

# Heiban Noun Classes

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This document outlines the Heiban language noun classes. The data was provided by Adam Kuku Kafi and his son, James Adam Kuku, of the Abu tribe of Heiban. The noun classes identified by their singular and plural prefixes and by their concords and are as follows:

singular prefix	singular concord	plural prefix	plural concord	semantic identification
gw-/kw- gu-/ku- φ	gw-	l- li-/lu- li-	l-	People, animals and nature except trees.
φ	gw-	-ŋa (suffix)	l-	relatives
gw-/kw- gu-/ku-	gw-	j- ji-/ju-	j-	trees
l-	l-	ŋ-/ŋw-	ŋw-	unit collective ??
k- g-	g-	j-	j-	common objects
dh-	dh-	d- r-	d- r-	long thin things
dh-	dh-	j-	j-	dangerous things
g- k-	g-	ny-	ny-	hollow and deep things
ŋ-	ŋ-	ny-	ny-	domestic and small animals and things
ŋ-	ŋ-	—	—	liquids and abstract nouns
ŋ-		j-		goat
g-/k-	g-	φ	φ	
φ	φ	j-	j-	words beginning with a vowel, mostly food?
				foreign words

## Orthography problems:

- There is some confusion over whether the classes with singular prefix ‘g’ or ‘k’ should be spelt with a ‘g’ or a ‘k’. When I asked Adam and James for more words, sometimes they spelt the words from these classes with a ‘g’ and sometimes with a ‘k’. Adam and James say this is a dialect problem.
- Similarly, the data given for the class with plural prefix ‘d’ or ‘r’ was sometimes spelt with ‘d’ and sometimes with ‘r’. In this case, Adam and James had more difficulty than in the ‘k/g’ distinction is deciding on the correct spelling. However there is one case where there is a distinction in meaning between the two plurals:

- 

dhereny  
dhereny

rereny  
dereny

low lake  
shin

## Morphophonemics

- In the classes which have singular prefix ‘gu’ or ‘gw’ and ‘ku’ or ‘kw’, ‘gu’ and ‘ku’ are used when the next letter is a consonant and ‘gw’ and ‘kw’ are used when the next letter is a vowel. The plural in these classes is formed either by replacing ‘gw’ or ‘kw’ with the appropriate plural prefix, or by replacing ‘gu’ or ‘ku’ with the appropriate plural prefix followed by a vowel. This vowel is normally ‘i’, but can be ‘u’. I have not been able to find a rule to tell me which vowel should follow.

### Heiban nouns

- In the class with singular prefix 'l' and plural prefix 'ŋ' or 'ŋw', there is some variation on how the plural is formed. In a few words, the prefix 'l' is replaced by 'ŋw'; in the rest of the words, 'l' is replaced by 'ŋ' and when 'l' is followed by 'i', the plural is generally formed by replacing 'li' with 'ŋu'. I have so far not found anything to explain the two ways of forming the plural for this class.

### Class distinctions

The above noun class classification closely matches that of Stevenson [1]. The main differences are that there are more classes in the above classification. According to Stevenson hollow and deep things should be in the common things class, but we have found a separate class. Stevenson also found no words beginning with a vowel, or the g/φ class.

Nevertheless the classification is not straight forward. The classes with singular prefix 'dh' taken together clearly make a class of long thin things and dangerous things. However the dangerous things class seems to have lost a few words to the long thin class, suggesting that these two classes are starting to merge. This may explain why 'elephant' is currently in both classes. The common things and unit collective classes are difficult to describe semantically and the classification given is that given by Stevenson.[1] The class with singular prefix 'g' and zero plural prefix is a small class, is not mentioned by Stevenson, and I have no idea what to do with it. There is potential confusion between the tree and common things classes because the only distinction is in their singular prefixes. This is clear when the tree prefix is 'kw' or 'gw', but less clear when it is 'ku' or 'gu' because of the different possibilities for the plural form. In this case it may be that 'gi' indicates the noun belongs to the tree class. However it may also indicate that the tree class is being amalgamated with the common things class.

### References:

Stevenson, R. C. *A Survey of the Phonetics and Grammatical Structure of the Nuba Mountain Languages with Particular Reference to Otoro, Katcha and Nyimat*. Africa und Ubersee, vol XLI 1956-57

### Data

People, Animals, and Nature (except trees)	gw/kw/gu/ku	1
gucega	licege	Denka man
gudha	lidha	fish, type of
gudhoro	lidhoro	gourd of milk
gudhrun	lidhrun	vegetable
gudhudhu	lidhudhu	pot
gudhugre	lidhugre	tribal man
gudhuna	lidhua	lazy man
guja	lija	gourd
gujaŋ	lijaŋ	way
gukruŋo	likruŋo	person
gukwari	likwari	tribal man
gum	lum	fish
gumi	limi	sea animal
gumiri	limiri	tribal man
gumora	limora	type of fence to keep animals out
gumoreny	limoreny	tribal man
gumro	limro	vegetable
gumrony	limrony	vegetable
gumū	limū	witch
guna	luna	father-in-law
guraŋar	liraŋar	gorilla
gurerey	lirerey	vegetable

**Heiban nouns**

guthuro	lithuro	tribal man
guwa	luwa	moon, month
guwam	lam	boa constrictor
guwani	lūni	small boa constrictor
guwaŋ	luwaŋ	buffalo
gwa	la	wife
gwa	law	woman
gwabul	labul	person
gwadhan	ladhan	antelope, type of
gwaginu	laginu	engaged (F)
gwago	lago	engaged (M)
gwal	lal	fly
gwaŋdha	laŋdha	watchman
gwara	lara	enclosure
gwaral	laral	antelope, type of
gwarany	larany	antelope, type of
gwaygu	laygu	Arab man
gwebaŋ	lebaŋ	Heiban person
gwidagig	lidagig	Dagig tribe
gwidhir	lidhir	bad woman
gwiga	liga	wife of brother
gwife	like	bad person
gwilaro	lilaro	Laro tribe
gwimoro	limoro	Moro tribe
gwina	lina	witch
gwiŋir	liŋir	well
gwira	lira	lion
gwiraŋar	liraŋar	monkey
gwiriiny	liriiny	antelope, type of
gwiriny	liriny	warthog
gwitira	litira	Tira tribe
gwurwel	lirwel	monkey
gwūmū	lūmū	man
kuri	luri	mouse, rat
kwa	law	woman, wife
kwawa	lawa	mosquito
kweleny	leleny	chief, king, boss
kwereny	lereny	wooden house
kwiga	liga	in law
kwiin	liyin	tree, type of
kwiji	liji	person
kwini	lini	tree, type of
kwira	lira	hyena
kwirin	lirin	guest

φ      li

mega	limega	brother
mirta	limirta	horse
murkab	limurkab	canoe

**Relatives**

φ

ŋa

afūndhi	afūndhiŋa	teacher
are	arŋa	somebody
awurika	awurikaŋa	friend
babo	babona	father

**Heiban nouns**

goco	goçoŋa	fifth boy
gwadha	gwadhəŋa	in law
gwayir	gwayirŋa	brother in law
kaka	kakaŋa	firstborn girl
kana	kanŋa	firstborn boy
kuce	kuceŋa	third girl
kuku	kukuŋa	firstborn boy
kumi	kumiŋa	fourth boy
kunda	kundaŋa	sixth boy
kurna	kurnaŋa	grandfather
kuti	kutiŋa	second boy
kwalo	kwaloŋa	third boy
kwani	kwaniŋa	second girl
madhir	madhirŋa	director
nana	nanaŋa	mother
ŋare	kelija	child

**Trees gw/kw/gu/ku g**

gu	ju	breast (woman's)
gudha	judha	tree, type of
gudhbo	judhbo	ostrich
gulo	julo	neck
guru	juru	dung (of cow)
gwibu	jibu	tree, type of
kugriny	jugriny	tree, type of
kukul	jukul	gourd, type of
kukulu	jukulu	vegetable, type of
kumrun	jimrun	tree, type of
kumrur	jimrur	tree, type of
kwala	jala	tree
kware	jare	tree
kwidaŋ	jidaŋ	tree, type of
kwiya	jiya	tree, type of

**Unit Collective**

**l**

**ŋ**

largul	ŋargul	bell
lawun	ŋawun	nose
len	ŋen	mountain (hill), village
liber	ŋuber	tail
libuŋ	ŋubuŋ	lake (pond)
lidhrom	ŋudhrom	pebble
lidiny	ŋidiny	wild plant, vegetable
lidotor	ŋudotor	intestines (guts)
lima	ŋima	lion
limen	ŋumen	wall
limroy	ŋumroy	cooking stone
limrur	ŋumrur	fruit, type of
limur	ŋumur	walking stick
lirany	ŋurany	ram
lirci	ŋurci	sesame tree
liririm	ŋuririm	dura, type of
lirko	ŋurko	knee
liwawra	ŋuwawra	flower
logiro	ŋogiro	lizard, type of
logiyo	ŋogiyo	bird, type of
lony	ŋony	egg

## Heiban nouns

lora	ɲora	leg
ludum	ɲudum	star
lura	ɲura	stick for men
lura	ɲura	head
lure	ɲure	wood
luwawra	ɲuwawra	flour
luy	ɲuy	bone
luyo	ɲuyo	bird
lūru	ɲūru	shield

## l      ɲw

ladam	ɲwadam	tip
lagru	ɲwagru	bird, type of
laiga	ɲwaiga	fruit, type of
lamun	ɲwamun	finger
lamun	ɲwamun	day
leny	ɲweny	gourd
ler	ɲwer	thigh
lidaŋ	ɲwidan	fruit, type of
linyu	ɲwinyu	mouth
lūbaŋ	ɲwabaŋ	chin

## Common Things

### g

### j

gabarū	jibaru	cloud
gabbo	jabbo	bat
gabile	jabile	butter
gabipir	jabipir	butterfly
gabir	jabir	worm, type of
gabiru	jabiru	old man
gabjagul	jabjagul	vegetable
gabrakur	jabrakur	dove
gadhu	jadhu	breeze
gamen	jamem	type of tree
gamrany	jamrany	hyena
gaŋal	jaŋal	ewe
gaŋer	jaŋer	worm, type of
gibur	jibur	door
gidegel	jidegel	louse
gidhur	jidhur	stool (chair)
gimla	jimla	tortoise
gimlugu	jimlugu	bark of tree
n	n	
giŋay	jiŋay	tooth
girna	jirna	skin
gogor	jogor	tree, type of
gola	jola	feather, wool
gu	ju	breast (woman's)
gudha	judha	tree, type of
gudhbo	judhbo	ostrich
gulo	julo	neck
guru	juru	dung (of cow)
gūe	jūe	eye
gūpa	jūpa	sweeper
gūru	jūru	skin for carrying (waterskin)
gūwaŋ	jūwaŋ	animal
gūru	jūru	hair
kagar	jagar	gate, type of

## Heiban nouns

kagro	jagro	hen, chicken
kajam	jajam	wild animal, type of
kajama	jajama	trap
kamal	jamal	youth
kamla	jamla	camel
kaṅra	jaṅra	headgear for carrying
karbille	jarbille	water_melon
kawdhe	jawdhe	shoe
kilūlū	jilūlū	type of matress
kitham	jitham	book
kiyo	jiyo	bark for making rope
kogor	jogor	tree
kono	jono	tree, type of
kugriny	jugriny	tree, type of
kukul	jukul	gourd, type of
kukulu	jukulu	vegetable, type of
kumrun	jimrun	tree, type of
kumrur	jimrur	tree, type of
kūwur	jūwur	doorway

## Long Thin Things

dh	d/r	
dhaju	daju	stream, temporary
dhamu	damu	vegetable, type of
dhamun	damun	meat, type of
dhay	day	path, road, way
dhbu	dbu	hat
dheguni	deguni	warthog
dhel	del	grave
dhereny	dereny	shin
dhereny	rereny	low lake
dhibrtha	ribrtha	river
dhidamrina	ridamrina	food, type of
dhigara	digara	fence to protect crops
dhigranyul	rigranyul	meat
dhigrim	digrim	spirit, shadow
dhil	dil	horn
dhimen	rimen	spear shaft
dhimre	dimre	lip ornament
dhimreny	dimreny	cave, narrow
dhimuru	rimuru	type of seed, or type of wine
dhijir	riḡir	hand, right
dhijla	diḡla	tongue
dhma	rma	tree, type of
dhmi	dmi	rib
dhoy	doy	hand
dhrany	drany	boundary
dhre	dre	stirring stick
dhruny	druny	field
dhubūla	dubūla	corn
dhugor	dugor	heart
dhugur	dugur	grass, type of
dhukar	dukar	bean
dhula	rula	local long stream
dhulaḡ	rulaḡ	ant, small
dhulun	dulun	animal, type of
dhuluḡ	ruluḡ	elbow
dhumrany	dumrany	body, part of
dhumuria	dumuria	cloth
dhunya	runya	grinding stone
dhunḡur	duḡur	elephant

**Heiban nouns**

dhurar	durar	leopard
dhuro	duro	back
dhuraw	duraw	village_fence
dhuwa	duwa	root
dhuwa	ruwa	root

**Large and Dangerous Things**

	<b>dh</b>	<b>j</b>	
	dhar	jar	rope
	dhimon	jimon	twig
	y	y	
	dhogom	jogom	wild cat, type of
	dhugi	jugi	thorn
	dhul	jul	giraffe
	dhuma	juma	snake
	dhumu	jumu	scorpion
	dhujur	jujur	elephant
	dhuro	juro	roof_beam

**Hollow and Deep Things**

	<b>g</b>	<b>ny</b>	
	gabre	nyabre	shoulder
	gamun	nyamun	claw, nail
	garro	nyarro	grass
	gbo	nyibo	wing
	gel	nyel	grave
	gidhaga	nyidhaga	plough
	gidhe	nyidhe	pot
	gidhlū	nyidhlū	year
	gile	nyile	shoulder region
	gimiri	nyimiri	big pot
	gimu	nyimu	cave, big
	gol	nyol	stone
	guna	nyuna	local spoon
	gūdi	nyūdi	girdle?
	gūdū	nyūdū	knife
	gūli	nyūli	sheath
	gūni	nyūni	ear
	gūrri	nyūrri	knee cap
	kare	nyare	belly (stomach)
	kimire	nyimire	cooking pot
	kuna	nyuna	spoon, local

**Domestic and Small Animals and Things**

	<b>ŋ</b>	<b>ny</b>	
	ŋadhun	nyadhun	forehead
	ŋapoy	nyapoy	cat
	ŋarta	nyarta	axe
	ŋartumi	nyartumi	fox
	ŋdhri	nyidhri	bull
	ŋera	nyera	girl
	ŋibiru	nyibru	mouse, type of
	ŋidhgu	nyidhgu	rat, type of
	m	m	
	ŋidhoga	nyidhoga	gazelle
	ŋidfa	nyidfa	barb
	ŋilun	nyilun	store
	ŋimanini	nyimanin	rhinoceros
	i		

## Heiban nouns

ɲimata	nyimata	seed
ɲimro	nyimro	cow
ɲin	nyin	dog
ɲini	nyini	rabbit
ɲire	nyire	spear
ɲirun	nyirun	squirrel
ɲrū	nyrū	bird
ɲula	nyula	flute
ɲulaŋ	nyulaŋ	digging stick
ɲum	nyum	insect
ɲuni	nyuni	basket, type of
ɲurɗe	nyurɗe	barbed spear
ɲuriny	nyuriny	witch
ɲūrigūŋ	nyūrigūŋ	donkey

## Liquids and Abstract Nouns    ɲ

ɲadigreny	
ɲale	
ɲamruny	- weakness
ɲan	- milk
ɲaw	- water
ɲawɲagibu	- sea (ocean)
r	
ɲdhar	
ɲela	- fat (oil)
ɲicūrū	
ɲidheny	- fear
ɲidhgany	
ɲidhuna	- laziness
ɲiduro	- quarreling
ɲiin	- blood
ɲijini	
ɲijma	- pain, kind of
ɲimadrany	
ɲimar	- killing
ɲimū	- healing
ɲiɲriye	- threatening
ɲirany	- disease
ɲiremna	
ɲirilū	- ignorant
ɲiro	- work
ɲirro	- urine
ɲirteny	- pain, severe
ɲony	- saliva
ɲoɲor	- war
ɲujmiy	- policy
ɲunɲun	- spreading
ɲuɲniye	- scratching
ɲuɲnūɗe	- spreading on
ɲuredeny	- pain
ɲuriny	- witchcraft
ɲuram	
ɲūɲini	- searching
ɲūrmin	- hurt
ɲwar	- sleep
ɲwūmu	- saliva



## Heiban nouns

g      φ

gibre	ibre	suporter
gibur	ibur	bead, type of
gidhiny	idhiny	animal, type of
gidhiro	idhiro	vegetable, type of
gidhlum	idhlum	insect, type of
gijaja	ijaja	bottle
gijeja	ijeja	beetle
gijejra	ijejra	rat trap
giliny	iliny	mushroom
gilūny	ilūny	foreigner
gimar	imar	tree, type of
gimiriny	imiriny	stone, type of
gimrgeny	imrgeny	snake, type of
gimrgige	imrgige	stone, flat
girben	irben	foundation
giredeny	iredeny	tree, type of
gireny	ireny	store
girgire	irgire	grass, type of
girkudh	irkudh	insect
girbudh	irbudh	game
girūr	irūr	vegetable, wild, type of
giyo	iyo	bark of tree
giyu	iyu	rat, type of
gmadhe	imadhe	foot
kun	un	porcupine

## Goat

ηuro juro goat

## Words Starting with a Vowel (Mostly Food)

φ      j

abaη	jabaη	chest
abraη	jabraη	sugarcane, local
aburo	jaburo	sugarcane
aro	jaro	ash
idhi	jii	meat
idhiro	jidhiro	vegetable
iginy	jigny	inside of gourd which you take out
igur	jigur	plant, type of
ila	jila	flour
iliny	jiliny	mushroom
imu	jamu	hunger
iriny	jiriny	name

## Foreign Words and Irregular Nouns

awe	awe	liver
gambagila	ηambagila	ass
iga	iga	fire
iga	iga	gun
krindhi	krindhi	hippo
libila	-	liquid
ηodo	lodo	worm
tagiya	ragiya	cap
thimsa	thamase	crocodile

## Heiban nouns