

Paul NEWMAN, *Nominal and Verbal Plurality in Chadic*.  
 (Publications in African Languages and Linguistics, 12).  
 Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1990, 164 pp.

A comparative Chadic project that was originally focused on grammatical gender, has resulted in a very inspirational study on plurality. It happened so in the course of work, when the author became aware that the treatment of gender apart from number "[...] was descriptively and conceptually unsatisfactory, since agreement in Chadic tended to be a three-term system of which plurality was an essential component" (p. IX). Later on, the further he delved into the study of plurality in Chadic, the more he took interest in this as a common Afroasiatic and Chadic phenomenon.

The references to Afroasiatic are rather casual and serve strictly comparative concerns. The basic aim of the study is a presentation of derivational and inflectional formations embodying plurality in the Chadic language family. The term "plurality" is broadly understood as encompassing "[...] various notions of pluralness or multiplicity including distributiveness and repetitiveness" (p. 1). The phenomenon of plurality is examined in four major areas: noun (and adjectival) plurals, plural action verbs (with a separate treatment of pluractionals in Hausa and Ngizim), plural verb stems required by concord rules, and plural imperatives used to direct a command at more than one addressee. A separate chapter is devoted to the analysis of those particular fields. Although plurality is an important feature of pronouns, demonstratives and genitive marks, they are not described in detail. Some remarks concerning them can be found in the introductory chapter.

First of all, P. Newman has tried to present a comprehensive documentation in respect of the nature and extent of particular constructions in present-day Chadic languages. When doing it, he

has used own materials as well as largely drawn on primary descriptions provided by other scholars. His ultimate objectives, however, were historical: he tried to propose what various morphological constructions must have been like in Proto-Chadic.

In *Introduction* (pp. 1-13) the author gives his earlier classification of the Chadic family (that proposed in 1977) with few modifications. It comprises 144 languages distributed in four coordinate branches: West, Biu-Mandara, East and Masa. P. Newman is of opinion that the classification presented in his study is probably reasonably accurate in most instances, but at the same time he is aware that it is far from definitive: some weak points of it have been spotted by him (p. 4ff.). Two questions could be asked here. Firstly, why P. Newman uses the spelling *Mapun* whereas Z. Frajzyngier, an investigator of that language, proposes the term *Mupun*? It is even more intriguing when we bring it to mind that both scholars share ideas and materials with each other (cf. p. IX). The other remark is that in Table 1: *Chadic Language Classification* (p. 3) *Mapun* is treated as an autonomous language whereas in an Appendix *Inventory of Chadic languages and alternative names* (p. 142) a sort of uncertainty is visible in a gloss *Mapun* (→ *Sura*?). By the way, *Mapun* should have classificatory number I.A.3. not I.A.2. as it is in the *Inventory* (p. 142).

The introductory chapter contains also discussion on number and gender in Chadic, substantiated by an extensive exemplification. The author asserts that Proto-Chadic had grammatical gender as a part of its Afroasiatic inheritance. Gender in Chadic is (and always was) a two-term masculine/feminine system, distinguished in singular only. It has been preserved in approximately half of present-day Chadic languages. The loss of that grammatical category elsewhere occurred independently a number of times in different groups in different periods. Proto-Chadic morphologically distinguished two number categories: singular and plural. Some scholars (Pilszczikowa-Chodak for Hausa, and M. Skinner for Pa'a), however, suggested the use of different affixes for forming plurals of feminine as opposed to masculine nouns. This should be

explored further. Generally, the principal cut in Chadic languages is singular vs. plural, with gender distinction secondly. Of great interest is the phonological shape of number/gender markers in Chadic: /n/ – masculine and plural, and /t/ – feminine, or some variants thereof. The detailed similarities in the form and function of n/t/n pattern in Chadic and in other Afroasiatic languages provide a sound evidence for the membership of Chadic within Afroasiatic.

The phenomenon of the multiplicity of ways the Chadic languages form noun plurals is discussed in chapter 2 (pp. 15-51). Numerous plural formations are not only found throughout the family, but one also can notice an abundance of plural formations within individual language (e.g. Hausa with some 40 different plural formations at the surface level). On the other hand, there are languages (e.g. Pero) that do not mark plurals at all. P. Newman having presented detailed data (cited under eleven different formations) from the entire family to support the reconstruction of specific plural morphemes for Proto-Chadic came to conclusion that the proto-language definitely had morphological noun plural formatives which took the shape of suffixes \*-aki, \*-n-, \*-i, \*-ai/-ay, and possibly \*-d(i). The status of internal -a as an independent morphological formative in Proto-Chadic has been not decided in a definite way. The other four plural categories are not reconstructible for Proto-Chadic. Prefixal reduplication is almost never found in Chadic plurals and – according to the author – there is no reason to believe that the situation was different in the past.

When the Chadic plurals are looked at in an Afroasiatic context, one has to admit that two of the strongest Chadic reconstructions \*-n-, and \*-ai/ay are plural forms of wide extension in Afroasiatic languages, and can almost certainly be reconstructed for Proto-Afroasiatic.

When discussing Bidiya plurals -i and -e, the author touches upon the problem of correlation of tone and vowel-height and refers to an article of N. Pilszczikowa which some years ago was quite vigorously criticized by him. P. Newman upholds his earlier opinion that "[...] such a correlation does not hold for Hausa in the terms

in which it was expressed", but concedes somewhat saying: "[...] one does keep meeting up with phenomena in Hausa and in other Chadic languages that suggest that some interrelationship between these variables is not out of the question" (p. 148).

The term "plural" when applied to verbs may be used for two distinct grammatical categories: derived plural verb stems denoting semantic plurality, and inflected plural verb forms required by a conjugational system. Those phenomena are being dealt with in chapters 3-4 and 5 respectively.

In order to set apart the semantically endowed verbal plurals from the inflectional agreement stems, a dozen of years ago P. Newman coined the term "pluractionals" for those semantically marked. Therefore chapter 3 is entitled *Chadic Pluractionals* (pp. 53-87). At its beginning the author presented an overview of labels as well as description of pluractionals' meaning and function in Chadic languages as proposed by various scholars. Further on, when discussing pluractional morphology he distinguished three major classes of their formation (reduplication, internal -a and suffixation), and came to conclusion that the formation which with great confidence can be reconstructed for Proto-Chadic is prefixal CV-reduplication. The gemination and suffixal reduplication, so commonly used in present-day Chadic languages, are later developments whereas internal -a pluractionals seem to be cognates from a common Afroasiatic structure. Although two scholars (Frajzyngier and Wolff) emphasized the similarities in Chadic between nominal and verbal plurality, the extensive analysis done by Newman offers a totally different picture. The differences are far more impressive than the few similarities.

To propose a fuller understanding of pluractional verb morphology, the author decided to look at Hausa and Ngizim in greater depth. In chapter 4 entitled *Pluractionals in Hausa and Ngizim* (pp. 89-106) he discussed productive and frozen pluractionals in both languages, and pointed out how essential it is to look at frozen non-productive forms in historical/comparative morphology.

In chapter 5 entitled *Plural Verbs* (pp. 107-120) P. Newman has shown that inflected plural verb stems in Chadic – unlike in Indo-European – are not very common and remain limited to a small number of languages, belonging to specific groups. The plural markers may be restricted either to a specific tense/aspect, or to person (most often third person). Since the Proto-Chadic had a conjugational system with plural verbs, one can assume that the present situation appears to be another manifestation of the general Chadic "drift". The Proto-Chadic suffix \*-(a)n has its reflexes both in Chadic and in other Afroasiatic languages.

Having presented the shape of the Chadic plural imperatives in chapter 6 (pp. 121-131), the author made a generalization that proto-language probably had such a category and it was marked by final \*-a. "This distinct morphological category has been lost independently any number of times in individual Chadic languages, whereupon other means were adopted to express the concept" (p. 131). That is why in present-day Chadic languages many patterns of imperative plurality are attested: switch to conjugated verb form, preverbal pronouns, suffixal pronouns, general number agreement and special plural imperative markers.

Besides the *Inventory of Chadic languages* mentioned above, the book contains a large *Bibliography* (pp. 155-162) and an *Index of Language Names* (pp. 162ff.). It is a detailed and solid study on plurality in those Chadic languages which have been described so far, with special attention given both to the historical and diachronic study of Hausa. Such an attitude is fully justified as it is the researches on Hausa that made P. Newman an internationally recognized authority in the field of African linguistics. Even if the descriptions of further Chadic languages brought data leading to new conceptions, the study under discussion will certainly remain a model for future comparative researches in Chadic morphology and grammar.