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Pluractionality in Hausa

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Chapter 2: Pluractionality in Hausa

2.1. Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to present some basic information on Hausa and introduce the data that will be analyzed in Chapter 3. The data are with a few exceptions my own, collected at various points between 2007 and 2010. Roughly half of the overall amount of data came out of a number of elicitation sessions with various native speakers of Hausa living in Europe. These speakers are from different parts of Hausaland, one from Niger, the rest from Nigeria. The other half was collected during my field trip to Sokoto, Nigeria, in August – September 2009. Even though the speakers I have consulted speak different dialects, I have no reason to think that the use of pluractional verbs is subject to dialectal variation.¹ There is a lot of variation but it seems to be a matter of individual idiolects and personal preferences, rather than dialects, since there is as much variation within the judgments of speakers of the same dialect as across dialects. As inter-speaker variation is something rather typical of Hausa pluractionals, it will be discussed throughout the chapter and a brief summary of the individual points of variation will be given in section 2.8.4. In the rest of this introduction a few general remarks concerning the variation will be made.

One general observation that can be made about how speakers vary in their use of pluractionals is that there are what I will call ‘conservative’ and ‘liberal’ speakers. Naturally, this distinction is gradual and thus one cannot speak of two clearly separate groups of speakers. Nevertheless, ‘conservative’ vs. ‘liberal’ is a distinction that can provide some insight into the ways speakers’ judgments vary. Below I discuss three different aspects or dimensions in which speakers can be conservative or liberal.

First, conservative speakers seem to require rather special contexts for an appropriate use of the pluractional form. Essentially, this means that for conservative speakers pluractionals clearly express meanings that go beyond simple event plurality. By contrast, liberal speakers often assign pluractionals interpretations that are simply plural (cf. the characterization of what I consider typical pluractionals and the distinction between the basic meaning and additional meanings of pluractionals given in (2) in Chapter 1).

¹ It should be said, however, that probably none of the speakers I consulted speaks a ‘pure’ dialect. They are all rather well educated people, as a consequence of which their language is influenced by the standard variety of Hausa. However, as already mentioned, dialectal differences do not seem to play a role in the interpretation (or formation) of pluractional verbs. Nevertheless, they can play a role in the choice of the particular lexical item (verb that serves as the basis for the pluractional formation) the speakers use to express the given meaning.

The second aspect or dimension seems connected to the first one. It has to do with the extent of the regularity of the formation. For conservative speakers, the pluractional formation is clearly derivational and subject to restrictions. Such speakers do not derive pluractional forms equally easily from all verbs. They often reject forms that seem coined, that is, that are not recognized as commonly used or ‘well-established’. For a very small number of speakers the pluractional form is special to the extent that it does not seem to be productive at all. It almost seems that such speakers accept only a few lexicalized cases. In contrast, liberal speakers form pluractionals very regularly, to the extent that for some of them the formation has almost an inflectional character. There are few idiosyncrasies in their data and only few forms are rejected as non-existent.

Finally, some speakers are conservative in the sense that they accept pluractionals only in optimal contexts. This means that many forms are rejected for essentially pragmatic reasons, for instance, because the pluractionals were used to describe situations that do not arise naturally. Other speakers are more flexible in accepting unusual contexts or they even themselves invent scenarios that make sentences with pluractionals felicitous. Such speaker are willing to accept more cases than conservative speakers are and can thus be said to be more liberal.²

This brief and necessarily schematic characterization of the ‘conservative’ vs. ‘liberal’ speaker distinction does not exhaust the topic of inter-speaker variation. It should rather serve as a general background against which the individual points of variation can be evaluated. Concrete examples of idiolects, including the discussion of how their individual features are related to each other, will be given in section 3.8. of Chapter 3.

The chapter is organized as follows. First, I present some general information on Hausa and its grammatical system, which will be concluded by introducing the pluractional formation (section 2.2.). After that, the actual pluractional data will be presented. I start by discussing in some detail the plurality requirement and its different components (section 2.3.). Section 2.4. is dedicated to a discussion of the status of iterative interpretations. Section 2.5. deals with data showing that the number of events referred to by pluractionals should not be specified precisely but it should be large. Following that, some data will be presented that challenge the idea that a plurality of events analysis is sufficient for a proper treatment of Hausa pluractionals, namely pluractional verbs with high degree interpretations (section 2.6.). Section 2.7. discusses how certain meaning aspects of pluractional verbs interact with each other. Section 2.8. deals with some remaining issues, the most important of which is the inter-speaker variation in judgments. Section 2.9. concludes the chapter.

² Note that the distinction between conservative and liberal speakers is not a distinction between older and younger speakers. In fact, I have no evidence for saying that the differences in the use of pluractionals depend on the age of the speaker. Similarly, there seems to be no clear correlation between the conservativeness and the gender of the speaker.

³ Alternatively, vowel length can be marked by a macron: *sūnā* ‘name’.

b. tone:	high (no accent mark)	<i>maza</i> ‘quickly’
	low (grave accent)	<i>dà</i> ‘with’ ⁴
	falling (circumflex)	<i>zân</i> ‘I will’ (1SG.FUT)

The consonant system is quite rich, thanks to the existence of glottalized, palatalized and labialized sets. Several special characters and digraphs are used in Hausa.⁵

(2)	ɓ	laryngealized bilabial stop
	ɗ	laryngealized alveolar stop
	ƙ	glottalized velar ejective
	ɾ	coronal tap/roll
	ts	ejective coronal sibilant
	ʔ	glottal stop
	ɥ	laryngealized semivowel

The Hausa phonological system plays a minor role in the discussion of pluractional verbs. I will only discuss it where relevant.

2.2.2. Sentence structure

In this section the basics of the sentence structure in Hausa are discussed. The focus of the discussion is on the basic elements forming a sentence, the main clause types and the tense-aspect-mood system. For this and the following five subsections, I am relying on the descriptions given by Newman (2000) and Jaggar (2001). Most of the examples given in these sections are taken from these two grammars.⁶

As illustrated in (3) below, Hausa is an SVO language, with an inflection-carrying element (INFL) between the subject and verb.⁷ INFL carries subject agreement and the tense/ aspect/ mood information (TAM, see below). Hausa is a pro-drop language, which means that a sentence can start directly with INFL if the subject is recoverable from the context.

⁴ Note that the tone is marked only on the first vowel if the vowel is long, e.g. *bàa* ‘negative marker’.

⁵ There are two R’s in Hausa. An ‘r’ with no diacritic is a retroflex flap. The glottal stop is marked only in non-initial positions. Apart from the use of special characters, other differences in comparison to the English orthography include the following: *c* is pronounced as *ch* in *church* and *g* is always pronounced as *g* in *get*. In addition, there are geminate consonants, which are indicated by double letters. In the case of geminates of consonants represented by digraphs such as *ts* only the first letter of the digraph is doubled: *tsaitsuàya* ‘stop.PLC’.

⁶ The glosses are my own.

⁷ This element is called person-aspect complex (PAC) in Newman (2000) and Jaggar (2001) and auxiliary in Hartmann (2008).

- (3) S INFL V O
 (Tàlaatù) takàn dafà àbinci
 (Talatu) 3SG.F.HAB cook food
 ‘(Talatu)/ she cooks food’

Not only subjects but also objects can be dropped easily if they are recoverable from context:

- (4) INFL V
 Kaa gyaaràa?
 2SG.M.PF fix
 ‘Did you fix (it)?’

Apart from verbal clauses, there are also two kinds of clauses in Hausa that do not contain a verb (i.e. not even a covert one). One type of non-verbal clauses are clauses that do not contain either a verb or INFL, for instance, equational (5a) or existential clauses (5b):⁸

- (5) a. Shii (bàa) mahàukàcii (ba) nèe EQUATIONAL
 he NEG crazy NEG STAB.M
 ‘He is (not) crazy’
 b. Àkwai ruwaa EXISTENTIAL
 there.is water
 ‘There is water’

The second type of non-verbal clauses are clauses that contain INFL but no verb. These are e.g. possessive (6a) or locative (6b) constructions, or clauses with the so-called statives (6c), which are assumed to be non-verbal (cf. subsection 2.2.4.):

- (6) a. Kanàa dà mootàa? POSSESSIVE
 2SG.M.IMPF with car
 ‘Do you have a car?’
 b. Yanàa gidaa LOCATIVE
 3SG.M.IMPF home
 ‘He is at home’
 c. Sunàa zàune STATIVE
 3PL.IMPF seat.ST
 ‘They are seated’

⁸ The stabilizer (STAB) is a copula-like element used in equational sentences, but it also functions as a focus marker (if it is indeed the same element; cf. Green 2007). The masculine and plural form of the stabilizer is *nèe* and the feminine form is *cee*. The tone is polar, i.e. opposite to that of the preceding syllable (cf. example (5a) above).

Having introduced the basic facts about clauses and the elements they are constituted by, the rest of the subsection will be devoted to verbs and the tense/ aspect/ mood system.

The most basic fact about verbs is that they do not inflect for tense, aspect or modality and do not carry agreement markers.⁹ Instead, this kind of information is encoded in the already mentioned INFL marker. INFL is composed of the tense/ aspect/ mood (TAM) morpheme and the subject agreement morpheme (person, gender and number). These two morphemes are sometimes clearly identifiable (or even written as separate words), as in the future form (7a), but often the two parts cannot be really distinguished, as in the perfective form (7b):

- (7) a. Bà(a) zaa mù iyà zuwàa ba FUTURE
 NEG FUT 1PL be.able come NEG
 ‘We won’t be able to come’
 b. Naa ci goofò PERFECTIVE
 1SG.PF eat kolanut
 ‘I ate a kolanut’

Tense and aspect are not realized as separate categories in Hausa. Rather, together with mood they constitute components of a single conjugational system: tense/ aspect/ mood (TAM). The TAM marker forms part of the INFL element, as demonstrated above. The TAM paradigms can be divided into three (syntactically determined) categories: general (affirmative clauses and *yes-no* questions), relative (focus, relativization and *wh*-questions) and negative (both general and focus negative clauses).¹⁰ The basic division is between imperfective and other than imperfective TAMs. Imperfective TAMs do not combine with verbs in the strict sense but rather with verbal nouns (comparable to the *-ing* forms of the English progressive), locative or stative predicates or possessive

⁹ There is one verb form that does express grammatical features that are otherwise marked by the INFL morpheme, however: the imperative. The imperative is available for second person singular only (ia). In all other cases, commands have to be expressed by using the subjunctive TAM (ic). In fact, the subjunctive is a more common way to express commands in the second person singular as well (ib). As for the form of the imperative, it is usually segmentally identical to the non-imperative form but the tone is usually LH (overriding the tone of the non-imperative use):

- (i) a. tàashì! < taashì IMPERATIVE
 ‘get up!’ ‘get up’
 b. kà/ki taashì SUBJUNCTIVE
 ‘(you.SG.M/F) get up’
 c. kù taashì
 ‘(you.PL) get up!’

¹⁰ Only a subset of all TAMs have three distinct forms. In some TAMs, a single form is used in all three categories. In addition, some TAMs are restricted to certain categories.

constructions.¹¹ Table 2.1. presents six variants of a single sentence, demonstrating six different TAM paradigms.

Table 2.1.: TAMs

	perfective	imperfective
general	Audù yaa fitoo Audu 3M.SG.PF come.out 'Audu came out'	Audù yanàa fitôwaa Audu 3M.SG.IMPF come.out.VN 'Audu is coming out' ¹²
relative	Audù (nee) ya fitoo Audu (STAB) 3SG.M.RELPF come.out 'It is Audu who went out'	Audù (nee) yakêe fitôwaa Audu (STAB) 3SG.M.RELIMPF come.out.VN 'It is Audu who is coming out'
negative	Audù bai fitoo ba Audu 3SG.M.NEGPF come.out NEG 'Audu didn't go out'	Audù baa yaa fitôwaa Audu 3SG.M.NEGIMPF come.out.VN 'Audu isn't going out'

As already mentioned above, the other, non-TAM, component of INFL reflects the person, gender and number features of the subject. This information is thus not encoded in the verb itself. This point is important in connection with pluractionality, since participant-based pluractionality could in principle be confused with agreement. In Hausa, however, the situation is very clear: pluractionality is marked on the verb, whereas agreement never is.

In the following subsection, more information on verbs is given. In particular, the subsection discusses the so-called 'grade system'.

2.2.3. Verb grades

As indicated in the previous subsection, Hausa verbs are not morphologically marked for person, number or tense/ aspect/ mood. However, they do in some cases change their form depending on the syntactic environment. The syntactic environment relevant for the choice of the appropriate form is determined by what follows the verb. If the verb has no object or if the object has been fronted the so-called 'A-form' is used. If the verb is followed by a pronominal direct object it is necessary to use the 'B-form'. In cases when the verb is followed by a noun in the direct object position the appropriate form is the 'C-form'. The 'D-form' is used if an indirect object follows the verb. An example of a verb and its different forms is given in Table 2.2. below.

¹¹ Saying that imperfective TAMs are only used with non-verbal predicates is not quite precise because in some cases the verbal form is actually used, instead of a verbal noun, namely, if an object follows (cf. the discussion of verbal nouns below). Both Newman (2000) and Jaggar (2001) use the term 'infinitive phrase' for such combinations of verbs and their objects in imperfective sentences, probably to be able to make a generalization that would cover all imperfective sentences, namely, that they do not contain finite verbs.

¹² The time-reference point is fixed by adverbials or context, for example. If no context is provided, the default time reference is the time of speaking.

Table 2.2.: Forms of the verb *sàyaa* ‘buy’

A (pre-zero)	B (pronominal d.o.)	C (nominal d.o.)	D (i.o.)
sàyaa	sàyee	sàyi	sayàa/sayaĩ

The verb *sàyaa* ‘buy’ exhibits a distinct morphological form in each of these four syntactic environments. This is not the case for all verbs. The number of distinct forms and their exact shape depend on the morphological class the particular verb belongs to. These morphological classes are called ‘grades’.

Verb grades are thus morphological classes of verbs that share certain formal and partly also semantic characteristics. There are eight grades described in the grammars, which can be divided into ‘primary grades’ and ‘secondary grades’. The primary grades are grades 0 to 3. Each of these grades is defined by certain formal characteristics, such as the final vowel and tone pattern. The following simplified characteristics of the primary grades can be given. Grade 0 are mostly monosyllabic verbs that typically end in *-i* or *-aa*, like *ci* ‘eat’ or *shaa* ‘drink’. Grade 1 contains both intransitive and transitive *a(a)*-final verbs, such as *dafàa* ‘cook’. Grade 2 verbs are all transitive verbs. They demonstrate the greatest variability in form, as exemplified in the table above. Grade 3 is an exclusively intransitive grade containing *a*-final verbs, like *fita* ‘go out’. Grades 4 to 7 are called secondary grades. The secondary grades, unlike the primary grades, can generally be characterized semantically as well, apart from being defined by certain formal features. Grade 4, the ‘totality’ grade, contains both transitive and intransitive verbs that “indicate an action totally done or affecting all the objects” (Newman 2000:629), e.g. *sayèe* ‘buy up’. Grade 5 verbs, called ‘efferential’ by Newman (traditionally ‘causative’) indicate “action directed away from the speaker” (Newman 2000:629), e.g. *zubaĩ* ‘pour out’. It is characteristic for these verbs that “semantic direct objects” require the use of the oblique marker *dà*, as in *yaa zubaĩ dà giyàa* ‘he poured out the beer’. Grade 6 verbs are called ‘ventive’ by Newman. They end in *-oo* and indicate action “in the direction of or for the benefit of the speaker” (Newman 2000:629), e.g. *daawoo* ‘come back’. Grade 7 indicates “an agentless passive, middle voice, action well done, or the potentiality of sustaining action” (Newman 2000:629), depending on the TAM. They end in *-u*, as in *dàfu* ‘be well cooked’. Despite the fact that secondary grades can be partly characterized semantically, it is often hard to provide a label that would cover all cases. Note that many verb stems occur in different grades, giving rise to slightly different meanings and uses. Typically, a verb will occur in one primary grade and possibly several secondary ones. The following table demonstrates that for the stem *say-* ‘buy’.¹³

¹³ The citation form is the A form.

Table 2.3.: Verb stem say- ‘buy’ in different grades

verb	grade	meaning
sàyaa	gr2	‘buy’
sayèe	gr4	‘buy up’
sayañ	gr5	‘sell’
sayoo	gr6	‘buy and bring’
sàyu	gr7	‘be well bought’

2.2.4. Deverbal categories

This section discusses three deverbal categories that are relevant for the discussion of pluractionality because they can be derived from pluractional as well as from non-pluractional verbs. When they are derived from pluractional verbs the derivation preserves the pluractional semantics. These categories are statives, adjectival participles and verbal nouns.

The so-called ‘statives’ are forms regularly derived from verbs by replacing the final vowel with a tone-integrating suffix *-e*)^{LH}.¹⁴ The nature of statives is not completely clear to me. They are often translated as present or past participles:

- (8) a. dàfe < dafàa
 ‘cooked’ < ‘cook’
 b. gùje < gudù
 ‘running, on the run’ < ‘run’
 c. kwànce < kwântaa
 ‘lying down’ < ‘lie down’

Newman (2000) considers these forms adverbial. Nevertheless, adverbs usually do not follow prepositions, while statives can (the preposition *à* meaning ‘in/at’):¹⁵

¹⁴ A tone-integrating suffix is a suffix with an associated tone melody that overrides the tones of the base the suffix is attached to. The tone pattern imposed by the suffix is indicated by the superscript following a right bracket.

¹⁵ Consider also the following characterization in Jaggar (2001:651): “[s]tatives denote the terminal state or condition resulting from the completion of a verbal action and are functionally equivalent to manner adverbs”. Jaggar’s formulation is rather cautious – he does not state directly that statives are adverbs. However, his definition is not quite precise either. Looking at the example in (8b), it is clear that the action has not been completed yet. Parsons (1981:30ff) calls statives VANS: ‘verbal adverbial nouns of state’. Newman (2000) rejects this because in his view there is nothing that would justify labeling statives as nouns. However, the fact that statives often follow the preposition *à* is exactly the right kind of evidence for treating statives as essentially nominal.

- (9) Naa gan shì à ãrùbùuce
 1SG.PF see him PREP write.ST
 ‘I saw him writing’

As shown already above, a stative can also be the main predicate of a sentence:

- (10) Sunàa (à) zàune
 3PL.IMPF (PREP) sit.ST
 ‘They are seated’

In such cases the stative can either follow the imperfective INFL morpheme directly or it is preceded by the preposition *à*.

Apart from statives, verbs generally allow the derivation of a corresponding adjectival past participle. Past participles are derived by a tone-integrating suffix *-aCCee*^{LHH} and have a distinct masculine, feminine and plural form, like other adjectives.

- (11) dàfafee *m./* dàfaffiya *f./* dàfàffuu *pl.* < dafàa
 ‘cooked’ ‘cook’

An adjectival participle can be used in the same constructions as other adjectives:

- (12) a. Shinkaafãr baa dàfaffiya ba cèe
 rice.the NEG cooked NEG STAB
 ‘The rice is not cooked’
 b. wani hòotoo sàatacce
 some picturestolen
 ‘a stolen picture’

In (12a), the participle is used as an equational predicate. In (12b) it functions as a (post-nominal) modifier of a noun.

The most important deverbal category that can be derived both from simple and pluractional verbs is the so-called ‘verbal noun’. Verbal nouns are used in imperfective sentences instead of verbs, which cannot follow imperfective TAMs (as discussed in subsection 2.2.2.; but see below). Two types of verbal nouns are distinguished: weak and strong.¹⁶

Strong verbal nouns are either regular – their form can be predicted from the grade of the verb – or irregular. If followed by a direct object, a so-called linker is attached to the verbal noun. The linker has two forms: *-n* for masculine verbal nouns and *-r* for feminine verbal nouns.¹⁷

¹⁶ As a rule, weak verbal nouns are derived from grades 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 and strong verbal nouns from grades 0, 2, and 3.

¹⁷ The genitive linker, or simply linker, is generally translated as ‘of’. It is an element connecting e.g. two NPs in possessive constructions (*màata-r Bellô* ‘Bello’s wife’, lit. wife.of Bello) or an adjective with a following

- ¹⁸ The grave accent mark (‘’) preceding *-waa* means that there is a floating tone associated with the suffix. A floating tone attaches to the immediately preceding syllable. If the tone of the preceding syllable is H, the attachment of the floating L tone produces a fall, as in (14a). If the tone is L, it remains L.

2.2.5.1. Dynamic nouns

Dynamic nouns are nouns referring to actions. They form ‘light verb constructions’ with *yi* ‘do’, a semantically empty verb:

- | | | | |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| (15) | <i>yi aikii</i> | <i>yi màgànáà</i> | <i>yi wàasaa</i> |
| | do work | do talking | do playing |
| | ‘work’ | ‘talk’ | ‘play’ |

In the imperfective TAM, dynamic nouns can also directly follow INFL, just like verbal nouns. However, these cases are usually analyzed as involving a deletion of the verbal noun corresponding to *yi* ‘do’:

- | | | | |
|------|----|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (16) | a. | <i>Baa sàa kuukaa</i> | (< <i>baa sàa yin kuukaa</i>) |
| | | NEG 3PL.IMPF crying | |
| | | ‘They are not crying’ | |
| | b. | <i>Sunàa kàdè-kàdè</i> | (< <i>sunàa yin kàdè-kàdè</i>) |
| | | 3PL.IMPF drumming | |
| | | ‘They are drumming’ | |

Despite the fact that dynamic nouns, when used in imperfective sentences without *yin*, can be almost indistinguishable from verbal nouns, they are essentially just regular nouns and not even necessarily deverbal. This also means that while there are ‘pluractional verbal nouns’ – verbal nouns formed on the basis of pluractional verbs (cf. subsection 2.2.7.) – there are no ‘pluractional dynamic nouns’. Nevertheless, in some cases, the so-called ‘frequentative’ form is available, which can be used with a pluractional-like interpretation. In fact, the reduplicated form in (16b) above is a frequentative. These forms will be discussed in more detail in the following subsection, since they are better discussed in the context of plural formation.

2.2.5.2. Number

From the perspective of the morphology employed, plural formation in Hausa is exceedingly complex. There are about 40 surface plural forms, reducible to roughly 14 major classes. In some cases, a single noun can have several plural forms. In addition (and possibly as a result of this), there is substantial dialectal and idiolectal variation. On the other hand, from the semantic point of view, the nominal number system is relatively simple, with a two-way opposition between singular and plural. The use of a plural form is generally obligatory to express plural meanings, just like in English. However, when modified by numerals and some other expressions of quantity singular forms are sometimes preferred.¹⁹ Below is an example of a noun, its plural form and the forms it can take when modified by a numeral:

¹⁹ The facts are rather complicated here. Speakers differ in how they use plural forms of nouns, not only when modified by numerals and other quantity expressions – some prefer singular, others plural forms – but also in

- (18) a. tàmbàye-tàmbàye (< tàmbayàa ‘to ask’)
 ‘questions/ repeated questioning’
 b. ciiwàce-ciiwàce (< ciiwòò ‘illness’)
 ‘illnesses’
 c. bùushe-bùushe (< buusàa ‘to blow’)
 ‘playing music’
 d. gine-gine (< ginàa ‘to build’)
 ‘buildings’

- (i) a. mākārañtun càn gùdaa biyu (sg. mākārañtaa)
schools.the there unit two
'those two schools'
- b. kwalabañ măn-jaa gùdaa shidà (pl. kwalāabee)
bottle.of palm.oil unit six
'six bottles of palm-oil'

²⁰ Newman (2000) mentions that these forms are sometimes called ‘pseudoplurals of diversity’. According to my own data (cf. also Al-Hassan 1998:180) these are indeed not just regular plurals but rather express meanings like ‘different kinds of’. Some nouns can actually form both a regular plural form with a simple plural meaning and a ‘frequentative’, or ‘pseudoplural’ form that differs slightly from the regular plural. For example, *mafārkiī* ‘dream’ can have a regular plural *mafārkoókii* ‘dreams’ and also a pseudoplural form *māfārke-māfārke*, which, at least according to some speakers, means ‘all kinds of dreams’, with a rather negative connotation (i.e. bad dreams), and not simply ‘dreams’.

- e. shùuke-shùuke (< shuukàa ‘plant’)
 ‘plant/crops’

Despite the fact that in some cases the frequentative seems to be the only plural form a noun can get, it is not a regular plural. As can be seen from (18), most frequentatives are derived from verbs. Even if there is no corresponding verb, the frequentative is often derived from an underlying verbal form, that is, from a form containing a verbalizing suffix *-ta* (/t/ palatalizes to /c/ before the /-e/ suffix; cf. (18b)). Nevertheless, sometimes these forms are derived directly from nouns (*irii* ‘kind’ > *ire-ire*).

As already mentioned above, frequentatives can refer either to objects or events, and in some cases to both. For example, *shùuke-shùuke* in (18e) can refer both to plants/crops (objects) and to a “repeated occurrence of an event or activity” (Jaggar 2001:86), in this case many events of planting something.²¹

- (19) Manòomii yanàa shùuke-shùuke
 farmer 3SG.M.IMPF plant. FREQ
 ‘The farmer is planting (various crops)’

Jaggar explicitly mentions that as such these forms can be considered nominal equivalents of pluractional verbs, which denote a plurality of action.²²

2.2.5.3. Determiners and modifiers

Hausa makes use of various determiners or determiner-like elements.²³ A noun in its bare form can receive both a definite and indefinite interpretation (20a). Nevertheless, Hausa can also make use of a ‘definite determiner’ (20b) and a ‘specific indefinite determiner’ (20c):

- (20) a. yaaròo
 ‘a/ the boy’

²¹ Notice that the frequentative can directly follow the imperfective INFL morpheme, just like other dynamic nouns – cf. examples (16) above.

²² Notice the expression ‘various’ in the translation of (19), which suggests diversification/ high individuation. A similar effect can also be found in the following example from Jaggar (2001:87; forms that I gloss IMP, used in impersonal constructions, are labeled ‘4th person’ in Newman 2000 and Jaggar 2001; *ta* is a particle used to express repetition):

- (i) Anàa ta sòoke-sòoke-n gwamnati
 IMP.IMPF TA [criticism(s).FREQ]-of government
 ‘They (different factions) are criticizing the government’

Here the idea of different factions can only come from the use of the repetitive-frequentative form. It seems that, just like pluractional verbs, frequentatives refer to multiple events that are somehow differentiated from each other. In the case of (i), the events are differentiated by having different agents.

²³ Cf. Zimmermann (2008).

- b. yaaròn
‘the boy’
- c. wani yaaròo
‘a certain/ some boy’

The so-called ‘definite determiner’ is probably better referred to as ‘previous reference marker’. It is generally translated as *the*, which is just the closest equivalent, however. According to Newman (2000:143), “the exact meaning and uses of the [definite article] are not entirely clear”. Note also that the meaning of this element is probably changing as its use seems to be more common nowadays than before, perhaps under the influence of English. The form of the definite determiner is -*n* for masculine and plural and -*ĩ* for feminine nouns.²⁴ *Wani* m., *wata* f., *wa(dan)su* pl. ‘some’ are even more clearly not indefinite articles, which can be seen also from the fact that they can stand on their own (Newman 2000 calls them ‘specific indefinite demonstratives’):

- (21) Wata taa iyàa
 someone.F 3SG.F.PF be.able
 ‘Someone is able’

Apart from the determiners discussed above, Hausa has a distributive universal quantifier (22a) and a non-distributive universal quantifier, comparable to *all* in English (22b):

- (22) a. koowàné yaaròo
 ‘every boy’
 b. duk yàraa/ duk yârân yàraa dukà/ yârân dukà
 ‘all boys/ all the boys’ ‘all boys/ all the boys’

Koowàné m. ‘every’ in (22a) combines with a singular noun, just like its English counterpart.²⁵ *Duk(à)* ‘all’ combines with plural nouns and can both precede and follow the noun it modifies. In the post-head position, the form *dukà* is generally required. In addition, *duk* also has an adverbial use, as in (23):

- (23) Duk naa gàji
 all 1SG.PF be.tired
 ‘I’m tired out completely’

²⁴ Recall that the grave accent represents a floating (low) tone, that is, a tone that attaches to the syllable the determiner merges with.

²⁵ The distributive universal quantifier, apart from having a masculine and feminine singular form (*koowàné* m./ *koowàcè* f.), has also a plural form: *koowàdànnè* pl.. According to Zimmermann (2008), the universal quantifier in the plural form appears to quantify over groups of entities:

- (i) Koowàdànnè mutàanee dà dabboobii sun mutù
 every.PL people with animals 3PL.PF die
 ‘All people and all animals have died’

Finally, nouns can be modified by numerals (24a) and other expressions of quantity (24b):

- (24) a. yaaròò/ yâraa biyu
boy/ boys two
‘two boys’
b. yaaròò/ yâraa dà yawàa
boy/ boys with many
‘many boys’

Other types of modifiers are less important with respect to the topic of this thesis and will not be discussed here.

2.2.6. Reduplication

Before moving on to pluractionals in the next subsection, this subsection gives an overview of different uses of reduplicative morphology in Hausa. Reduplicative morphology is employed very frequently in Hausa. Apart from the formation of pluractional verbs, reduplication can also be found with nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and numerals, with various semantic effects.

Newman (2000) distinguishes between active and frozen reduplication. Active reduplication is a “synchronically recognizable derivational or inflectional process”, which is more or less productive. The term ‘frozen (vestigial) reduplication’, by contrast, refers to forms that are phonologically reduplicated but which from a synchronic point of view are essentially unanalyzable. I will focus on cases of active reduplication, but note that lexicalized reduplicated cases are numerous. They can be found with nouns (*kankanaa* ‘water melon’), adjectives (*tsòoloolòò* ‘tall and skinny’) and verbs (*sansànaa* ‘smell’) alike.

In the case of nouns, reduplication plays a role in forming plurals. In many of the types of plural formation, the plural affix contains a copy of a consonant of the base, usually the final one:

- | | | | | | |
|------|----|--------|---|-----------|----------------------|
| (25) | a. | waakàa | > | waakookii | -oCi) ^H |
| | | ‘song’ | | ‘songs’ | |
| | b. | zoobèe | > | zôbbaa | -CCa) ^{HLH} |
| | | ‘ring’ | | ‘rings’ | |

The examples in (25) are cases of copying a single consonant. There are cases of full reduplication as well. In particular, certain loan words form their plurals that way:

- | | | | | |
|------|----------|---|---------------|--------------------|
| (26) | fīṛjii | > | fīṛjii-fīṛjii | FULL REDUPLICATION |
| | ‘fridge’ | | ‘fridges’ | |

Apart from these, there are also the above-mentioned ‘frequentative’ forms (cf. (18) above):

- (27) *tàfiyàa* > *tàfiye- tàfiye* -e)^{LH} x 2
 ‘journey’ ‘journeys, travels’

All in all, reduplication in its pure form (i.e. apart from suffixes containing a copied consonant) is not typical for plural formation in the nominal domain. On the other hand, full reduplication of nouns is commonly used to express other meanings, namely, distribution:

- (28) a. *oofis-oofis*
 ‘office by office’
 b. *lookàcii-lookàcii*
 ‘from time to time’

Similarly, full reduplication of numerals leads to a distributive meaning as well:

- (29) *Naa baa sù naiřàa biyu biyu* (or: *bibbiyu*)
 1SG.PF give them naira two two
 ‘I gave them two naira each’

Turning to reduplication in adjectives, there are several cases to be considered. First, just like nouns, adjectives form plural forms. This is because adjectives agree in number (and gender) with the noun they modify. Adjectives make use of essentially the same plural formation types as nouns of the same shape. This means that plural forms of adjectives also include copies of the base consonants, as can be seen in the example below:²⁶

- (30) *farii m.* > *faràaree pl.* cf. *wurii* > *wuràaree* -aCe)^{LH}
 ‘white’ ‘white’ ‘place’ ‘places’

Similarly to some of the plural formations, the formation of participial adjectives also makes use of affixes containing copied consonants:

- (31) *řubùutaa* > *řubùutaccee m.* -aCCe)^{LHH}
 ‘write’ *řubùutacciyaa f.*
 řubùutàttuu pl.
 ‘written’
 e.g. *kaatii řubùutaccee dà ruwan ziinaarèe*
 card written with water.of gold
 ‘a card written in gold’

²⁶ Non-derived adjectives form a very small class in Hausa. To express adjectival notions, other constructions are often used. The so-called *mài/ maràs* (‘having/ lacking’) constructions with abstract nouns are particularly common. Cf. *riijiyaa mài zurfii* ‘a deep well’, lit. well having depth, *yàraa maràsaa hankàlii* ‘senseless children’, lit. children lacking sense.

Apart from these cases, where copied elements are part of affixes that have grammatical functions, there are also cases where the lexical meaning is modified. In particular, there is a class of adjectives derived from nouns, generally referring to qualities, which have an intensified meaning:²⁷

- (32) *karfii* > *kàkkarfaa m/f.*, *karfàafaa pl.*
 ‘strength’ ‘very strong’

Another class of reduplicated adjectives consists of denominal adjectives whose meaning can be paraphrased as ‘N-like’:²⁸

- (33) *gàarii* > *gàari-gàari*
 ‘flour’ ‘powdery’

The type of cases illustrated in (33) is similar to the one in (34) below where full reduplication of an adjective results in the meaning that can be paraphrased as ‘A-ish’:

- (34) *doogoo m.* > *doogo-doogo m.*
 dooguwa f. *dooguwa-dooguwa f.*
 doogwàayee pl. *doogwàaye-doogwàaye pl.*
 ‘tall’ ‘tallish’

Adjectives that can undergo this type of reduplication typically refer to colors or physical attributes.

There are also adjectives involving reduplication that usually do not have non-reduplicated counterparts. These are e.g. diminutive (35a), augmentative (35b) or ‘negative-defective’ (expressive) (35c) adjectives:²⁹

- (35) a. *miitsiitsii m.*, *miitsiitsiyaa f.*, *mitsii-mitsii pl.* DIM
 ‘miniscule’
 b. *ribdeedëe m.*, *ribdeediyaa f.*, *ribdâa-ribdâa pl.* AUGM
 ‘huge’
 c. *dòosoosòo m.*, *dòosoosùwaa f.*, *dòosòosai pl.* NEG
 ‘ugly, grubby’

²⁷ The intensification effect is not present for all speakers, however. Cf. Jaggar (2001:141).

²⁸ These derived adjectives do not have inflected feminine and plural forms but otherwise they are generally used like other reduplicated adjectives. Interestingly, however, according to Newman (2000:27), some speakers treat these forms as essentially nominal, which can be seen from the fact that they use the *màì* construction if these forms are to modify a noun (see footnote 26).

²⁹ Note also that there is an interesting class of words called ‘ideophones’. These are phonaesthetic words that are “descriptive of sound, colour, smell, manner, appearance, state, action or intensity... [that is, they are words that are] vivid vocal images or representations of visual, auditory and other sensory or mental experiences” (Cole 1955:370, as quoted by Newman 2000:242). Not all ideophones involve reduplication. However, many do.

Despite the fact that they lack corresponding simple forms (and as such do not represent ‘active’ reduplication), these forms are worth mentioning here because they carry meanings typical for reduplication. These cases form clearly recognizable classes with regular semantics, and as such they differ from cases that are just lexicalized.

Adverbs can reduplicate as well, resulting in an intensified meaning:

- (36) can > can-can
 ‘over there’ ‘way far away’

Interestingly, in the case of denominal adverbs, the same full reduplication leads to detensification:

- (37) baaya > baaya-baaya
 ‘behind’ ‘slightly behind’

Finally, I would like to mention a case of partial reduplication of verbs that does not give rise to pluractional meanings (pluractionals will be discussed in the next subsection). These cases involve verbs that Newman (2000) calls ‘sensory quality verbs’, related to adjectives and nouns of the type mentioned above in (32):

- (38) zaafàfaa cf. zàzzaafaa *m./f.*, zaafàfaa *pl.*; zaafii
 ‘heat up’ ‘very hot’ ‘heat’

Note that the list of reduplicated forms I have given above is not exhaustive. However, the main types have been presented.

2.2.7. Pluractional formation

The pluractional formation is a very productive derivational process, applying to verbs of all grades (Newman 2000).³⁰ In spite of that, pluractional forms are not used frequently and they are generally rather marked. The usage and meaning of pluractional forms will be discussed in detail in the rest of the chapter, starting in the next section. The present subsection, the last subsection of this general introduction to Hausa, focuses on the formal side of the pluractional formation.

Pluractional verbs in Hausa are derived from the corresponding non-pluractional verbs by partial reduplication. In fact, there are two ways of forming pluractional verbs but only one of them is truly productive: the prefixal reduplication, which itself comes in

³⁰ A very small number of speakers seem to exhibit some restrictions with respect to what grades pluractional verbs can be derived from. These restrictions do not seem to be morphological in nature, however. Rather, they appear to be semantico-pragmatic: it seems that the semantics of certain secondary grades is not compatible with the pluractional semantics for these speakers. I will not discuss these data because most speakers do derive pluractionals from all grades without problems. But cf. section 3.7.5. for a similar phenomenon: restrictions some speakers seem to have with respect to compatibility of pluractionals with certain TAMs.

two variants. The first variant is C_1VG - (C_1 – first consonant of the stem, V – vowel, G – geminate):

- (39) a. bugàa > bubbùgaa
 ‘beat’
 b. kiraa > kikkiraa
 ‘call’
 c. jèefaa > jàjjeefāa
 ‘throw’
 d. mutù > mummutù
 ‘die’
 e. tàmbayàa > tàttàmbayàa
 ‘ask’
 f. bi > bibbi
 ‘follow’

If the reduplicated vowel is underlyingly long, it undergoes shortening and adjustment rules that affect closed syllables ((39c); ee > a).

The other variant of the prefixal reduplication is C_1VC_2 -. It can be employed if the second consonant of the stem is a sonorant or any coronal:³¹

- (40) a. kiraa > kirkiraa
 ‘call’
 b. mutù > muṛmutù
 ‘die’
 c. tàmbayàa > tàntàmbayàa
 ‘ask’

Reduplicated C_2 nasals assimilate to the position of the following consonant (cf. (40c)), coronal obstruents undergo rhotacism and appear as rolled /ṛ/ (cf. (40b)). All verbs that form pluractionals by C_1VC_2 - reduplication also allow the C_1VG - formation, but not vice versa. Pluractional formation does not affect tone per se. Reduplication operates on the segmental level and tone is assigned to the resulting form based on the grade and syllabic shape.

In addition to the prefixal formation, there is an archaic formation, which makes use of infixing a reduplicative -CVC- in the penultimate position:

³¹ “Historically, the C_1VG - prefix undoubtedly derived from C_1VC_2 - plus complete assimilation. Synchronically, however, the C_1VG - variant has full and direct morphological status, i.e., one does not replicate the historical development and utilize an assimilation rule.” (Newman 2000:425)

- (41) a. tafāsaa > tafařfāsaa
 ‘boil’
 b. rikitaa > rikiřkitaa
 ‘confuse’

What is copied in this formation is the second syllable plus the initial consonant of the third syllable. This formation is restricted to specific lexical items and these verbs usually allow the first formation as well.³² The two formations are usually equivalent in meaning, except for a few cases where one of the forms has a lexicalized meaning (presumably the archaic form; e.g. *hàifaa* ‘give birth’ > (a) *hàhhaifaa* ‘give birth many times or to many children’, (b) *hàyyafaa* ‘engender, proliferate’). In this thesis, I do not differentiate between the two forms as the meaning, if regular, appears to be the same in both cases. The vast majority of pluractionals that appear in my data are of the productive type, however.

Apart from active pluractionals, there are also cases of lexicalized, or so called ‘frozen pluractionals’. Frozen pluractionals lack non-reduplicated counterparts and often the pluractional semantics is not obvious anymore:

- (42) a. famfāree
 ‘fall out (tooth)’
 b. lāllaasāa
 ‘soothe, coax’

Sometimes pluractionals are derived from forms that are already pluractional. This is only possible if the first formation is the infixal reduplication:

- (43) giřdāa > giřriřdāa > gigiřriřdāa
 ‘uproot’

According to Newman, these ‘hyperpluractionals’ are semantically strengthened but he does not specify in what sense.

One fact to be stressed is that there are not only pluractional verbs but also pluractional verbal nouns, statives and adjectival past participles. More precisely, these are verbal nouns, statives and adjectival past participles derived from pluractional verbs, rather than pluractional forms formed on the basis of these categories:

³² Newman suggests that these two formations used to be one in fact. The original formation was antepenultimate reduplication, which in the case of disyllabic verbs led to the same results as prefixal reduplication; e.g., *gāsāa* ‘roast’ > *gař-gāsāa*. In these cases, the antepenultimate formation can easily be reinterpreted as prefixal.

(44) *pluractional verbal nouns*

- a. 6u66bulloo > 6u66bullôwaa
 ‘appear’ ‘appearing’
 N.B. in numbers or all over the place

pluractional statives

- b. zazzàunaa > zàzzàune
 ‘sit down’ ‘seated’
 N.B. many people

*pluractional adjectival past participles*³³

- c. yagalgàlaa > yàgàlgàlallee
 ‘tear to pieces’ ‘torn into pieces’

As far as pluractional verbal nouns are concerned, it is important to say that not all pluractional verbs have corresponding verbal nouns. It seems to be much easier to derive a verbal noun from a pluractional verb if the verbal noun corresponding to the verb in question is weak, that is, formed in a regular and transparent way. Strong verbal nouns, on the other hand, often do not have pluractional counterparts, presumably because the formation is less transparent and often irregular.³⁴ Recall also that sometimes there is an alternative way to express the intended meaning, namely by means of using a ‘frequentative’ form as in (19). Nevertheless, the frequent lack of pluractional verbal nouns is responsible for the fact that pluractional forms are more often found in perfective sentences than imperfective ones (recall that imperfective TAM generally requires the use of verbal nouns, rather than verbs). In this thesis, pluractional verbal nouns and statives will not be treated separately. The analysis of pluractional verbs is assumed to extend to these categories as well, since the semantic contribution of the pluractional marker is preserved in the derivations.³⁵

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to a detailed discussion of the meaning of Hausa pluractionals.

³³ I have no pluractional adjectival past participles in my own data (the example given above is from Newman 2000). Perhaps incidentally, the examples given in Newman (2000) are derived from frozen pluractionals. The participle *yàgàlgàlallee* ‘torn into pieces’ is derived from *yagalgàlaa* ‘tear to pieces’, which does not seem to have a simple counterpart. The other example, *ninnìnkakkee* ‘multiplied’, is derived from *ninnìnkàa* ‘multiply’, whose simple counterpart has a different meaning: *ninkàa* ‘fold’. As can be seen from these two examples, however, the participle formation preserves the meaning of the pluractional.

³⁴ This seems to be related to the distinction Newman (2000) makes between stem-derived verbal nouns (SDVNs) and base-derived verbal nouns (BDVNs). SDVNs are derived from full verb stems (i.e. including the final vowel and tone). BDVNs are derived from verbal bases (i.e. without the final vowel and tone). As a consequence, the formation of SDVNs is rather straightforward and transparent, whereas the form of BDVNs is less predictable. All weak nouns are stem-derived but strong verbal nouns are of both types. This is in accordance with the generalization that in contrast to strong verbal nouns, weak verbal nouns can be derived from pluractionals rather easily.

³⁵ Cf. section 2.8.3. for more discussion, however.

2.3. Plurality and individuation

The basic generalization about pluractionals in Hausa, as well as in other languages, is that they refer to plural events. In what follows I will elaborate on this simple statement by going through the facts step by step. I will start by showing that pluractionals cannot be used to talk about singular or collective events (subsections 2.3.1. and 2.3.2.). In subsection 2.3.3., it will be demonstrated that Hausa pluractionals do not force a distributive interpretation in the sense of distribution to atoms. Next, I discuss cases where more than one argument of a pluractional is plural (subsection 2.3.4.) and I will show that even sentences with singular arguments can receive plural interpretations (subsection 2.3.5.). Subsection 2.3.6. presents some data showing that the individual subevents of a plural event should be separate from each other and possibly diverse. Finally, I present some potential counterexamples to the plurality and separateness requirement (subsection 2.3.7.).

Since there is a lot of variation, the data presented in this thesis are clearly always representative of a subset of speakers only. Where possible, I chose examples that most speakers would agree on or that illustrate properties of pluractionals that do not vary so much with speakers. Wherever I discuss examples that are less generally accepted or have less common interpretations this will be indicated. Example sentences that a majority of speakers agreed on will be presented as grammatical. Those accepted by only a minority of speakers are marked by a % sign. If an example was accepted by just one speaker it will be mentioned explicitly in the text. Note also that the translations assigned to the example sentences are usually simplified and do not capture the meanings of the Hausa sentences fully. With every particular example, just one specific aspect of the pluractional semantics is the focus of the discussion and other aspects might be ignored.

2.3.1. Pluractional vs. single action readings

Pluractional verbs in Hausa cannot be used to refer to singular events. This is illustrated in (45) where the pluractional form *fĩřfĩtoo* (or its variant *fiffĩtoo*), derived from *fĩtoo* ‘come out’, is compatible with a plural subject like *mutàanên* ‘the people’ (45b) but not with a singular subject like *mùtùmin* ‘the man/person’ (45a).³⁶

- (45) a. *Mùtùmin yaa fĩř-fĩtoo
 man.the 3SG.M.PF RED-come.out
 b. Mutàanên sun fĩř-fĩtoo
 people.the 3PL.PF RED-come.out
 ‘The people have come out’

³⁶ As mentioned in section 2.2.5.1., in some cases singular count nouns can have plural reference. However, unless indicated otherwise, singular count nouns used in example sentences are real singulars.

When the verb occurs in its non-pluractional form, the subject can be both singular (46a) and plural (46b):

- (46) a. Mùtumìn yaa fitoo
man.the 3SG.M.PF come.out
'The person has come out'
- b. Mutàanên sun fitoo
people.the 3PL.PF come.out
'The people have come out'

In the case of (45a), one could in principle expect the possibility of an iterative interpretation. However, such an interpretation is not possible. The sentence cannot be used to refer to a situation in which the same person came out repeatedly. I will come back to the lack of iterative interpretations for cases such as (45a) in section 2.4.

Turning to transitive cases now, we can see in (47b) that the plurality requirement can be satisfied by the plurality in the object argument as well:

- (47) a. *Yuusùf yaa sàs-sàyi littaaḥii
Yusuf 3SG.M.PF RED-buy book
- b. Yuusùf yaa sàs-sàyi littàttàḥai
Yusuf 3SG.M.PF RED-buy books
'Yusuf bought many (different) books'

(47a) is not well-formed because both the subject and object are singular.³⁷ If the object is plural, as in (47b), however, the use of the pluractional is felicitous. Again, the non-pluractional form of the verb allows for both singular and plural arguments (48a-b):

- (48) a. Yuusùf yaa sàyi littaaḥii
Yusuf 3SG.M.PF buy book
'Yusuf bought a book'
- b. Yuusùf yaa sàyi littàttàḥai
Yusuf 3SG.M.PF buy books
'Yusuf bought some books'

Importantly, the plurality requirement does not have to be satisfied by a particular syntactic constituent. For many languages, it is reported that the pluractional requires the subject to be plural in the case of intransitive verbs, and the object in the case of transitive verbs. This means that these languages follow the ergative pattern (cf. Corbett

³⁷ Again, structures like these are not felicitous, even when the verb refers to an action that can be easily repeated, as in (49a). Iterative readings will be ignored until section 2.4., which is devoted to describing under what conditions repetition is a possible interpretation of Hausa pluractionals.

2000).³⁸ However, this is not true for Hausa, where both the subject and the object of transitive clauses may license the use of the pluractional:

- (49) a. *Màifō taa dāf-dāgà kujèerâf
 Mairo 3SG.F.PF RED-lift chair.the
 b. ‘Yammaatân sun dāf-dāgà kujèerâf
 girls.the 3PL.PF RED-lift chair.the
 ‘The girls lifted the chair’
 N.B. the most natural interpretation: the girls lift the chair one by one
 c. Màifō taa dāf-dāgà kujèerûn
 Mairo 3SG.F.PF RED-lift chairs.the
 ‘Mairo lifted the chairs’
 N.B. the most natural interpretation: the chairs are lifted one by one

Sentence (49a) is ungrammatical because both the subject and the object are singular. Sentences (49b) and (49c) are both well-formed, however. The object can be singular if the subject is plural and vice versa. In other words, the pluractional can be used both in a situation in which the same chair is lifted consecutively by different girls and in a situation in which one girl lifts several chairs, one by one. In either case, the event is a plural one.

Moreover, not only do Hausa pluractionals not follow the ergative pattern, it does not seem to matter at all what element in the sentence licenses the pluractional.³⁹ This can be illustrated by the following examples:

(50) *indirect object*

- a. Yaa zuz-zùbaa musù shaayi
 3SG.M.PF RED-pour to.them tea
 ‘He poured tea for them’

goal

- b. Yaa zuz-zùbà shaayi cikin koofunàa
 3SG.M.PF RED-pour tea in cups
 ‘He poured tea into (different) cups’

location

- c. Suunansà yaa fĩf-fĩtoo à wuràaree dàban-dàban
 name.his 3SG.M.PF RED-come.out at places different-different
 ‘His name came up in different places’

³⁸ It is possible that this pattern is typical for what I called, following Wood (2007), plural-participant verbs, rather than for real pluractionals. Nevertheless, there are clear cases of languages with restrictions as to what syntactic argument reflects the plurality of the verb (e.g. the internal argument in Kaqchikel; cf. Henderson 2010).

³⁹ Often, the ‘licensor’ does not even have to be overt; cf. section 2.8.2.

To summarize, in this subsection I demonstrated that the event described by a pluractional verb cannot be singular. Moreover, I showed that different elements in the sentence can be ‘responsible’ for the plurality of the event. In the next subsection I will show that collective readings, which are also singular in nature, are excluded with pluractionals as well.

2.3.2. Pluractional vs. true collective readings

Consider again sentence (49b), repeated in (51):

- (51) ‘Yammaatân sun dâc-dâgâ kujèerâñ
 girls.the 3PL.PF RED-lift chair.the
 ‘The girls lifted the chair’

N.B. the most natural interpretation: the girls lift the chair one by one

Speakers typically translate sentences like (51) using expressions like ‘one by one’, which indicates that the sentence cannot be used to describe a situation in which a group of girls lift a chair together, that is, collectively. Similarly, if a plural object is involved in an event in a collective fashion, the pluractional cannot be used either. Thus, the sentence in (52a) can only be uttered in a situation in which the lights have been switched off one by one. It is not possible to use the pluractional if all the lights were switched off by using a single switch, i.e. in a single event.⁴⁰ In (52b) the pluractional of *baa* ‘give’ can only be used if there were several separate events of book-giving and not if a group of people received a collective gift of a pile of books.

- (52) a. Yaa kañ-kàshè fitilûn
 3SG.M.PF RED-kill lights.the
 ‘He switched off the lights’
 N.B. #with one switch/ OK: several switches, one by one
- b. Naa bab-baa sù littàttâfai
 1SG.PF RED-give them books
 ‘I gave them some books’
 N.B. #if it is a collective gift/ OK: several separate events of giving

Thus, pluractional verbs cannot be used to refer to true collective action, which supports theories that treat collective events as singular in nature (to be discussed properly in section 3.5. of Chapter 3).

As already pointed out in section 1.5.2. of Chapter 1, the use of the term ‘collective’ requires some caution. Cooccurrence with adverbs like *together* is often taken as a signal that a collective interpretation is involved. However, *together* and its counterparts in other languages do not necessarily imply joint action in the sense that the action is

⁴⁰ The next subsection presents a correction to the claim that the entities referred to by the verb’s arguments have to be affected strictly one by one.

performed by a group as a whole and not individually by each member of the group. *Together* can also be used just to indicate accompaniment, spatio-temporal overlap and other related notions (cf. (56) in Chapter 1). Thus, for example, if several people sit down or stand up together, each of them still has to sit down or stand up by themselves – they only do it simultaneously or at the same place. This means that plural action and adverbials comparable to *together* are in principle compatible, at least if the predicate is inherently distributive as in (53a), which can be contrasted with (53b):

- (53) a. [?]Sun zaz-zàunaa tàare
 3PL.PF RED-sit.down together
 ‘They sat down together’
 b. *Sun dāɗ-dāgà teebùr̀ tàare
 3PL.PF RED-lift table together
 ‘They lifted the table together’

In section 3.5.3. of Chapter 3, it will be shown that the facts regarding collective interpretations are still a bit more complicated. However, at this point, the following generalizations are sufficient: (a) pluractional verbs cannot be used to refer to truly collective events, and (b) the presence of a collectivizing adverb by itself does not imply that the sentence is to be interpreted as involving a truly collective action.

2.3.3. Pluractionality vs. distribution to atoms

Considering the fact that speakers tend to translate sentences like (51) above using expressions like *one by one*, one might conclude that pluractionals in Hausa are distributive in the sense of distribution to atomic individuals. However, sentence (51), repeated below as (54), can also be used in a scenario where not all the girls lift the chair by themselves, as long as there are multiple liftings. In other words, in a context where there are six girls, *a, b, c, d, e* and *f*, and the table is lifted by *a, b, c, d, c+e* and *e+f*, the sentence is still felicitous:^{41,42}

⁴¹ A parallel interpretation is also available for examples like (45b), repeated below in (i). Similarly to (54), for the sentence in (i) to be true, the people do not have to come out necessarily one by one. The sentence is felicitous also in a situation in which the people come out in smaller groups:

- (i) Mutàanèn sun fiɓ̣-fɓ̣oo
 people.the 3PL.PF RED-come.out
 ‘The people have come out (one by one or in smaller groups)’

Notice, however, that *fiɓ̣oo* ‘come out’ is an inherently distributive predicate, which makes this case rather different from the one in (54): the predicate *fiɓ̣oo* holds of every atomic individual in any case. This type of case will be discussed in section 3.5.3. of Chapter 3.

⁴² Note that this is not a necessary property of pluractional markers in general. An example of a language where the pluractional marker does give rise to a distributive interpretation in the sense of distribution to atoms is Kaqchikel. If the following sentence is used, with the pluractional marker on the verb, it can only mean that every individual child was hugged. It cannot be used if any subset of the children got a collective hug (Henderson 2010):

- (54) ‘Yammaatân sun đad-đàgà kujèerâĩ
 girls.the 3PL.PF RED-lift chair.the
 ‘The girls lifted the chair’
 N.B. the most natural interpretation: the girls lift the chair one by one

The same is true for the internal argument: it is not necessary that each atom in the plurality denoted by the plural object argument be affected individually. Sentence (55a) can also be used in a situation in which the things are not bought literally one by one but perhaps a few at a time. Sentence (55b) can describe a situation in which the books are put on the table in little piles.

- (55) a. Yaa sàs-sàyi abubuwaà
 3SG.M.PF RED-buy things
 ‘He bought a lot of different things’
 b. Taa sas-sàkà littàttàfai à kân teebũĩ
 3SG.F.PF RED-put books at top.of table
 ‘She put some books on the table, in various places/piles’

To conclude, what matters for the use of the pluractional form is whether there are multiple events that can be described by the basic verb. It does not seem to matter whether the individual subevents have atomic or collective participants.

2.3.4. Plural arguments

So far, only cases where one of the participants is plural have been discussed. Naturally, pluractional verbs allow more than one participant to be plural. Two examples are given below:

- (56) a. Sun bub-bùudè taagoogii⁴³
 3PL.PF RED-open windows
 ‘They opened the windows’
 b. Yârân sun đad-đàgà teebũooĩĩ
 children.the 3PL.PF RED-lift tables
 ‘The children lifted some/ the tables’

When more than one participant is plural (e.g. both the subject and object), the number of possible scenarios increases. For example, sentence (56b) can be used in situations in

(i) X-e’-in-q’ete-la ri ak’wal-a’
 CP-A3p-E1s-hug-PDIST the child-PL
 ‘I hugged the children individually’

⁴³ In this particular example, one speaker preferred the use of the singular form *taagàa* ‘window’ as it is clear that the windows are plural from the form of the verb already. Cf. the discussion in section 2.2.5.2., esp. footnote 19.

which each of the children lifted one table, where each of the children lifted all tables (one by one), where all the children collectively lifted all the tables one by one, or where the children in smaller groups lifted the tables one by one, or a few at a time. The only excluded scenario is the one in which all the children collectively lift all the tables at once, for example, by putting them on top of each other and then lifting them together. In other words, the sentence cannot be used to refer to a single collective action but there are essentially no restrictions on how exactly the lifting is carried out as long as the event is plural.

2.3.5. Singular count and mass arguments

In this subsection I discuss sentences in which the ‘licensing’ participants of pluractional verbs are expressed either by singular count or mass nouns. These cases make it very clear that the phenomenon observed is not number agreement (cf. Durie 1986, Corbett 2000), and also that these verbs are not simply plural-argument verbs (in the sense of Wood 2007).⁴⁴ Examples like the following thus demonstrate that the plurality requirement is not (morpho)syntactic in nature, but rather purely semantic:⁴⁵

- (57) a. Yanàa mìm-miife à kân gadoo
 3SG.M.IMPF RED-stretch.ST at top.of bed
 ‘He is sprawled out all over the bed’
- b. Gidân yaa rur-rùushee
 house.the 3SG.M.PF RED-collapse
 ‘The house is completely demolished’
 N.B. all its parts
- c. %Kankanaa yaa rur-rùùbee⁴⁶
 watermelon 3SG.M.PF RED-rot
 ‘The watermelon is all rotten’
 N.B. all parts of it, it cannot be eaten anymore
- d. Kwalabaa taa faf-fàshee
 bottle 3SG.F.PF RED-break
 ‘The bottle broke’
 N.B. into many pieces, not just two

⁴⁴ Cf. section 1.6.1. of Chapter 1.

⁴⁵ Example (57a) is from Newman (2000:423). Examples like (57b-c) generally receive two types of interpretations, depending on the speaker. At this point I give only one of them. The other interpretation will be introduced in section 2.8.1.

⁴⁶ For speakers who accept cases where it is parts of objects that are affected by the individual subevents, the size of the object seems to play a role. Thus, a speaker might not accept the example with *mangwàrò* ‘mango’ but if *kankanaa* ‘watermelon’ is the subject of the sentence, the acceptability improves substantially. Naturally, nouns referring to objects like houses (57b), which are much bigger and have clear parts, are even better suited for such readings.

In the case of verbs with singular count arguments (like those above), the pluractional form is acceptable if the intended meaning is that the individual subevents of the plural event affect various parts of the object, rather than the object as a whole. For example, sentence (57a) is interpreted as an event in which different body parts stretch in different directions. Similarly, the sentence in (57b) expresses that (all the) different parts of a house are demolished. Sentence (57c) conveys the information that (all the) different parts of a melon are rotten. In (57d), a situation is described in which a single bottle breaks into many pieces. In other words, it refers to a situation involving more than one breaking event.⁴⁷

Similar effects can be found with mass nouns in the position of the verbs' arguments:

- (58) a. Ruwaa yaa bu6-bulloo
 water 3SG.M.PF RED-appear
 'Water appeared'
 N.B. in various places
- b. %Shinkaafaa yaa dàd-dàfu
 rice 3SG.M.PF RED-cook
 'The rice is (all) cooked'
 N.B. the rice is in different pots
- c. %Yaa shas-shànyè madaṛaa
 3SG.M.PF RED-drink.up milk
 'He drank up all the milk'
 N.B. either all the bottles, or all subquantities of milk in a single bottle

In the situation described by sentence (58a), the water is understood to have appeared in different places, which means that separate quantities of water are involved. Similarly for (58b): if the sentence is acceptable at all it usually means that the rice is being cooked in different pots. As for the sentence in (58c), two different scenarios are possible: either the milk was divided into spatially separate quantities (e.g. several bottles; this is the preferred option), or it means that all the subquantities of milk in a single container were consumed (a less natural option).

Note that not all speakers accept sentences like the ones in (57) and (58) equally easily. The availability of this type of interpretation is influenced by various factors. For example, body parts are salient parts of humans and thus verbs referring to events that can involve the individual body parts more or less separately can be pluralized in such contexts quite easily. It seems that it is more difficult to obtain a 'distribution to parts'

⁴⁷ One could think that the pluractional is licensed by an implicit plural argument or adjunct in (57d) (cf. 2.8.2.), e.g. a resultative phrase like 'into many pieces'. However, it would often be hard to determine what the particular argument/adjunct should be. One could imagine that the non-overt expression is something like 'many times' or 'in many places' just as easily as 'into many pieces', since all these could in principle describe the same situation. I will argue in section 3.5.2. of Chapter 3 that cases like these are indeed underspecified with respect to what licenses the plurality.

interpretation with homogeneous (mass) nouns. In such cases, pluractionals are more likely to be used if the (mass) individual can be split into spatially separated quantities. However, as illustrated in (58c), an interpretation in which different parts of a single quantity of stuff are affected, is also available for some speakers.⁴⁸

In this section, it was shown that pluractional verbs can sometimes combine with morphologically singular arguments. In the case of mass nouns, this often means that the event involves spatially separate entities of matter, that is, essentially plural individuals. The other option, and the only one available for singular count nouns, is that the plural subevents are distributed over parts of objects. To conclude, pluractionals can also be used felicitously when their participants are singular if the situations can be conceptualized as involving a plurality of events.

2.3.6. High individuation: separateness and diversity

So far, pluractionals have been described as if they were used to talk about events that are simply plural. This does seem to be the case with a certain type of predicates. In particular, certain inherently distributive predicates seem to have the same meaning in the pluractional and non-pluractional form in cases in which the plurality is already signaled by the plurality of an argument, as in (59):

- (59) a. Sun taashi
 3PL.PF stand.up
 ‘They stood up’
 b. Sun tat-taashi
 3PL.PF RED-stand.up
 ‘They stood up’

In cases like this, the pluractional form does not seem to contribute any additional meaning as compared to the non-pluractional form. According to the first intuition of many speakers, sentences (59a) and (59b) mean exactly the same. Given that the non-pluractional forms of verbs can be used to refer to plural events, the effect of pluralization can become essentially invisible in cases like these. Nevertheless, in many cases, it is clear that the effect of using a pluractional verb is more than just evoking a plural event. Rather, the interpretation is that there is a number of (more or less) clearly individuated events of the same type. In the case of (59b), we can get a glimpse of that if the speaker translates the sentence as ‘they all stood up’, where *all* does not indicate exhaustiveness as much as it puts emphasis on the fact that each person stands up

⁴⁸ In fact, one speaker was able to assign a ‘distribution to parts’ interpretation to the sentence in (58b) as well. The resulting interpretation was an odd one, however, due to a requirement that will be discussed in more detail later. This requirement forces an interpretation according to which the individual subevents are more or less independent of each other. As a result, the use of the pluractional form in sentence (58b) implies for that speaker that the different parts of rice were cooked to various degrees.

individually, i.e. that each person is involved in their own event of standing up. Clearer cases of emphasis on the individuation of the subevents, however, are those where the subevents are visibly separate from each other and/or differentiated from each other along some dimension. Such cases are discussed below.

The requirement that the individual subevents should be separated from each other was already observed in the previous section. Consider the following examples:

- (60) a. Ruwaa yanàa zuz-zubôwaa
 water 3SG.M.IMPF RED-pour.VN
 ‘Water was pouring down’
 N.B. from various places
- b. Naa cic-ci tuwoo
 1SG.PF RED-eat tuwo
 ‘I ate several servings of tuwo’
 N.B. possibly from other people’s plates

Sentence (60a) can be used only in a situation in which the water is coming from several different sources (e.g. dripping/ pouring from various spots on the ceiling). This means that the pluractional cannot be used if the water came down in a single stream from a single spot – only the non-pluractional form is felicitous in such a context. Similarly, sentence (60b) cannot be used if *tuwoo* refers to a single serving but only when several different quantities of *tuwoo* are involved, e.g. portions served to different people on different plates.⁴⁹

The examples given above to illustrate the separateness requirement involve mass arguments. This is because that is where the effect is most clearly visible. Nevertheless, it should be clear that the separateness requirement is present also with count arguments. With count nouns, however, the separateness requirement is usually fulfilled trivially: different people or books, for example, are necessarily separate entities.⁵⁰

The condition that the individual subevents should be separate is often accompanied and strengthened by a requirement that they should be diverse. This diversification is not strictly speaking a requirement, rather just a preference. It can be observed that, often, the most natural translations of sentences with pluractionals contain expressions like *various*, *different kinds of* etc. In many cases, then, it is clear that the pluractional form is not used to refer to simply plural events but rather to ‘multiple and varied’ events. Consider the following examples:

⁴⁹ Staple food made from guinea-corn, rice, or millet flour, which is cooked in boiling water and stirred until thick (Newman 2007).

⁵⁰ The cases where the separateness requirement is not fulfilled trivially with count nouns are cases with collective arguments. In those cases, there has to be something ‘lumping’ the individual members of the collections together and separating them from others, e.g. a common purpose or shared location. More discussion of collective interpretations can be found in section 3.5.3. of Chapter 3.

- (61) a. Yaa sàs-sàyi littàttàfai
 3SG.M.PF RED-buy books
 'He bought a lot of different books'
- b. Yaa dad-dàfà àbinci
 3SG.M.PF RED-cook food
 'He cooked different kinds of food'
- c. %Sun gog-gòodee
 3PL.PF RED-thank
 'They thanked individually'
 N.B. for different things/ reasons

For most speakers, sentence (61a) means that many different (kinds of) books were bought, perhaps also at various places. Sentence (61b) describes an event of cooking different kinds of food. As for sentence (61c), the comment of a speaker with a very strong diversity requirement is that the sentence can be uttered in a situation in which different people, living in different places got different presents and they are all sending their thanks back, from different places and for different reasons.

One more dimension along which the (sub)events of a plural event can be differentiated is illustrated below:

- (62) %Yàransù sun yiy-yi kàmaa dà bàabansù
 children.their 3PL.PF RED-do resemblance with father.their
 'Their children resemble their father to various degrees'

In this example, the subevents are differentiated by the fact that the degree to which the property can be attributed to each of the subjects is different. In other words, there are many subevents, each of them being an event of a child resembling his or her father, and the subevents differ from each other in the degree of resemblance.

It should be kept in mind that, as already mentioned, speakers' intuitions vary quite considerably in how strong this preference is. For some, sentence (61a) can only be used if the agent buys different books in different places but for most speakers, the diversity requirement is less strong and it is satisfied even if the books are bought in a single shop, as long as they are different. All in all, it can be concluded that the subevents of a plural event should be more or less clearly individuated if the pluractional form is used.

2.3.7. Pluractional vs. continuous readings

The main generalization so far is that pluractional verbs in Hausa refer to plural events, whose subevents are more or less clearly individuated. However, it is also occasionally possible to find cases that seemingly contradict this generalization. In particular, these are cases where there are no gaps between the individual subevents, i.e. cases that seem to involve (singular) continuous events. Admittedly, it is very hard to get clear data here.

Moreover, even if true continuous cases can be found, they are extremely rare. The two examples that I give below are the only cases I have encountered that are more or less clearly continuous and, in fact, most speakers do not accept them on the continuous interpretation. Consider first the example in (63):

- (63) Ruwaa yanàa zuz-zubôwaa
 water 3SG.M.IMPF RED-pour.VN
 ‘Water was pouring down’

N.B. most speakers: from different sources; a small number of speakers:
 possibly from one source, continuously

For most speakers, the sentence in (63) means that there was water coming from various places (cf. (60a)) or that that the stream was being interrupted. However, sentence (63) can also be interpreted by some speakers as involving a continuous, uninterrupted, stream of water.⁵¹ Still, it is not completely clear that even for those speakers sentence (63) refers to a truly continuous process. I believe that there is another way to analyze cases like these. This can be better illustrated with the following example, which some speakers also accept on what seems to be a continuous reading:

- (64) Naa tut-tùurà mootàa
 1SG.PF RED-push car
 ‘I pushed the car’

N.B. most speakers: there must be pauses in the pushing; a small number of
 speakers: possibly continuously, without stops

Similarly to (63), for most speakers, this sentence can only be used if there are pauses in the pushing or if there is some other plurality present. Nevertheless, for some speakers it can be used both when the pushing is interrupted and when it is continuous and some speakers report that the sentence expresses that the pushing is continuous and requires a lot of effort.

Despite the fact that some speakers do seem to accept sentence (64) on a continuous reading, closer examination reveals that the interpretation might not be truly continuous. When asked in more detail about the exact conditions under which the sentence can refer to a continuous pushing, some of the speakers respond in a way that suggests that the seemingly continuous action rather involves repeated inputs of energy. A natural situation for the use of the sentence would be, for instance, when the car is very heavy and thus hard to push, as a consequence of which the attempts need to be repeated. This might also explain why the ‘continuous’ reading is possible for some speakers if it requires a lot of effort. As for the continuous reading of sentence (63), it is less clear that this type of explanation can be applied to it. Nevertheless, one could say in this case as well that the water is not flowing strictly continuously. It is possible that the situation is

⁵¹ The same holds for its perfective counterpart. This means that the ‘continuous’ effect is not the result of using the imperfective TAM.

conceptualized as involving repeated gushes of water. The fact that the situation involves a plurality of gushes might be obscured by lack of moments when there is no water coming, which is however plausible if the gushes follow one another in quick succession. That is, the event of water pouring down can be repeated without any (perceptible) gaps between the repetitions. If that is the case, the idea is still defensible that this is a plural event. As such, example (63) would not be a real counterexample to the basic generalization that pluractional verbs can only be used to refer to plural events. However, it would still be a counterexample to the generalization that the individual subevents should be clearly individuated (note that this also applies to the explanation offered for (64)). The second option is that (63) is a genuine continuous case. In that case it would be a real counterexample to the main generalization about pluractionals. I suggest, however, that even then the problem would not be very serious as this would be essentially the only real counterexample I have come across. In Chapter 3, I will argue that the two potential continuous examples given here should be treated as subcases of two slightly different phenomena. The example in (63) might be best analyzed as a subcase of the participant-based type of interpretation, whereas example (64) will be analyzed as a subcase of the repetitive type of pluractionals, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.4. Iteration

In descriptions of pluractional verbs across languages one often encounters the generalization that pluractionals are used to refer to multiple events distributed over different participants, locations or times (cf. Lasnik 1995). So far, examples of the first case (most of the examples given so far) and some potential examples of the second case (e.g. (50c)) have been presented. However, no well-formed examples of the third case have been presented yet. In this section, I will argue that even though simple iteration of an event is in most cases not a possible interpretation of Hausa pluractionals, a distinction has to be made between two types of cases. I will call the first type ‘repetitive events’ and the second type ‘repeated events’. It is perfectly acceptable to refer to repetitive events by pluractional verbs, while repeated events have to be described using other constructions. I will discuss these two types separately, in subsections 2.4.1. and 2.4.2., respectively. In subsection 2.4.3., I will discuss a related issue of tentative and conative readings.

2.4.1. Repetitive events

I use the term ‘repetitive events’ to refer to cases that involve typically quick repetition of short events. Such series of short events can be described by using a pluractional in Hausa. Below are some examples:

- (65) a. Taa tat-tàbà hancìntà
 3SG.F.PF RED-touch nose.her
 ‘She tapped her nose/ touched her nose repeatedly’
- b. Yaa shùs-shùuri teebùr̃
 3SG.M.PF RED-kick table
 ‘He kicked the table repeatedly’
- c. Tanàa ta nun-nùunà hannuntà dòomin sù gantà?⁵²
 3SG.F.IMPF TA RED-show hand.her so.that 3PL.SUBJ see.her
 ‘She was waving her hand so that they saw her’
- d. Taa sos-sòosà gaashintà
 3SG.F.PF RED-scratch hair.her
 ‘She scratched her head repeatedly’

These pluractional verbs are derived from verbs that refer to short events like hitting, scratching, kicking or slapping etc. In English, verbs like *jump* or *kick* can be used to refer to either a single jump or kick (the semelfactive use) or to a series of jumps or kicks (the repeated action/ activity use). This is illustrated in (66):

- (66) a. He jumped onto the chair (one jump)
 b. He jumped on the spot for several minutes (repeated jumps)
 c. She kicked him hard to make him shut up (one kick)
 d. She kicked the leg of the table nervously (repeated kicks)

In Hausa, non-pluractional verbs of this type can also refer both to single and repeated events, even though it seems that the pluractional form is strongly preferred if the intended meaning is repetition:⁵³

- (67) Yaa taafāa
 3SG.M.PF clap
 ‘He clapped’
 N.B. once or more times

Rothstein (2008) assumes that English verbs like *kick* and *jump* refer to ‘single occurrence’ events and are homonymous with activity predicates denoting events which involve iterations of the single event. I assume that Hausa verbs like *shùuraa* ‘kick’ or

⁵² The sentence contains the particle *ta*, which by itself signals repetition.

⁵³ Some of the frozen pluractionals of the language have a repetitive meaning as well:

- (i) a. Naa kwankwàsà teebùr̃
 1SG.PF knock table
 ‘I knocked on the table (repeatedly)’
- b. Taa mulmùlà alkamāa, zaa tà yi wàinaa
 3SG.F.PF knead wheat FUT 3SG.F do pancakes
 ‘She’s kneaded the dough, she is going to make pancakes’

taafàa ‘clap’ are number-neutral, just like all other non-pluractional verbs. For lack of a better term, I will call this class of verbs ‘semelfactive verbs’, despite the fact that the semelfactive interpretation is not their only interpretation.

In relation to the previous subsection, it is important to point out that cases with the repetitive interpretation might resemble the potential continuous cases. The reason is that there are often no perceptible gaps between the individual repetitions. For instance, the most natural scenario associated with example (65d) is one involving an uninterrupted series of scratches, rather than a single scratch, followed by a pause, another scratch, and so on. What distinguishes the repetitive cases without perceptible gaps from cases like (64) is mainly that it is rather well defined what counts as one kick, hit or scratch. With pushing, this is much less obvious. In Chapter 3, I will offer an explanation for why reduplicated semelfactives constitute an exception to the general requirement for (visible) ‘gaps’ and how that relates them to cases such as (64). At this point, it is important to realize that the class of verbs just presented is a class with special properties. In the following subsection, it will be shown that repetition is not a possible interpretation with other types of pluractional verbs.

2.4.2. Repeated events

Perhaps surprisingly, iteration of any other type than the one just described cannot be expressed using a pluractional in Hausa. Thus, it is not possible to utter (68) to describe a situation in which the same person poured tea for herself, drank it up, poured more tea etc.

- (68) Naa zuz-zùbà shaayi (*cikin koofin/ OK: cikin koofunàa)
 1SG.PF RED-pour tea (*in cup.the/ OK: in cups)
 ‘I poured tea (*in the cup/ OK: in the cups)’

Sentence (68) is not felicitous if the event of pouring tea into a cup is simply repeated. However, for some speakers, (68) is acceptable with *cikin koofin* (in cup.the.SG) in a situation in which the tea is in fact meant for different people but where the speaker has only one cup so she has to reuse it. If that is the case the individual subevents are not just repetitions of the same event: they are differentiated by means of the tea being poured for different people.⁵⁴

Below are some more examples that show that simple iteration is generally not an option. All the examples involve differentiation between the subevents:

- (69) a. Naa nà-nèemee tà
 1SG.PF RED-look.for her
 ‘I looked for her in various places’
 N.B. not just repeatedly in the same place

⁵⁴ This example also shows how a well-chosen context can influence the acceptability of a sentence.

- b. Naa bib-bi shì (wuràaree)⁵⁵
 1SG.PF RED-follow him (places)
 ‘I followed him to various places’
 N.B. not repeatedly to the same place
- c. Yaa bub-bùudê jákaa
 3SG.M.PF RED-open bag
 ‘He opened different compartments of the bag’
 N.B. not repeated opening
- d. Yaa bib-biyaa kudii
 3SG.M.PF RED-pay money
 ‘He paid for different people’
 N.B. several different paying events

In (69), the pluractional verbs are used with singular subjects and objects. However, the interpretation is never that of simple repetition. If a person is looked for many times, it has to be in different places (69a). If a single person is being followed and a pluractional is used to describe the situation it means that he was followed to different places (69b). If a bag is opened and the verb *bùudêe* ‘open’ is used in its pluractional form, as in (69c), it is not just repeated opening but rather different compartments of the bag are being searched. Finally, in (69d) a situation is described in which there are multiple events of paying by the same person but the payments are for different people, for example. In cases in which an interpretation other than simple repetition is not easily available, the sentence is not acceptable:⁵⁶

- (70) a. *Naa tsat-tsallàkè kujèeraa
 1SG.PF RED-jump.over chair
 intended: ‘I jumped over the chair repeatedly’
- b. *Taa bub-bùudê taagãĩ
 3SG.F.PF RED-open window.the
 intended: ‘She opened the window repeatedly’

It is hard to imagine a multiple event of jumping over a single chair as involving anything else than simple repetition, or at least not without a lot of creativity. Similarly for (70b): a single window cannot be opened in many different ways and thus the only way to interpret the sentence would have to involve simple repetition.

⁵⁵ Some speakers require the presence of *wuràaree* ‘places’ for the sentence to be acceptable.

⁵⁶ Notice that the pluractional in (70a) is acceptable if the object is plural:

- (i) Naa tsat-tsallàkè kujèeruu
 1SG.PF RED-jump.over chairs
 ‘I jumped over (different) chairs’

As for (70b), some speakers accept the sentence on the interpretation ‘she opened the different parts of the window’, which is then a case of distribution to parts, described in subsection 2.3.5.

This being said, it should also be acknowledged that the picture is a bit more complicated than suggested above. As already mentioned, there is a lot of variation in judgments among speakers. Perhaps not surprisingly then, there are a few speakers who occasionally, or quite systematically, accept iterative interpretations with pluractionals. This happens especially after they have been exposed to a number of sentences with pluractionals that are hard to interpret as not involving repetition. However, simple repetition is never the first interpretation a pluractional will receive even for these speakers. I will come back to this issue in Chapter 3. Generally, it can be concluded that simple iteration is not a possible interpretation of pluractional verbs in Hausa.

Iterative interpretations need to be distinguished from habitual interpretations. Habituality is expressed by using the habitual TAM marker (or the imperfective TAM marker in some dialects). In Hausa, habituality cannot be expressed by the use of the pluractional form. This is not surprising as simple iteration of an event is not a possible interpretation of the pluractional form either. However, habitual TAM (or imperfective TAM in the habitual use) can generally combine with pluractionals. The resulting interpretation is that on each occasion, there is a plural event of V-ing.

- (71) Takàn tàt-tàmbàyee nì
 3SG.F.HAB RED-ask me
 ‘She always asks me a lot of (different) questions’

The individual asking events cannot be distributed over different occasions. In other words, the sentence above cannot be used to express that on each occasion the person was asked a single question.

2.4.3. Conative and tentative readings

There are two special types of cases that represent another way of interpreting pluractionals with singular arguments, which would otherwise be infelicitous since iteration is not a possible interpretation. These are the so-called conative and tentative readings (cf. section 1.4.4.). In the case of conative interpretations, the action does not produce the desired result (72a-b). Tentative interpretations are interpretations according to which the action was performed superficially or not with serious effort (72c):⁵⁷

- (72) a. %Naa dāɗ-dāgà teebùr̃
 1SG.PF RED-lift table
 ‘I tried to lift a table’
 N.B. here and there, a bit on each side

⁵⁷ This type of interpretation is not easily available for all speakers. Sentences like (72c) are systematically assigned a different type of interpretation by some speakers (cf. the discussion of exhaustive interpretations in section 2.8.1.). Note also that sentence (72b) can in principle get a regular plural reading as well. For instance, the sentence could mean that the things were pushed into many cars.

- b. Naa tut-tùurà kaayân
 1SG.PF RED-push things.the
 ‘I tried to push in the things’
 N.B. e.g. in a car that is already too full
- c. %Yaa shàs-shàari òaakii
 3SG.M.PF RED-sweep room
 ‘He swept the room superficially’

In (72a), the simple iterative interpretation, involving a repeated lifting of the table, is not possible. However, at least for some speakers it is possible to interpret the sentence as describing a situation in which the attempt to lift the table was repeated, rather than the full event. In addition, for some speakers, the attempts are not just repeated. Instead, the person trying to lift the table tries different corners and angles. In (72b), the use of the pluractional suggests that someone is trying to push something either into a container that is too small or full already or through an opening that is too small. Again, the attempts are repeated. In (72c), the use of the pluractional suggests that the person did not do the sweeping properly. Perhaps he swept a bit here and a bit there but the room was not really clean in the end.

Conative (72a-b) and tentative (72c) readings are rather common cross-linguistically. It is not surprising, then, that they can be found with Hausa pluractionals as well. In this chapter, I discuss conative and tentative readings together, as they are at least superficially very similar to each other. In Chapter 3, however, I offer two different explanations for the two types of meaning effects.

2.5. Large quantity and vagueness

The discussion of the Hausa pluractional data revolves around one central claim, namely, the claim that pluractional verbs refer to plural events. In this subsection I will make this claim a bit more specific again, describing another layer of the meaning of Hausa pluractionals. In particular, I will demonstrate below that plural events referred to by pluractionals are not just plural (or plural and individuated). Rather, the number of events should be relatively large and, moreover, it should be vague. This is true no matter whether the plurality of events is manifested as plurality of participants, locations, repetitions or anything else. In the following, the large number and vagueness requirement will be illustrated separately for temporal and non-temporal cases, starting with the non-temporal ones.

As just mentioned, for a pluractional verb to be used felicitously, the number of events referred to by it should be left unspecified. It can be seen from the fact that specifying the exact number of participants or locations leads to reduced acceptability. The number of subevents should rather not be specified. It is simply understood to be quite large.

This is not a strict requirement for all speakers but it is the preferred option even for those who (sometimes) accept cases with explicit reference to numbers. In (73), the general pattern is presented:

- (73) a. Mutàanee sun fĩr-fĩtoo
 people 3PL.PF RED-come.out
 ‘Many people came out’
 b. Mutàanee ʔdà yawàa/ ʔdārii/ ʔʔbiyaĩ/ ʔ*biyu sun fĩr-fĩtoo
 people ʔwith many/ ʔhundred/ ʔʔfive/ ʔ*two 3PL.PF RED-come.out
 ‘ʔMany/ ʔhundred/ ʔʔfive/ ʔ*two people came out’
 c. Mutàanee dà yawàa/ dārii / biyaĩ / biyu sun fĩtoo
 people with many/ hundred/ five/ two 3PL.PF come.out
 ‘Many/ hundred/ five/ two people came out’
 d. ʔ*John dà Peter sun fĩr-fĩtoo
 John with Peter 3PL.PF RED-come.out

In (73a), the noun *mutàanee* ‘people’ is not modified by a numeral or a quantity expression. Nevertheless, the use of the pluractional implies that the number of people was rather large. In (73b), it is demonstrated that modifying the noun by a vague quantity expression leads only to slight degradedness, whereas the use of numerals yields a worse result. Moreover, the smaller the number is, the less acceptable the sentence gets. Example (73c) demonstrates that the non-pluractional form of the verb imposes no such restrictions. Finally, the ungrammaticality of (73d) shows that also noun phrases like *John dà Peter* ‘John and Peter’ do not combine well with pluractionals since the number of the participants should be larger than two for the pluractional form to be acceptable.

The same pattern can be found in the case of specifying the number of locations (if that is where the plurality is located):⁵⁸

- (74) a. Mutàanee sun fĩr-fĩtoo dàgà gidàajèn/ ʔʔgidàajèn àshĩrĩn
 people 3PL.PF RED-come.out from houses.the/ houses.the twenty
 ‘People came out of the houses/ ʔʔtwenty houses’
 b. Katangaa taa tsat-tsàagee (ʔʔà wurii biyaĩ)
 wall 3SG.F.PF RED-crack (ʔʔat place five)
 ‘The wall cracked in many places (ʔʔin five places)’

Example (74a) shows that the preferred option is to not specify the number of houses the people came out of if the pluractional is used. Similarly, specifying the number of places in which the wall cracked is not acceptable for most speakers if the multiplicity of cracking events is expressed by the pluractional form, as in (74b).

⁵⁸ In Chapter 3, I will argue that there is no fundamental difference between participants and locations as ‘licensors’ of pluractionality.

The question marks and stars show the relative acceptability of the modifiers across speakers, not absolute judgments for all speakers. As in many other aspects of the meaning of pluractionals, also here speakers' judgments vary to a certain degree. Nevertheless, the basic generalization is that the use of the pluractional form implies that the number of the subevents was rather large. Furthermore, it is dispreferred to specify the cardinality of the subevents by another expression, especially if the quantity expression is not sufficiently vague.

The facts are slightly more complicated in the case of temporal interpretations. Testing the possibility of precise specification of the number of repetitions requires more caution, for reasons to be specified below. Once the complicating factors are taken care of, however, the picture is clear: the number of subevents should be vaguely large in these cases as well.

One reason why the situation is less transparent with the repetitive cases is that *x-times* adverbials can appear in different syntactic positions. In cases in which an *x-times* adverbial is felicitous with a pluractional, it usually precedes it and also semantically scopes over it. In (75), then, the interpretation is that there were ten occasions on which the plural event occurred. In other words, there were ten occasions involving many hits, not ten individual hits:

- (75) Sàu goomà taa bub-bùgà teebũr
 times ten 3SG.F.PF RED-hit table
 'Ten times, she hit the table repeatedly'

To test whether *x-times* adverbials can also specify the number of the actual subevents (the individual hits), the adverbial has to follow the pluractional, as in (76):

- (76) %Taa bub-bùgà teebũr sàu goomà
 3SG.F.PF RED-hit table times ten
 'She hit the table (repeatedly) ten times'

Some speakers report the same interpretation for (76) as the one exemplified in (75). This means that for them the adverbial does not have to be preposed to scope semantically over the pluractional, which results in the sentence being acceptable, on a par with (75). For most speakers, however, (76) is degraded because in this position the adverbial necessarily specifies the number of the individual hits and that is not accepted if the pluractional is used. Consider also the following examples where the individual slaps are being counted:

- (77) a. Taa màm-màaree shì
 3SG.F.PF RED-slap him
 ‘She slapped him repeatedly/ many times’
- b. Taa màm-màaree shì ?sàu dà yawàa/ ??sàu biyaĩ
 3SG.F.PF RED-slap him times with ?many/ ??times five
 ‘She slapped him (repeatedly) ?many/ ??five times’
- c. Taa màaree shì sàu dà yawàa/ sàu biyaĩ
 3SG.F.PF slap him times with many/ times five
 ‘She slapped him many/ five times’

The pattern is the same as in the case of non-repetitive readings: the number of slaps should not be specified if the pluractional is used, at least not very precisely. Thus, it can be concluded that the vagueness requirement applies in the temporal cases as well. Just like in the case of the participant-based readings, the use of the pluractional form itself implies that the number of the subevents is relatively large.

Finally, notice that if a pluractional is used with a repetitive interpretation, the number of participants can be specified since the contribution of the pluractional does not have to do with the number of participants in that case but with the number of repetitions. The well-formedness of (78a) can be contrasted with the degraded status of the participant-based case in (78b).

- (78) a. Mutàanee biyu/ John dà Peter sun tat-tàbà kujèerāĩ
 people two/ John with Peter 3PL.PF RED-touch chair.the
 ‘Two people/ John and Peter (each) touched the chair repeatedly’
- b. ?*Mutàanee biyu/ John dà Peter sun fĩr-fĩtoo
 ?*people two/ John with Peter 3PL.PF RED-come.out
 ‘?*Two people/ John and Peter came out’

Notice that the opposite case is not so easy to construct. If the singular subject in (77b) is replaced by a plural one it does not rescue the sentence because of the low position of the adverbial. As indicated above, *x-times* adverbials generally cannot take scope over the pluractional in that position.

- (79) Sun màm-màaree shì ?sàu dà yawàa/ ??sàu biyaĩ
 3PL.PF RED-slap him times ?with many/ ??times five
 ‘They slapped him (repeatedly) ?many/ ??five times’

To prevent the adverbial from counting the number of the individual slaps it should be preposed, as in (80):

- (80) Sàu biyaĩ sun màm-màaree shì
 times five 3PL.PF RED-slap him
 ‘Five times, they slapped him’
 N.B. several/ many people on each occasion but possibly each person once

Sentence (80) expresses that there were five occasions on which a plural event of slapping took place.

To summarize, the use of a pluractional generally implies that the number of the subevents in the plural event is relatively large. Specifying the number precisely is dispreferred.

2.6. Degree readings

In the present section, I discuss interpretations that involve either intensification or detensification, that is, degree-like meaning effects. Subsection 2.6.1. deals with high degree cases, subsection 2.6.2. with cases that can be seen as involving low degree meanings.

2.6.1. High degree

Cases of pluractionals with high degree interpretations do not constitute a large class but they are rather important for the overall analysis of pluractionality in Hausa. Therefore, they will be discussed in some detail. An example of a pluractional with a high degree interpretation is given below:

- (81) Yâraa sun rur-rùudfee
 children 3PL.PF RED-be.confused
 ‘The children were very confused’
 N.B. beyond control, alarmed

Note that cases like the one above are different from cases where the intensity effect comes only as a side effect of plurality (cf. section 1.4.2.). Consider the following examples:

- (82) a. Kwalabaa taa faf-fâshee
 bottle 3SG.F.PF RED-break
 ‘The bottle shattered/ broke into many pieces’
 b. Kwalabaa taa fashèe
 bottle 3SG.F.PF break
 ‘The bottle broke (into two pieces)’

Sentence (82a) might sound like a description of an ‘intensified’ event because the expressions *shatter/ break into many pieces* in the translation make the event sound more serious in comparison to simple *break* in (82b). However, I suggest that any potential degree effects in cases like this should be understood as following from the large number of the breaking (sub)events.

The type of cases that will be discussed here are, unlike the verb in (82a), pluractionals derived from gradable verbs, i.e. verbs like *ruudëe/ gâji/ dàamu* ‘be confused/ tired/ worried’. The interesting generalization about these verbs is that the gradable property associated with them is intensified, while the use of the pluractional form requires the participants to be plural at the same time. This can be seen in the following examples:

- (83) a. *Yâraa sun ruudëe*
 children 3PL.PF be.confused
 ‘The children were confused’
 b. *Yâraa sun rur-rùudëe*
 children 3PL.PF RED-be.confused
 ‘The children were very confused’
 N.B. beyond control, alarmed
 c. *%Yaa rur-rùudëe*⁵⁹
 3SG.M.PF RED-be.confused
 intended: ‘He is very confused’

Sentence (83b) is interpreted as involving a higher degree of confusion than sentence (83a), where the verb is in its non-pluractional form. The sentence in (83c) shows, in addition, that the pluractional form of *ruudëe* ‘be confused’ cannot be combined with a singular subject. The same pattern is found with other gradable verbs, e.g. *gâji* ‘be tired’:

- (84) a. *Mun gâji*
 1PL.PF be.tired
 ‘We are tired’
 b. *%Mun gâg-gâji*
 1PL.PF RED-be.tired
 ‘We are all very tired’
 c. *??Naa gâg-gâji*
 1SG.PF RED-be.tired
 intended: ‘I am very tired’

Example (84b) shows that the pluractional form of *gâji* ‘be tired’ expresses a higher degree of tiredness in comparison to the non-pluractional form in (84a). The unacceptability of the sentence in (84c) demonstrates that the pluractional form is incompatible with a singular subject.

In section 2.2.3., I briefly discussed the so-called grade system, a system of morphological classes of verbs. With respect to gradability, grade 7 is an interesting class since these verbs display the same pattern as the verbs discussed above. Grade 7

⁵⁹ The % sign indicates that for some speakers this sentence is well-formed. However, it seems that at least for some of those speakers for whom it is acceptable, the interpretation is rather that of internal plurality. For instance, it can mean that the person was confused for multiple reasons, kept getting confused etc.

verbs are all intransitive. In the perfective TAM these verbs have passive-like semantics and usually refer to action thoroughly or well done (cf. Newman 2000).⁶⁰ This means that in the perfective TAM these verbs already involve high degree in the non-pluractional form. However, in the pluractional form, the degree of the property is even higher:

- (85) a. Naa/Mun dàamu
 1SG/PL.PF be.worried
 ‘I am/ we are (very) worried’
 b. %Mun dàd-dàamu
 1PL.PF RED-be.worried
 ‘We are (really) very worried’
 c. ??Naa dàd-dàamu
 1SG.PF RED-be.worried
 intended: ‘I am very worried’

To conclude, when the meaning of a pluractional derived from a gradable verb is compared to its non-pluractional counterpart, it is clear that the gradable property is intensified. At the same time, the plurality requirement is still present since sentences with singular participants are degraded. This means that intensification alone is not a possible interpretation of Hausa pluractionals, as sometimes suggested in the literature (e.g. Frajzyngier 1965). In other words, in the cases of gradable verbs, the semantic contribution of the use of the pluractional form is both plurality and high degree.⁶¹

2.6.2. Low degree

In this subsection, a different type of cases that involve a degree-like effect is presented. In these cases, the effect is detensification rather than intensification: the degree of whatever property is gradable in each particular case is lower than in the case of the non-pluractional form. Below are some examples (note that not all speakers find them acceptable or they do not interpret them as involving detensification):

⁶⁰ In the imperfective TAM grade 7 verbs (or, more precisely, verbal nouns) indicate potentiality of action:

- (i) Wannàn mootāf tanāa gyāaruwaa
 this car.the 3SG.F.IMPF repair.VN
 ‘This car is repairable’

⁶¹ As in many other aspects of the use of pluractional verbs, there is quite some variation in judgments among native speakers also in the gradable cases. The variation concerns both the exact set of verbs that allow for pluractional formation, as well as the interpretation of the resulting, reduplicated, forms. Some speakers seem to get high degree interpretations quite easily, for others intensification is very rare as a meaning contribution of the pluractional form. Despite all the variation, however, the data presented above manifest a rather regular pattern in the sense that gradable verbs generally require intensification in the pluractional form while the plurality requirement is still preserved.

- (86) a. % Yârân sun yiy-yi kàmaa dà juunaa
 children.the 3PL.PF RED-do resemblance with each.other
 ‘The children resemble each other a bit’
- b. %Mun yiy-yi aikii
 1PL.PF RED-do work
 ‘Occasionally we found some time for work’
 N.B. the work is not serious enough
- c. %Sun kak-kařàntà littàttàfân
 3PL.PF RED-read books.the
 ‘They read the books superficially’
 N.B. a bit here, a bit there

The sentence in (86a) implies that the degree of the resemblance among the children is rather low. Sentence (86b) can be uttered by people who did not work very hard. Finally, the use of the pluractional form in (86c) suggests that the reading was not thorough. For example, if the sentence describes the preparation of a group of students for an exam, the use of the pluractional indicates that they did not study seriously enough.

Notice that with the exception of the complex predicate *yi kàmaa* ‘resemble’ these verbs cannot be considered gradable. This makes these pluractionals rather different from the high degree cases discussed in the previous subsection. Notice also, that examples (86b-c) can be taken to represent the tentative reading, as exemplified in (72c) (section 2.4.3). In fact, in Chapter 3, I will treat cases like (86b-c) and (72c) as representing the same phenomenon. Also, it will be shown that the high degree and low degree effects have very different sources.

2.7. Interaction between large number, high degree and high individuation

In the previous sections, it was shown that pluractional verbs in Hausa do not simply refer to non-singular events but that the subevents have to be many and the number should remain vague. Moreover, the individual subevents are typically highly individuated and in some cases high or low degree interpretations arise in addition to plurality. Putting the gradable cases aside for a moment, it can be said that pluractionals typically refer to many and varied events. The following examples suggest that at least for some speakers either meaning contribution can license the pluractional form on its own. For such speakers, it is enough for the events to be sufficiently many (and not very varied), or only sufficiently varied (and not very many). Note that the comments provided for the examples given below represent intuitions of one or two speakers in each case. However, effects of this type can be found with a number of speakers. Consider first the example in (87):

- (87) Sun jij-jiraa shi
 3PL.PF RED-wait.for him
 ‘They waited for him’
 N.B. %as few as two people is enough if they waited for different reasons

The example in (87) elicited a comment according to which the pluractional can be used even if there were only two people waiting provided that they waited (e.g. to meet with someone) for different reasons. If the reasons were not different, then the people waiting should be many. The following example gave rise to a similar comment:⁶²

- (88) %Anàa gig-ginà màkàřàntun sakandāřee gùdaa biyař
 IMP.IMPF RED-build schools.of secondary unit five
 ‘Five secondary schools are being built’
 N.B. %possible if the schools are being built in different towns

The number of schools can be specified (and low) if the individual events of building were differentiated by having the schools built in different towns.

Something very similar can be observed in cases of pluractionals with high degree interpretations. It seems that in high degree cases, some speakers allow for interpretations involving participants that are simply plural, rather than numerous, which is otherwise usually required with pluractionals. Thus, one speaker suggested that in (89) it is possible for the subject pronoun to refer to two people only, provided that the degree of being thankful is very high:

- (89) %Mun gog-gòodee
 1PL.PF RED-thank
 ‘We thank you so much!’
 N.B. %it is possible that the subject refers to two people only

In fact, the general idea that the event is somehow very serious or important often seems to save sentences where the number of subevents is specified and/or low. The sentence in (88) above also received a comment that it sounds like something a politician would say, as if to stress how well they are taking care of the well-being of their people. This means that if the pluractional in (88) is interpreted as augmenting the importance of the plural event, it is possible to specify the number of the subevents. The same effect is illustrated in (90), which sounds inappropriate exactly for this reason:

- (90) %?Kàajiinaa biyu sun muř-mutù
 chickens.my two 3PL.PF RED-die
 ‘My two chickens died’
 N.B. %it sounds as if the event is given too much importance

⁶² The example in (88) is based on an example from Pawlak (1975:146).

The reason why sentence (90) sounds odd to the speaker who provided the comment is that the use of the pluractional makes the event sound overly serious.

To summarize, from the data presented in this subsection it seems clearer than from the discussion of the individual aspects of the pluractional meaning that the use of the pluractional form often suggests that the plural event is somehow special or remarkable. What makes the event remarkable could be a higher degree of a property, it could be the fact that the subevents are very many or that they are highly diversified. In addition, it could be just a very general emphasis. Typically, several of these special effects cooccur. Nevertheless, the examples just discussed point to the conclusion that this is not necessary. It is enough if one of the special meaning effects ‘licenses’ the use of the pluractional form in Hausa. However subtle these effects can sometimes be, they reveal something important about the nature of Hausa pluractionals and as such they play an important role in the motivation of the proposal presented in Chapter 3.

The basic properties of Hausa pluractionals have now been described. The purpose of the following section is to present some additional properties of pluractionality in Hausa.

2.8. Further issues

This section discusses some further issues that are relevant for the analysis. Subsection 2.8.1. discusses the issue of exhaustive and non-exhaustive interpretations. The next subsection (2.8.2.) deals with cases of pluractionals whose arguments are not expressed overtly. In subsection 2.8.3. statives and verbal nouns derived from pluractional verbs are discussed. Finally, subsection 2.8.4. summarizes the facts about inter-speaker variation.

2.8.1. Exhaustivity

Hausa sentences with pluractionals are often translated by native speakers with the use of expressions like *all* or *each* (cf. (91a)). Also, when providing their own examples of sentences with pluractionals, speakers often use the Hausa equivalent of *all*: *duk(à)*, which apparently makes the examples sound very natural (91b).⁶³

⁶³ Notice that while the non-distributive universal quantifier *duk* ‘all’ is frequently used with pluractionals, the distributive universal quantifier is usually not compatible with the pluractional form:

(i) ?³Koowaa yaa zaz-zàunaa
 everyone 3SG.M.PF RED-sit.down
 intended: ‘Everyone sat down’

Interestingly, while some speakers do not find sentences with *koowaa* ‘everyone’ (completely) ungrammatical, sentences with *koowàné* *N* ‘every N’ are clearly worse in comparison:

- (91) a. Sunàa zàz-zàune
 3PL.IMPF RED-sit.ST
 ‘They were all seated’
 b. Duk sun tsait-tsàyaa
 all 3PL.PF RED-stop
 ‘They all stopped’

This might be taken to mean that pluractionality in Hausa involves exhaustivity. However, if this were the case pluractionals would be expected to be incompatible with exceptive phrases. The following examples show that this is not the case. The sentences in (92) are not contradictory despite the presence of an exceptive phrase:

- (92) a. Sunàa zàz-zàune àmmaa bà dukà ba
 3PL.IMPF RED-sit.ST but NEG all NEG
 ‘They are seated but not all of them’
 b. Fuřsunoonii sun guř-gudù àmmaa bà dukà ba
 prisoners 3PL.PF RED-run.away but NEG all NEG
 ‘The/ some prisoners escaped but not all of them’

I conclude from this that pluractionals do not give rise to truly exhaustive interpretations. However, the tendency of speakers to use *all* or *each* in the translations and *duk(à)* in the original sentences with pluractionals clearly exists. It probably partly reflects the fact that pluractionals are used for emphasis, to make the event sound more ‘serious’. The following example illustrates this and shows that in such cases *duk(à)* does not mean literally ‘all’ or ‘completely’:

- (93) Duk kaa zuz-zubař dà ruwaa!
 all/completely 2SG.M.PF RED-pour with water
 ‘You spilled all the water!’
 N.B. possible even if only some of the water is spilled

According to the speaker who volunteered the example, the sentence can be used when the person being scolded in fact did not spill all the water, maybe not even a bigger part of it. *Duk* is used basically to make the clumsiness of the person spilling the water sound really terrible and of serious consequences.

-
- (ii) ?*Koowàné dāalibii yaa zaz-zàunaa
 every student 3SG.M.PF RED-sit.down
 intended: ‘Every student sat down’

This correlates with the fact that in English, *everybody* combines more easily with e.g. *together* than *every N*:

- (iii) Everybody/ *every man danced together

As *together* needs a plural subject, this example shows that *everybody* is more plural-like than *every N*.

It is important to realize that apart from the seemingly exhaustive interpretations, it is also possible to find the opposite case. Recall that Hausa pluractionals can in some cases be assigned the so-called tentative interpretation, where the implication is that the action is not performed thoroughly:

- (94) %Yaa shàs-shàari dfaakii
 3SG.M.PF RED-sweep room
 ‘He swept the room superficially’

If the room is not swept properly, it probably means that not all parts of the room were swept. In other words, the superficiality effect can be understood as resulting from non-exhaustivity. In addition to the tentative cases, there are also other cases of pluractionals with non-exhaustive interpretations:

- (95) Gidân yaa rur-rùushee
 house.the 3SG.M.PF RED-collapse
 i. ‘The house collapsed completely’
 ii. ‘The house collapsed in some parts’

Sentences like (95) are generally interpreted in two different ways. For some speakers the contribution of the pluractional is an exhaustive interpretation (i) while others interpret such cases non-exhaustively (ii). For some speakers, then, (95) expresses that the house was completely destroyed, while for other speakers the use of the pluractional indicates that only some parts of the house collapsed and thus the house might still be usable.⁶⁴ In Chapter 3 (section 3.8.1.), I will offer an explanation for this paradox.

2.8.2. Unexpressed arguments

As already mentioned in section 2.2.2., the verb’s arguments can often be left unexpressed in Hausa. This is also true for sentences with pluractionals. Such unexpressed arguments can then also serve as licensors of pluractionality. Consider the following example:

- (96) a. Naa tut-tùnaa
 1SG.PF RED-remember
 b. Sun tut-tùnaa
 3PL.PF RED-remember

Sentence (96a) is easily interpreted as ‘I remembered various things’, ‘various things’ being something the hearer has to fill in on their own. Sentence (96b) has a plural subject. However, this does not mean that the subject has to be interpreted as the licensor of the pluractional form. The pluractional can also be licensed by the unexpressed object.

⁶⁴ Similarly, there are speakers who interpret sentence (94) as ‘He swept all parts of the room/ he swept the room thoroughly’.

Thus, sentence (96b) can be interpreted as ‘They (all) remembered (the same thing)’, or ‘They remembered various things’. In principle, then, unexpressed arguments are not different from expressed (plural) arguments in the ability to license a pluractional. In spite of that, expressing or not expressing an argument overtly can make a certain interpretation more prominent than another. This is illustrated in (97):

- (97) a. Yaa zuz-zùbà shaayi
 3SG.M.PF RED-pour tea
 i. ‘He poured tea for them (different people)’
 ii. ‘He spilled tea’
- b. Yaa zuz-zùbaa musù shaayi
 3SG.M.PF RED-pour to.them tea
 ‘He poured tea for them (different people)’

Many speakers assign the same interpretation to sentence (97a) as to sentence (97b): the tea was poured for different people. Nevertheless, the fact that the beneficiary of the event is not expressed overtly in (97a) makes the interpretation according to which the tea was spilled (here and there) much more prominent for some speakers. In addition, there are also speakers who actually seem to require overt expression of the licenser of the pluractional form. Such speakers find sentences like (96a) unacceptable and require the object to be expressed overtly in order for the pluractional to be felicitous:

- (98) Naa tut-tùnaa dà suu
 1SG.PF RED-remember with them
 ‘I remembered them (different things)’

In my view, this is not a reflection of a real grammatical restriction. Rather, some speakers seem to be better at providing possible interpretations in underspecified contexts than others. It is easier to locate the source of plurality if it is expressed in the sentence. Importantly, however, the majority of speakers seem to have little trouble reconstructing the missing material.

2.8.3. Pluractional statives and verbal nouns

Pluractionality is a verbal phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is not restricted to verbs in Hausa. Pluractionality can also be found with certain deverbal categories, namely statives and verbal nouns (cf. section 2.2.7.).⁶⁵ Both pluractional statives and verbal nouns have been used in the examples in this chapter, since the pluractional semantics is preserved in the derivations. The present subsection discusses in what sense these forms are specific.

⁶⁵ I have nothing to say about adjectival participles derived from pluractionals.

Statives do not seem to exhibit any kind of morphological constraints with respect to the availability of pluractional forms. Consider the following pair of a verbal pluractional and its corresponding stative:

- (99) a. An cic-cikà kwalàabân
 IMP.PF RED-fill bottles.the
 ‘They filled the bottles’
 b. Kwalàabân sunàa cic-cike
 bottles.the 3PL.IMPf RED-fill.ST
 ‘The bottles are filled/ full’

What distinguishes pluractional statives from their corresponding verbs is that they seem to require the plurality to be situated in the subject. Thus, whereas (100a) is acceptable with the singular subject (the plurality is located in the unexpressed object argument), (100b) is not: the pluractional stative requires the subject to be plural (100c).

- (100) a. Naa shis-shiryaa
 1SG.PF RED-prepare
 ‘I got prepared’
 N.B. preparing a lot of things
 b. *Inàa shis-shirye
 1SG.IMPf RED-prepare.ST
 intended: ‘I am prepared/ ready’
 c. Sunàa shis-shirye
 3PL.IMPf RED-prepare.ST
 ‘They are (all) prepared/ ready’

This pattern is perhaps not unexpected, considering that the stative describes the state of the subject resulting from the event of preparing oneself and not the event itself.

As for verbal nouns, their meaning seems entirely parallel to that of their corresponding verbs. However, there are gaps in the paradigm: not all types of verbal nouns have corresponding pluractional forms. This means that many pluractionals cannot be used in the imperfective TAM. Consider the following contrast between the well-formed *daddàfāwaa* (the pluractional counterpart of *dafāwaa* ‘cooking’, a weak verbal noun; (101a)) and the degraded *nanneemaa* (the expected pluractional counterpart of *neemaa* ‘looking for’, a strong verbal noun; (102a)):

- (101) a. Tanàa dad-dāfāwaa
 3SG.F.IMPf RED-cook.VN
 ‘She is cooking different kinds of things’
 b. Taa dad-dāfaa
 3SG.F.PF RED-cook
 ‘She cooked different kinds of things’

- (102) a. ??Tanàa nan-neemansù
 3SG.F.IMPF [RED-look.for].VN.of.them
 ‘She is looking for them (in various places)’
 b. Taa nà-nèemee sù
 3SG.F.PF RED-look.for them
 ‘She looked for them (in various places)’

The constraint at play seems to be of morphological nature. Apparently, if a given verb does not derive its corresponding verbal noun in a completely transparent and regular fashion, it is generally impossible to derive a verbal noun from its corresponding pluractional verb.⁶⁶

To conclude, pluractional statives and verbal nouns do have their specifics. Nevertheless, the pluractional semantics is inherited from the base verb. As a consequence, I will not propose a separate analysis of pluractional statives and verbal nouns.

2.8.4. Variation

At various points during the presentation of the data, variation in speakers’ judgments has been discussed. There is no variation with respect to the basic plurality requirement, that is, no speakers use pluractionals to refer to singular events.⁶⁷ However, most other aspects of the use of pluractional verbs exhibit less uniformity. Some of the most important ones are summarized in the following paragraphs.

First, while all speakers allow for the pluractional form to be licensed by plural participants, not all speakers accept cases with singular count or mass arguments without problems (cf. section 2.3.5.). In other words, not all speakers find it easy to distribute the event plurality to parts of participants. Those speakers who cannot associate the plural subevents with different parts of a single participant very easily generally reject examples with singular participants unless an interpretation involving a different type of plurality is available.

Second, the high individuation requirement (cf. section 2.3.6.) is not equally strong for everyone. For some speakers, this seems to be a genuine requirement and thus the pluractional form is rejected if the individual subevents are not sufficiently differentiated. For others, however, high individuation is generally preferred but not strictly speaking required. For such speakers, pluractionals often refer to events that are simply plural.

⁶⁶ The impossibility of deriving verbal nouns from pluractional verbs whose non-pluractional counterparts are associated with irregular verbal nouns thus follows from the restrictions on the formation of verbal nouns, rather than from restrictions on the pluractional formation. Cf. also the discussion in section 2.2.4.

⁶⁷ Note that the very limited number of continuous-like interpretations some speakers seem to accept are analyzed as plural events where the gaps between the individual subevents are less clearly visible. These cases will be dealt with in sections 3.5.4.1. and 3.6.1. of Chapter 3.

Another point of variation is the absoluteness of the ban on iterative interpretations (cf. section 2.4.2.). While most speakers reject all interpretations involving simple iteration with other than semelfactive verbs, some speakers do occasionally or even quite regularly accept them. However, iteration is never the first interpretation offered by any speaker. It is rather typical that if speakers accept iterative interpretations this is after they have been exposed to a sufficient amount of data that are hard to interpret otherwise. This suggests that some speakers can develop a certain degree of ‘tolerance’ to iterative interpretations despite the fact that they usually reject them at first.

As a fourth aspect in which there is quite a lot of variation, the availability of high degree interpretations can be mentioned (cf. section 2.6.1.). For most speakers, intensification interpretations are not very frequent but they do occur. However, there are speakers for which intensification is a meaning effect that is relatively commonly found with pluractional verbs. On the other hand, there are also speakers who hardly ever interpret pluractionals as involving high degree.

The points of variation discussed above are perhaps the most easily noticeable ones. Nevertheless, there are many other aspects in which speakers vary. For instance, some speakers can specify the number of subevents more easily than others. An interesting point of variation is also the preference for either exhaustive or non-exhaustive interpretations, discussed in section 2.8.1. In addition, for many but not all speakers, pluractionals have certain special connotations associated with them. For example, they may be perceived as carrying some kind of negative evaluation or suggesting that there is an element of disorder and/or unpredictability in the event or that the event is striking in some other way.

In Chapter 3, I will offer an analysis that will, among other things, provide an explanation for why there is so much variation in the Hausa pluractional data and also why some aspects of the use of pluractionals give rise to more variation than others. Even though there will be cases that I have no principled explanation for, most of the variation can be explained and is in fact predicted by the analysis. In other words, the variation in the judgments is not as random as it might seem at first sight.

2.9. Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to introduce the data that will be analyzed in the next chapter, the main chapter of the dissertation. After providing an overview of the Hausa grammatical system, the individual aspects of the use of pluractional verbs were discussed one by one and they were illustrated by a number of examples. The basic generalization is that pluractional verbs can only refer to plural events. There are some additional conditions on the felicitous use of pluractionals, however. In particular, the individual subevents are generally required to be many, rather than simply plural, and preferably differentiated from each other. In some cases, the use of the pluractional form

also indicates that the event is somehow intensified. These additional conditions or meaning effects sometimes interact with each other in interesting ways. One of the most striking facts about Hausa pluractionals is that they cannot be used to express simple iteration, with the exception of semelfactive verbs. Apart from this restriction, however, there are very few restrictions as to how the event plurality is instantiated. All these properties will be given an explanation in the next chapter, where I propose an analysis of the semantics of pluractionality in Hausa.