A SEMANTIC MAP OF PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS

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THE PROJECT

- A PhD Thesis (Universities of Pavia/Bergamo) that investigates the under-studied phenomenon known as PLURACTIONALITY from a typological perspective.

- It is a large scale typological study based on the cross-linguistic comparison of a sample composed by 240 languages (cf. Appendix on the handout).

- The sample is a variety/convenience sample based on the WALS 200-language sample available online (cf. http://wals.info/languoid/samples/200), and the 194-language sample of Chapter 80 of WALS, "Verbal Number and Suppletion" (Veselinova 2005).

PLURACTIONALITY

■ A term coined by Newman (1980:13) to refer to what was previously known as *intensive* in Chadic (especially Hausa) tradition. The first definition is by Newman (1990:53):

The essential semantic characteristics of such verbs is almost always plurality or multiplicity of the verb's action. Newman (1990:53)

■ Definition adopted in this work:

Pluractionality is a phenomenon that marks the plurality of the situations (i.e., events and states) encoded by the verb through any linguistic mean that directly modifies the form of the verb itself.

Pluractionality

(1) Beng (Mande, Eastern Mande) (Paperno 2014:41)

a.	*Ŏ	bè-ɛĺó.*	b.	*Ŏ	bè~bè-ɛĺó.*

	3SG:ST+	run-PROG		3SG:ST+	run~ITER-PROG

	'He is running'		'He is running (repeatedly back and forth)'

(2) Squamish (Salishan, Central Salish) (Bar-el 2008:34)

a.	*Chen	kwelesh-t	ta	sxwi7shn*

	1SBJ.SG	shoot-TR	DET	deer

	'I shot a deer.'

b.	*Chen	kwel~kwelesh-t	ta	sxwi7shn*

	1SBJ.SG	RED~shoot-TR	DET	deer

	'I shot a deer several times/continuously.'

THE FUNCTIONAL DOMAIN OF PLURACTIONALITY

- Cross-linguistically, pluractional constructions express a significant variety of functions.

1. CORE FUNCTIONS: necessary to talk about pluractionality. They are: PLURACTIONALITY *STRICTO SENSU* (ITERATIVITY and FREQUENTATIVITY), DISTRIBUTIVITY, and PARTICIPANT PLURALITY (cf. ex. (3)-(6)).

2. ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS: not necessary, but recurrent. They are: INTENSITY (COMPLETENESS, EMPHASIS), EVENT-INTERNAL PLURALITY, CONTINUATIVITY, HABITUALITY, GENERIC (or GNOMIC) IMPERFECTIVITY, and RECIPROCITY (cf. ex. (7)-(14)).

THE SEMANTIC MAP MODEL

■ In order to describe and explain such a wide multifunctionality, I adopted the so called SEMANTIC MAP MODEL (cf. Croft 2001, Haspelmath 2003).

A semantic map is a geometrical representation of functions in "conceptual/semantic space" that are linked by connecting lines and thus constitute a network. The configuration of functions shown by the map is claimed to be universal. Haspelmath (2003:213)

■ An important terminological issue involves the distinction between CONCEPTUAL SPACE and SEMANTIC MAP: the former is a network of functions of a specific domain and it is universal, the latter is the language-specific expression of the conceptual space.

THE CONCEPTUAL SPACE OF PLURACTIONALITY
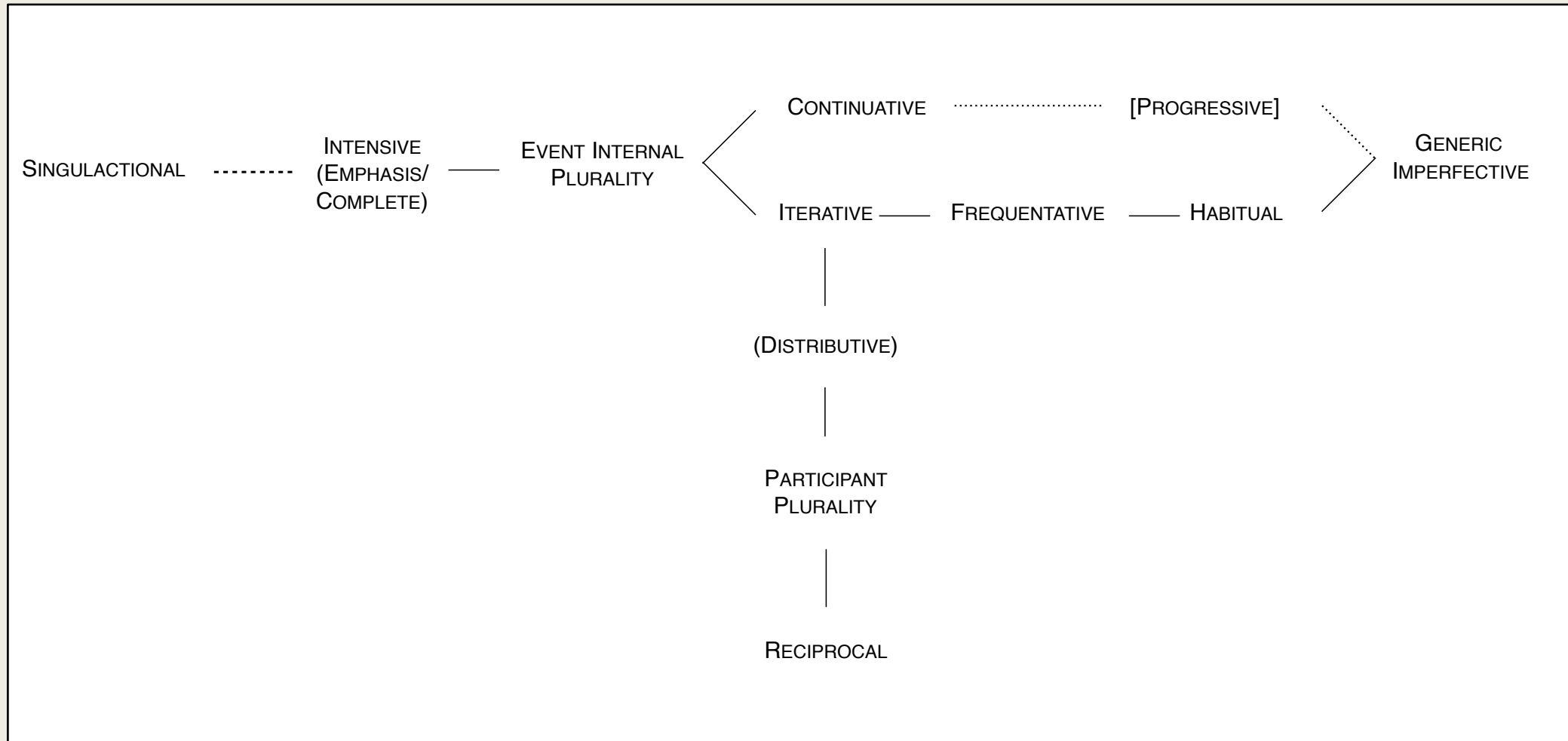
How does Pluractionality work?

■ To show how pluractional constructions work in specific languages and to verify the cross-linguistic generalizations, I have analyzed in detail extensive texts of three different languages (corpora analysis).

1. Akawaio (Cariban, Venezuelan)

2. Beja (Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic)

3. Maa (Nilo-Saharan, Nilotic)

Pluractional Constructions in Akawaio

- In Akawaio, the morpheme *-pödï* (and its allomorphs) can express pluractional functions, both core and additional ones.

(15) Akawaio (Cariban, Venezuelan)

naigaza	*kuru*	*pöröu*	*ennogï-bödï*	*zerö*	*ta-'pï*	*i-ya*
how	EMPH	arrow	shoot-ITER	this	say-PAST	3-ERG

ji	*mörö*
EMPH	A.I.?

'"How, really, will we shoot the arrow **more than one time**?" he said.' (RA Piyai'ma Story 033 <106.543>)
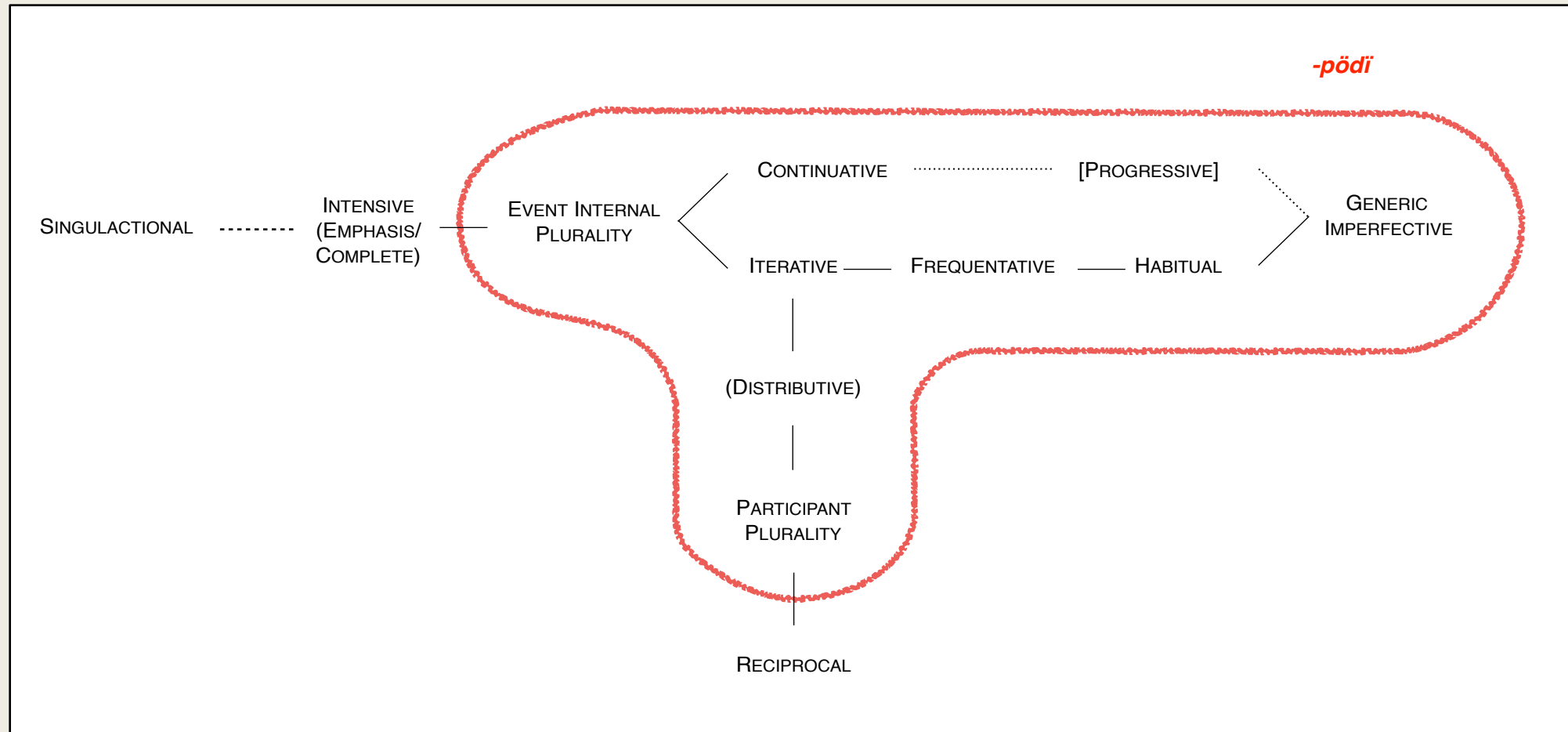
PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN AKAWAIO

- 220 occurrences of *-pödï* that can be grouped in different function-clusters.

| SET(S)	FUNCTION(S)	OCCURRENCE(S)
FREQ./HAB./GENERIC IMPF.	freq./hab.	101 (45,9 %)
	freq.	18 (8,2 %)
	hab.	1 (0,4 %)
	generic impf.	12 (5,4 %)
	freq./hab./generic impf.	15 (6,8 %)
	TOTAL OCCURRENCES	**147 (66,7 %)**
ITER.	iter./freq.	30 (13,6 %)
	iter.	13 (5,9 %)
	ev.-int. plur./iter.	10 (4,5 %)
	TOTAL OCCURRENCES	**53 (24,0 %)**
PART. PLUR.	part. plur.	5 (2,3 %)
	part. plur./iter.	2 (0,9 %)
	TOTAL OCCURRENCES	**7 (3,2 %)**
CONT.	cont./iter.	4 (1,8 %)
	ev.-int. plur./cont./iter.	2 (0,9 %)
	cont.(/prog.)	2 (0,9 %)
	TOTAL OCCURRENCES	**8 (3,6 %)**
	OTHER MINIMAL FUNCTIONS	**5 (2,3 %)**
	TOTAL OCCURRENCES	**220 (100 %)**

PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN AKAWAIO

■ The (extended) semantic map of pluractional constructions in Akawaio (Cariban, Venezuelan).

PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN AKAWAIO

■ The semantic map of pluractional constructions in Akawaio (Cariban, Venezuelan).
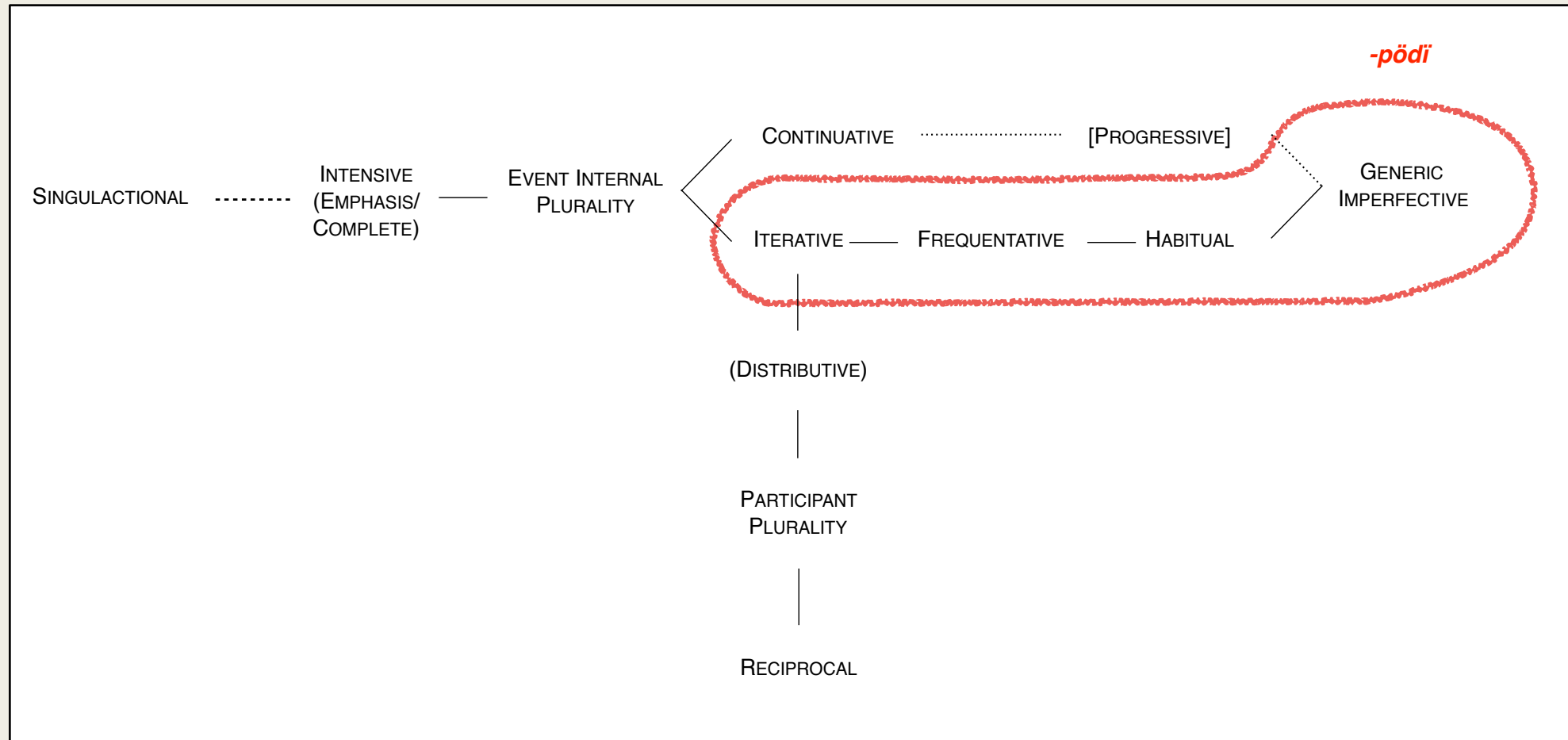
PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN BEJA

■ In Beja, two strategies can express pluractional functions.

(16) Beja (Afroasiatic, Cushitic): Ablaut of the verb stem (Intensive).

a.   *ʔawi=b*   *jhak-s-an=t*   *a-gid*

stone=INDF.M.ACC   get_up-CAUS-PFV.1SG=COORD   1SG-throw\PFV

'I took a stone and threw it.' (BEJ_MV_NARR_05_eritrea_389)

b.   *geːd-eːti*   *hoːsoː*   *tiː-simh=jeːb=ka*

throw\INT-CVB.CSL   3SG.ABL   3SG.F-get_rid_of\AOR=REL.M=DISTR

'Each time she throws stones at it to get rid of it.' (BEJ_MV_NARR_05_eritrea_147)
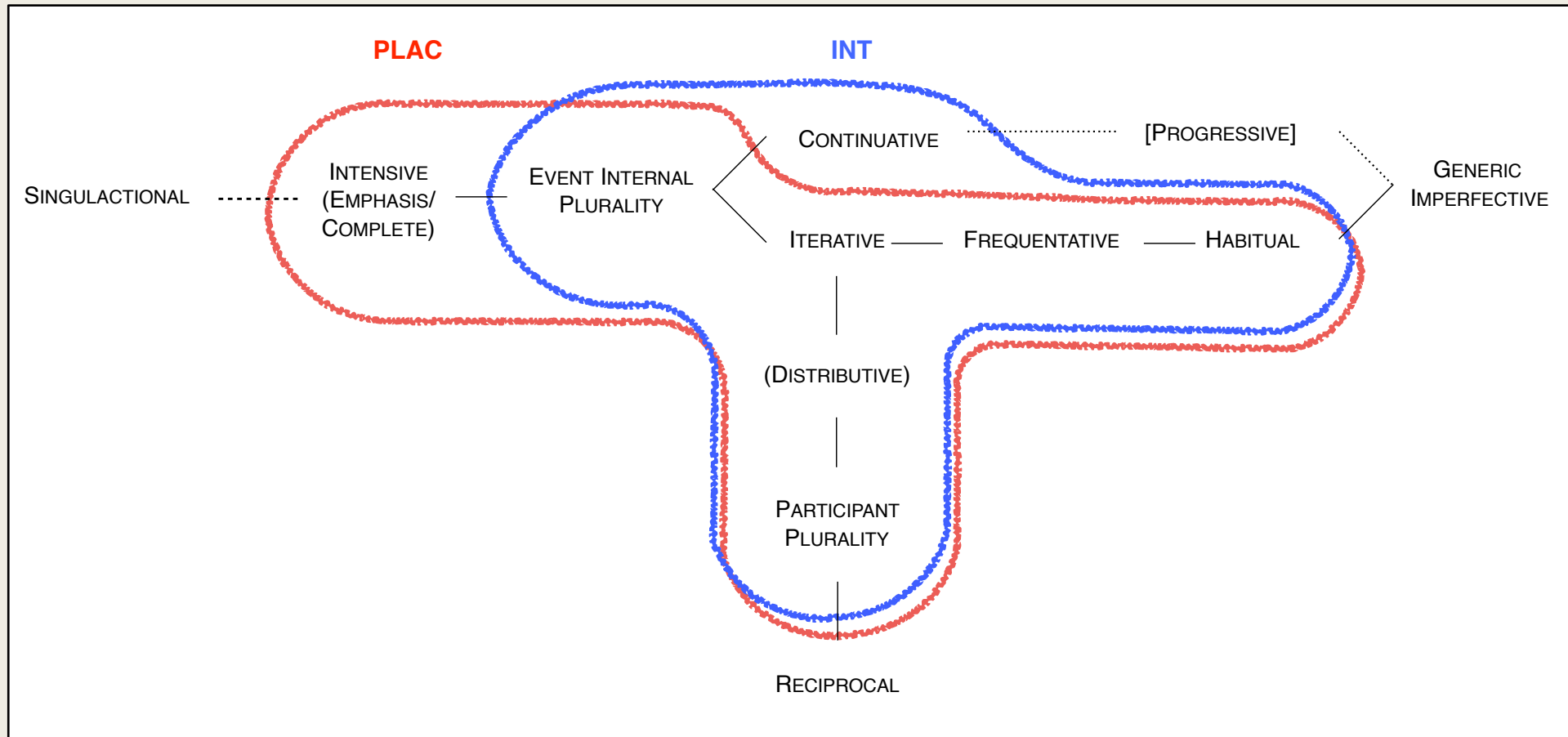
PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN BEJA

(17) Beja (Afroasiatic, Cushitic): Reduplication (partial or full) of the verb stem (Pluractional).

a. *toːt* *ti=takat* *ti=waw-ti=t* *rh-i=hoːb*

PROX.SG.F.ACC DEF.F=woman DEF.F=cry-AOR.3SG.F=INDF.F see-AOR.3SG.M=when

'when he saw this woman who was crying,' (BEJ_MV_NARR_14_sijadok_155)

b. *tuː=ndi* *ʔakir-aː=t* *waːw~waːw-eːtiːt*

DEF.SG.F.NOM=mother be_strong-CVB.MNR=INDF.F PLAC~cry-CVB.ANT

'the mother having wept a lot' (BEJ_MV_NARR_13_grave_076)

PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN BEJA

- 188 occurrences of Intensive and 77 of Pluractional.

FUNCTION(S)	N° OF OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
ITER.	95	50,5 %
ITER./PART. PLUR.	20	10,6 %
ITER./FREQ.	16	8,5 %
ITER./EV.-INT. PLUR.	5	2,7 %
ITER./CONT.	5	2,7 %
ITER./DISTR.	1	0,5 %
DISTR.	1	0,5 %
PART. PLUR./DISTR.	1	0,5 %
PART. PLUR.	9	4,8 %
FREQ.	2	1,1 %
FREQ./HAB.	17	9,0 %
SUCCESSIVE EV.	2	1,1 %
DUBIOUS CASES	14	7,5 %
TOTAL	188	100 %

FUNCTION(S)	N° OF OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
ITER.	41	53,2 %
ITER./FREQ.	7	9,1 %
ITER./DISTR.	5	6,5 %
ITER./EV.-INT. PLUR.	1	1,3 %
PART. PLUR.	7	9,1 %
FREQ./HAB.	2	2,6 %
INT.	2	2,6 %
DUBIOUS CASES	12	15,6 %
TOTAL	77	100 %

Pluractional Constructions in Beja

■ The semantic map of pluractional constructions in Beja (Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic).

Pluractional Constructions in Maa

■ In Maa, pluractionality is expressed through: (i) stem alternation (verb 'to go'), and (ii) reduplication (no more productive > lexicalized forms).

(18) Maa (Nilo-Saharan, Nilotic): Stem alternation.

a. *tɛ-n[HL]-ɛ̀-lo(t)*   *kulîê*   *áŋítie*

OBL-CN1-3-go.SG   others.ACC   houses.ACC

'when **he goes** to other homes.' (elengon2.010b)

b. *n-ɛ̀-po(n)-í₃*   *áa₁-ya-ú(n)*   *ílɔ̂*   *rinká*

CN1-3-go.PL-PL   INF.PL-take-TOWARD   that.MSG.ACC   club.ACC

'**They went** to bring that club,' (arinkoi.041a)

Pluractional Constructions in Maa

(19) Maa (Nilo-Saharan, Nilotic): Reduplication.

n[HL]-kɨ₂-duŋ-ɨ₂-duŋ

CN1-1PL-cut-EP-cut

'we shall cut it into pieces.' (arinkoi.011b)

(20) Maa (Nilo-Saharan, Nilotic): Reduplication lexicalized.

[L]-ɛ̀-ɨtɔkɨtɔk

TEMP-3-boil

When it was still boiling' (arinkoi.019b)

PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN MAA

- 396 occurrences of the verb 'to go' (238 SG, 158 PL), and 53 of reduplicated verbs.

FUNCTIONS		N° OF OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
Pluractional	Iter.	9	17,0 %
	Part. Plur.	10	18,9 %
	Iter./Part. Plur.	1	1,9 %
	Freq.	2	3,8 %
	Hab.	1	1,9 %
	Total	**23**	**43,5 %**
Lexicalized		25	47,1 %
Textual repetition		4	7,5 %
2 Person plural		1	1,9 %
Total		53	100 %

PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN MAA

■ The semantic map of pluractional constructions in Maa (Nilo-Saharan, Nilotic).
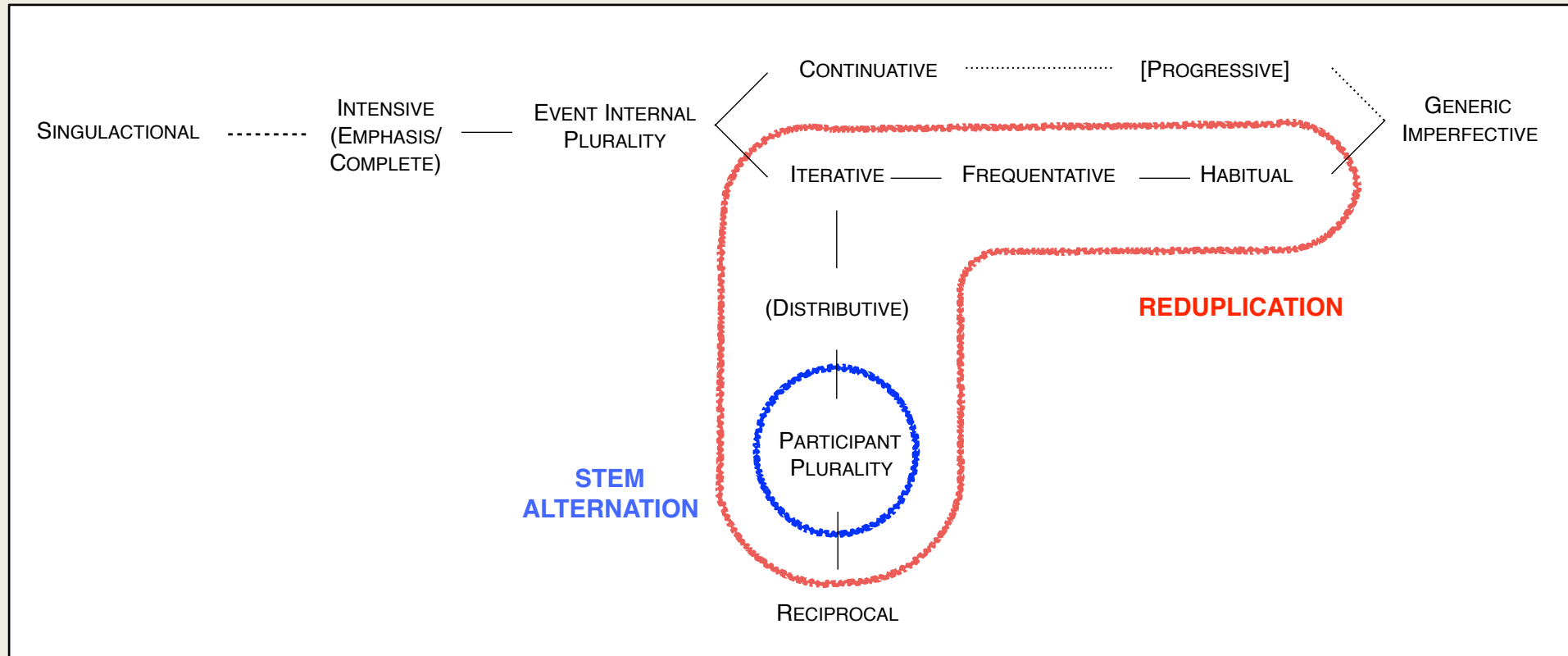
PLURACTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN MAA

■ In Maa, the directional AWAY –*áa* sometimes can express pluractional function.

(21) Maa (Nilo-Saharan, Nilotic) (Payne 2013:260)

a. *a-sʉ́j*   b. *a-sʉ́j-aá*   c. *a-sʉ́j-ʉ́*

INF.SG-follow   INF.SG-follow-AWAY   INF.SG-follow-TOWARD

'to follow'   'to follow away'   'to follow hither'

b. *n[HL]-ɛ̀-puo(n)*   *adé*   *ɨl=mʉ́rrân*   *l1-ɔɔ́$_1$*

CN1-3-go.PL   later   M.PL=warriors.NOM   M.PSD-PSR.PL.ACC

ɨl=áíkípia   *áa$_1$-puo(n)*   *áa$_1$-inɔs-áa*

M.PL=Laikipia.people.NOM   INF.PL-go.PL   INF.PL-tell-AWAY

'the Laikipia warriors went to report (tell out/repeatedly)' (emutata.036b)

GRAMMATICAL STATUS OF PLURACTIONALITY

■ If we take into consideration the grammatical status of pluractionality in these languages, we can see that the situation is not straightforward:

1. AKAWAIO: it can be described as aspectual, but the morpheme *-pödï* can co-occur with real aspectual markers (such as *-bök* 'PROGRESSIVE');

2. BEJA: it seems to have an independent status within Beja grammar: pluractional constructions are evidently different from aspectual markers. At the same time, there is an interesting parallelism (both formal and semantic) with nominal number.

3. MAA: though it seems that pluractionality used to be an independent phenomenon, the new incoming pluractional marker is strictly related with motion and directionality.

WHAT IS PLURACTIONALITY?

■ In the literature, there are several proposals of conceiving pluractionality from a theoretical point of view, for example: an actional value (cf. Dressler 1968, Cusic 1981), a value of aspect (Corbett 2000), or an independent phenomenon (Corbett 2000).

■ They are all correct and incorrect at the same time because pluractionality can be explained only adopting the Radical Construction Grammar approach (cf. Croft 2001).

■ This approach proposes to consider grammatical categories as language- and construction-specific, and not universally valid.

PLURACTIONALITY IN CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

- Usually, categories are defined as "a class of elements that display at least partially overlapping grammatical properties" (Cristofaro 2009:441).

- It is undeniable that the members of categories have common properties in the languages of the world, but at the same time they show also extensive differences:

"[...] it is important to realize that similarities do not imply identity: It is very hard to find categories that have fully identical properties in two languages, unless these languages are very closely related. [...] [O]ne has to start with the awareness that each language may have totally new categories." Haspelmath (2007:126)

Pluractionality in Cross-Linguistic Perspective

■ Often, linguists focus only on similarities and give no importance to these differences.

■ We cannot consider categories universally valid because they do not have the same grammatical status in all languages.

■ Linguistic categories are language- and construction-specific (Cristofaro 2009). However, "this does not mean [...] that grammatical relations [and categories] will be entirely incommensurable across languages" (Cristofaro 2009:469).

Pluractionality in Cross-Linguistic Perspective

- We should conceive categories only as classificatory labels that group together different constructions that share a specific semantic or pragmatic value.

"The most important consequence of the non-existence of pre-established categories for language typology is that cross-linguistic comparison cannot be category-based, but must be substance-based, because substance (unlike categories) is universal" Haspelmath (2007:124)

- In this sense, pluractionality is a classificatory label that group together a set of different constructions that share the common function of expressing a plurality of events, places, and participants.

Thank you very much for your attention!

я благодарю вас за ваше внимание!

Grazie mille per la vostra attenzione!

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