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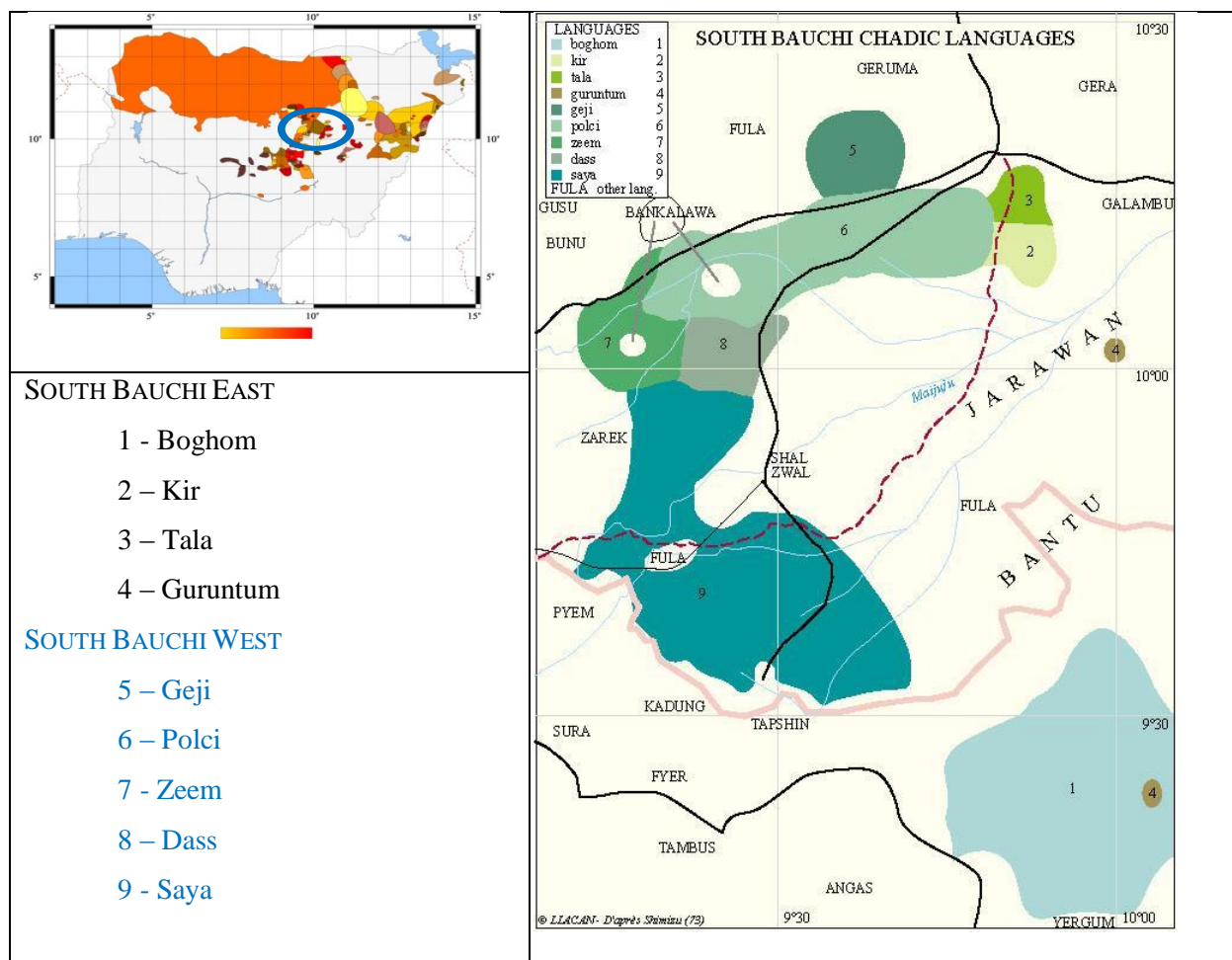
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NUMBER IN SOUTH-BAUCHI-WEST LANGUAGES

*B. CARON**

The 27 or so lects grouped into the SBW sub-group of Chadic languages are spoken in the South of the Bauchi State (Nigeria) stretching from Bauchi to the south of the state over less than 100 kms. Among them, only *Zaar* is relatively less known (Caron 2002a, 2002b ; Schneeberg 1971, 1974) and is often used to characterise the whole SBW group.



The comparison of the basic vocabulary of SBW languages proves their genetic relationship, and it has enabled Shimizu to propose the following classification:

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Table 1. SBW Classification¹

| Language clusters | Languages | Dialects |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Sub-group North | | |
| Geji | Geji | Bolu |
| | | Pelu |
| Zaranda | Zaranda | Geji |
| | | Zaranda |
| Polci | Dir | Zul |
| | | Baram |
| | Polci | Diir |
| | | Buli |
| | | Langas (Luri†) |
| Lundur | | |
| Polci | | |
| Sub-group South | | |
| Zeem | Chaari | Zeem†, Dyarum (?) |
| | | Tule† |
| | | Chaari |
| Lushi | Lushi | Lushi† |
| | | Bàraza |
| | | Dùr |
| Dass | Dott | Zumbul |
| | | Wangdày |
| | | Zòfi |
| Saya | Zakshi | Zàkshì |
| | | Boto |
| | | Zari |
| | Zaar | Sigidi |
| | | Zaar of Kal |
| Zaar of Marti | | |
| Zaar of Bogoro | | |

However, various elements tend to set the Zaar language (Sigidi and Zaar proper) apart:

1. From a socio-linguistic and historical point of view: the name *Baaraawaa* used by Shimizu (78) and Cospér (89) to name the group is not acknowledged by the *Zaar* (Sayawa) and *Gùùs* (Sigidi) people. If all the *Baaraawaa* agree to be closely related and all originate from the same area, viz. the Buli and Zaranda hills near Bauchi, the Zaars say they came from Bornu through Zaria; they say they settled in the hills South of Tafawa Balewa after some cohabitation with the Angas, Pyem and Jarawa.

¹ After Shimizu 1978, p. 13. I have named the languages (which are just numbered by Shimizu) after the best known dialects. The languages whose name is highlighted in yellow are referred to in the text. Those in grey have been surveyed but are not mentioned in the text. Luri, Zeem, Tule and Lushi are now extinct. Dyarum (Zeem cluster) is mentioned by Blench as almost extinct.

2. *Zaar* and *Gùùs* have a very elaborate and profusive TAM system when compared to the other languages.

SBW languages have lost the gender, inclusive/exclusive and dual markers which characterise Afro-Asiatic languages. The remaining singular/plural number opposition is apparent in the paradigms of independent pronouns.

Table 2. SBW Independent Pronouns

| | GEJI | | | POLCI | | | | ZEEM | DASS | | | SAYA | | |
|----|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------------|--|
| | Geji | Zaranda | Pelu | Diir | Buli | Langas | Polci | Chaari | Baraza | Dott | Zakshi | Sigidi | Zaar | |
| 1s | <i>ami</i> | <i>ámí:</i> | <i>ami</i> | <i>ám</i> | <i>mí</i> | <i>ám</i> | <i>ám</i> | <i>ám</i> | <i>ám</i> | <i>ám</i> | <i>ámí</i> | <i>ɲá:ni</i> | <i>m'á:ni</i> | |
| 2s | <i>kí</i> | <i>kí:</i> | <i>kí</i> | <i>ká</i> | <i>ki</i> | <i>káɲ</i> | <i>kí</i> | <i>kí</i> | <i>ká</i> | <i>kí</i> | <i>kí</i> | <i>k'á:ni</i> | <i>k'á:ni</i> | |
| 3s | <i>tí</i> | <i>tí:</i> | <i>tí</i> | <i>yàx</i> | <i>tʃí</i> | <i>yáx</i> | <i>tí</i> | <i>tʃí</i> | <i>yè:</i> | <i>àrì</i> | <i>tí</i> | <i>tʃá:ni</i> | <i>yá:ni</i> | |
| 1p | <i>mi</i> | <i>mí:</i> | <i>mi</i> | <i>mì</i> | <i>mí:</i> | <i>mì:</i> | <i>mì</i> | <i>mè:</i> | <i>mà</i> | <i>mà</i> | <i>mì</i> | <i>ɲà:né</i> | <i>m'á:ni</i> | |
| 2p | <i>ki</i> | <i>kiní:</i> | <i>ki</i> | <i>kàn</i> | <i>ki:</i> | <i>gàn</i> | <i>kì</i> | <i>kè:</i> | <i>kò</i> | <i>kò</i> | <i>kì</i> | <i>k'á:né</i> | <i>k'á:ni</i> | |
| 3p | <i>si</i> | <i>sí:</i> | <i>si</i> | <i>wúrí</i> | <i>wur</i> | <i>wúr</i> | <i>wún</i> | <i>tʃè:</i> | <i>kè:</i> | <i>sáɲ</i> | <i>tʃí</i> | <i>tʃá:né</i> | <i>yá:tʃí</i> | |

From a genetic point of view, Shimizu (*op.cit.*) has divided these languages into two sub-groups: the North sub-group (Geji and Polci) and the South sub-group (Zeem, Dass and Saya). The same division is observed if we examine the exponents of plurality in SBW languages.

Common SBW does not possess grammatical gender or nominal classes and as a rule, few nouns form a plural (morpho-lexical plural)². The plural inside the NP is expressed through the noun modifiers. There is no agreement between the verb and its arguments³. However, plurality appears in the verb phrase in two places: (i) the formation of the imperatives (ii) a verbal derivation forming what has come to be called, since Newman 1990, 'pluractionals'. The South sub-group (Zeem, Dass, Saya) differs in that it has developed a set of noun plurals through the use of various morphological devices, but most commonly, a *-(Vn)sə* suffix.

In this paper, we will present first the situation of noun plurals in the northern sub-group (Geji, Polci) which we will then contrast with the situation in the southern sub-group (Zeem, Dass, Saya). Then we will present the situation of verbal plurals. Finally, as a bonus, we will examine the case of number in 2nd person.

² In this presentation, we will ignore the Hausa lexemes borrowed with their original Hausa plural, e.g. in *Zaar*:

| | singular | plural |
|----------|----------------|-------------------|
| animal | <i>dabbà</i> | <i>dabbo:bi</i> |
| car | <i>mó:ta</i> | <i>mo:to:tʃí</i> |
| soldiers | | <i>so:ɗʒo:ɗʒi</i> |
| book | <i>tágàrda</i> | <i>tágàrdu</i> |

³ With the exception of the subjunctive. Cf. § V (Post-Scriptum: The 2nd person Plural in SBW) below.

I. NOUN PLURALS IN THE NORTHERN SUB-GROUP

A. NOUN PLURALS

Apart from one case of plural formed by suffixation with the suffix *-a:són* (Geji *buka:són*, ‘parent’, sg. *Buk*), noun plurals are represented by very few suppletive plurals, generally limited to ‘child’ and ‘woman’. Table 1 below lists all the noun plurals found in the sub-group. Zodi, although it belongs to the southern sub-group, appears in this summary as it behaves like the northern sub-group of SBW languages.

Table 3: Noun Plurals in the Northern SBW sub-group

| | child | children | woman | women | thing | things | person | people |
|--------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Geji | <i>yén</i> | <i>mî:l</i> | <i>káli</i> | <i>mó:ɟi</i> | <i>ili</i> | <i>wúl</i> | | |
| Pelu | <i>yéŋ</i> | <i>mí:lí</i> | <i>káli</i> | <i>mó:ɟi</i> | | | | |
| Diir | <i>ɲá:</i> | <i>mímí:ri</i> | <i>gerí</i> | <i>myéti</i> | | | | |
| Buli | <i>ʔún</i> | <i>me:</i> | | | | | | |
| Langas | <i>le:n</i> | <i>mimer</i> | | | | | | |
| Polci | <i>wún</i> | <i>mí:r</i> | | | | | <i>yàŋ</i> | <i>mbá:m</i> |
| Zodi | <i>wún</i> | <i>mé:r</i> | <i>gət</i> | <i>máti</i> | | | | |

B. MODIFIERS

Plurality is otherwise expressed by the noun modifiers, while the head noun remains invariable. In the nominal system, plurality is marked in the indefinite, in demonstratives, relative pronouns, and in the pronominal system. NB: adjectives have no plural form in these languages. We will show a few examples taken from Zodi, a member of the Dass cluster.

1. INDEFINITE DETERMINER

The indefinite determiner, translated as some/other(s) is *galâm* for the singular and *ɟilâm* for the plural.

| | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| <i>dí:</i> | <i>ma</i> | <i>bən</i> | <i>ərám</i> | <i>galâm</i> | <i>ndi</i> |
| NEG.PERF | 1P | know | thing | some.SG | NEG |

We don't know anything.

| | | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| <i>buká:</i> | <i>mbárti</i> | <i>ɟilâm</i> |
| after | day | some.PL |

after a few days

2. DEMONSTRATIVES

Zodi demonstratives are sensitive to number:

| | | proximal | | distal | |
|--------------|----|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Adverbs | | <i>woní</i> | here | <i>wéj</i> | there |
| Determinants | sg | <i>(lá:) goní</i> | this (cow) | <i>(lá:) gwej</i> | that (cow) |
| | pl | <i>(lá:) ɟoní</i> | these (cows) | <i>(lá:) ɟwej</i> | those (cows) |
| Pronouns | sg | <i>goní</i> | this one | <i>gwej</i> | that one |
| | pl | <i>wúrɟoní</i> | these ones | <i>wúrɟwej</i> | those ones |

3. GENITIVE LINK (GEJI)

The genitive link *gə* (s.) / *ɖɛi* (pl.), 'of' is optional and incompatible with [-human] possessors (in a broad sense). It appears in the structure <SN₁ *gə/ɖɛi* SN₂>, <the SN₁ of SN₂>, where SN₂ stands for a [+human] possessor. It is sensitive to number, manifesting the number of SN₁.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|
| puka | gə | Áwdù | puka | ɖɛi | Áwdù |
| knife | of | Audu | knife | of.PL | Audu |
| <i>Audu's knife.</i> | | | <i>Audu's knives.</i> | | |

The same genitive link manifests itself in possessive pronouns, manifesting the number of the possessed:

| Gen. Pro | sg. | pl. |
|----------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1s | <i>gi:ni</i> | <i>ɖɛi:ni</i> |
| 2s | <i>gwa:</i> | <i>ɖɛwa:</i> |
| 3s | <i>gwa:si</i> | <i>ɖɛwa:si</i> |
| 1p | <i>gənən</i> | <i>ɖɛinən</i> |
| 2p | <i>gwa:kən</i> | <i>ɖɛwa:kən</i> |
| 3p | <i>gwa:sən</i> | <i>ɖɛwa:sən</i> |

4. RELATIVE CONSTRUCTION (ZODI)

The relative pronouns are *gu* for singular and *wúrɖɛu* for plural head nouns.

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|
| <i>to:</i> | <i>séj</i> | <i>kon</i> | <i>wún-i</i> | <i>pi</i> | <i>ərám</i> | <i>gu</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>ndákə-ti</i> |
| well | then | male | boy-DEF | do | thing | REL | cont | want-VN |

Well, then the boy did the thing that he wanted.

| | | | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|---------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| <i>séj</i> | <i>mé:</i> | <i>məl</i> | <i>wúrɖɛu</i> | <i>tə</i> | <i>pat</i> | <i>máni</i> |
| then | children | girl | REL.PL | 3P.AOR | take | man |

| | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <i>ɖi:</i> | <i>tə</i> | <i>doŋ</i> | <i>səŋ</i> | <i>ŋak</i> | <i>ndi</i> |
| NEG.PERF | 3P.AOR | return | 3P.ICP | PERF | NEG |

Then, the girls who had found a husband did not return.

II. NOUN PLURALS IN THE SOUTHERN SUB-GROUP

A. NOUN PLURALS

Some traces of the suppletive plurals of the north sub-group can be found in the Zeem and Saya clusters of the southern sub-group:

| | child | children | woman | women |
|--------|-------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| Chaari | <i>nə:</i> | <i>mímyé:rə</i> | <i>kəl</i> | <i>məŋi</i> |
| Guus | <i>ŋá:ŋ</i> | <i>mimé:r</i> | | |
| Zaar | <i>ŋá:</i> | <i>mə:ri</i> | | |

However, a much larger group of complex noun plurals⁴ have developed in these languages, using suffixation and other morphological devices.

⁴ The complexity of these plurals parallels what is well known for Hausa and other Chadic languages. Cf. Newman (1990).

1. SAYA (SIGIDI)

Our survey of the Sigidi lexicon has yielded 235 verbs, 15 adjectives, 527 singular nouns and 267 plural nouns. Two classes of plural can be distinguished:

Regular plurals use suffixes. The most common is $\text{ɛ} \bullet \text{ɔ}$ frequently combined with lengthening of a radical vowel, plus some other morphonological changes (apophony, restitution of etymological consonants, etc.).

| -sə pl.suff. | sg. | pl. |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
| pumpkin | <i>bòláy</i> | <i>bòlà:ɲsá</i> |
| cloud | <i>bú:n</i> | <i>bù:nsá</i> |
| groundnut | <i>dàl</i> | <i>dàlsà</i> |
| shrew | <i>ɖʒa:ba</i> | <i>ɖʒà:bà:gsà</i> |
| stone | <i>dā:j</i> | <i>dā:ɲsá</i> |

Nouns finishing in ɔ or ɛ replace these with a *-ees* suffix:

| -e:s pl.suff. | sg. | pl. |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| locust-bean | <i>bətkə</i> | <i>bətkɛ:s</i> |
| thorn | <i>ɖʒibgə</i> | <i>ɖʒibgɛ :s</i> |
| leaves | <i>waldə</i> | <i>waldɛ:s</i> |

Other plurals, limited in number, display different types of vowel lengthening and apophony :

| apophony | sg. | pl. |
|----------|--------------|----------------|
| iguana | <i>dəgər</i> | <i>dəgɛ:r</i> |
| worm | <i>zibər</i> | <i>zibɛ:r</i> |
| wife | <i>gədə</i> | <i>gu:də</i> |
| baboon | <i>föyɲ</i> | <i>fugá:n</i> |
| lizard | <i>báyɲ</i> | <i>búgò:n</i> |
| squirrel | <i>ʒàfi</i> | <i>ʒətà:j</i> |
| bone | <i>ʒera</i> | <i>ʒira:j</i> |
| broom | <i>votsə</i> | <i>vwa:tsə</i> |

kinship terms: *ká ɖʒigè* = grand-fathers ; *ká ɖʒi:ka* = grand-children ; *ká ká:wù* = uncles, etc.).

2. SAYA (ZAAR)

Our survey of the Zaar lexicon has yielded 578 verbs, 52 adjectives, 1479 singular nouns and 50 plural nouns. Regular plurals are formed with the suffix *-s⁵*, and its variants *-fi*, *-tsə*, *-Vnsə* associated to various tone patterns.

| | sg. | pl. |
|---------|-----------------|--------------------|
| head | <i>gàm</i> | <i>gàm(t)sà</i> |
| hen | <i>gèri</i> | <i>gersá</i> |
| dog | <i>káafi</i> | <i>kadúysá</i> |
| mouse | <i>mbâp</i> | <i>mbaptsá</i> |
| chief | <i>gùɲ</i> | <i>guɲsá</i> |
| vulture | <i>kwádâk</i> | <i>kwadaksá</i> |
| viper | <i>ɖʒigu:ri</i> | <i>ɖʒigu:rinsə</i> |

⁵ In the Marti dialect of Zaar, the suffix is *-sá*, i.e. *kansá* (from *kân*, uncle), vs *kansá* in the Bogoro dialect.

The irregularities are proportionally quite numerous:

| | sg. | pl. |
|-------|------------|--------------|
| woman | <i>gət</i> | <i>gudí</i> |
| arrow | <i>pís</i> | <i>piská</i> |
| guest | <i>sám</i> | <i>səmdá</i> |
| sheep | <i>tám</i> | <i>timsá</i> |

As in Sigidi, a good number of family nouns form a pseudo-plural with a $-(k)tə$ [-*ytə*] suffix and MH tones:

| | sg. | pl. |
|---------|---------------|-----------------|
| in-law | <i>dʒit</i> | <i>dʒitəktá</i> |
| cousin | <i>kúndà:</i> | <i>kundaktá</i> |
| mother | <i>na:</i> | <i>naktá</i> |
| sister | <i>wa:tsá</i> | <i>watsaktá</i> |
| brother | <i>jês</i> | <i>jestá</i> |

3. CHAARI

Our survey of the Chaari lexicon has yielded 190 verbs, 19 adverbs, 25 adjectives, 693 singular nouns and 56 plural nouns. The basic plural suffix is $-V:sə$ / $-V:fí$ / $-nsə$ / $-nfí$, combined with various other processes, where *V:* stands for the lengthening of the final lexical vowel.

| | sg. | pl. |
|---------|---------------|------------------|
| pot sp. | <i>dàkà</i> | <i>dáká:sə</i> |
| hut | <i>dàwkè</i> | <i>dàwkè:sə</i> |
| dog | <i>kàdê</i> | <i>kádí:fí</i> |
| hyena | <i>vúli</i> | <i>vúlánsá</i> |
| bone | <i>nísə</i> | <i>nísənsə</i> |
| tooth | <i>f'è:nə</i> | <i>f'è:nənfí</i> |
| king | <i>ləkə</i> | <i>lókənfí</i> |

Final /i/ and /ə/ in the singular exhibit various degrees of apophony:

| | sg. | pl. |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
| water spring | <i>lɑ:rə</i> | <i>lɑ:ri:sə</i> |
| hut | <i>b'è:nə</i> | <i>b'è:né:sə</i> |
| old man | <i>kwàrí</i> | <i>kwàri:sə</i> |
| basket | <i>dər'fí</i> | <i>dər'f'è:sə</i> |

Two nouns use an $-a:sə$ suffix:

| | sg. | pl. |
|---------|---------------|-------------------|
| pot sp. | <i>dʒáráŋ</i> | <i>dʒáráŋá:sə</i> |
| arm | <i>táwò</i> | <i>táwà:sə</i> |

4. SEMANTIC FIELDS OF NOUN PLURALS

In Zaar, noun plurals relate to [+animate] terms, e.g. humans and animals. In Sigidi and Chaari, where the number of plurals is proportionally more important than in Zaar, no specific semantic field seems to be predominant, and both animate and inanimate terms have a plural form. This may be due to the fact that the survey of Chaari and Sigidi was done over a couple of weeks, and was strictly morphological, whereas the work on Zaar has been going on for 20 years, and has been more thorough and extensive. During a morphological survey, speakers can produce morphologically sound plurals, by applying processes mechanically, while the resulting plurals

would hardly be used by a speaker. I suspect this was the case during the survey of Sigidi and Chaari, and the lexicon gathered in Zaar has a good chance of reflecting the way the Saya languages work as a whole, from a cognitive point of view.

B. MODIFIERS

Contrary to the Northern sub-group, the languages of the Southern sub-group vary as regards plural agreement in their determiner, whether indefinite or demonstrative. Let us take our examples from Sigidi and Zaar, two members of the Saya cluster:

1. INDEFINITE DETERMINER

In Zaar, the indefinite *gón* does not vary with the number of the head noun it modifies. : *za :r gón* (a man) ; *zà:rsà gón* (some people)

In Sigidi, the indefinite determiner (some/other(s)) is *gón* for the singular, *gján* for the plural: *kùn gón / mimí:ri gján*, 'a boy/some boys'.

2. DEMONSTRATIVES

The two Zaar demonstratives are: proximal *gón*, 'this' and distal *gí*: 'that', used both with the plural and the definite form of the singular: *zà:rsà gón/gí*:, these/those people *za:r-i gón/gí*:, this/that man.

The two Sigidi demonstratives are: proximal *gwíni*, 'this' (pl. *gíni*, 'these') ; distal *gwa gágwi*, 'that' (pl. *gja gági*, 'those'): *za:r gwíni/ gwa gágwi*, 'this/that man' ; *zà:rsà gíni/gwà gágwi*, (these/those men).

3. RELATIVE CONSTRUCTION

The relative construction in Zaar uses an invariable relativizer, *dam*, which does not agree with the pivot noun. Only the resumptive pronoun agrees in number with a [+human] antecedent.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|-------|
| <i>mur-í</i> / <i>zà:rsà gí</i> : | <i>dam</i> | <i>mə</i> | <i>jél=tə/jí</i> | [...] |
| man-PROX / people PROX | rel | 1sg.aor | see=3sg/3pl.acc | |
| This man / those people that I saw... | | | | |

4. ADJECTIVES

Contrary to what obtains in the Northern sub-group, the adjectives have a singular and a plural form that agrees with the head noun. Morphologically, adjectives are a "nouny" category. They cannot be combined to a negative marker nor to a comparative morpheme. They have a plural and a definite form. When these two affixes are combined, four forms can be obtained. Let's take the adjective 'evil' as an example:

| | lexical | definite |
|----------|----------------|----------------|
| singular | <i>kúskə</i> | <i>kú:fi</i> |
| plural | <i>kusúŋsə</i> | <i>kusúŋfi</i> |

They draw their number feature by agreement with the noun they modify. When they operate as noun modifiers, adjectives can be simply juxtaposed on the left of the noun : <Adj N> or appear on the right and are introduced by genitive link : <N=*ká* Adj>. The GL structure is not used with plural adjectives.

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>dàllá firáŋ</i> | <i>ndurúŋsə fayndí</i> | <i>lât ká mu:ri</i> |
| big stick | short(-legged) pots | new leather |

When they operate as predicates, adjectives use the PTCL.PRED *nə*, and optionally the verb *ji*, 'be':

| | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| | modifier | predicate |
| singular | <i>kúskə za:r</i> an evil man | <i>D. nə kú:fi</i> D. is evil |
| plural | <i>kusúŋsə zàrsə</i> evil people | <i>zàrsə ʔí⁶ nə kusúŋfi</i> people are evil |

III. VERBAL PLURALITY IN SBW

Verb/Subject agreement in SBW languages is limited to the Imperative, with an opposition between singular and plural addressees. Another phenomenon is the presence of a derivation well-known in Chadic languages, producing what has been named 'pluractional verbs' by Paul Newman (Newman 1990).

A. THE IMPERATIVE PLURAL

1. GEJI (GEJI)

The imperative is characterized by a specific tone pattern replacing the lexical tone pattern of the verb: M* for verbs beginning with an initial depressor consonant (D verbs) and HH(M) otherwise (T verbs)⁷. Direct object pronouns and directional adverbial particle (i.e. *ka*, 'away') are cliticized to the verb, and included in the Imperative tone pattern.

The plural is formed with a *-n* suffix. An epenthetic /ə/ is added to verbs ending in a final consonant. When the verb finishes in a vowel, the nasal consonant disappears, but the nasal feature remains on the vowel, which results in lengthening and nasalization of the vowel.

| Geji | | Singular Imperative | | Plural Imperative | |
|------------|------------|---|------------|---|------------|
| wipe | <i>ʔok</i> | <i>ʔók</i> | <i>ká!</i> | <i>ʔók-ən</i> | <i>ka!</i> |
| | | wipe.IMP.SG | away | wipe-IMP.PL | away |
| | | Wipe! (pl.; cf. Fr: <i>Essuie!</i>) | | Wipe! (pl.; cf. Fr: <i>Essuyez!</i>) | |
| switch off | <i>ʔo</i> | <i>ʔó</i> | <i>ká!</i> | <i>ʔó: (< ʔón)</i> | <i>ka!</i> |
| | | kill.imp.sg | away | kill.IMP.PL | away |
| | | Switch (it) off! (sg.; cf. Fr: <i>Éteins!</i>) | | Switch (it) off! (pl.; cf. Fr: <i>Éteignez!</i>) | |

NB: verbs finishing with /i/ use both forms of the plural: the /i/ is either lengthened or replaced with the *-ən* suffix.

⁶ *ʔí* < *tə+yi* (be+3SG.AOR).

⁷ M* = all-mid tones; HH(M) = H on 1 and 2-syllable verbs ; HHM on 3-syllable verbs. See (Caron 2009) for a study of depressor consonants in Geji.

| | | | | |
|--------------|--|------------|--|------------------------|
| bàlli | ballə | ki! | ball-ən | ki⁸! |
| turn back | turn_back.IMP.SG | 2SG | turn_back-IMP.PL | 2PL |
| | Turn back! (sg.; cf. Fr: <i>Va t'en!</i>) | | Turn back! (pl.; cf. Fr: <i>Allez-vous en!</i>) | |

The bare imperative (viz. without an object or a directional adverbial particle) is added a **-(n)i** suffix:

| Geji | | Sg. Imperative | Pl. Imperative |
|-------|------------|----------------|----------------|
| farm | kól | kólí | kólónni |
| take | kɑ: | kámí | kámónni |
| pound | dòp | dòbì | dòbì:ni |
| stand | ɣəl | ɣəli | ɣəlónni |

Exception: a number of monosyllabic verbs ending in a short vowel do not take the **-i** suffix in the singular:

| Geji Imperative | Sg | Pl |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|
| go | su | sú:ni |
| drink | ɬa | ɬá:ni |
| enter | te | té:ni |
| climb | to | tó:ni |
| emigrate | yo | yó:ni |
| billow | gù | gu:ni |
| put | zì | zənni |

2. POLCI (POLCI)

The situation in Polci is close to that of Geji, with the exception that depressor consonants do not exist in Polci. The tone pattern of the Imperative is H for singular and HL for plural.

| Polci Imperative | Sg. | Pl. |
|------------------|------------|----------------|
| pound | dès | désánni |
| grill | bùk | búkání |
| open | búl | búlónni |
| enter | té | té:ni |

3. ZEEM (CHAARI)

In Chaari, the tone patterns of the Imperative are H for singular and LHL for plural. The plural suffix is **-əne**.

| Chaari Imperative | Sg. | Pl. |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|
| shoot | mbák | mbákánè |
| take | kám | kámánè |
| blow | fát | fátánè |
| tie | ngán | ngánánè |

4. DASS (ZODI)

We have no examples of imperative plurals in Zodi.

⁸ The verb *bàlli* (turn back, intr.) is followed by an Intransitive Copy Pronoun. The tonal difference between *ki* (2sg.) and *kí* (2pl.) is cancelled by the imperative Mid tone pattern associated with D verbs. This is compensated by the *-ən* plural suffix.

5. SAYA (SIGIDI)

The form of the Imperative singular is the same as the lexical form of the verbs. The plural is formed with a **-(ə)n** suffix and HL(L) tones.

| Sigidi Imperatives | Sg. | Pl. |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| unroll | <i>ta:</i> | <i>tá:n</i> |
| knead | <i>ka:s</i> | <i>ká:sən</i> |
| chop | <i>ja:tsá</i> | <i>já:tsən</i> |
| lick | <i>batə</i> | <i>bátən</i> |

B. PLURAL VERBS (“PLURACTIONALS”)

Plural verbs, also called « pluractionals », mark agreement with a plural subject in case of intransitive verbs, and repeated or distributed action in case of transitive verbs. They are best represented in the Southern sub-group, and more precisely in the Saya sub-branch. In the northern sub-group, only one verb in Geji can be considered to be a pluractional: **zine**, ‘cook’, related (?) to **zi** ‘put down’.

1. SAYA (ZAAR)

Two forms of pluractionals exist in *Za:r* :

- an **internal plural** through lengthening of the radical vowel, or replacement of this vowel by the vowel /a:/, resulting in a H verb : *dʒom* / *dʒwá:m* : ‘pile up, gather’ (with a plural object) ; *kír* / *kí:r*, ‘run’ (with a plural subject) ; *ndʒol* > *ndʒwá:l*, ‘leave, go’ (with a plural subject) ; *ʒop* / *ʒwá:p*, ‘sting’ ; *mal* / *má:l*, ‘get lost’ ; *nat* / *ná:t*, ‘tie up’ ; *dat* / *dá:t*, ‘nail’ ; *ʒim* / *ʒí:m*, ‘call’ ; *kəp* / *ká:p*, ‘weave, plant’ ; *məs* / *má:s*, ‘die’ ; *vjer* / *vjá:r*, ‘insult’

- an **external plural** through suffixation of **-ń / -ən**. We saw *ná:t* (pl. < *nat*, ‘tie up’), which alternates with the form *nadən* (pl. : ‘tie up several times, or several things, or several people tying up sth.’). We have *bat* / *badən* : ‘move along’ ; *sə:* / *sə:n* : ‘breathe’ ; *tə* / *tən*, ‘go’ ; *wum* / *wumən* : ‘feel’.

2. SAYA (GUUS)

There are traces of a pluractional derivation through lengthening of the first vowel :

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| combine, glue | <i>mbatsá</i> | gather | <i>mba:tsá</i> |
| bite | <i>nas</i> | chew | <i>na:s</i> |
| tie | <i>nat</i> | tie | <i>na:t</i> |
| see, look at | <i>ngal</i> | examine | <i>nga:l</i> |
| answer | <i>ngigə</i> | refuse | <i>ngi:gə</i> |
| cease | <i>ʒer</i> | stand, stop | <i>ʒe:r</i> |

3. DASS (ZODI)

Verbs and verbal nouns sometimes take a $\text{ɛ} \text{ɔ} \text{ɛ}_1$ suffix (with a preceding floating Hi tone) in agreement with plural subjects or objects: *pár/páрни* ‘do’ ; *ʒi/ʒini* ‘eat’ ; *ʒəbát/ʒəbátni* ‘get up, start, grow up, migrate’. This suffix is incompatible with the Perfective.

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>əri</i> | <i>gu</i> | <i>má:</i> | <i>ʒi</i> | <i>ada</i> | <i>man</i> | <i>ʒi-ni</i> | <i>gálba</i> |
| 3s | rel | 1s.fut | eat | pro | 1p.fut | eat-PL | victory |
| it’s what I shall eat with | | | | we will win | | | |

ú *lǎbǎt*
2s.aor grow_up
you grew up

ma *lǎbǎt-ni* *ú* *lo:tí*
1p.aor migrate-PL gen far
we came from far

4. ZEEM (CHAARI)

Only two instances of verbs looking like pluractionals appear in our survey of Chaari:

| | Verb | Pluractional |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|
| divide/distribute | <i>bǎlí</i> | <i>bǎlè:ŋá</i> |
| dance | <i>nápí</i> | <i>nánápí</i> |

IV. CONCLUSION

The study of plurality in SBW languages has introduced some nuances in the vision we have of the divide introduced by Shimizu (78) between the northern and southern sub-groups, with the Dass cluster (i.e. Zodi) behaving like the Northern languages as regards nominal and adjectival plurals. Pluractionals seem to be absent, and replaced by a *-ni* suffix which looks more like an agreement flexion than a pluractionals derivation.

| | Plurals | Determiners | Adjectives | Imperative | Pluractionals |
|----------|---------|-------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Northern | | | | | |
| Geji | — | + | — | + | — |
| Polci | — | + | — | + | — |
| Southern | | | | | |
| Zeem | + | + | + | + | + |
| Dass | — | + | — | ? | ? |
| Saya | + | +/- | + | + | + |

The presence of nominal and adjectival plurals in the Zeem and Saya clusters seems to be an innovation departing from a situation where plurality is expressed only by the personal pronouns, by the modifiers within the nominal system, and by the imperative⁹. Pluractionals, although they are widespread in many Chadic languages, seem to be an innovation of Zeem and Saya as well. These innovative features may have developed through the influence of plateau languages in the case of Zeem and Saya. The innovation has gone one step further in Zaar proper with the loss of plural agreement on the nominal determiners.

V. POST-SCRIPTUM: THE 2ND PERSON PLURAL IN SBW

From proto-West Chadic where person and number contrast in the pronominal system is marked by vocalic contrast, what can be observed in SBW is a situation where the final vowels have been lost and replaced by a central neutral vowel /ə/ resulting in segmental ambiguity between singular and plural. Let us illustrate this by looking at the two geographically most distant languages : Zaranda and Zaar:

⁹ The absence of plural in the Zodi imperative may be due to a faulty survey.

| | Proto West-Chadic | Zaranda | Zaar |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1sg | <i>*ni</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>mə</i> |
| 2sg.m | <i>*ka</i> | <i>kə</i> | <i>kə</i> |
| 2sg.f | <i>*ki</i> | | |
| 3sg.m | <i>*si</i> | <i>tə</i> | <i>a</i> |
| 3sg.f | <i>*ta</i> | | |
| 1pl | <i>*mu</i> | <i>mə</i> | <i>mə</i> |
| 2pl | <i>*ku</i> | <i>kə</i> | <i>kə</i> |
| 3pl | <i>*su</i> | <i>sə</i> | <i>tə</i> |

In Caron (2006) I summarized the situation in the proto-SBW pronominal system in the following table, where no segmental difference is made between singular and plural pronouns:

Table 4. Proto SBW pro.syst.

| | |
|--------|-------------|
| 1sg/pl | <i>*n/m</i> |
| 2sg/pl | <i>*k</i> |
| 3sg/pl | <i>*t/s</i> |

We can see that a new segmental forms (e.g. *a*) has emerged in various languages in the 1st and 3rd persons to remove the ambiguity. But this segmental ambiguity remains prevalent in all SBW in the 2nd person, much in the same way as the difference between *thou* and *you* has been lost in modern English. However, the SBW languages have found various ways of maintaining the opposition active, as the following table shows for the Aorist/Subjunctive:

| | Zda | Geji | Pelu | Diir | Lgas | Ch | Pci | Bza | Zdī | Zshi | Sdi | Zaar |
|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|-----------------|----|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|------|
| 1s | à | à | à | à ^H | à | má | a | ám | à | á | mə | mə |
| 2s | kə | kə | kə | kə ^H | kə | ká | kə | ká | ú | ká | kə | kə |
| 3s | tə | tə | tə | yà: ^H | yá: | tá | jà:/ər* | jè: | ∅ | tá | tʃi | á |
| 1pl | mə | mə | mə | mù ^L | mə ^H | mə | mə | mə | mà | mə | mə | má |
| 2pl | kə Vpl | kə Vpl | kə Vpl | kə ^L Vpl | gə ^H | kə | kə | kò | kò | kə | kə | ká |
| 3pl | sə | sə | sə Vpl | wù ^L | wù | tə | wú | kì | tì | tə | tʃi | tá |

* : ər = [-human] ; jà: = [+human]

The means developed by the SBW languages to solve the ambiguity between 2sg & 2pl pre-verbal pronouns are quite varied :

- 1) Baraza & Zodi have developed a new set of vowels, resp. *ká/kò* and *ú/kò*
- 2) Langas has used the [+/- voiced] feature to differentiate the singular (*kə*) from the plural (*gə*) in the 2nd person only;
- 3) Other languages have used tone to oppose the singular and the plural: Zakshi opposes High tones for singular to Low tones for plural in the whole paradigm (*ká/kə*); Guus does the same with Mid and Low (*kə/kə*) ; Zaar Mid and High (*kə/ká*).
- 4) Other languages use a floating tone that attaches to the 1st syllable of the following verb: Dir uses this device for all the persons: High for the singular and Low for the plural; Langas combines a High floating tone on the plural 1st and 2nd person pronouns with the voice opposition seen above for the 2nd person;
- 5) Finally, four languages (Zaranda, Geji, Pelu and Diir) use a suffix that attaches to the 2nd person plural¹⁰. This suffix, which is the same as that of the Imperative plural, is the only

¹⁰ In Pelu, the suffix is used with the 3rd person plural as well.

distinctive mark of plural for Zaranda and Geji, and reinforces the floating Low tone for Diir.

Let us see an example of the plural suffix on the 2nd person plural in the Subjunctive in Pelu:

sə la: tək¹¹ po:l hunká.
 3PL.AOR want 2.SBJV sweep room
They want you (sg.) to sweep the room.

sə la: tək pó:l-ən hunká.
 3PL.AOR want 2.SBJV sweep-PL room
They want you (pl.) to sweep the room.

This suffix which appears here in the 2nd person plural is a remarkable development in so far as it is the only instance of plural agreement in the verb in SBW languages.

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¹¹ *tək* is analysed as *tə+kə* = complementizer + Aorist, resulting in a subset of Aorist with a subjunctive meaning.

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