Verb Plurality in Kushi: A First Appraisal

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Abstract

It is a well-known fact that in Chadic languages the notion of verbal plurality falls into two categories: agreement plurality, where a plural subject requires a plural verbal form, and pluractionality, a form used to encode the iterativity (i.e. repetitiveness) or multiplicity (i.e. multiple effects on arguments) of an action. Kushi, a West Chadic language spoken in north-eastern Nigeria, presents both types of plural. In this article, I will illustrate the derivational strategies employed to encode verbal plurality in Kushi—suffixation, infixation, and gemination—showing the existing correlation between plural form and root shape (i.e. verb class). Interesting features of Kushi plurals are the existence of two plurality morphemes (one for non-subjunctive TAM paradigms and one for the subjunctive) and the quality of the final vowel in subjunctive plural verbal forms. All the data used in this paper have been collected in the framework of an on-going project of documentation and description of Kushi.

Keywords

Kushi – Bole-Tangale – verb plural – pluractionality – TAM system

1 Introduction

Kushi (*Goji*) is a Chadic language (West, A.2, Bole-Tangale, Tangale; Newman 2013) spoken in southern Gombe State, Nigeria (Glottocode <kush1236>, ISO 639-3 code <kuh>). The language is labelled as 'vigorous' by *Ethnologue* (Simons, Fennig 2018). Fieldwork research undertaken in the last years confirms this positive assessment, the inter-generational transmission of the language and its use across all domains being perhaps the most significant factors in defining the vitality of Kushi. Kushi people are bilingual, and Hausa, the

lingua franca, is more and more present in the lexicon of the language. Code-switching between Kushi and Hausa is a common phenomenon, particularly among the youngsters. The same can be observed in all the neighbouring communities, almost without exceptions. The elders of Filiya, Kushi, Burak, Bangwinji, and Loo (villages spread along the north-eastern fringes of the Muri mountains south of Kaltungo) agree in certifying a gradual process of lexical erosion in their respective languages. In 2006, the construction of the tarmac road connecting the town of Filiya to the villages of Kushi, Burak, and Bangwinji has certainly contributed to the 'opening' of these settlements by easing the movement of people and goods. Historically, the eastern Muri plains have always constituted a very dynamic area from the point of view of language contact and migrations. Many Kushi speakers are competent in one or more of the neighbouring languages, e.g. Burak and Loo (Niger-Congo, Adamawa, Waja-Jen), or Pero (Chadic, Bole-Tangale). Nigerian Fulfulde is also strongly present in the area.

2   Verbal Plurality in Chadic

The notion of verbal plurality encompasses two distinct phenomena. As discussed by Newman (1990: 53; see also Schuh 2017: 371ff.), verbal plurality in Chadic may refer either to plural verb forms working in a concord system (i.e. where an agreement between a plural subject and a plural verb form is required) or to derived plural forms indicating semantic plurality. Schuh observes the existence, in many Chadic languages, of a strong correlation between the plural verb and the plurality of the subject, pointing out that plural verb forms tend to be used as pluractionals to indicate the iterativity and multiplicity of action even with singular arguments. This consideration leads Schuh (2017: 372) to view pluractionality as 'paramount' (i.e. a core feature) and concord plurality as 'epiphenomenal'.

The two categories are represented in the Bole-Tangale (BT) group almost in a dichotomous way. Northern BT languages show the predominance of an agreement system (i.e. a plural argument entails a plural verbal form), whereas southern BT languages seem to favour semantic plurality (e.g. iterativity and multiplicity of action; Leger 2014: 247). The distinction between concord plurality and pluractionality is reflected in the verbal morphology of the BT languages. In a concord plurality system, verbal plurality is marked by means of a nasal element: **an** in Bele, Bole, Kwami, Karekare, Ngamo, Kupto, and Maaka, **(i)n** in Kirfi (Leger 2014: 247), and **in** in Bure (Batic 2014: 67ff.). On the other hand, pluractionality involves several derivational strategies. This could be

linked to the fact that—as we will see in the next paragraphs—semantic plurality embraces a variety of meanings and covers different functions, while concord plurality is determined by a straightforward agreement mechanics.

3   Verbal Plurality in Kushi: an Overview

Kushi is a southern BT language whose system of verbal plurality fits the general picture offered in the previous section, and the presence of pluractionals comes as no surprise. According to the data collected so far, verbal plurality in Kushi has the following characteristics:
a)   concord plurality and pluractionality are both present in the language;
b)   concord plurality is not obligatory;
c)   concord plurality and pluractionality are not morphologically differentiated (hence, concord plurality is not marked by a specific -(V)n- morpheme);
d)   some verbs do not have a plural form;
e)   verbs that allow plurality present two plural forms: one for the non-subjunctive/habitual TAMs (perfect, progressive, future, imperative, and aoriste-preterite) and one for the subjunctive/habitual;
f)   plural forms appear to be partly class-dependent, i.e. they are determined by the root shape;
g)   the semantics of a pluractional is not tied to a specific morphological derivation: plural forms of verbs applying identical morphological rules can encode different semantic perspectives on the action.
Before proceeding with the morphological aspects of verbal plurality, I shall integrate the previous points with some additional information.

The speakers of Kushi I have been working with are quite adamant in seeing concord plurality as a feature rarely used in present-day Kushi. According to the elders, most of the plural verbal forms are unknown to the younger speakers. The great majority of data presented here have been obtained by means of elicitation as part of a description of the verbal system. Elicitation allowed me to collect a significant amount of data on verbal plurals with the primary aim of defining morphological patterns. Therefore, this paper is concerned more with the morphology of verbal plurality than with the specific semantics of the forms that will be given in the next section. As for the semantics of pluractionals, the spectrum of possibilities embraces several sub-categories that seems to coincide with the 6 pluractional meanings productive in Bole, namely (1) one subject repeatedly doing the same action; (2) one subject repeatedly doing the same action to the same object; (3) one subject acting iteratively on

several objects; (4) several subjects acting one by one; (5) several subjects act-ing iteratively on the same object; and (6) several subjects acting iteratively on several objects (Schuh 2017: 373–74).

4   The Morphology of Verbal Plurality

In this section I will present the main derivational rules found across plural forms. Since my working hypothesis is the existence of a correlation between verb class and plural derivation (a correlation that seems to exist), I will briefly summarise the verb class system of Kushi and then proceed with the illustration of the plural forms.

4.1   *Verb Classes*
Kushi presents three main verb classes that can be determined according to the stem shape (Batic 2019). Basically, the three classes represent the following patterns: CVC(C)V (class A), CVVCV (class B), and CV(V) (class C). Table 1 details the morphophonology of the classes:

TABLE 1   Verb classes

A	A1	CVCCɔ CVCCo	
	A2a	CVCV	(+ATR)
	A2b	CVCɔ CVCʊ	
	A2c	CɛCɔ	
B	B	CVVCɔ CVVCo	
C	C1	CV	(−ATR)
	C2	CVV	(−ATR)

Table 2 illustrates the morphological behaviour of the verb classes across the different TAMs:

TABLE 2   Verbal classes: root shape and final vowel

	A				B	C	
	A1	A2a	A2b	A2c	B	C1	C2
IMP/ AOR	-ɔ/-o	-u/-o/-ə	-ɔ/-ʊ	-ɔ	-ɔ/-o	–	–
PFCT	-aa/-əə	-aa/-əə	-aa	-aa	-aa/-əə	-aa	-a
PROG/ FUT	-anɪ/-əni	-əni	-anɪ	-anɪ	-anɪ/-əni	-anɪ	-anɪ
SUBJ/ HAB	-ɪna/-inə	-i	-ɪ	-i	-Ca/-Cə	(-i/-e/-a)	-na
	CVC.Cɔ CVC.Co	CV.CV	CV.Cɔ CV.Cʊ	Cɛ.Cɔ	CVV.Cɔ CVV.Co	CV	CVV
	±ATR	+ATR	−ATR	−ATR	±ATR	−ATR	−ATR

4.2   *Morphology of Plural Verbal Forms*

As mentioned before, Kushi verbs that have developed verbal plurality present two verbal derivations: a main derivation used in all verbal paradigms except the subjunctive and the habitual, and a second derivation used in the subjunctive and the habitual.[1] In the majority of cases, the subjunctive plural is derived from the non-subjunctive plural by geminating either the second consonant of the plural morpheme (in case of suffixation) or the second consonant of the verb stem (in case of infixation).

Kushi displays three morphological strategies to mark plurality: (1) suffixation, (2) infixation, and (3) gemination.

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1 Subjunctive and habitual present the same verbal form but different TAM markers (Batic 2019). From now on, I will refer to the subjunctive/habitual form simply with subjunctive.

#1—Suffixation[2]

Rule #1.1	Plural forms	
suffixation of **-ɪy-**	non-SUBJ **CVC-ɪy-**	SUBJ **CVC-ɪyy-**

The morpheme **-ɪy-** follows the second stem consonant. In A1 verbs, the second stem consonant is shortened. The subjunctive plural is derived by geminating the consonant of the plurality morpheme. The final vowel of the subjunctive plural is **-A**.

(1)

	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	A1	**ʔámm-ɔ**	"climb"	**ʔam-íy-**	**ʔam-íyy-a**
	A1	**ʔíssh-ɔ**	"grind"	**ʔɪsh-íy-**	**ʔɪsh-íyy-a**
	A1*	**júɓɓ-o**	"jump"	**juɓ-íy-**	**juɓ-íyy-ə**
	A1	**límm-o**	"repair"	**lim-íy-**	**lim-íyy-ə**
	A1	**lóŋŋ-ɔ**	"mix"	**lɔŋ-íy-**	**lɔŋ-íyy-a**
	A1	**néssh-ɔ**	"rest"	**nɛj-íy-**[3]	**nɛj-íyy-a**
	A1	**nómm-ɔ**	"close"	**nʊm-íy-**	**nʊm-íyy-a**
	A1	**nyímm-ɔ**	"think"	**nyɪm-íy-**	**nyɪm-íyy-a**
	A1	**ʔómm-ɔ**	"rot"	**ʔɔm-íy-**	**ʔɔm-íyy-a**
	A1	**pámm-ɔ**	"thank"	**pam-íy-**	**pam-íyy-a**
	A1	**shómm-ɔ**	"suck"	**shʊm-íy-**	**shʊm-íyy-a**
	A1	**témm-ɔ**	"sweep"	**tɛm-íy-**	**tɛm-íyy-a**
	A1	**tókʰkʰ-ɔ**	"add"	**tɔkʰ-íy-**	**tɔkʰ-íyy-a**
	A1	**wíssh-ɔ**	"roast"	**wɪsh-íy-**	**wɪsh-íyy-a**
	A1	**yópp-ɔ**	"escape"	**yɔp-íy-**	**yɔp-íyy-a**

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2   The following orthographic conventions have been adopted: (1) Kushi vowels harmonise according to a [±ATR] feature. Small capitals are used to indicate vowels with unmarked ATR sign (i.e. in plural morphemes); (2) high tones are marked, low tones are unmarked; (3) in several cases the final vowel of subjunctive plurals diverge from the ending found in the singular: for this reason the PL (SUBJ) column will always present the full verbal form; (4) the elicitation form used in the SG column is the imperative form.

3   ***sh+ɪ > jɪ**.

CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
A2c	**shɛɣ-ɔ**	"vanish"	**shɛɣ-íy-**	**shɛɣ-íyy-a**
A2c	**yɛm-ɔ**	"carve"	**yɛm-íy-**	**yɛm-íyy-a**
A2a	**ɗig-u**	"build"	**ɗig-íy-**	**ɗig-íyy-ə**
A2a*	**kpom-u**	"meet"	**kpɔm-íy-**	**kpɔm-íyy-a**
A2b	**ɗaŋ-ʊ**	"wait"	**ɗaŋ-íy-**	**ɗaŋ-íyy-a**
A2b	**jam-ʊ**	"loom"	**jam-íy-**	**jam-íyy-a**
A2b	**kʊm-ʊ**	"agree"	**kʊm-íy-**	**kʊm-íyy-a**
A2b	**nʊm-ʊ**	"tan"	**nʊm-íy-**	**nʊm-íyy-a**
A2b	**shʊkʰ**	"show"	**shʊkʰ-íy-**	**shʊkʰ-íyy-a**
A2b	**shʊn-ʊ**	"skin"	**shʊn-íy-**	**shʊn-íyy-a**
A2b	**tʊɣ-ʊ**	"kill"	**tʊɣ-íy-**	**tʊɣ-íyy-a**
B*	**kʰááw-ɔ**	"scatter"	**kʰaw-íy-**	**kʰaw-íyy-a**
B	**sháám-ɔ**	"curse"	**sham-íy-**	**sham-íyy-a**
B	**shwáál**	"ridicule"	**shwal-íy-**	**shwal-íyy-a**
B*	**túúm-o**	"bow down"	**tum-íy-**	**tum-íyy-ə**
C2	**kpaa**	"abuse"	**kpaɣ-íy-**	**kpaɣ-íyy-a**

The verbs **shóppɔ** "teach" and **tókkɔ** "knot" deviate from the rule in presenting a different configuration of vowel quality:

(2) A1 **shópp-ɔ** "teach" **shʊp-íy-** **shʊp-óyy-ʊ**
    A1 **tókk-ɔ** "knot" **tʊk-óy-** **tʊk-óyy-a**

Rule #1.2	*Plural forms*	
suffixation of -ɪr-	non-SUBJ	SUBJ
	CVC-ɪr-	**CVC-ɪrr-/**
		CVC-ɪnn

The suffixation of -ɪr- targets some class A verbs (A1 and A2c). The subjunctive plural presents two plural allomorphs and a final -**a**.

(3)	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	A1	fóɗɗ-ɔ	"wash clothes"	foɗ-ír-	foɗ-írr-a
	A1	kótt-ɔ	"lay"	kʊt-ír-	kʊt-ínn-a
	A1	tɔ́ɗɗ-ɔ	"destroy"	toɗ-ír-	toɗ-ínn-a
	A1	tónn-ɔ	"sew"	tɔn-ír-	tɔn-írr-a
	A2c	ɗɛr-ɔ	"pour in"	ɗɛr-ír-	ɗɛr-írr-a
	A2c	shɛn-ɔ	"push"	shɛn-ír-	shɛr-ínn-a

The verbs **shíɗɗo** "shove" and **kʰɛmɔ** "fill" have irregular subjunctive plurals (note the change of ATR sign in **kʰɛmɔ**).

(4)	A1	shíɗɗ-o	"shove"	shiɗ-ə́r-	shiɗ-ír-ə́ni
	A2c	kʰɛm-ɔ	"fill"	kʰɛm-ír-	kem-r-u

#2—Infixation

Rule #2.1	Plural forms	
infixation of -bɪ-	non-SUBJ CV-bɪ-C-	SUBJ CV-bɪCC-

This rule applies exclusively to class A verbs. The subjunctive plural presents final -A.

(5)	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	A1	júkk-o	"pour out"	ju-bí-y-	ju-bíyy-ə
	A2a	ɓir-u	"beat"	ɓi-bí-r-	ɓi-bírr-ə
	A2a	kuw-o	"reduce"	ku-bí-y-	ku-bíyy-ə
	A2a	min-u	"give"	mɪ-bí-n-	mɪ-bínn-a
	A2b	ɓal-ɔ	"be tired"	ɓa-bí-l-	ɓa-bíll-a
	A2b	ɗaw-ʊ	"tie"	ɗa-bí-y-	ɗa-bíyy-a
	A2b	pɪl-ʊ	"buy"	pɪ-bí-l-	pɪ-bíll-a
	A2b	taw	"touch"	ta-bí-y-	ta-bíyy-a

CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
A2c	ɓɛl-ɔ	"break"	ɓɛ-bí-l-	ɓɛ-bíll-a
A2c	mɛn-ɔ	"migrate"	mɛ-bí-n-	mɛ-bínn-a
A2c	pɛn-ɔ	"know"	pɛ-bí-n-	pɛ-bínn-a
A2c	tɛw-ɔ	"say"	tɛ-bí-y-	tɛ-bíyy-a

Rule #2.2	Plural forms	
infixation of -ŋ-	non-SUBJ CV-ŋ-C-	SUBJ CV-ŋiCC-

This rule applies to some A2 verbs presenting a liquid in second consonant position. The plural subjunctive has an ending in -A. The verbs **galɔ** "gather" and **tɛlɔ** "ask" present a final -U (note the change of ATR sign in the subjunctive plural of **tɛlɔ**).

(6)	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	A2a*	dir-ə	"inspect"	di-ŋ-r-	di-ŋírr-ə
	A2b	ɗʊr-ʊ	"unload"	ɗʊ-ŋ-r-	ɗʊ-ŋínr-a
	A2b	gal-ɔ	"gather"	ga-ŋ-l-	ga-ŋíll-ʊ
	A2b	kʰar-ʊ	"slaughter"	kʰa-ŋ-r-	kʰa-ŋínn-a
	A2b	kʰʊr-a	"refuse"	kʰʊ-ŋ-r-	kʰʊ-ŋínn-a
	A2b	lʷar-ɔ	"pluck"	lʷa-ŋ-r-	lʷa-ŋínr-a
	A2b	shal-ɔ	"roam"	sha-ŋ-l-	sha-ŋíll-a
	A2c	tɛl-ɔ	"ask"	tɛ-ŋ-l-	te-ŋíll-u

Rule #2.3	Plural forms	
infixation of -ɪ-	non-SUBJ CV-ɪ-C-	SUBJ CV-ɪCC-

This rule applies exclusively to class B verbs. The subjunctive plural presents a regular ending in -**a**.

(7)	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	B	**fɔ́ɔ́r-ɔ**	"arrive"	**fɔ́-yí-r-**	**fɔ́-yínn-a**
	B	**kʰáán-ɔ**	"remain"	**kʰá-yí-n-**	**kʰá-yínn-a**
	B	**kpáár-ɔ**	"pull up"	**kpá-yí-r-**	**kpá-yínn-a**
	B	**mə́ə́r-i**	"read"	**má-yí-r-**	**má-yírr-a**
	B	**nyáár-ɔ**	"lose"	**nyá-yí-r-**	**nyá-yínn-a**

Rule #2.4		*Plural forms*	
infixation of -**jɪ**-	non-SUBJ		SUBJ
	CV-jɪ-C-		CV-jɪCC-

This rule applies to some A (A1 and A2b) and C2 verbs presenting the glide **y** in second stem consonant position. The subjunctive plurality morpheme is derived by gemination and the subjunctive form presents an ending in -**a** (an exception is **gɛɛ** "see").

(8)	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	A1	**kʰay-ɔ**	"drive away"	**kʰa-jí-y-**	**kʰa-jíyy-a**
	A2b	**ɗay-ʋ**	"put down"	**ɗa-jí-y-**	**ɗa-jíyy-a**
	A2b	**fɪy-a**	"spit"	**fɪ-jí-y-**	**fɪ-jíyy-a**
	C2	**gɛɛ**	"see"	**gɛ-jí-y-**	**gɛ-jíyy-ʋ**
	C2	**pɛɛ**	"thatch"	**pɛ-jí-y-**	**pɛ-jíyy-a**

Rule #2.5		*Plural forms*	
infixation of -**ɗɪ**-	non-SUBJ		SUBJ
	CV-ɗɪ-C-		CV-ɗɪCC-

This rule has been observed in three verbs. The subjunctive plurality morpheme is derived by gemination and the subjunctive form presents an ending in -**a**.

(9)	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	A1	ɓáyíl-ɔ	"split"	ɓá-dǐl-	ɓa-dǐll-a
	B	ɓwáár-ɔ	"divide"	ɓwá-dǐ-r-	ɓwá-dǐrr-a
	B	téél-ɔ	"cross"	té-dǐ-l-	té-dǐll-a

Rule #2.6	*Plural forms*	
infixation of -**li**-	non-SUBJ	SUBJ
	CV-lɪ-C-	CV-lɪCC-

The rule applies to disyllabic A1 verbs presenting **l** in second stem consonant position. The subjunctive plurality morpheme is derived by gemination and the subjunctive form displays an ending in -**a** (-**ʊ** in the case of **ɓállɔ** "write").

(10)	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	A1	ɓáll-ɔ	"write"	ɓa-lí-l-	ɓa-líll-ʊ
	A1	ʔíll-ɔ	"stand up"	ʔɪ-lí-l-	ʔɪ-líll-a
	A1	yóll-ɔ	"curse"	yɔ-lí-l-	yɔ-líll-a

The verb **kʰaa** "greet" presents an irregular plural formation consisting in the reduplication of the first consonant in second position plus the suffixation of a -VyVr-element. The subjunctive ending is -**ʊ** (cf. C2 verbs undergoing gemination in rules #3.1 and #3.2):

(11) C2   **kʰaa**   "greet"   **kʰa-kʰíy-**   **kʰa-kʰíyór-ʊ**

#3—Gemination

Gemination is the third derivational strategy found in Kushi to form plurals. The rules are quite homogenous, at least for non-subjunctive plurals: the second

stem consonant undergoes gemination (or, as in rule #3.1, they are replaced by another geminated consonant). This strategy targets mainly class C verbs.[4] In rules #3.1 and #3.2, the final vowel of the subjunctive plural is -ʊ, a vowel that is not found anywhere among the subjunctive endings of the singular (cf. table 2). The presence of the round vowel -ʊ after the geminated consonant in #3.1 and #3.2 is motivated by anticipatory assimilation (cf. progressive assimilation in Widala(-Kholokh); Leger 2015: 123).

Rule #3.1	*Plural forms*	
gemination of ɗ	non-SUBJ CV-ɗɗ-	SUBJ CV-ɗɗVr-[5]

This rule has been found in two class A verbs. The second stem **r** consonant is replaced by geminated **ɗ**. The subjunctive plurality marker is derived by adding a -**Vr**- element (cf. rules #3.2 and 3.4 below).[6]

(12)	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	A1*	**for-u**	"extract"	**fɔ-ɗɗ-**	**fo-ɗɗír-u**
	A2b	**shar-ɔ**	"carry"	**sha-ɗɗ-**	**sha-ɗɗŏr-ʊ**

Consider also:

(13)   A2c   **yɛr-ɔ**   "bite"   **yɛ-ɗɗ-**   **yɛ-ɗɗ-ína**

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4   In the elicitation form, class C verbs present a monosyllabic structure. However, the only paradigms in which they appear with this structure are the imperative and the aoriste-preterite. In all other TAM paradigms, C verbs behave as disyllabic verbs, i.e. they display a second consonant (which is the glide **y** in most C1 verbs and an unpredictable consonants in C2 verbs).

5   Another way of analysing the subjunctive ending in #3.1 and #3.2 would be to consider the morpheme -**rʊ** as the plural subjunctive marker. As a result, the rule #3.1 and #3.2 would become **CV-ɗɗV-** and **CV-CCV-** respectively.

6   In Kwami, the pluractional formative -**iɗɗ** "doubtlessly indicates some iterative and/or intensive action leading to a final result which might not be achieved otherwise" (Leger 2015: 122).

Rule #3.2	*Plural forms*	
gemination of second consonant + **r**	non-SUBJ CV-CC-	SUBJ CV-CCVr-[7]

This rule applies to C verbs. The plurality marker is obtained by geminating the second stem consonant. The subjunctive plurality marker affixes a -**Vr**- -element to the geminated consonant. The subjunctive form presents and ending in -**ʊ**. A change of ATR sign is observed in the plurals of **kpa** "fetch" and **lɛɛ** "pick fruits" (subjunctive plural becomes +ATR)

(14)

CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
A2a	**tol-u**	"stretch"	**tɔ-ll-**	**to-llír-u**
C1	**fʊ**	"finish"	**fʊ-yy-**	**fʊ-yyór-ʊ**
C1	**kpa**	"fetch"	**kpɛ-yy-**	**kpə-yyír-u**
C2	**gbɔɔ**	"knock"	**gbɔ-ɓɓ-**	**gbɔ-ɓɓór-ʊ**
C2	**lɛɛ**	"pick fruits"	**lɛ-pp-**	**le-ppúr-u**
C2	**lɔɔ**	"hang"	**lɔ-kʰkʰ-**	**lɔ-kʰkʰór-ʊ**

The A2b verbs **yɪw** "catch" **shɛwɔ** "fear" follow this rule, but diverge from it in the subjunctive:

(15) A2b   **yɪw**   "catch"   **yɪ-pp-**   **yɪ-ppíyy-a**
      A2c*   **shɛw-ɔ**   "fear"   **shɪ-yy-**   **shɪ-yírr-ʊ**

Rule #3.3	*Plural forms*	
gemination of glide/liquid	non-SUBJ	SUBJ
	CV-CC-	CV-CC-

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7   See note 5.

C1 verbs form the plural by making use of a geminated glide. There is no difference of plurality marking between non-subjunctive and subjunctive. Subjunctive plural forms present a final **-ına** (see class A1 vs class C1 in table 2).

(16)	CLASS	SG	GLOSS	PL (non-SUBJ)	PL (SUBJ)
	A2c	**ɗɛl-ɔ**	"swallow"	**ɗɛ-ll-**	**ɗɛ-ll-ína**
	C1	**yɔ**	"call"	**yɔ-yy-**	**ya-yy-ína**
	C1	**ma**	"go back"	**mɛ-yy-**	**mɛ-yy-ína**
	C1	**rɪ**	"enter"	**rɪ-yy-**	**rɪ-yy-ína**

5   Open Questions

This paper represents a first attempt to categorise verbal plurals in Kushi. The purpose is to focus on the morphology of the plurals, leaving aside—at least for the moment—the semantics of the different forms. As mentioned before, there seems not to be a correlation between plurality morpheme and plural category (agreement plurality or pluractionality). The verb **ʔámmɔ** "climb", if used in the plural, entails plurality of subject, whereas **júɓɓo** "jump" means "jump many times": they both apply the same derivational rule (suffixation of **-ɪy**) and they are both intransitive. Therefore, plural formation appears to be motivated mostly by morphophonological factors. What a verbal plural form really means (plural subject? repeated action?) depends entirely on the inner semantics of the verb, and this fact limits the possibility to advance convincing generalisations without the results of a semantic analysis carried out verb-by-verb. Another obstacle is due to the slow and steady erosion of the feature: plural forms seem to belong to the "good *Goji*" spoken by the elders, but they are very rarely used by the youngsters. This, in turn, leads to another consideration: there must be a difference of erosion between the two categories represented by the umbrella expression "verbal plurality". It is reasonable to think that the erosion of agreement plurality and pluractionality does not proceed in parallel: agreement plurality can 'easily' be abandoned (the subject argument itself is not required in many narrative contexts), but semantic plurality would need to be replaced with something else. In Kushi, people are still able to say that they "have beaten a dog again and again" or that somebody "kept calling"! If it is true that pluractionals are being abandoned, then one would expect another strategy to be put in place, like for example an increase of adverbs or the

use of aspectual verbs carrying the notion of 'repetitiveness' or 'multiplicity' (cf. Hausa). Hence, there are two particularly challenging question that further research should try to address: 1) what do specific plural forms really mean?; and 2) what has pluractionality eventually turned into?

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