

Book Review

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Reviewed by **Jessica K. Ivani** [**dʒes:ika i'vani**], University of California, Santa Barbara, CA, USA; and Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany, E-mail: jkivani@ucsb.edu. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2894-7135>

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Number in the World's Languages is the fifth volume in the Comparative Handbooks of Linguistics series. In this comprehensive volume, editors Paolo Acquaviva and Michael Daniel present a collection of 23 contributions spanning over 900 pages, offering a broad and detailed account of the formal and semantic complexity of number across a diverse sample of the world's languages.

In the introductory chapter, *Number in the World's Languages: Configuring the Variation Space* (§1), the editors summarize past and recent advances in the typological literature on number marking and acknowledge the challenging complexity of number as a linguistic category. This complexity includes the network of phenomena connected to the expression of number combined with a rich formal and distributional variation. Phenomena often associated with number in languages include distributive and collective readings, reciprocity, genericity, plurality of events, associative and general extender functions, and, along the pragmatic dimension, politeness. In addition, grammatical number varies significantly in its formal encoding, even within the same language. Number marking splits and variation are also common: a language may feature several (often unpredictable) number markers and processes, which may cumulate with categories other than number, such as case, noun class, and others. Depending on context and discourse factors, number formatives may overlap with other functions, such as distributivity or any of the phenomena mentioned above.

Given this semantic and formal richness and complexity, the editors set the overall goal of the volume to be an empirical comparative overview of number in the world's languages, focusing on language-specific (or area-specific) descriptions by language experts and specialists who have engaged with the data, thus offering a detailed perspective on number and the constellation of number-related phenomena within a language or groups of languages.

The language sample covered in the book spans diverse areas, which include Africa, Europe and the Middle East, Northern Eurasia, the Pacific and Australia, and the Americas. The volume is organized around these geographic partitions that

function as macro sections grouping the individual language(s) chapters. While most chapters feature language-specific descriptions, others focus on areal overviews, such as South America in Krasnoukhova's chapter, or provide comparative descriptions of related languages, such as the contributions on Japonic and Lower Sepik languages by Shimoji and Foley, respectively. The final main section of the book, *Further perspectives on linguistic diversity*, collects diverse contributions, including an overview of number marking in contact languages, such as pidgins and creoles, and a description of number marking in Russian Sign Language. The volume concludes with a summary by the editors.

A whole subsection within the introduction is dedicated to the *Number Questionnaire* (§1.A). The questionnaire is a valuable tool for typologists and language specialists interested in having a broad picture of the formal, semantic, and pragmatic complexities of number. According to the editors, who developed the questionnaire, it functions as a "starting guide" to the description of number in language. The primary goal of the questionnaire is to offer broad guidelines in number description rather than providing a rigid etic grid. This approach gives the contributors descriptive freedom in illustrating linguistic variation, with the desired outcome of allowing particulars and language-specific number phenomena to surface organically in the descriptions.

The questionnaire is structured around five main sections. The first section contains introductory questions about the language to be described. The second section covers the properties and particularities of the pronominal, nominal, and verbal number systems. Additional questions cover the interaction of number with other categories (i.e., noun classes, case, definiteness), the presence of classifiers, the relevance of typological hierarchies, and number irregularities, such as suppletion and extended exponence. The questionnaire also prompts the description of semantic and formal properties of mass nouns and *pluralia tantum*. In addition, the section contains questions on additional meanings associated with number marking on nouns, such as collectives, associative plurals, distributive meanings, and others. The third section of the questionnaire focuses on number agreement and the syntax of number. The fourth section deals with number expression in semantics, pragmatics, and discourse by prompting the discussion of pragmatic uses of number marking (i.e., politeness), countability, and how grammatical number can be used for discourse functions, such as reference tracking. The fifth and final section calls for generalizations and peculiarities observed by the contributors in analyzing the domains above.

In what follows, I summarize the individual chapters as these appear in the volume with a focus on typologically relevant phenomena.

Part I of the volume, *Africa*, contains three chapters on number marking in languages from the African continent. Valentin Vydrin's chapter *Number in Eastern Dan* describes the number system in a Mande language. Eastern Dan (east2794)¹ features a singular/plural number system, with a dual inclusive form in the pronominal paradigm. Plurality is primarily encoded by a plural word, *dhùn*, occurring on nouns, pronouns, verbs, and other parts of speech. The number system is overall regular, with few exceptions. Kinship terms and agent nouns use an additional suffix *-zã* in the plural, sometimes combined with the plural word. Based on comparative data, the marker might have been a nominalizer in origin. This formative often contrasts a morpheme alternation in the singular, expressed by another suffixal formative, *-bhìn*, whose original meaning is 'human'. The presence of *dhùn* on nominals appears to be constrained by the Animacy Hierarchy: it is more likely to be found on human nouns and less common on inanimate nouns.

Angelika Jakobi and Gerrit J. Dimmendaal's chapter *Number Marking in Karko and Nilo-Saharan* provides an overview of the number system of this Nubian language spoken in Sudan. Karko (kark1256) features a vast inventory of formatives to express number distinctions. A rich inventory of number markers is common in Nilo-Saharan languages. It is usually due to the presence of a tripartite number system involving singulative markers on unmarked naturally paired and collective nouns, singular/plural morpheme alternations on unmarked stems, plural markers on unmarked singular nouns, as well as additional processes such as semantic assignment of number marking and suppletive forms. A notable feature is the behavior of mass nouns. Mass nouns, marked with the diminutive suffix, refer to a small quantity of a given referent. Some mass nouns can be pluralized, and the combination of plural and diminutive markers gives a distributive reading. The encoding of the associative plural is notable. It is expressed via a complex possessive construction where the referent (usually a kinship term or a personal name) is the dependent (marked with a coordinator), and the head is the lexical item *î*, meaning 'people'. The head and the dependent are linked by the genitive marker.

Denis Creissels' contribution *Number in Tswana* describes the number system of this Southern Bantu language. Tswana (tswa1253) number system properties align with the tendencies identified in Bantu languages: number marking is deeply intertwined with gender marking and is a highly inflectional category, with a pervasive gender/number agreement system marked on the NP, its modifiers, and verbs. Tswana number system features singular/plural distinctions. Both singular and plural are expressed overtly in most classes. Tswana nouns that distinguish number are divided into nine inflectional classes, depending on the singular/plural formative pair they select. Pronominal number is construed via a stem and a person/number prefix. In the third person, pronouns agree

1 Glottocodes for subfamilies and languages are given where available.

in gender and number with the antecedent. One of the regular plural markers, *bó-*, can be used with associative meaning on kinship terms and proper names. A notable use of this construction is its involvement in an atypical inclusory construction.

Part II of the volume, *Europe and Middle East*, contains four chapters that deal with number marking in the broad region. Abdelkader Fassi Fehri's chapter *Number in Arabic* (arab1395) provides a semantically focused overview of the Arabic number system. Nouns in Arabic distinguish singular, dual, and plural. Nominal number is realized by various morphological strategies, from non-linear processes to concatenative morphemes, the latter expressing cumulatively gender distinctions. Number marking constructions may be used cumulatively to form double plurals, denoting plurals of abundance. A restricted set of nouns distinguishes paucal forms.

Xavier Bach's chapter *Number in Occitan* describes number marking in the Occitan dialect continuum (occi1239). While the general properties of the Occitan number system align with what is observed in Romance, Occitan varieties show notable geographical variation in number allomorphy. Western varieties use concatenative markers to express plurality, while Eastern varieties use other means, such as morpheme alternations or tones. In addition, Occitan languages vary in agreement patterns, depending on the position of the adjectives. In Provençal, for example, number agreement is marked only on prenominal modifiers, while post-nominal elements do not agree in number. Pronominal number is marked via suppletion in the first and second person, while the third person follows the marking strategy used on nouns. A typologically notable aspect is the encoding of NP plurality in Limousine, realized via a high pitch and low pitch distinction, developed from a *-s* > *-w* sound change, triggering a generalized pitch lowering.

Adrian Stegovéc's chapter *Number in Slovenian* discusses number marking in Slovenian (slov1268), the only Slavic language that has preserved dual number. Number encoding is expressed by cumulative inflectional forms expressing person, gender, animacy, and case. Syncretism patterns are relevant in Slovenian inflection. The author lists several environments of syncretism across pronouns, nouns, and adjectives that involve number, case, and gender. While the system is overwhelmingly inflectional, there is evidence, albeit rare, for non-linear processes used in number encoding in countable nouns. These involve suppletion, stress shift, and the addition of further morphemes expressing augmenting properties.

Irina Bagirokova, Yury Lander, and Paul Phelan's chapter *Number in West Circassian* addresses number marking properties in West Circassian, or Adyghe, spoken mainly in the West Caucasus. West Circassian (adyg1241) has a number system that distinguishes singular and plural. Pronouns are suppletive for number in the first and second person. The third form is a demonstrative, which behaves like nouns with respect to number marking. Nominal number presence is determined by the

contrast in nouns between deficient (generally morphologically and syntactically deficient, thus insensitive to number; these forms have been compared in the literature to pseudo-incorporated nominals), unmarked (indifferent to number, either singular or plural interpretation) and additive forms (obligatorily marked for number and case). Associative plurals are expressed by a dedicated marker, and echo formations are used to express general extender functions, similar to the structures found in South Asian languages (Masica 1976).

Part III, Northern Eurasia, contains three chapters. Edward Vajda's contribution *Number in Ket (Yeniseian)* offers a detailed overview of the number category in Ket (kett1243). The description relies on extensive data and compares Ket number system properties with other (now extinct) Yeniseian languages, such as Yugh. Especially valuable is the discussion of the diachronic origin of number marking in Ket, which explains splits and irregularities in the number system (such as double exponence on a subset of dual nouns). The chapter also discusses innovations in the Ket number marking system. These include the development of a pitch tonal distinction to express plurality in some lexical items and that borrowings (mainly from Russian) in Ket take the inanimate plural marker, irrespective of the animacy of the borrowed noun.

Valentin Gusev and Beáta Wagner-Nagy's contribution, *Number in Nganasan*, addresses the number system of this Samoyedic language spoken in northern Siberia (ngan1291). Similarly to Ket, Nganasan has dual number. Particularly noteworthy are two aspects related to dual expression. The first is the use of dual and plural in body parts. Nouns denoting paired body parts can be used in the plural or the dual, while the singular expresses either the individual organ (i.e., 'eye') or the sensory property (i.e., 'vision'). Nouns denoting non-paired body parts take obligatory dual marking. This distinction suggests that Nganasan distinguished between the *ambal* (Plank 1989) and the dual proper, using the former for natural pairs and the latter for 'accidental duality'. The *ambal* is not obligatory in Nganasan. The second noteworthy property is the distribution of numeral phrases (i.e., Num-N) and dual phrases (N-du) in discourse. Their distribution is motivated by information status: new referents are introduced with the numeral phrase, then, when brought up again in discourse, with the dual phrase.

The last contribution for Northern Eurasia is Ekaterina Gruzdeva's chapter *Number in Nivkh*, which offers a detailed overview of the number system of Nivkh (nivk1234) and compares data with other Nivkh varieties such as Amur. One of Nivkh's most notable and known characteristics is its extensive inventory of numeral classifiers, which no longer appear in use (except for their obligatory presence with the numerals from one through five). In addition, Nivkh shows multiple plural exponence in independent personal pronouns: plurality distinctions are expressed

via suppletion, and the noun plural marker can be added to the plural forms for emphasis. These forms are actively used in spoken language.

Part IV of the volume, *Pacific and Australia*, collects five contributions on number marking in languages from the area. William B. McGregor's contribution *Number in Gooniyandi* discusses number in the Australian non-Pama-Nyungan language Gooniyandi (goon1238). Number marking is mostly optional. Number distinctions in Gooniyandi appear to be constrained by the Animacy Hierarchy and further correlate with the grammatical role of the NP. Number is more likely to appear with NPs serving in participant roles and is less frequent on NPs in other grammatical roles. A notable feature, given its interaction with number marking, is the use of particular speech registers denoting avoidance and respect with close relatives, as attested in other Australian Aboriginal languages. Such registers include using plural pronoun forms in reference to an address of single individuals in "close" avoidance relations to a speaker.

David Gil's chapter *Number in Indonesian* describes number marking in Indonesian, comparing the four colloquial varieties of Riau Indonesian (riau1236), Jakarta Indonesian, Kupang Malay (kupa1239), and Papuan Malay (papu1250). They display a high degree of variation with respect to the presence of number values, clusivity and obligatory number distinctions (only at the pronominal level for all varieties, with different cutoff points). Although number plays a peripheral role in the grammar of the language, Indonesian features a rich array of phenomena amenable to number distinctions. The wide range of fine-grained data presented in the chapter, with a focus on the semantic and pragmatic nuances of their expression, sets the stage for a data-derived typology of number marking and also allows for detailed categorizations, such as the distinction between associative plurals and extra-focal associative plurals. Notable is the use of reduplication to express nominal plurality, which is rare cross-linguistically (Ivani 2017; Ivani and Zakharko 2019).

Michinori Shimoji's chapter, *Number in Japonic Family*, describes number marking in Japonic (japo1237), including Standard Japanese and the mainland varieties, and the Ryukyuan varieties of Shiiba and Irabu. The overview is comparative, and the author describes the striking variation in the expression of number marking in these languages, which nonetheless share an animacy-based number system. One of the most prominent features of these languages is the number marking behavior of address nouns. Address nouns are lexical nouns used as terms of address and include proper names and kinship terms. Their number marking behavior is unique: plural marking is obligatory and has an associative meaning, similar to the behavior shown by pluralized personal pronouns. Address nouns are found elsewhere (such as in Indonesian; see Gil's contribution), where they do not take number markers.

William A. Foley's chapter *Number in the Languages of the Lower Sepik Family* (lowe1423) discusses number marking in six endangered languages: Yimas, Karawari, Chambri, Kanda, Murik, and Kopar. Number marking is a pervasive category in these languages, as it is cumulative with the noun class (except in Murik and Kopar, which have lost noun classes). Consequently, singular number is often expressed overtly. In addition, these languages distinguish four distinct number values (singular, dual, paucal, and plural) with different distributions and splits across languages. Number marking is particularly relevant in Murik, the one language among the six that distinguishes verbal number and has an obligatory paucal marking on countable nouns, with no animacy restrictions. Animacy plays a role in those systems with optional number expression (such as on Kopar nouns), where number marking is more likely to be found in nouns higher in animacy, and on pronouns. Number marking is pervasive in the pronominal systems, both on independent personal pronouns and bound forms: here, one finds obligatory number distinctions that are optional on nouns. One example is Kopar, which features a singular/dual/paucal/plural obligatory number marking system in bound and independent pronouns and an optional and reduced singular/plural opposition in nouns.

Wayan Arka and Mary Dalrymple's chapter *Number in Marori* describes the number system of the endangered language Marori (moro1289). Marori distinguishes verbal number (plurality of events) through suppletive verbal forms, showing a singular/nonsingular distinction. Nouns are usually underspecified for number, and number information can be inferred by verbal indexing or other verb properties. Pronouns make a three-way (SG/DU/PL) distinction. A notable characteristic of the Marori number system is the underspecification of dual exponence. Dual number on nouns, for example, is not expressed by a dedicated formative, but rather by a combination of non-singular and non-plural formatives.

Part V, *Americas*, contains five chapters describing number marking in the languages from the broad region. Olga Krasnoukhova's chapter *Number in the Languages of South America* is a comparative survey of nominal, pronominal, and verbal number on a rich sample of 100+ languages from South America. Pronominal number distinctions are common among the languages of the sample (with some exceptions, such as Pirahã and Matsés). The pronominal number systems in the sample either show a singular/plural or a singular/dual/plural distinction. The distribution of these values varies across languages and reflects the Referential Hierarchy. The presence of pronominal dual marking appears to cluster areally. Number marking on nouns is either optional (conditioned by animacy or discourse factors, the latter exemplified by Tapieté) or absent altogether. Overt singular marking is rare but attested (i.e., in Kotiria). The distribution of verbal number shows areal tendencies: stem change is geographically restricted to the southwest Amazon region; reduplication (for event number) shows a geographic patterning in the southern and western Amazon regions,

plus the adjacent eastern foothills of the Andes. A less common feature observed in some Tupian languages (Kukama-Kukamiria and Omagua) is gender indexicality, where the selection of number markers differs depending on the speaker's gender. The co-presence of classifiers and number markers is noteworthy.

Roberto Zariquiey's chapter *The Category of Number in Kakataibo (Panoan)* offers an overview of number marking in the Panoan language Kakataibo (cash1251). Notable is the existence of two distinct non-singular forms for each pronoun. These forms appear to be linked to the coexistence of two different number systems: a more archaic one, reconstructed by the author as Proto-Panoan and still used by elderly speakers, and an innovative one, used by younger Kakataibo speakers. The archaic system includes dual and clusivity distinctions, which younger speakers reinterpret as generic non-plural markers. Nominal number marking features various plural allomorphs with different distributions within nominals. While the generic plural marker =*kama* (possibly derived from the lexical item meaning 'all') has a broader distribution, the generic marker *-ina(k)* and the collective marker *-baë* feature different distributions and configurations, often associated with fine-grained semantic and discourse functions.

Daniel Harbour and Andrew McKenzie's contribution *Grammatical Simplicity: Number in Kiowa* describes the number system of the Kiowa language (kiow1266). Kiowa is known in the typological literature for its atypical number marking encoding, referred to as "inverse number" (cf. Corbett's 2000:159–166 overview). Nouns in Kiowa fall into eight semantic classes (number marking distinguishes four of them) with one suffixal formative, the "inverse", which distinguishes singular or plural depending on the noun. While free pronouns are peripheral in number expression, the verb is the primary locus in Kiowa for number expression. Verb prefixes encode singular, dual, plural, and animate plural agreement, as well as information about noun class and person.

Marianne Mithun's chapter *Number in Mohawk (Iroquoian)* illustrates the number system of Mohawk (moha1258). The pronominal prefixes found on verbs distinguish singular, dual, and plural and feature more number distinctions when compared to the corresponding independent personal pronouns (marginal in Mohawk). These distinctions are obligatory and reflect gender (four genders, distinguished only in the third person) and grammatical role. Nouns do not bear any number distinction. Number is encoded on the verb and through verbal constructions, that express number-related functions including distributivity. Possessive prefixes are another locus of number distinctions for nouns. Terms for humans and kinship terms are deverbal nouns; thus, they are pluralized (or dualized) as verbs.

Part VI, *Further Perspectives on Linguistic Diversity*, includes two chapters dealing with number marking in mixed and sign languages. Viveka Velupillai's chapter *Contact Languages: A Survey* provides an overview of number encoding in

pidgins, creoles, pidgincreoles, and mixed languages. Pidgins appear to be largely insensitive to number distinctions, while pidgincreoles, creoles, and mixed languages tend to have distinct forms for pronominal plurals, encoded via suppletive forms. In these languages, nominal plural, usually optional, is encoded via a plural word, usually derived from either third-person pronoun plural forms or generic lexical items with a meaning connected to a plurality (such as ‘all’, e.g., in Bislama). The number systems of mixed languages reflect the system of one of the input languages, especially concerning nominal and verbal number morphology.

Vadim Kimmelman, Svetlana Burkova, and Elizaveta Filimonova’s contribution, *Number in Russian Sign Language*, describes plurality in Russian Sign Language (RSL, russ1271). Plurality distinctions are found in nouns, pronouns, and verbs. Its encoding is mainly optional. There are multiple means to express plurality, including reduplication and modification of movement, and these signs are, in general, highly iconic, in line with tendencies observed across other sign languages. RSL has devices to encode meanings connected to plurality, such as distributivity, iterativity, collective, and simulative plurality. Although plurality plays a minor role in discourse, the plural forms of the pronouns and the classifier handshape (combined with the numeral) are used to track referents in discourse.

The editors’ closing chapter, *Number in Grammar: Results and Perspectives*, summarizes the tendencies in the realization of grammatical number emerging from the chapters in the volume. Most importantly, the editors highlight open questions and terminological issues. One pertains to optionality in number marking and, by extension, “general number”, a term used in the literature to describe (unmarked) nouns in a language system that are noncommittal as to number marking (Corbett 2000). The editors argue that the concept of optionality in these terms is ambiguous because of its underspecificity. Optionality in grammatical number may refer to two different scenarios within a language number system. It either implies that number marking is obligatory in a set of referents and, in another subset, is not (as it is conditioned perhaps by discourse factors); alternatively, optionality means that number marking can be used, but does not have to be. To clarify this ambiguity, the authors propose more systematic, language-specific approaches exploring the circumstances under which the expression of number becomes relevant in discourse or whether a number feature is optional in the true sense of the word.

The editors also acknowledge the lack of homogeneity and the opaqueness in the terminology used to describe number. This includes basic terms such as PLURALITY and the constellation of phenomena connected to it, such as COLLECTIVES, DISTRIBUTIVES, and ASSOCIATIVES. While the authors suggest alternatives, for example NUMEROSITY for the broad category of number, and HETEROGENEOUS PLURALS as opposed to ADDITIVE PLURALS (see also their argument against terms such as PLURACTIONALITY and CLUSIVITY), they leave the discussion open to future research.

The editors conclude by identifying three critical directions for advancing the field in the conceptualization of number in languages. The first encourages systematic research into the number variation we observe across lexical categories: number marking restricted to verbs and a group of nouns may be linked to the fact that these nouns are pluralized because they are structurally verbs (such as in Mohawk). The second direction invites more in-depth explorations of the interaction of number with other categories, such as case, gender, and definiteness, and their role in the development of number systems. The final challenge, more abstract, pertains to the nature of the number category itself and aims at exploring linguistic and contextual cues involved with the expression of numerosity, especially in those languages where number marking is absent.

The summary of the volume offers insightful commentary on theoretical topics and linguistic definitions. However, this discussion would have been better placed in the introduction to help set the tone of the volume, provide guidance to the authors of the individual contributions, and to streamline the volume.

The volume is an excellent resource for exploring the complexities of number in languages. It presents a diverse and detailed overview of number marking in the world's languages and includes a starting kit (the questionnaire) to detect and capture the various aspects of number in languages. There are three overlooked points in the volume, which I summarize below.

The first pertains to the geographical and genealogical coverage of the volume. There is a wide geographical gap in the volume that spans from West Asia to Central Asia and South Asia to Mainland South-East Asia, a gap immediately noticeable by looking at the geographical partitions that make up the macro sections in the table of contents. The volume does not cover prominent language families such as Sino-Tibetan, Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, or Austroasiatic. This absence is quite surprising (and no explanation for this exclusion is offered in the volume), especially when considering the typological variation in the number systems of the languages in these regions. The variation includes rich nominal plural allomorphy, such as in Burushaski (cf. Table 1), or, in terms of number systems, notable distributions, as displayed, for example in Önge (cf. Table 2), featuring overt dual marking on nouns and not on pronouns, and overt singular marking on nouns not cumulative with other categories, that constitute typological oddities (Ivani 2017).

The second aspect worth improving on is the structure of the questionnaire. The authors deliberately kept the questionnaire's structure and terminology broad to offer general guidelines rather than a fixed descriptive grid. There is no standardized basic terminology (suggestions for terminological revisions and updates are proposed in the final chapter of the book). The idea behind this choice was to give the contributors descriptive leeway, as number is structurally and functionally complex. While this approach has merits, it comes at a price. Readers have to deal with nonsystematic

Table 1: Nominal number marking allomorphy in Burushaski (isolate; Glottocode: buru1296; adapted from Lorimer 1935).

	SG	PL	
Kin nouns	<i>mi</i>	<i>mi-tsaro</i>	‘mother, mothers’
Human nouns	<i>dasin</i>	<i>dasi-wants</i>	‘girl, girls’
Animate nouns	<i>hal</i>	<i>hal-jo</i>	‘fox, foxes’
Inanimate nouns	<i>ha</i>	<i>ha-kicaj</i>	‘house, houses’

Table 2: Pronominal and nominal number marking in Önge (Jarawa-Önge, onge1236; adapted from Dasgupta and Sharma 1982).

	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>mi</i>		<i>eti</i>
2	<i>pi</i>		<i>ni</i>
3	<i>gi</i>		<i>ekwi</i>
<i>inene</i> ‘foreigner’	<i>inenda</i>	<i>inendena</i>	<i>inenle</i>
<i>ueme</i> ‘dog’	<i>uenda</i>	<i>uendena</i>	<i>uenle</i>
<i>daʔne</i> ‘canoe’	<i>daʔnda</i>	<i>daʔndena</i>	<i>daʔnle</i>

terminology that extends far beyond family-specific labeling traditions. The editors are well aware of the need for systematic terminology, as they bring up terminological clarity as one of the key aspects to focus on in future investigations. However, this is an already known issue mentioned in language-specific (see Gil’s contribution in the volume and his 1996 discussion of “collective”) and typological research (Corbett 2000). A potential solution would have been to provide some basic definitions in the questionnaire to ensure consistency across the individual descriptions without sacrificing descriptive richness. Another consequence of a broad questionnaire is the lack of cohesion across chapters, as the features of the questionnaires are not covered consistently in the descriptions. An appended table at the end of each description, summarizing the main points of the questionnaire (and perhaps with internal referencing to sections and examples), would have helped the contributors keep track of what has been discussed and readers in finding phenomena and structures of interest. On the other hand, the volume includes an extremely useful and well-structured index.

A last, overlooked, point is the diachrony of number markers and number systems. Diachrony is not mentioned in the questionnaire, and number development processes are only cursorily touched upon by the editors (e.g. when discussing plural marking spread from pronouns to nouns in Mandarin Chinese; Iljic 1994). Some authors discuss diachronic aspects of number in their descriptions, for example, Mithun on Mohawk (and also earlier in Mithun 1988) and Gruzdeva on Nivkh.

To conclude, this volume stands out as a valuable addition to the typological and comparative literature on number marking. It provides a thorough examination of number, covering a wide range of related phenomena. The questionnaire included is a useful tool for navigating the intricacies of number complexity, with the caveat that terminological consistency remains a challenge.

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