

# Individual-level meanings in the semantic domain of pluractionality

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Pluractionality is a domain of meaning that deals with the plurality of events. Pluractional meanings remain under-investigated, although they are an important and relevant aspectual distinction in many languages. In this chapter a set of so-called Individual-Level pluractional meanings (henceforth IL-meanings) is explored. These meanings are typically expressed by pluractional markers, but sometimes also by more general aspectual grams. They all have one thing in common: they introduce an individual-level predicate, i.e. a predicate that denotes a permanent feature of an individual. The majority of IL-meanings are semantically and/or pragmatically related to iteration, and all of these are typically expressed by the same markers as are plural events. This Individual-Level type of pluractional meanings has never been concisely discussed in the literature on pluractionality. However, it is crucial in understanding how pluractionality is generally organized.

IL-meanings are often expressed by pluractional markers, although not all pluractional markers are able to express these individual meanings. The main goal of this chapter is to determine how IL-meanings are related to other meanings in the semantic domain of pluractionality.

I present here the results of a cross-linguistic study based both on a questionnaire and on published secondary data. First-hand data from questionnaires is available for a sample of 20 languages (Agul, Adyghe, Basque, Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Enets, French, Hebrew, Karachay-Balkar, Korean, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Maori, Mari, Nenets, Russian, Susu, Tajik, Udmurt). For a substantially larger sample of languages, the data was drawn from published descriptions.

In Section 2, the notion of pluractionality and the corresponding pluractional markers are introduced, and a brief survey of the semantic domain of pluractionality is given. In Section 3, the distinction between individual-level vs. stage-level predicates is explained, and the interaction between

individual-level predicates and pluractionality is discussed. The bulk of the chapter is devoted to defining five distinct categories of pluractional IL-meanings, namely INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE, PROPERTY, CAPACITIVE, QUALITATIVE, and GENERIC. In the final section, the relationships among these categories are represented by means of a semantic map.

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE (Section 4) is the label for the meaning of a pluractional marker that, combined with a lexical individual-level predicate, expresses a single permanent state. In this case, the resulting form is automatically an individual-level predicate, and the connection to iteration is the most obscure.

PROPERTY (Section 5) is the label for the meaning of a pluractional or aspectual marker that, combined with a lexical stage-level predicate, introduces a permanent characteristic of an individual. This characteristic typically shows up in recurrent events.

CAPACITIVE (Section 6) is the label for the meaning of a pluractional or aspectual marker that is used to express the permanent capacity of an individual to perform a certain event. This permanent capacity is pragmatically related to iteration: if one repeatedly takes part in an event, it means that this person (or device) is capable of doing it.

QUALITATIVE (Section 7) is the label for the meaning of a pluractional or aspectual marker that, combined with a lexical stage-level predicate, indicates that an individual permanently belongs to a class that is characterized by regular participation in a specific event.

GENERIC meaning (Section 8) is the label for the meaning of a sentence (and a pluractional or aspectual marker used in this sentence) that introduces a permanent state of affairs. This state of affairs is a generalization of different repeated events with different individuals. In contrast to other IL-meanings, GENERIC meaning is used to characterize a permanent feature not of a single individual, but of a whole class of individuals.

## **2. The semantic domain of pluractionality: an overview**

The semantic domain of pluractionality refers to the relatively large set of meanings corresponding to events that are ‘plural’ in any sense – i.e. that are repeated or have a plural-like internal structure. Normally, pluractional meanings are classified as a subset of a bigger set of aspectual meanings. However, studies on pluractionality are few compared to the extensive work on aspect more generally. The term pluractionality that I use here was originally proposed by Paul Newman (1980, 1990) in his case study of

Chadic languages, but now the term has been adopted as a suitable label for the complete variety of different meanings involving any kind of plurality of events (also compare studies from a more formal perspective, e.g. Lasersohn 1995, Yu 2003, van Geenhoven 2005, and a non-formal study by Wood 2007 who use the term in a wider sense than Newman originally did). Grammatical markers that are used mainly for pluractional meanings are labelled accordingly as pluractional markers. I am aware of five cross-linguistically oriented studies of pluractionality (Dressler 1968, Cusic 1981, Xrakovskij 1989b / Xrakovskij 1997, Šluinskij 2005, Wood 2007).

A first semantic distinction between different clusters of pluractional meanings was proposed by Dressler (1968), in which distributive and non-distributive pluractionality are differentiated. The difference depends on whether a new participant is involved in each iteration of an event (i.e. distributive), or not (i.e. non-distributive). In the following discussion of pluractional meanings, distributive pluractionality is not considered.

A second semantic distinction was formulated independently by Cusic (1981) and by Xrakovskij (1989a), and consists in differentiating event-internal (in Xrakovskij's terms, "multiplicative") vs. event-external (in Xrakovskij's terms, "iterative") pluractionality. If a single event consists of a series of repeated sub-events, as in (1), it is classified as event-internal pluractionality. If a whole event is repeated, as in (2), it is called event-external pluractionality (for further discussion, see Šluinskij 2006).

English (Indo-European, Germanic)

- (1) *John is coughing.*
- (2) *John does his morning exercises every day.*

Both event-internal and event-external pluractionality are clusters of specific meanings. For instance, typical examples of event-external pluractional meanings are the standard habitual and usitative. Habitual describes an event that takes place regularly, once (or a fixed number of times) per period during a certain time (3). Usitative corresponds to an event that takes place under a certain condition (4).<sup>2</sup>

Lithuanian (Indo-European, Baltic; Ambrasas 1997: 246)

- (3) *kasdien ei-dav-au tavęs pasitik-ti.*  
 every\_day go-HAB.PST-1SG you.ACC meet-INF  
 'Every day I came to see you.'

Nenets (Uralic, Samoyedic)

- (4) *n'eka-w*                      *tur-pʔ*,                      *xada-w*  
 elder\_brother-1SG    come-CONV    grandmother-1SG  
*ja-mʔ*                      *pʔir'e-mba-s'ti*.  
 soup-ACC.SG    cook-DUR-HAB  
 'When/if my elder brother came, my grandmother cooked soup.'

Pluractional markers used for event-internal meanings are usually called event-internal pluractionals, or multiplicatives. The term 'wide pluractionals' refers to those more rare ones that are used both for event-internal and event-external meanings.

### 3. Individual-level predicates

The distinction between stage-level and individual-level predicates is well-established in formal semantics. It was originally introduced by Carlson (1977), who used the terms stage-level vs. individual-level properties. Essentially the same opposition, though outside any formal framework, was proposed independently by Bulygina (1982), who defines stage-level predicates as occurrences and individual-level predicates as qualities. Individual-level predicates express potentially stable characteristics that normally do not change throughout the whole period in which an individual exists (5). Stage-level predicates are used for transitory properties that correspond to separate, relatively short stages of the individual's existence (6).

English (Indo-European, Germanic; Manninen 2001: 1)

- (5) *John loved Mary.*  
 (6) *John kissed Mary.*

Individual-level predicates form a subset of stative predicates. All the stable features of an individual are states, but many states are temporary and therefore stage-level. For example, *love* and *be white* are stative individual-level predicates, *sleep* and *be standing* are stative stage-level predicates, and *kiss* and *run* are dynamic stage-level predicates.

Various semantic features that distinguish stage-level from individual-level predicates were identified by Diesing (1988), Kratzer (1995), and Chierchia (1995), based mainly on English data. Among these features is the 'lifetime effect' (Musan 1997), a property of individual-level (but not stage-level) predicates in a zero context. For example, John in (5) is likely

to be presumed dead, but in (6) he is not. The lifetime effect seems to be a substantial property of individual-level predicates, although it can be eliminated contextually.

The lexical meaning<sup>3</sup> of individual-level predicates does not allow them to be combined with pluractional meanings. An event that corresponds to an individual-level predicate does not change during the long-term period in which it takes place, so an individual cannot be involved in such an event more than once. Therefore it is to be expected that a verb whose meaning is individual-level will not combine with pluractional markers at all (at least as understood with individual-level lexical meaning).

Indeed, in some languages verbal<sup>4</sup> individual-level predicates (frequently referred to in grammatical descriptions as verbs of state) have a reduced compatibility with many verbal markers. For instance, in Maninka (Keita 1986: 115) the only grammatical markers that can be combined with the verbs of state are positive and negative particles, cf. the use of a positive particle in (7). In contrast, stage-level predicates, labelled verbs of action, can have a wide set of possible tense-aspect-modality markers, among them the Habitual, an event-external pluractional marker (8).

Maninka (Niger-Congo, Western Mande)

(7) *kě tùn ká kùdù.*

this man POS little

‘This man was short.’ (Keita 1986: 115)

(8) *mùsù yé ná tòbì-là.*

woman COP sauce cook-HAB

‘The woman cooks the sauce.’ (Keita 1986: 111)

In other languages verbal individual-level predicates follow the standard verbal paradigm, but their pluractional forms are semantically problematic or even impossible. Compare the normal use of the Habitual marker in Nenets on a stage-level verb in (9) with the obligatory reinterpretation of an individual-level predicate into a stage-level one in (10) and the complete ungrammaticality of (11), where such a reinterpretation is semantically impossible.

Nenets (Uralic, Samoyedic)

(9) *wan'a to-s'ti.*

Vanya comes-HAB

‘Vanya comes regularly.’

- (10) *was'a maša-m? men'e-s'ti.*  
 Vasya Masha-ACC.SG love-HAB  
 1. 'Vasya loves Masha regularly.'  
 {i.e. regularly falls in love with Masha}  
 2. \*'Vasya (permanently) loves Masha.'
- (11) \**was'a n'enč'a wada-m? t'en'ewa-s'ti.*  
 Vasya Nenets language-ACC.SG know-HAB  
 exp. 'Vasya knows Nenets.' {i.e. can speak Nenets}

However, contrary to the expectation formulated above, Maninka and Nenets are not the most typical cases cross-linguistically. In many languages verbal individual-level predicates may combine with event-external pluractional markers – a phenomenon which I call the INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE. Furthermore, in some cases pluractional markers, when applied to lexical stage-level verbs, cause such verbs to acquire some individual-level features. This is the case with other individual-level pluractional meanings.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4. INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE as a pluractional function

It is well known that event-external pluractional markers can be combined in various languages with verbal individual-level predicates to express the permanent state that is lexically expressed by the verb.<sup>6</sup> Consider the following Komi-Zyrian examples: in (12) the *-l-* suffix serves as a marker for an iterated event, but in (13), with a lexical individual-level predicate, it expresses a permanent state of an individual.

Komi-Zyrian (Uralic, Finnic)

- (12) *m'e m'ešök-jas nov-l-i, šyb'it-l-i..*  
 I bag-ACC.PL carry-ITER-PST.1SG throw-ITER-PST.1SG  
 'I (repeatedly) carried the bags and threw them.'
- (13) *m'e töd-l-i vojna-tö lit'eratura s'ert'i.*  
 I know-ITER-PST.1SG war-ACC.SG literature by  
 'I used to know the war from the literature.' (Serebrennikov 1960: 87)

A similar phenomenon can also be observed in languages that have a progressive vs. non-progressive distinction. For example, in English a single individual-level event and a repeated stage-level situation with a present tense reference are expressed by the Simple Present, but for single-event uses of stage-level predicates the Continuous Present is used. Exactly the same distribution can be found in Maasai: typically, the simple form is used for habitual (14) and the progressive form is used for the imperfective viewpoint (15). However, a stage-level predicate requires the simple form, although no repetition is involved in this case (16).

Maasai (Nilo-Saharan, Nilotic; Tucker and Mpaayei 1955: 60)

(14) *e-nya nkishu nkujit.*

3SG-eat cattle grass

‘Cows eat grass.’

(15) *a-pik-ita nkiri enkima.*

1SG-put-PROG meat fire

‘I am putting meat on the fire.’

(16) *a-nyor inkiri.*

1SG-like meat

‘I like meat.’

The fact that permanent states are semantically close to habituals is well known. Kučera (1981: 181) claims that “iteratives represent states, not activities”; Padučeva (1985: 223) includes directly habitual events in the set of consistent states; de Swart (2000) claims that a habitual interpretation of an imperfective verbal form is a tool for stativizing a dynamic predicate. However, it is necessary to make two remarks about this relation between states and habituals.

First, the set of verbs that describe a single event with a habitual marker can be wider than the set of clearly individual-level predicates. Bagvalal, according to Kibrik (2001: 237–239), provides an example of this; see example (17) with a habitual form of the individual-level verb *ĩ-* ‘know’ and example (18) with a habitual form of the verb *hal-* ‘be ill’ that would be expected to be stage-level, but in fact does not have the meaning of a repeated state, but instead that of a single one.

Bagvalal (East Caucasian, Andic)

- (17) *di-ba he-r-ʕagila sajuz-iṯ mis'-abi*  
 I-AFF what-N.PL-every Union-GEN language-PL  
*r-ī-r-ō-r.*  
 N.PL-know-IPFV-HAB-N.PL

‘I know all the languages of the (Soviet) Union.’ (Kibrik 2001: 233)

- (18) *ʕali hal-ō-w.*  
 Ali be\_ill-IPFV-HAB-M  
 ‘Ali is ill.’ (Kibrik 2001: 237)

Second, the use of event-external pluractional markers for a single INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE like in (13) are typical, but not universal; see the Nenets examples (10–11) above and the example from Karachay-Balkar in (19). In Karachay-Balkar, the habitual form of the predicate *sij-* ‘be in love / fall in love’ cannot have the meaning of a single state ‘be in love’, but can be applied only to the inchoative meaning and involves an iteration of the event ‘fall in love’.

Balkar (Altaic, Turkic)

- (19) *kerim lejla-ni sij-üüci-dü.*  
 Kerim Lejla-ACC love-HAB-3SG

‘Kerim usually falls in love with Lejla.’ / \*‘Kerim loves Lejla.’

To summarize, the INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE is a common use of event-external pluractional markers, and therefore should be considered within the semantic domain of pluractionality.<sup>7</sup>

## 5. PROPERTY as a pluractional function

Pluractional marking may function to express a basic characteristic of an individual that becomes apparent in specific regular events, a function of pluractionality I will call PROPERTY. To illustrate, consider the following. The English sentence in (20) is ambiguous: it can either be used for a single occasion of John’s smoking and therefore have a normal single-event perfective interpretation (default), or it can indicate John’s habit of smoking with no reference to any specific event. In Russian, the analogous sentence (21) is normally understood in a zero context as a statement that



characterizes the referent with the meaning of PROPERTY (21.1), and the episodic interpretation (21.2) can only be induced by context.

English (Indo-European, Germanic)

(20) *John smoked.*

Russian (Indo-European, Slavic)

(21) *vas-ja kuri-l.*  
 Vasya-NOM smoke-PST.M.SG  
 1. 'Vasya was a smoker.'  
 2. 'Vasya was smoking.'

Example (2) above (*John does his morning exercises every day*) is used to express just the fact of the regular repetition of an event; (21.1) *Vasya was a smoker* focuses on internal features of an individual and as a result its relationship to repetition is mediated.

Although, logically, every repeated situation can be interpreted as a property of its participants, the semantic difference between standard habitual contexts like (2) and PROPERTY contexts like (21.1) is substantiated by linguistic evidence. PROPERTY contexts are expressed more often like INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE contexts than like habitual contexts. In Lithuanian, the pluractional marker *-dav-* is restricted by proper event-external uses. Both INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE (22) and PROPERTY (23a) are encoded by the simple form of Past tense; the *-dav-* marker in (23b) involves a standard repetition that has no focus on the individual's properties.

Lithuanian (Indo-European, Baltic)

(22) *mano močiut-ė mokėj-o pasak-as.*  
 my grandmother-NOM.SG know-PST.3SG tale-ACC.PL  
 'My grandmother knew tales.'

(23) a. *mano senel-is rūk-ė.*  
 my grandfather-NOM.SG smoke-PST.3SG  
 'My grandfather was a smoker.'  
 b. *mano broli-is kasdien rūky-dav-o.*  
 my brother-NOM.SG every\_day smoke-ITER.PST.3SG  
 '(Last year), my brother smoked every day.'

When a pluractional marker is used to express PROPERTY, then it is also regularly used for the INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE. For instance, in Agul the

so-called Generic Past (see Merdanova 2004 for the details of the Agul tense-aspect system) can be used to express habitual meanings (24), PROPERTY (25) and INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE (26).

Agul (East Caucasian, Lezgić)

(24) *ze ħabaw-a har jaκ-a ŧurpa rüx-e-f-ij.*  
 my grandmother-ERG every day-TMR soup cook-IPFV-SBST-PST  
 ‘My grandmother cooked soup every day.’

(25) *ze ħadad-a p’ap’ruc-ar du-a-f-ij.*  
 my grandfather-ERG cigarette-PL pull-IPFV-SBST-PST  
 ‘My grandfather was a smoker [=sucked cigarettes].’

(26) *ze ħabaw-as ħakijat-ar ħa-f-ij.*  
 my grandmother-DAT tale-PL know-SBST-PST  
 ‘My grandmother knew tales.’

In summary, the PROPERTY meaning characterizes some specific properties of an individual, but also involves iterative semantics and therefore belongs to the pluractional semantic domain.

## 6. CAPACITIVE as a pluractional function

The meaning of CAPACITIVE has been discussed in some cross-linguistic studies on verbal systems in general (see, e.g., Plungjan 1997), but has not been considered in the context of the typology of pluractionality. The CAPACITIVE meaning relates to the capacity of an individual to participate in an event (ability in terms of Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994; participant-internal possibility in terms of van der Auwera and Plungjan 1998). Logically, CAPACITIVE can be described as a special case of the meaning PROPERTY (viz. a capacity to participate in an event is also an inherent feature that can become explicit in repeated events). However, it can nonetheless be expressed differently from typical PROPERTY contexts and therefore should be described as a distinct meaning.

There are two types of CAPACITIVE contexts that tend to have different kind of expressions: inherent and acquired. Consider the Russian examples in (27) and (28).

Russian (Indo-European, Slavic)

- (27) *ivan plava-et brass-om.*  
 Ivan swim-PRES.3SG breaststroke-INST  
 ‘Ivan can swim using the breaststroke.’

- (28) *naš-a stiral'n-aja mašin-a*  
 our-F.NOM washing-F.NOM machine-NOM  
*otžima-et bel'-e.*  
 wring\_out-PRES.3SG linen-ACC  
 ‘Our washing machine can wring out the linen.’

Both of these sentences are typical examples of CAPACITIVE contexts, but they differ in that (27) necessarily implies that the individual whose capacity is characterized has participated in the event (acquired capacity) at least once,<sup>8</sup> while (28) can refer to a new device that has never been used (inherent capacity). These two semantic types of CAPACITIVES can also be distinguished linguistically: in some languages there are examples of verbal markers that can be used only for inherent CAPACITIVE, but not for acquired CAPACITIVE. For example, in Lithuanian a Simple Past form can be used in the inherent CAPACITIVE context (29a), but the acquired CAPACITIVE context requires a modal verb (29b).<sup>9</sup>

Lithuanian (Indo-European, Baltic)

- (29) a. *ši mašin-ėl-ė vir-ė sriub-q.*  
 this machine-DIM-NOM.SG cook-PST.3SG soup-ACC.SG  
 (Once upon a time my father bought an amazing machine;)  
 ‘that machine could cook soup itself.’
- b. *mano ses-el-ė jau mokėj-o*  
 my sister-DIM-NOM.SG already can-PST.3SG  
*iš-vir-ti sriub-q.*  
 PREF-cook-INF soup-ACC.SG  
 (When I returned home,) ‘my little sister could already cook soup herself.’

More frequently, however, these two types of CAPACITIVES are not formally distinguished and are expressed by verbal forms with a general meaning or by event-external pluractionals. If an event-external pluractional marker is used for the CAPACITIVE meaning, then it is also used for the INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE; consider examples (30–31) from Susu.

Susu (Niger-Congo, Western Mande)

- (30) *n xunya ginε ma nu bɔrε*  
 I younger\_sibling female to RETR soup  
*ɲin-ma a yetε ra.*  
 cook-HAB (s)he self with  
 (When I returned,) ‘my younger sister could cook soup herself.’

- (31) *n mama nu gaxo-ma bare yara.*  
 I grandmother RETR be\_afraid-HAB dog front  
 ‘My grandmother was afraid of dogs.’

In summary, the CAPACITIVE meaning characterizes an inherent property of an individual, but it also involves (potential) iteration. This meaning connects the semantic domain of pluractionality with the semantic domain of modality – see Tatevosov (2005) for further discussion.

## 7. QUALITATIVE as a pluractional function

Sentences with a QUALITATIVE meaning are used to characterize an individual as belonging to a specific ontological class that is defined by participating regularly in an event. A typical case of such use is an expression that a person belongs to a particular profession.

In some languages the semantics of general event-external pluractional markers include such QUALITATIVE contexts. For instance, Robins (1958: 82) gives some examples of the Yurok infix *-eg-* with event-external pluractional semantics (*la-y* ‘pass’ > *l-eg-ay* ‘pass regularly, use a certain track’) and some QUALITATIVE examples (*kemol* ‘steal’ > *k-eg-emol* ‘be a thief’).

However, some languages have a special Qualitative marker that is not used to indicate other types of pluractionality. This is the case of the Nivkh Qualitative suffix *-xy-*:

Nivkh (isolate; Panfilov 1965: 75)

- (32) *hy n'ivx q'otr lyi-xy-d'.*  
 this man bear kill-QUALIT-NONFUT  
 ‘This man kills bears.’

As Panfilov (1965: 75) shows, the *-xy-* suffix in Nivkh can be contrasted with reduplication, which marks other kinds of event-external plu-

rationality. The example in (33a), with a reduplicated form, has the meaning of a repeated event; (33b), with the Qualitative marker, has the meaning of assigning a group of individuals to a specific class.

Nivkh (isolate; Panfilov 1965: 75)

- (33) a. *n'yŋ qan-gu vava-d'-yy.*  
 our dog-PL fight<sub>RED-NONFUT-PL</sub>  
 'Our dogs fought repeatedly.'  
 b. *n'yŋ qan-gu va-xy-d'-yy.*  
 our dog-PL fight-QUALIT-NONFUT-PL  
 'Our dogs are pugnacious.'

Specialized QUALITATIVE markers differ according to whether the regular iteration of the event is obligatory. This is the case for the Nivkh sentences (32) and (33b), which normally imply that the events of killing and fighting occur more or less regularly. In contrast, the specialized marker of the QUALITATIVE in Agul, the so-called Intentional form marked with *-je-f-* is used both for QUALITATIVE contexts that involve a regular iteration (34) and for QUALITATIVE contexts where it is not assumed that the event takes place regularly (35).

Agul (East Caucasian, Lezgetic)

- (34) *ze ħabaw-a šurpa rüx-e-je-f-ij.*  
 my grandmother-ERG soup cook-IPFV-PART-SBST-PST  
 'My grandmother cooked soup professionally.' {i.e. she was a cook}  
 (35) *ze ħabaw-ak ital k-e-je-f-ij.*  
 my grandmother-CONT illness CONT-be\_situated-PART-SBST-PST  
 'My grandmother was disposed to illness.'

The set of the possible uses of the specialized QUALITATIVE marker *-ty-* in Selkup (labelled in Kuznecova, Xelimskij and Gruškina 1980 as characterization Aktionsart) is even wider. There are standard QUALITATIVE examples (*tāly-* 'steal' > *tel-ty-* 'be a thief'), examples that do not imply a regular iteration (*sōty-* 'bite' > *sat-ty-* 'be a biter') and, finally, examples that do not even imply that the relevant situation has ever taken place at all (*tal'y-* 'break' > *tal'-ty-* 'be fragile', Kuznecova, Xelimskij and Gruškina 1980: 232–233).

While the QUALITATIVE meaning typically is indicated via a specialized marker, languages that lack such a marker normally express the QUALITA-

TIVE meaning in the same way as they mark standard event-external pluractionality. See, for example, the Udmurt *-l-* pluractional suffix in a standard habitual context (36a) and in a QUALITATIVE (36b) one:

Udmurt (Uralic, Finnic)

- (36) a. *baba-je*                      *každyj*   *nunal*   *šyd*   *pöž't-yl-i-z*  
 grandmother-1SG every day soup cook-ITER-PST-3SG  
 'My grandmother cooked soup every day.'
- b. *baba-je*                      *stolovyj-yn*   *šyd*   *pöž't-yl-i-z*  
 grandmother-1SG canteen-LOC soup cook-ITER-PST-3SG  
 'My grandmother cooked soup in a canteen.'

In summary, the meaning of QUALITATIVE can be expressed by a special marker, but if such a marker is not available, then such meanings are normally expressed by event-external pluractionals.

## 8. GENERIC uses of pluractionals

Whereas the QUALITATIVE function uses certain features of a class to make statements about its members, the GENERIC meaning involves statements about a class of individuals as a whole. GENERIC refers to a 'timeless' event (and therefore it has truth conditions that do not depend on a point in time). For example, (37) is true in present, past and future.

English (Indo-European, Germanic)

- (37) *Cows eat grass.*

There is a vast literature on generics; see Carlson and Pelletier (1995) for a discussion on genericity and further references. Here I will discuss only the connection between genericity and pluractionality.

An important feature of GENERIC sentences is the generic reference of the noun phrases involved.<sup>10</sup> As Givón (1984: 406–408) shows, the generic reference is semantically close both to definite and non-referential functions. Definite and generic references are similar in that a class of individuals that is introduced by a generic noun phrase can be regarded as a single individual with some specific features. Therefore a GENERIC sentence contains an individual-level predicate with a term referring to a whole class of objects. This explains why GENERIC sentences refer to 'timeless' events: the lifetime of the whole class of objects<sup>11</sup> is pragmati-

cally predicted to be infinite. For example, consider (38), a GENERIC sentence with a past time reference, termed a past generic (Dahl 1975, 1985).

English (Indo-European, Germanic)

(38) *Dinosaurs ate kelp.*

In (38) we observe a standard lifetime effect of a predicate with an IL-meaning, as defined in this chapter. Truth conditions of (38) are exactly limited by the period during which the necessary class of objects exists.

The fact that GENERIC sentences can be defined as sentences with generic NPs is a natural explanation of the fact that special verbal markers for GENERIC meaning are quite rare, although there are some examples, for instance the Usual Aktionsart in Selkup (Kuznecova, Xelimskij and Gruškina 1980: 219) as illustrated in (39), and the Generic Present<sup>12</sup> in Agul (Merdanova 2004: 109) as illustrated in (40).

Selkup (Uralic, Samoyedic; Kuznecova, Xelimskij and Gruškina 1980: 219)

(39) *šettyr-qyn špa halqal-k-a.*  
 spring-LOC duck shed\_feathers-GENER-PRES  
 ‘A duck sheds its feathers in spring.’

Agul (East Caucasian, Lezgi; Merdanova 2004: 109)

(40) *ʒurd-ana ixp-ar us-a-f-e.*  
 winter-TMR snow-PL snow/rain-IPFV-SBST-PRES  
 ‘In winter it snows.’

More typically, the GENERIC meaning is expressed either by an event-external pluractional marker (that may also have some IL-meanings) or by a simple non-pluractional form (that may contrast with a pluractional form used in other contexts). The first case is exemplified by the Habitual in Swahili; compare a standard habitual sentence (41) and a GENERIC sentence (42).

Swahili (Niger-Congo, Central Bantu)

(41) *mimi hu-soma asubuhi.*  
 I HAB-read in\_the\_morning  
 ‘I usually read in the morning.’ (Gromova and Oxotina 1995: 232)

- (42) *paka hu-kamata panya a-ka-wa-la.*  
 cat HAB-catch mouse.PL CL-CONS-CL-eat  
 ‘A cat catches mice and eats them.’ (Gromova and Oxotina 1995: 234)

The second case is exemplified by Kolyma Yukaghir (Maslova 2003: 140), where a habitual form is used in (43), but the GENERIC context in (44) requires the simple imperfective form.

Yukaghir (isolate)

- (43) *tuda: ta:t ed’u-t moda:-nun-d’i:l’i.*  
 long\_ago so live-SS live-HAB-1PL  
 ‘We used to live that way long ago.’ (Maslova 2003: 140)
- (44) *puge-d-in el-al’a:č’uon qodo:-nu-j.*  
 summer-POSS-DAT NEG-melt-CAR lie-IPFV-3SG  
 ‘It lies without melting till summer.’ (Maslova 2003: 131)

Similarly, Dahl (1985: 103) assumes that English periphrastic past habitual forms seem to be impossible in past generics;<sup>13</sup> compare (38) with (45).

English (Indo-European, Germanic; Dahl 1985: 103)

- (45) *???Dinosaurs used to eat kelp.*

Thus the GENERIC meaning may be understood as marginally associated with the individual area of the pluractional semantic domain in that it is semantically close both to pluractionality and to the description of a single event.

## 9. Conclusion: a semantic map for individual-level pluractionals

In this chapter, I have introduced five meanings of pluractional markers that are usually left out of descriptions of this semantic domain, although all of them are generally well-known in grammatical typology. These meanings are INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE, PROPERTY, CAPACITIVE, QUALITATIVE and GENERIC. Table 1 presents a list of diagnostic sentences for these meanings.



Table 1. Diagnostic sentences for IL-meanings

Meaning	Diagnostic sentences
INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE	<i>My grandmother knows tales.</i> <i>John loves his wife.</i>
PROPERTY	<i>My grandfather smokes / is a smoker.</i> <i>Our door creaks / is creaky.</i>
CAPACITIVE	<i>Our child can speak.</i> <i>This machine can dry the linen.</i>
QUALITATIVE	<i>My mother cooks in a restaurant / is a cook.</i> <i>My grandmother is prone to be ill.</i>
GENERIC	<i>Cows eat grass.</i> <i>A peasant grows vegetables.</i>

According to my data, pluractional IL-meanings can be organized in a semantic map in the following way (see Figure 1). This map follows the standard methodology of semantic maps: if two meanings are regularly expressed in a language by the same marker, then they are semantically close. This fact is indicated by the lines on the semantic map. This semantic map includes no diachronic perspective, so there are lines but no arrows; these lines are not grammaticalization paths. The figure obeys the principle of continuity: if a marker is used for two meanings that are not directly connected by a line, it should also be used for all the meanings between these two. A semantic map is thus used here as a tool to clarify the observed restrictions on expressing IL-meanings. We can see that the possible set of IL-meanings that a marker can express is limited by the semantic relations between them.

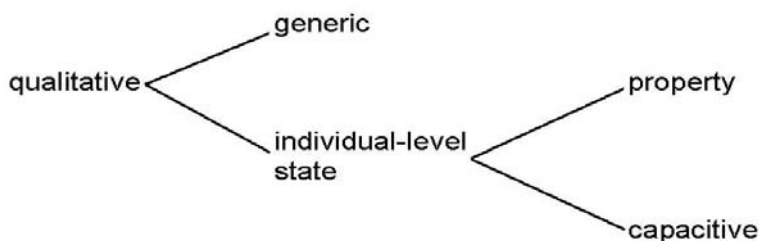


Figure 1. Semantic map for IL-meanings

Due to lack of space, the argumentation for this semantic map is presented in a brief tabular form. In Table 2 information about possible and impossible IL-meanings of some event-external pluractional and imperfec-

tive markers is summarized. Only the information about the meanings from Figure 1 is given in Table 2. Markers with identical clustering of the meanings in focus are separated by a thinner horizontal line.

*Table 2.* Possible and impossible IL-meanings of specific markers

Language	Marker	QUAL	GEN	IL-S	PROP	CAP
Basque	Imperfective Progressive (Imperfective Gerund in <i>-ten/-tzen</i> + <i>aritzen</i> + Past auxiliary)	+	–	–	–	–
Karachay-Balkar	Habitual ( <i>-ucu</i> )	+	+	–	–	–
Udmurt	Iterative ( <i>-l</i> )	+	+	–	–	–
Mandarin Chinese	zero form	+	+	+	+	–
Danish	Past	+	+	+	+	–
Tajik	Imperfect ( <i>me-</i> )	+	+	+	–	+
Agul	Habitual Past ( <i>-ji</i> )	–	–	+	+	+
English	<i>used to</i> construction <sup>14</sup>	+	–	+	+	–
Basque	Imperfective Past (Imperfective Gerund in <i>-ten/-tzen</i> + Past auxiliary)	+	+	+	+	+
French	Imparfait	+	+	+	+	+

(The following abbreviations are used: QUAL – QUALITATIVE, GEN – GENERIC, IL-S – INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE, PROP – PROPERTY, CAP – CAPACITIVE.)

To conclude, IL-meanings form an important part of the semantic domain of pluractionality. By characterizing these meanings as a whole and describing each of them in depth, this chapter contributes to an overlooked aspect of this area of grammar.

## Notes

1. The help of many people in collecting data for cross-linguistic research cannot be overestimated. Mukadas Abdullaeva (Tajik), Oumar Camara (Susu), Mads Eskildsen (Danish), Natalja Inokaitenė (Lithuanian), Solmaz R. Merdanova

(Agul), Iker Sancho (Basque) were my consultants. Udmurt and Chinese data were collected by Natalia Serdobolskaya and Anna Leontieva, respectively. Karachay-Balkar and Nenets data were collected during fieldtrips organized by Moscow State University, partly by myself and partly by Anna Pazelskaya. I am strongly indebted to all these people and also to the consultants of the other languages that were not cited in this chapter. I also thank: Sergei G. Tatevosov, who was my supervisor during my work on my dissertation; Yury A. Lander, Timur A. Maisak, Elena V. Paducheva and Vladimir A. Plunjan who were the reviewers; others colleagues for their valuable remarks and fruitful discussions; Bernard Comrie and Julia Kuznetsova who read this chapter and made lots of corrections; Pattie Epps, Michael Cysouw and an anonymous reviewer for their multiple notes and corrections; Joshua Wilbur for improving my English.

2. Examples with no reference come from my own work with native speakers. Abbreviations in glossing: 1, 3 – 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, ACC accusative, ADV adverbial marker, AFF affective, CAR caritive, CL (noun) class marker, CONS consecutive, CONT contact localization, CONV converb, COP copula, DAT dative, DIM diminutive, DUR durative, ERG ergative, F feminine, GEN genitive, GENER generic, HAB habitual, INF infinitive, INST instrumental, IPFV imperfective, ITER iterative, LOC locative, M masculine, N neutral (gender), NEG negative, NOM nominative, NONFUT non-future, PART participle, PL plural, POS positive particle, POSS possessive, PREF (verbal) prefix, PRES present, PROG progressive, PST past, QUALIT qualitative, RED reduplication, RETR ‘retrospective shift’, SG singular, SS same-subject, SBST substantivizer, TMR temporalis form.
3. To be more precise, verbs are usually polysemantic, and therefore the same verb understood in one meaning can be an individual-level predicate, but understood in another meaning a stage-level one. Accordingly, here I am speaking not about a lexical meaning of a verb in general, but about a lexical meaning of a verb taken in a single specific interpretation.
4. The majority of individual-level predicates are nominal, such as in the sentence *John is a linguist*. For a formal semantic description, the difference between nominal and verbal predicates is not crucial, but in the context of a typology of verbal markers and their uses I speak first of all about the properties of the individual-level predicates that are expressed by verbs.
5. My term ‘individual-level meanings’ is an extension of the standard term ‘individual-level predicates’ that originates from formal semantics. This extension seems to be useful for a cross-linguistic study, although it would not be possible to make this extension within a formal semantics framework. From the point of view of the formal semantics tradition, if an event is repeated, it is classified automatically as a stage-level predicate. However, I claim that if a predicate introduces a repeated event, but is still used for expressing a permanent (or quasi-permanent) characteristic of an individual, this predicate has substantial features in common with prototypical individual-level predicates.

6. There seems to be no substantial semantic difference between individual-level verbs with and without a pluractional marker. If one changes the iterative form *tödli* ‘knew’ in (16) with a simple past form *tödi* ‘knew’, the meaning of the sentence is more or less the same.
7. An alternative analysis is possible that treats pluractionality and the meaning of INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE as related parts of the same larger category. My decision to describe the meaning of INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE – and also other pluractional IL-meanings – as based on the fact that the uses of pluractional markers for INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE are quiet marginal. At least non-zero markers of this type are systematically described for different languages as habitual markers and not as durative/imperfective markers.
8. Typically, a CAPACITIVE context implies that an individual participates in the event more or less regularly, or at least has participated in it *many* times.
9. Note that as a result (some) CAPACITIVE meaning can be lacking in a particular verbal system. In some languages only modal verbs can be used to express an individual’s capacity.
10. Usually, sentences that refer to some features of unique objects, such as ‘*The Earth is round*’ are also labelled GENERIC sentences. But for such objects the difference between different kinds of referential status seems to be irrelevant, cf.: *\*Any Earth is round, \*Every Earth is round, etc.*
11. Sentences like those mentioned in note 10 refer to unique objects that also have an infinite lifetime.
12. But not the parallel Generic Past, see examples (27–29).
13. Note, however, that speakers’ judgements on this example differ.
14. Data on *used to* constructions is from Google.com and from previously mentioned sources. See the relevant examples. QUALITATIVE: *My father used to sell pizzas*. GENERIC: *\*Dinosaurs used to eat kelp*. INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL STATE: *I used to love you, Mary Jane*. PROPERTY: *Churchill used to smoke*. CAPACITIVE: *John used to swim* \*‘John could swim’.

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