

## **Verbal number in Goemai (West Chadic)**

**Birgit Hellwig (Universität Köln)**

Chadic languages are well known for marking verbal number (Corbett 2000; Newman 1990), and Goemai is no exception to this generalization. When comparing Goemai to other Chadic languages, however, several differences become apparent: the inventory is exceptionally large (78 verbs out of a database of 569 verbs mark number); the verbs come from all lexical fields and are not restricted to expected fields such as posture, motion or caused motion; and they are used to indicate participant number rather than event number. Contrary to expectations, the marking of participant number does not only cover intransitive subjects and transitive objects, but also transitive subjects and some peripheral arguments. These patterns have a semantic basis in that they depend on the thematic roles of the arguments involved, and this talk explores the interaction of verbal number, transitivity and semantic roles in Goemai.