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Creole Languages in a World-Wide Perspective

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1. Serial verb constructions in *APiCS* (features 84, 85, 86, 95, 96, 42)

- 'Come' and 'Go' serial verb constructions (F 84)
- 'Take' serial verb constructions (F 85)
- 'Give' serial verb constructions (F 86)
- Instrumental expressions (F 69; 'Take'-serials)
- Comparative Standard Marking (F 42; 'Surpass'-serials)
- Complementizers with verbs of 'Speaking' (F 95; 'Say'-serials)
- Complementizers with verbs of 'Knowing' (F 96; 'Say'-serials)

2. Definition of serial verb construction

A serial verb construction (SVC) is a sequence of verbs which act together as a single predicate, **without any overt marker of coordination, subordination, or syntactic dependency of any other sort**. Serial verb constructions describe what is conceptualized as a single event. They are monoclausal; their intonational properties are the same as those of a monoverbal clause, and they have just one tense, aspect, and polarity value. SVCs may also share core and other arguments. Each component of an SVC must be able to occur on its own. Within an SVC, the individual verbs may have same, or different, transitivity values. (A. Aikhenvald & R.M.W. Dixon. Serial Verb Constructions. A Cross-Linguistic Typology. Oxford: University Press 2006, p.1, highlighting ours)

- serial verb constructions allow for the **repetition of the subject and of TAM markers**, as in Guinea-Bissau Kriyol:

Guinea-Bissau Kriyol (P, West Africa)

(1) *I nada i bin li.*
he swim he come here
'He came swimming.'

Guinea-Bissau Kriyol (P, West Africa)

(2) *Es katcur ta toma rabu i ta miti bas di bariga tudu ora.*
this dog HAB take tail he HAB put under of belly all hour
'This dog always puts his tail under his belly.'

• The important point here is the **absence of any marker of coordination or subordination**, as is the case with directional serial verbs in Guinea-Bissau Kriyol:

Guinea-Bissau Kriyol (P, West Africa)

(3) **N kuri i n bin kasa.*
I run and I come home
'I ran home.'

3. Feature 85: 'Take' serial constructions

• Take-serials (i.e. serial verb constructions with 'take' as the first verb, "he took

knife cut meat”) are widespread in the languages of the world.

- In creole studies, mainly the instrumental function of such serials has been emphasized. However, the functional range of take-serials is broader, and the object of a ‘take’ serial may also be the theme of the second verb.

value 2: ‘Take’ object is theme of second verb, literal interpretation possible

Sango (Ngbandi, Adamawa-Ubangian, Africa; Samarin 2012)

- (4) *mu ta ni, zia na sese*
take pot DET put PREP ground
'Put the pot on the ground.'

value 3: ‘Take’ object is theme of second verb, literal interpretation impossible

Ghananian Pidgin English (E, West Africa; Huber 2012)

- (5) *dis pipu tu dè tek dεa mɔf put insai*
DEM people FOC 3PL take 3PL.POSS mouth put inside
'These people meddled/interfered.'

value 4: ‘Take’ object is instrument of second verb, with resumptive pronoun

Santome (P, Gulf of Guinea; Hagemeyer 2012)

(6) *Tlêxi ome toma inen faka se kota mpon ku ê.*

three man take PL.DEF knife DEM cut bread with 3SG

'Three men cut the bread with the knives in question.' OR:

'Three men took the knives in question and cut the bread.'

Hagemeyer (2012) comments: "Note that the object of *toma* does not agree in number with the resumptive pronoun."

- values 3 and 4 do not occur as the only take-serial construction in a contact language

value 5: 'Take' object is instrument of second verb, no resumptive pronoun

Creolese (E, Guyana; Devonish & Thompson 2012)

(7) *ii tek wan klaat waip di teeb*

3SG take INDF.ART cloth wipe DEF.ART table

'He wiped the table with a cloth.'

Devonish & Thompson (2012) comment: " This construction has a different

implication for its seeming equivalent *ii waip di teebɫ wid wan klaat*. The serial construction 'take X do Y' has the implication that the action is deliberate and planned. The non-serial construction does not have such an implication."

- some languages show all four values (2–5): Gulf of Guinea Creoles (Santome, Angolar, Principense), Cape Verdean of Santiago, Vincentian Creole
- many contact languages do not have take-serials (not areal restriction)

Feature 85: 'Take' serial constructions

4. Feature 86: 'Give' Serial Verb Construction

- in languages with serial verb constructions, 'give' is sometimes used as a serial verb, introducing a recipient or a beneficiary
- normally, 'give' is the **second verb** in the series

- especially in South East Asian creoles, there are serial verb constructions where 'give' is the **first verb** and where no participant can intervene between the two verbs in the series (see value 3)

value 1: 'Give' verb in second position, introduces recipient only

Berbice Dutch (D, Guyana; Kouwenberg 2012)

(8) *o ma tiri en pi ekε*
 3SG IRR send one give 3SG
 'He will send me one.'

Kouwenberg's (2012) comment: "The construction is acceptable only if actual transfer of an object takes place. In other words, *pi* 'give' always introduces a recipient in this construction."

value 2: 'Give' verb in second position, may introduce recipient or beneficiary

Nengee (E, Surinam; Migge 2012)

(9) *Den pikin wasi ala den beenki gi mi.*
 DET.PL child wash all DET.PL dishes give me

'The children washed all the dishes for me.' --> beneficiary

value 3: 'Give' verb in first position, the construction expresses recipient

- the theme argument and (most of the time) the recipient argument follow the second verb:

Papia Kristang (P, Asia; Baxter 2012)

(10) *E ja da mpustá ku yo aké langgiáng.*
he PFV give borrow OBJ 1SG that push-net
'He lent me that push-net.'

- other languages showing this value are Ambon Malay, Batavia Creole, Cavite Chabacano, Ternate Chabacano, and Zamboanga Chabacano.

Feature 86 'Give' Serial Verb Construction

5. Feature 42: Comparative Standard Marking ('Surpass'-serials)

- in a comparative construction, e.g. English *John is taller than Peter*, the standard refers to the entity Y (Peter) to which the topic X (John) is compared, marked by the particle *than* in English

- comparative constructions involve adjectives. Note that we use adjective in a semantic sense to refer to gradable property concepts. Thus, if a language has no adjective–verb distinction, this feature is still relevant.
- The standard markers are here classified by the salient other meanings that they have in addition to that of marking the standard.
 - Surpass markers also occur as (or are closely related to) a verb meaning ‘surpass’ or ‘exceed’.
 - Locational markers have a locational sense (ablative, allative, locative), or a dative sense.
 - Particle markers are specialized for standard marking, or at least have no ‘surpass’ or locational meaning (English *than* and French *que* belong here).

value 1: 'Surpass' marking

Cameroon Pidgin English (E, West Africa; Schröder 2012)

- (11) *Douala big pas Yaoundé.*
 Douala be.big surpass Yaoundé
 'Douala is bigger than Yaoundé.'

value 2: Particle marking

- most frequent construction in the *APiCS* sample

Afrikaans (semi-creole, Africa; den Besten & Biberauer 2012)

(12) *Jan is ouer as sy neef.*
Jan is ou-er as sy neef
John is old-er than 3SG.M.POSS cousin
'John is older than his cousin.'

value 3: Locational marking

- with markers e.g. 'from', 'to'

Bislama (E, Pacific; Meyerhoff 2012)

(13) *saes blong wharf bae i bigwan lelebet long hemia we i stap naoia*
size POSS wharf IRR AGR big little.bit to 3SG.DEF REL AGR stay now.DEF
'The size of the wharf will be a bit bigger than the current one.'

Chinuk Wawa (creole, Algonkian, North America; Grant 2012)

(14) *pilpil ptl'ix kapa tsak*
blood thick from water
'Blood is thicker than water.'

value 4: Conjoined marking

Singapore Bazaar Malay

(15) *John tinggi. Jimmy pendek.*

John tall Jimmy short

'John is tall (and) Jimmy is short.'

- also in Gurindji Kriol (mixed lg.), Kriol, Tayo

value 5: Standard is not overtly marked

Angolar (P, Gulf of Guinea; Maurer 2012a)

(16) *Maya masi txo Dho.*

Mary more small John

'Mary is smaller than John.'

- other languages which only show value 3: Chinese Pidgin English, Pidgin Hawaiian,

value 6: Other, combination of particle and locational marking

Cape Verdean Creole of Brava

(17) *E mutu mas bedju di ki mi.*

is much more old of than me

'He is much older than I am.'

Feature 42: Comparative Standard Marking

6. Feature 95: Complementizers with verbs of 'Speaking' ('Say'-serials)

- This feature asks about the **complementizer** used with verbs of speaking such as 'say', 'tell', 'ask', 'shout', 'whisper', in an indirect-speech construction.
- We are interested in sentences with **indicative mood** like 'She said that the boy did not feel well', not in sentences with directive modality like 'She told the boy to stay in bed'.

value 1: Complementizer based on bare 'say'

African American English (North America; Green 2012)

(18) *She told me say she wasn't going to church.*

'She told me that she wasn't going to church.'

value 2: Complementizer based on 'say' plus some other marker

Seychelles Creole (F, Indian Ocean; Michaelis & Rosalie 2012)

(19) *Mon dir li pourdir nou pou al Bamberg demen.*

1SG tell 3SG COMPL 1PL FUT go Bamberg tomorrow

'I tell her that we would go to Bamberg the next day.'

The complementizer *pourdir* is transparent and can be separated into two monomorphemic lexemes *pour* 'for, to' and *dir* 'say'.

value 3: Complementizer not based on 'say'

Belizean Creole (E, Meso-America; Escure 2012); *da* < English *that*

(20) *A tɛl dem pipl da nobadi ɛls wan dɛ da kamp.*

1SG tell them people that nobody else FUT LOC at camp

'I told those people that nobody else will stay at the camp.'

value 4: Zero complementizer

• the most prominent strategy (many pidgins, Louisiana, Martinican, Guadeloupean Creole as their only strategy)

Chinese Pidgin English (E, Asia; Matthews & Li & Baker 2012)

(21) [...] *but he say no wanchy see master.*

but 3SG say NEG want see master

'[...] but he said he didn't want to see the master.'

Feature 95: Complementizers with verbs of 'Speaking'

7. Feature 96: Complementizers with verbs of 'Knowing' ('Say'-serials)

- This feature asks about the complementizer used with the verb 'know', or similar verbs such as 'learn', 'forget'.
- The distribution of the different constructions seems quite similar to those in the previous feature on complementizers with verbs of speaking.

Feature 96: Complementizers with verbs of 'Knowing'

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