

‘Take’ serial verb constructions in Kwa: an intra-genetic typology
oral/poster

The paper presents an intra-genetic typology of ‘take’ serial verb constructions (SVCs) in Kwa. Methodologically, it deals with a phenomenon that is far from being universal cross-linguistically, but is attested throughout this specific language family. The data of ca. 20 Kwa languages (out of ca. 80 languages currently classified as Kwa) are accessible and were compared in the investigation.

‘Take’ SVCs are SVCs where the verb ‘take’ is the first one and is, to some extent, grammaticalized. There are three types of ‘take’ SVCs in Kwa:

- (a) lative ‘take’ SVCs where the verb ‘take’ is combined with a motion verb, and the whole construction is used to express a transference of an object, as in Gen example (1),
- (b) instrumental ‘take’ SVCs where the verb ‘take’ is used to express an instrumental valency of the second verb, as in Gen example (3),
- (c) objectal ‘take’ SVCs where the verb ‘take’ is used to introduce an object of the second verb, as in Gen example (3).

- (1) *ayí* *só* *agban-a* *vá* *asíme*
Ayi take package-DEF come market
‘Ayi brought the package to market’. (Lewis 1992: 110)
- (2) *amejro-á* *só* *klo* *gban* *kpé-á*
stranger-DEF take knee break stone-DEF
‘The stranger used his knee to break the rock’. (Lewis 1992: 138)
- (3) *ayí* *só* *te* *dó* *zo-jí*
Ayi yake yam place fire-on
‘Ayi put a yam on the fire’. (Lewis 1992: 148)

Kwa languages differ significantly in the extent of elaboration of each of these types.

Lative ‘take’ SVCs are absent in some Kwa languages, are attested only with inanimate objects in most of them, and are also attested with animate objects in some of them.

Instrumental ‘take’ SVC are attested in most of the Kwa languages to express the Instrument proper. Other meanings are restricted to some languages: the meanings of extended Instrument (including, e.g., animate ‘Instruments’), Manner and other adverbials, Comitative.

Objectal ‘take’ SVCs are attested in all examined Kwa languages to introduce the Theme of a verb that is ditransitive outside the SVC (‘give’, ‘show’ and some others). Less frequently objectal ‘take’ SVCs are attested to introduce the Theme of other verbs that have other valencies (oblique or locative). Finally, in many Kwa languages objectal ‘take’ SVCs are attested to introduce the object of monotransitive verbs; telic agentive verbs are attested in such constructions in most Kwa languages, other volitive verbs are also attested in some languages, and involitive verbs are quite rare.