Argument, Adjunct or Neither: Emai Co-participant Serials
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This paper has its origin in the Leipzig Valency Project (LVP), which centered on a predetermined set of verb meanings and allowed us to assess lexical equivalents and their valency profiles in southern Nigeria's Edoid language Emai. Like other West Benue Congo languages (Williamson and Blench 2000), Emai exhibits verbs in series, while showing few prepositions and little inflectional morphology. Through this exercise, co-participant constructions came to light.

Common to co-participant constructions is the identification and verb coding of an event co-participant that is obligatorily human but not entailed by the core verb in a serial verb construction, either V_1 or V_2. The construction introduces a co-participant who co-locates with other participants in the scene coded by the construction or clarifies a dimension of the subject.

Co-participant constructions consist of a complex predicate in which a co-participant verb phrase either precedes or follows a core verb phrase. Each construction translates English 'with,' 'more than' or 'instead of' and exhibits one or more of the frames NP_0 V_1 NP_1 V_2 NP_2, NP_0 V_1 NP_1 V_2 or NP_0 V_1 V_2 NP_2. Displaying a precedence relation are constructions where a co-participant predicate (*de baa* 'join,' *kpaye* 'accompany,' or *kpaye* 'replace') precedes the core predicate (*sua* 'push,' *ta* 'speak,' or *e* 'eat,' respectively).

1 a. *ólí ómòhè dé báá élí ívbèkhàn súá ìmátò.*
the man PRP.reach add the youths push car
'The man joined the youths to push the car / pushed the car with the youths.'
b. *ólí ómòhè ò ó kpàyè ójé tà étà.*
the man SC C accompany Oje speak word
'The man is speaking with Oje.'
c. *ólí ómòhè kpáyé òlólò é ólí émàè.*
the man PRP.replace Ololo eat the food
'The man ate the food instead of Ololo.'

Showing a succedence relation are constructions where the co-participant predicate (*lee* 'surpass' or *kpeen* 'support') follows the core predicate (*on* 'drink' or *fi* 'leave').

2 a. *ólí ómòhè ón àmè léé òlólò.*
the man PRP.drink water surpass Ololo
'The man drank more water than Ololo.'
b. *òjè fí ómò kpéén ólì òkpòsò.*
Oje leave child support the woman
'Oje left a child with the woman.'

Co-participant constructions reflect classic serial verb properties (Aikhenvald and Dixon 2006): a verb sequence sharing tense, aspect and polarity under a single intonation contour acting as a single predicate with no overt marking of clausal dependency.

Initially, co-participant noun phrases were considered as possible arguments of the core verb, whose meaning dominates the construction and provides for the translation equivalent. This was ultimately rejected since the co-participant was not entailed by core verb meaning. Subsequently, co-participant phrases were evaluated as possible adjuncts. This, too, was rejected since the co-participant corresponded neither to semantic notions typically associated with adjuncts, e.g. location, time or manner (Dixon and Aikhenvald 2009), nor to Emai question types reflecting such notions, e.g. *ébé* 'where', *éghè re* 'when' and *ébé i* 'how.' Co-participant noun phrases were neither arguments of the core verb nor adjuncts of the event coded by the complex predicate incorporating the core verb.

Our hypothesis, instead, is that co-participant noun phrases in these serial verb constructions bear on the information status of core event participants (Lambrecht 1994). For the speaker there is reason to suspect that the hearer assumes a certain configuration of scene participants for the core event when, in fact, a different configuration is the actual case or that there is need to clarify the participants of the core event.

Verb flagging of co-participants is not unlike other verbs in series where an event participant is coded. In Emai, serial verb constructions also express an instrument relation with *re* 'take, use' as V_1. Instrument participants serve as immediate cause of a change of state expressed by V_2 that affects NP_2. Predication sense is 'take, use, do with.' Such constructions are often perceived as prototypical serial verb constructions. The instrument relation to the construction event, however, is entailed by its core verb.

3 a. *òjè ré ópìà kpíákpíá óràn.*
Oje PRP.use cutlass trim tree
'Oje used a cutlass to trim a tree / trimmed a tree with a cutlass.'
b. *òjè ré údò gbé ákhè á.*
Oje PRP.use stone break pot CS
'Oje used a stone to break a pot / broke a pot with a stone.'

Co-participant constructions

Complex predicates convey a sociative relation (Blake 2001) with *de baa* 'join' as V_1. The sociative participant joins and accompanies other event participants. V_2 consists of activity verbs that are transitive (e.g. *sua ìmátò* 'push car') or intransitive (e.g. *sie* 'play'). Predication sense is 'do with, together.'

4 a. *ólí ómòhè dé báá élí ívbèkhàn súá ìmátò.*
the man PRP.reach add the youths push car
'The man joined the youths to push the car / pushed the car with the youths.'

b. *ólí ómó dé' báá ínyó ói sìè.*
the child PAP.reach add mother his play
'The child played with his mother.'
c. *ólí ómóhé dé' báá élí ívbèkhàn lá.*
the man PAP.reach join the youths run
'The man joined the youths to run / ran with the youths.'

NP_0 and NP_1 participants in *de baa* predications spatially co-locate. NP_0 subject position requires a human noun, nonhuman, animate nouns (*éwè* 'goat') being unacceptable. NP_1 position requires a human noun; nonhuman animate nouns (*éwè*) are also unacceptable. NP_1 position in *de baa* predications accepts accusative pronouns (*ói*), as does NP_2 in the case of transitive core verbs.

Complex predications with sociative *de baa* strictly deconstruct as verbs sharing NP_1. V_2 *sie* or *sua* appears as a simple intransitive predicate with NP_1 as subject or as transitive predications with NP_1 as subject and NP_2 as direct object.

5 a. *ínyó òjè ò ó sìé.*
mother Oje SC C play
'Oje's mother is playing.'
b. *élí ívbèkhàn ò ó súá ìmátò.*
the youths SC C push car
'The youths are pushing a car.'

V_1 *de baa* appears as an intransitive predicate with NP_0 as subject or as a transitive shape with NP_0 as subject and NP_1 as direct object. Predication sense is 'join, participate.' Predications with V_1 *de baa* require human noun subjects and direct objects. Nonhuman animate nouns (*éwè*) in either position are ungrammatical, as are inanimate nouns (e.g. *ókà* 'maize,' *ìkpèshè* 'beans'). The position following *de baa* accepts an accusative pronoun (*ói* 'him, her, it').

6 a. *ójé dé' bàà.*
Oje PAP.reach add
'Oje participated / joined.'
b. *òjè dé báá élí ívbèkhàn.*
Oje PRP.reach add the youths
'Oje joined / participated with the youths.'

Complex predicates that are transitive or intransitive identify a comitative relation (Blake 2001) with *kpaye* 'accompany, move with' as V_1. Comitative and subject relation participants co-locate to undertake an event. V_2 consists of intransitive activity verbs such as *dan* 'wrestle' or *vbaye* 'chat' as well as cognitive information transfer verbs such as transitive *ta* 'speak.' Predication sense is 'do with, together.'

7 a. *ólí ómòhè ò ó kpàyè òhí dán.*
the man SC C accompany Ohi wrestle
'The man is wrestling with Ohi. / The man and Ohi are wrestling.'

b. *ólí ómòhè kpáyé' òlólò vbáyé.*
the man PAP.accompany Ololo chat
'The man chatted with Ololo.'

c. *ólí ómòhè ò ó kpàyè òjé tà étà.*
the man SC C accompany Oje speak word
'The man is speaking with Oje.'

NP_0 and NP_1 referents in complex *kpaye* predicates co-locate as event participants. NP_1 subject requires a human noun; nonhuman, animate nouns are unacceptable. NP_2 position in *kpaye* predications requires either an animate or human noun. Inanimate nouns such as *àyóghó* 'rattle' are unacceptable with V_2 *sie* 'play' and animate nouns such as *áwà* 'dog' are unacceptable with V_2 *dan* 'wrestle.'

8 a. *ólí ómòhè ò ó kpàyè ólí áwá / *àyóghó sìé.*
the man SC C accompany the dog rattle play
'The man is playing with the dog.'

b. *ólí ómóhé kpáyé' ólí óvbèkhàn / *ólí áwà dán.*
the man PAP.accompany the youth the dog wrestle
'The man is wrestling with the youth.'

NP_1 position following *kpaye* accepts accusative pronouns (*ói*).

9 *ólí ómóhé kpáyé' ói vbáyé.*
the man PAP.accompany him pass.time
'The man chatted / passed the time with him.'

Complex predications with comitative *kpaye* do not strictly deconstruct as simple verbs. V_2 *dan* or *vbaye* appear as simple predicates but not with singular NP_1 as subject; instead, both *dan* and *vbaye* require a plural grammatical subject. On the other hand, V_2 *sie* takes singular or plural subjects, as does *ta* 'speak.'

10 a. *élí ímòhè / *ólí ómòhè ò ó dán.*
the men the man SC C wrestle
'The men are wrestling.'

b. *élí ímòhè / *ólí ómòhè ò ó vbàyé.*
the men the man SC C chat
'The men are chatting.'

c. *ólí ómòhè /élí ímòhè ò ó sìé.*
the man the men SC C play
'The man is / men are playing.'

V_1 *kpaye* fails as a simple transitive verb with NP_0 as subject and NP_1 as direct object or as a simple intransitive verb with NP_0 as subject.

11 a. *ólí ómòhè ò ó kpàyè òhí.
the man SC C accompany Ohi
'The man is accompanying Ohi.'
b. *ólí ómòhè ò ó kpàyé.
the man SC C accompany
'The man is accompanying / coming with.'

As a simple predicate, V_1 *kpaye* only appears with a direct object framed as an obligatory external possessor phrase. A human noun possessor precedes a possessum, restricted to the body-part *óbò* 'hand.' Predication sense is 'help, assist, give a helping hand.'

12 òjè kpáyé áléké óbò.
Oje PRP.accompany Aleke hand
'Oje helped Aleke / gave Aleke a helping hand.'

Complex predicates express a substitutive relation (Blake 2001) with *kpaye* 'replace' as V_1. *kpaye* subject (*ólí ómóhé* 'the man') specifies an event participant that substitutes for *kpaye* direct object (*òlólò* 'Ololo'), which is also the understood subject of V_2. V_2 consists of transitive verbs such as *e* 'eat' or *hian* 'cut.' Predication sense is 'replace, do in place of, in lieu of, instead of.'

13 a. ólí ómóhé kpáyé' òlólò é ólí émàè.
the man PAP.replace Ololo eat the food
'The man replaced Ololo to eat the food / ate the food instead of Ololo.'
b. ólí ómóhé kpáyé' òlólò híán ólí óràn.
the man PAP.replace Ololo cut the wood
'The man replaced Ololo to cut the wood / cut the wood instead of Ololo.'

NP_0 and NP_1 participants in *kpaye* predications are obligatorily human. NP_1 requires a human noun; nonhuman, animate nouns (*ólí áwá* 'the dog') are unacceptable. Similarly, NP_1 position requires a human noun, nonhuman animate nouns being unacceptable. NP_1 position in substitutive *kpaye* predications accepts accusative pronouns (*ói* 'him), as does NP_2.

Complex substitutive predications with *kpaye* do not deconstruct strictly as simple verbs. V_2 position verbs and their NP_2 direct objects (*e ólí émàè*, *hian ólí óràn*) appear as simple predicates with either NP_0 or NP_1 as subject.

14 a. ólí ómòhè / òlólò é ólí émàè.
the man Ololo PRP.eat the food
'The man / Ololo has eaten the food.'
b. ólí ómòhè / òlólò híán ólí óràn.
the man Ololo PRP.cut the wood
'The man / Ololo has cut the wood.'

As already shown, V_1 *kpaye* fails as a simple transitive verb with NP_0 as subject and NP_1 as direct object or as a simple intransitive verb with NP_0 as subject, as already suggested.

15 a. *ólí ómóhé kpáyé' òlólò.
the man PAP.replace Ololo
'The man replaced Ololo.'
b. *ólí ómòhè kpáyé-ì.
the man PRP.replace-F
'The man got replaced.'

As a simple predicate, V_1 *kpaye* only appears with a direct object framed as an obligatory external possessor phrase in which a human noun possessor precedes the body-part possessum *óbò* 'hand.' Predication sense is 'help, assist.'

16 òjè kpáyé áléké óbò.
Oje PRP.accompany Aleke hand
'Oje helped Aleke / gave Aleke a helping hand.'

Complex predicates specify a comparative relation with *lee* 'surpass' in series as V_2. Participants marked by *lee* serve as a standard of comparison along some dimension applicable to subject participant. V_1 consists of transitive or intransitive verbs whose scalar conditions can be identified for comparison. Predication sense is 'be/do more than.'

17 a. ólí ómòhè ón àmè léé mè.
the man drink water surpass me
'The man drank more water than I.'
b. ólí ómòhè dá léé òhí.
the man be.tall surpass Ohi
'The man is taller than Ohi.'
c. áwá ísì èé kéré' léé éwé mè.
dog ASS your be.small surpass goat my
'Your dog is smaller than my goat.'
d. áfúzé' réré' léé òkè.
Afuze be.far surpass Oke
'Afuze is farther than Oke.'

Noun phrase positions in *lee* predications exhibit distinctive properties. Depending on V_1 transitivity, NP_0 subject is measured against intransitive NP_1 or transitive NP_2, each preceded by *lee*. Illustrating with intransitives, *lee* marked NP_1 position accepts animate (*òhí*), inanimate (*éànmì*) or locative (*íwé*) nouns.

18 a. ólí ómòhè dá léé òhí.
the man be.tall surpass Ohi
'The man is taller than Ohi.'

b. *éhèèn kpó léé éànmì.*
fish be.cheap surpass meat
'Fish is cheaper than meat.'
c. *íwé mè gbá léé íwé ísì èé.*
house my be.big surpass house ASS your
'My house is bigger than your house.'

NP_1 and NP_2 position accept accusative pronouns (*ói*). In addition, particularly for intransitives, NP_1 position marked by *lee* can be ellipted in a sufficiently rich context, such as focus, where NP_0 corresponds to an obligatory focus position constituent. Without such a context, the *lee* marked noun phrase tends not to allow ellipsis.

19 a. *éhèèn lí ó kpó' lèè.*
fish PF it be.cheap surpass
'It is fish that is cheaper.'
b. *ìgbégbè lí ó ò ghàén léé.*
velvet PF it H be.costly surpass
'It is velvet that costs more (compared to velvetine).'

Complex predicates with comparative *lee* deconstruct strictly, sharing NP_0. V_1 forms such as *on* 'drink' or *da* 'be tall' appear as simple predicates, respectively, with NP_0 as transitive subject and NP_1 as direct object or simply NP_0 as intransitive subject.

20 a. *ólí ómòhè ón àmè.*
the man drink water
'The man drank water.'
b. *ólí ómòhè dá-ì.*
the man be.tall-F
'The man is tall.'

Relative to transitive complex predications, V_2 *lee* takes NP_0 as subject and NP_2 as direct object. However, *lee* fails with NP_1 as subject and NP_2 as direct object.

21 a. *ólí ómòhè léé mè.*
the man surpass me
'The man surpassed me.'
b. **ólí àmè léé mè.*
the water surpass me
'The water surpassed me.'

More precisely, V_2 *lee* takes subject and direct object nouns that are both human (*ómòhè*, *òhí*). *lee* rejects as subject and direct object nouns that are nonhuman animate (*èkpèn* 'leopard,' *éìn* 'tortoise'), inanimate (*ìgbégbé* 'velvet,' *ìlélééjì* 'velvetine') or locative (village names *áfúzé'* and *òkè*).

22 a. *ólí ómòhè léé òhí.*
the man surpass Ohi
'The man surpassed / is superior to Ohi.'

b. **ólì èkpèn léé éìn.*
the leopard surpass tortoise
'The leopard surpassed the tortoise.'

c. **ìgbégbé léé ìlélèèjì.*
velvet surpass velvetine
'Velvet surpassed velvetine.'

d. **áfúzé' léé òkè.*
Afuze surpass Oke
'Afuze surpassed Oke.'

Lastly, complex predicates articulate an adjacency relation (Blake 2001) for posture and position change events with V_2 *kpeen* 'support, as in a wedged position.' Participants spatially co-locate. V_1 consists of intransitive posture verbs such as *muzan* 'stand,' *dia* 'sit,' and *mehen* 'lie' or transitive verbs of object manipulation such as *nwu* 'take hold' or *fi* 'leave.' Predication sense is 'VERB with, alongside, by.'

23 a. *òjè múzán kpéén òlólò.*
Oje stand support Ololo
'Oje stood with /alongside / by Ololo.'

b. *ólí ómòhè díá kpéén ólì òkpòsò.*
the man sit support the woman
'The man sat with the woman.'

c. *ólí ómòhè méhén kpéén òlólò.*
the man lie support Ololo
'The man lay by Ololo.'

d. *òjè nwú ómò kpéén òlólò.*
Oje take.hold child support Ololo
'Oje put a child with Ololo.'

e. *òjè fí ómò kpéén ólì òkpòsò.*
Oje leave child support the woman
'Oje left a child with the woman.'

NP_0 subject in adjacency *kpeen* predications requires a human noun; nonhuman animate nouns (*éwè* 'goat') are unacceptable. And adjacency *kpeen* complements, whether V_1 is intransitive or transitive, require human noun direct objects; nonhuman, animate nouns (*éwè* 'goat') are unacceptable. Adjacency *kpeen* complements take accusative pronouns (*ói*), as do transitive V_1 complements.

Complex predications with adjaceny *kpeen* do not deconstruct strictly as simple verbs. V_1 *muzan*, for instance, appears as an intransitive shape with NP_0 as subject but not as a transitive shape with NP_0 as subject and NP_1 as direct object.

24 a. *òjè múzán-ì.*
Oje stand-F
'Oje stood.'
b. **òjè múzán òlólò.*
Oje stand Ololo
'Oje stood Ololo up / Oje stood with Ololo.'

Conversely, V_1 *nwu* manifests a sense shift to 'carry' when it appears as a transitive shape with NP_0 as subject and NP_1 as direct object; it fails as an intransitive shape with NP_0 or NP_1 as subject.

25 *òjè nwú ómò.*
Oje take.hold child
'Oje carried the child.'

V_2 *kpeen* fails as a simple predicate with NP_0 as subject and NP_1 as direct object or NP_1 as subject and NP_2 as direct object.

26 a. **òjè kpéén òlólò.*
Oje support Ololo
'Oje supported Ololo.'
b. **ólí ómò kpéén òlólò.*
the child support Ololo
'The child supported Ololo.'

As a transitive verb, V_2 *kpeen* occurs in complex predicates with instrument verb *re* 'take' and its direct object. Predication sense is 'support, prop up, wedge in a held position.' *kpeen* with its vowel sequence never occurs as sole verb of a simple predication.

27 a. *ólí ómòhè ré óràn kpéén ólì ìmátò.*
the man use pole support the car
'The man supported / propped up the car with a pole.'
b. *òjè ré óbò kpéén àgbàn.*
Oje use hand support jaw
'Oje wedged his jaw with his hand.'
c. **ólí ómòhè kpéén ólì ìmátò.*
the man support the car
'The man supported / propped up the car.'

A phonologically related form *kpen*, with a single vowel, expresses spatial collocation with body part or locative noun as direct object. It has the sense 'be next to / adjacent to,' which seems related to the 'support' sense. Nonetheless, there is no grammatical process signaled by a change from a single vowel to a vowel sequence.

28 a. *ólì òkpòsò kpén ùòkhò.*
the woman be.next to back
'The woman was last.'

b. *ólì ìwè déló èò kpén úkpódè.*
the house turn face be.next.to road
'The house faced the road.'

c. *òjè nwú ólí úkpùn kpén òtòì.*
Oje take.hold the cloth be.next.to ground.
'Oje put the cloth at the bottom.'

d. *òjè fí úhùnmì kpén òtòì.*
Oje toss head be.next.to ground
'Oje turned upside down.'

Discussion of co-participant constructions

Given their common co-participant coding, how might we begin to understand these constructions, particularly with respect to their information and discourse properties. First, let's consider how all but one of Emai's co-participant verbs show evidence of being dependent on their serial verb partner. We note in this regard that instrument *re* 'take' serial verb constructions allow not only lexical verbs in V_2 position but also pro-verb *u* 'do.'

29 a. *òjè ré ópià híán éràn.*
Oje PRP.take cutlass cut trees
'Oje cut trees with a cutlass / Oje used a cutlass to cut trees.'

b. *òjè ré ópià ú óì.*
Oje PRP.take cutlass do it
'Oje did it with a cutlass.'

Most co-participant verbs, in contrast, require a lexical verb; they reject pro-verb *u*. Serial constructions with *de baa* 'join,' *kpaye* 'accompany,' *lee* 'more than' and *kpeen* 'support' fail to occur in a serial construction with V_1 or V_2 position held by pro-verb *u*.

30 a. **ójé dé' báá élí ívbèkhàn ú óì.*
Oje PAP.reach add the youths do it
'Oje joined the youths to do it. / Oje did it with the youths.'

b. **òjè ò ó kpàyè àlèkè ù óì.*
Oje SC C accompany Aleke do it
'Oje is doing it with Aleke.'

c. **ójé ú' óì léé àlèkè.*
Oje do it surpass Aleke
'Oje did more than Aleke.'

d. **òjè ú óì kpéén òlólò.*
Oje do it support Ololo
'Oje did it with Ololo.'

In contrast, V_2 position in complex substitutive predications with V_1 *kpaye* 'replace' accepts pro-verb *u* 'do.'

31 *òjè kpáyé òlólò ú ói.*
Oje PRP.replace Ololo do it
'Oje did it in place of Ololo.'

Another potentially related discourse feature concerns serial construction subject position. Serial constructions with instrument *re* 'take,' for instance, allow the indefinite subject pronoun, variously translated in English with indefinite 'one, they' or simply not translated as a near equivalent to the English passive.

32 *á ré' ópìà híán élí éràn.*
one PAP.take cutlass cut the trees
'Someone cut the trees with a cutlass / The trees were cut with a cutlass.'

Most co-participant verbs, nonetheless, fail to accept indefinite *a*. Serial constructions with *de baa* 'join,' *kpaye* 'accompany,' *lee* 'more than' and *kpeen* 'support' reject indefinite *a* in subject position.

33 a. **á dé' báá élí ívbèkhàn súá ìmátò.*
one PAP.reach add the youths push car
'Someone joined the youths to push the car / pushed the car with the youths.'

b. **à á kpàyè òjé tà étà.*
one C accompany Oje speak word
'Someone is speaking with Oje.'

c. **á ón àmè léé àlèkè.*
one drink water surpass Aleke
'Someone drank more water than Aleke.'

d. **á fí ómò kpéén ólì òkpòsò.*
one leave child support the woman
'Someone left a child with the woman / A child was left with the woman.'

However, *kpaye* 'replace' serial constructions take indefinite *a*.

34 *á kpáyé' òhí é ólí émàè.*
one PAP.replace Ohi eat the food
'Someone ate the food instead of Ohi.'

Now let's look at the reach within serial verb constructions of contrastive focus. Focus constructions allow the speaker to present an alternative to the presumed identity of an event participant held by the hearer. Occurrence in focus position thus reveals information whose status is shared between speaker and hearer. Instrument *re* serial verb constructions, for instance, allow repositioning of subject as well as direct object of *re* and of V_2. Each corresponds to a focus position constituent marked by positive focus particle *li*.

35 a. *ólí ómóhé nà lí ó ré' ólí ópìà híán éràn.*
the man this PF he PAP.take the cutlass cut trees
'It was this man who used a cutlass to cut trees.'

b. *ólí ópìà lí ólí ómóhé ré' híán éràn.*
the cutlass PF the man PAP.take cut trees
'It was the cutlass that the man used to cut trees.'

c. *élí éràn lí ólí ómóhé ré' ólí ópìà híán.*
the trees PF the man PAP.take the cutlass cut
'It was the trees that the man used the cutlass to cut.'

Most co-participant verbs, however, inhibit repositioning of participants. Serial constructions with *de baa* 'join,' *kpaye* 'accompany,' *lee* 'more than' and *kpeen* 'support' constrain the repositioning of their direct object participants and, in some cases, subject participants as well.

Predications with *de baa* inhibit repositioning of all participants. Neither subject nor direct object of V_1 *de baa* nor direct object of V_2 corresponds to a focus position constituent.

36 a. **òjè lí ó dé' báá ònwìmè kén ògèdè.*
Oje PF he PAP.reach add farmer share plantain
'It was Oje who joined the farmer and shared the plantain.'

b. **ólì ònwìmè òkpá lí ójé dé' báá kén ògèdè.*
the farmer alone PF Oje PAP.reach add share plantain
'It was the farmer alone that Oje joined and shared the plantain.'

c. **ógédé mè lí ójé dé' báá ònwìmè kén.*
plantain my PF Oje PAP.reach add farmer share
'It was my plantain that Oje joined the farmer and shared.'

Predications with *kpaye* 'accompany' partially inhibit repositioning of participants. Subject corresponds to a focus position constituent but, most importantly, *kpaye* direct object does not.

37 a. *ólí ómóhé nà lí ó kpáyé' òhí dán.*
the man this PF he PAP.accompany Ohi wrestle
'It was this man who wrestled with Ohi.'

b. **òhí lí ólí ómóhé kpáyé' dán.*
Ohi PF the man PAP.accompany wrestle
'It was Ohi who the man wrestled with.'

Complex *lee* predications show variable repositioning of participants. Verbs like *on* 'drink' as V_1 allow only their subject in focus position. The direct object of neither V_1 nor V_2 corresponds to a focus position constituent.

38 a. *òjè òkpá lí ó ón' àmè léé àlèkè.*
Oje alone PF he PAP.drink water surpass Aleke
'It was Oje alone who drank more water than Aleke.'
b. **ámé mè lí ójé ón' léé àlèkè.*
water my PF Oje PAP.drink surpass Aleke
'It was my water that Oje drank more of than Aleke did.'
c. **àlèkè òkpá lí ójé ón' àmè léé.*
Aleke alone PF Oje PAP.drink water surpass
'It was Aleke alone that Oje drank more water than.'

As for complex *kpeen* predications, they partially inhibit repositioning of participants. Subject corresponds to a focus position constituent, but direct objects, including that of *kpeen*, do not, regardless of V_1 as an intransitive or transitive shape.

39 a. *òjè òkpá lí ó nwú' ómò kpéén òlólò.*
Oje alone PF he PAP.take.hold child support Ololo
'It was Oje alone who put a child with Ololo.'
b. **ómó mè òkpá lí ójé nwú' kpéén òlólò.*
child my alone PF Oje PAP.take.hold support Ololo
'It was my child alone that Oje put with Ololo.'
c. **òlólò òkpá lí ójé nwú' ómò kpéén.*
Ololo alone PF Oje PAP.take.hold child support
'It was Ololo alone that Oje put a child with.'

In contrast to this constrained configuration for direct object participants, verb *kpaye* 'replace' constructions allow, across grammatical relations, participant repositioning. Subject, direct object of V_1 *kpaye* and direct object of V_2 correspond to a focus position constituent.

40 a. *ólí ómóhé nà lí ó kpáyé' òhí é ólí émàè.*
the man this PF he PAP.replace Ohi eat the food
'It was this man who ate the food for Ohi.'
b. *òhí lí ólí ómóhé kpáyé' é ólí émàè.*
Ohi PF the man PAP.replace eat the food
'It was Ohi who the man ate the food for.'
c. *ólí émàè lí ólí ómóhé kpáyé' òhí é.*
the food PF the man PAP.replace Ohi eat
'It was the food that the man ate for Ohi.'

Conclusion

We thus find that across construction types sensitive to information value *kpaye* 'replace,' of all co-participant types, exhibits distinctive behavior. One way to interpret these data is to consider the information flow across a serial construction. In this regard, the co-dependency of four of the co-participant verbs, as revealed in *u* 'do' constructions, as well as their failure to allow their direct objects to correspond to focus constituents,

suggests that these four predications represent new information held by the speaker that is not open to dispute with the hearer.

On the other hand, the failure of *u* constructions and the lack of a focus constraint for all direct object participants in *kpaye* 'replace' serials suggests that this serial construction expresses shared information, much in the fashion of instrument *re*, where verb entailment played a role. However, the *kpaye* participant is not entailed by the core verb. Thus we need some other level of information other than new or shared to characterize the information status of the *kpaye* complement.

However this might be solved, it does not appear that serial verb constructions are limited to the expression of verb arguments or the creation of lexical items, which is a conventional interpretation espoused by, among others, Comrie (1995). It seems that in addition to their syntactic and semantic properties, we should also consider that verbs in series along with their complements have an information function that requires attention.

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*Orthographic conventions for Emai are consistent with those in Schaefer (1987), Schaefer and Egbokhare (1999) and Schaefer and Egbokhare (2007), where **o** represents a lax mid back vowel, **e** a lax mid front vowel, and **vb** a voiced bilabial approximant. With respect to tone, acute accent marks high, grave accent signals low, and acute accent followed by an apostrophe designates high downstep. Across an Emai clause, tone marking is grammatically conditioned by syntactic position as well as inflectional factors such as mood, aspect and polarity. Subject position is therefore variously assigned a construct tonal pattern (*ójé, óli ókpósó*) for the past perfect, for instance, or an absolute, lexical pattern (*òjè, ólì òkpòsò*) for the present perfect.

*Abbreviations for grammatical morphemes used throughout this paper include: ASS=associative, C=continuous, , CS=change of state, F=factative, GEN=genitive, H=habitual, PAP=past perfect, PF=positive focus, PRP=present perfect, SC=subject concord.

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