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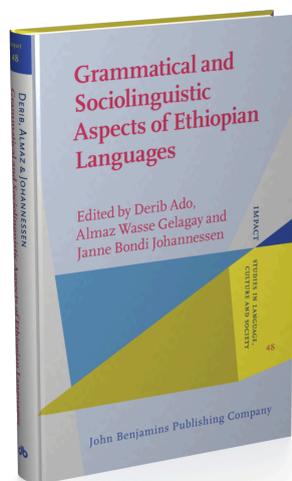
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Serial verb constructions in Sezo

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Serial verb constructions in Sezo are formed by simple juxtaposition of two or three verbs without any marker of coordination or subordination. The components of a serial verb construction are always contiguous and do not allow syntactic constituents to intervene between them. They form one intonational group and do not allow multiple marking of grammatical features, such as subject, tense, polarity and other syntactic dependency markers. All serial verb constructions attested in Sezo are asymmetrical because they always consist of one major verb and one or two minor verbs. The major verb which comes from a semantically and grammatically unrestricted class of verbs is always the main verb. The minor verb is either a motion or a posture verb and encodes directional (deictic), valency changing or aspectual information. The minor verbs cannot be treated as auxiliaries, because they are able to occur as lexical verbs outside serial verb constructions.

Keywords: Sezo, serial verb construction, asymmetrical serial verb, major verb, minor verb, direction, valency, aspect

1. Introduction

Serial verb construction is phenomena that occurs cross-linguistically in many languages of the world, most frequently in languages of West Africa, East Asia, Amazonia and Oceania (Aikhenvald 2006: 1). However, the phenomenon is not common in Ethiopian languages. So far, verb-verb sequences with characteristics of serial verb constructions have been reported for some Omotic languages such as Sheko (Hellenthal 2010: 334–341) and Northern Mao (Ahland 2012: 601–607). The aim of this paper is to provide an analysis of a cluster of verbs attested in Sezo in the light of the properties of serial verb constructions proposed by scholars such as Aikhenvald (2006) and Haspelmath (2016). The discussion of serial verb constructions of Sezo is organised in the following way: section one introduces the paper, section two provides brief information about Sezo and its speakers and

section three gives information about the methodology. Section four is a short review of cross-linguistic definitions of serial verb constructions, and sections five and six are dedicated to the description of the formal and semantic properties of serial verb constructions in Sezo. Section seven concludes the paper.

2. Sezo and its community of speakers

Sezo belongs to the Omotic language family and, more precisely, is one of the Mao group of languages spoken in western borderland of Ethiopia, Oromia Regional State, West Wollega Zone, Begi and Qondala districts. The language is closely related to the Non-Gonga group of Mao languages, such as Hozo, Bambasi-Diddessa (Northern) Mao and Ganza (Fleming 1988, Bender 2003). The population figure for the Sezo speaking community has not been clear up until now. But Girma (2015: 2) estimates speakers of Sezo as numbering between 7,000 and 10,000, depending on the 2007 population and housing census of Ethiopia.¹

Sezo can be considered to be an endangered language because it is not used by all members of the community, especially the young generation. The language is mostly used by the older generation. Its use is also highly restricted to communication within the home. The language exists only in oral form and has no written form. In general, literacy in the language does not exist, and in this area, Oromo, a language belonging to the Cushitic family, is the medium of instruction and wider communication.

Sezo exhibits SOV and SV constituent orders in transitive and intransitive clauses. In the structure of phrase and clause, modifiers precede heads, possessor nouns precede possessed nouns and dependent clauses precede main clauses. The language is agglutinating, as the morpheme boundaries in the word are clear-cut. Sezo consists of twenty-two consonants and five short vowels. Consonant gemination and vowel length are phonemic. Root-internal sibilant harmony is a common phenomenon in the language. The language has two-level tones, which play a significant role in the lexicon. Sezo is a nominative-accusative language in which the nominative is always marked and the accusative is marked differentially. The pronominal system distinguishes between inclusive and exclusive first-person plural. Mood is the most prominent category in verbal inflection, though aspect and

1. According to CSA (2008), the number of all Mao people who live in different parts of the country is 43,535. Apparently, this number includes different Omotic and Nilo-Saharan speaking groups, such as Bambasi-Diddessa Mao, Hozo, Sezo, Anfillo and probably Gwama, who use the term 'Mao' as their ethnic denomination. The census data does not show the number of these groups independently.

tense also play role. The passive is indicated by impersonal construction. Converb constructions are among multi-verbal constructions attested in the language. Switch-reference is indicated by the presence of a subject clitic on the converb (Girma 2015).

3. Methodology

This study follows qualitative research methodology. The data used for this paper were collected mainly through elicitation method in 2015 in Asosa, the capital of the Benishangul Gumuz Regional State and the Begi town of West Wellegga Zone, Oromia Regional State. Some data have also been extracted from texts recorded from 2011 to 2013 for other research. The data used in this paper are presented in a four-line format. The first and the second lines respectively present the phonetic representation of the data and the morpheme-by-morpheme segmentation. The elements in the second line are purely phonemic. The third and the fourth lines present the glossing and the free translation, respectively. The data are then described in detail.

4. Serial verb constructions: A cross-linguistic overview

In order to assess the proposed serial verb constructions in Sezo, some sort of definition of concepts needs to be established first. In the literature on verb serialisation, the term ‘serial verb construction’ is generally reserved for constructions in which at least two verbs occur in the same clause with no morphological linker. However, definitions of serial verb constructions vary in the aspects they include. For instance, Foley and Olson (1985: 18) view a serial verb construction as a type of construction in which verbs sharing a common subject or object are merely juxtaposed, with no intervening conjunction. Déchaine (1993: 799) describes it as ‘a succession of verbs and their complements (if any) in a single clause with one subject and one tense or aspect value’. According to Bisang (1995: 138), a serial verb construction is ‘the unmarked juxtaposition of two or more verbs or verb phrases (with or without subject and/or object) each of which would also be able to form a sentence on its own’. Durie (1997: 290) defines a serial verb construction as a structure consisting of a sequence of two or more verbs acting together as a single verb. By consolidating the various defining features of serial verb constructions stated in the above definitions, Aikhenvald (2006: 1) gives a more detailed definition as follows:

A serial verb construction 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 conceptualised 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. [...] Each component of an SVC must be able to occur on its own.

(Aikhenvald 2006: 1)

As can be observed, Aikhenvald includes the following grammatical and semantic properties in her definition of serial verb constructions:

- a. There is no marker of syntactic dependency between the components of a serial verb construction.
- b. Each component of a serial verb construction is able to occur as a main predicate in other constructions.
- c. The verbs in a serial verb construction share at least one core argument.
- d. The verbs in a serial verb construction share one tense, aspect, mood and polarity value.
- e. SVCs are monoclausal; they have the same intonational properties as a clause with a single verb.
- f. The verbs in an SVC describe something conceptualised as a single event.

On the basis of their compositional properties, Aikhenvald (2006: 3) classifies serial verb constructions into two types. Accordingly, serial verb constructions are referred to as asymmetrical if they consist of two verbs of unequal status, i.e. a major verb that comes from a semantically and grammatically unrestricted class of verbs, and a minor verb that is selected from a semantically and grammatically restricted group of verbs (such as motion and posture verbs). In this type of serial verb construction, the major verb carries the lexical meaning and acts as the semantic head of the whole construction, while the minor verb adds grammatical specifications such as aspect, direction, manner and mood to the meaning of the major verb. In symmetrical serial verb constructions, all the verbs that constitute the construction come from semantically and grammatically unrestricted class. They have equal grammatical status and none of them determines the semantic or grammatical properties of the whole construction. According to Aikhenvald, 'asymmetrical and symmetrical serial verb constructions are better viewed as extremes on a continuum' (2006: 37). With regard to the evolution of verbs in such constructions, Aikhenvald (2006) makes an insightful generalisation stating that, while the combination of two major verbs in the symmetrical SVCs tends to become lexicalised, a minor verb in the asymmetrical SVCs tends to become grammaticalised. The typical grammaticalisation paths for minor verbs in asymmetrical SVCs include the following (Aikhenvald 2006: 30ff):

- a. Motion verbs tend to develop into markers of tense, aspect mood directionals and adpositions.
- b. Verbs with the meanings of 'give', 'take', 'do' and 'make' tend to develop into valency changing markers.
- c. Verbs with the meanings of 'pass' or 'exceed' are frequently grammaticalised to comparative and superlative markers.
- d. Verbs of saying are often grammaticalised to complementisers.

A further formal classification made by Aikhenvald (2006: 37) is between contiguous and non-contiguous serial verb constructions. Serial verb constructions are referred to as contiguous if they do not allow any other constituents to intervene between the constituting verbs. Those which allow other constituents to occur between components are called non-contiguous. In relation to this, Aikhenvald (2006: 4) states that the more contiguous the components of a serial verb construction are, the closer the whole construction comes to a prototypical serial verb construction.

In a more recent work on serial verb constructions, Haspelmath (2016: 296) gives a definition that differs from Aikhenvald's in some aspects. His definition reads as follows:

A serial verb construction is a monoclausal construction consisting of multiple independent verbs with no element linking them and with no predicate-argument relation between the verbs.

As can be seen, Haspelmath's definition consists of five key features, out of which four are the same as those given by Aikhenvald (2006). These are the features of monocausality, absence of any marker of syntactic dependency, presence of multiple verbs and independence of the constituting verbs. The remaining feature that has not been discussed in Aikhenvald (2006) concerns the relationship between the verbs that constitute serial verb construction. According to Haspelmath (2016: 305), constituting verbs of a serial verb construction do not have a predicate-argument relation. This excludes causative and complement clause constructions from the domain of serial verb constructions. Haspelmath (2016: 306–307) also excludes the criterion of 'expressing single event' from his definition, because serial verb constructions may express multiple events. He considers the sharing of tense, aspect, mood and arguments, as well as a single intonation contour as unnecessary criteria because there are no constructions that would be excluded from the class of serial verb constructions only because they lack these properties.

To be able to describe the topic under investigation, this paper follows an eclectic approach. The paper mainly adopts Aikhenvald's (2006) approach as it consolidates key features of serial verb constructions proposed by different scholars such as Foley and Olson (1985: 18), Déchaine (1993: 799), Bisang (1995: 138), Durie

(1997: 290) etc. and gives a variety of possibilities for their classification. Additional features of serial verb constructions that are not included in Aikhenvald's (2006) definition will be described on the basis of ideas proposed by Haspelmath (2016).

5. Formal properties of serial verb constructions in Sezo

Serial verb constructions in Sezo consist minimally of two verbs clustered together without any morphological or tonal marker of coordination or subordination (1a). But often three verbs can also be clustered as in (1b).

- (1) a. [jáma'tú:f hèzzálèzbòlá:]
jé-má- tú:-f hèzz- hel=hèzz-bòl-á:
 DEF-man-PAU-NOM beat.VN 3PL= **beat-get/REC** -DCL
 'The few men beat each other'.
- b. [wànági| hán' málté ják' - jénbùgùltijá:]
wànági-f hán=mál-té ják'- jén-bùgùl- tí-á:
 Wanagi-NOM 3SG=son-DAT/LOC goat- **trade-drop- give/APPL** -DCL
 'Wanagi sold a goat for (the benefit of) his son'.

The serial verb constructions in (1a) and (1b) are formed from two and three verbs, respectively. In both cases, the verbs in V_1 position (i.e., *hèzz-* 'beat' and *jén-* 'trade; buy') are the main verbs of their respective constructions. The remaining verbs in the two constructions have different functions. As can be understood from the free translation of the examples, the function of the verb *bòl-* 'get' in (1a) is to mark reciprocity. In (1b) while the verb *bùgùl-* 'drop' deictically indicates the direction of the action expressed by the verb *jén-* 'trade; buy', the verb *tí-* 'give' marks the applicative (cf. §§ 6.1 and 6.2 for further information).

From the formal and (to some extent) semantic properties they show, one would ask whether the constructions in (1) could be analysed as verb compounds. Indeed, the combinations show considerable similarity with verbal compounds in that they refer to a single event and share grammatical values such as tense, aspect and mood (Aikhenvald 2006: 32). However, they are better analysed as serial verb constructions because words in a compound mostly retain a meaning similar to their meaning as isolated words, and those attested in Sezo do not show this property. For instance, in serial verb constructions consisting of two verbs such as in (1a), one of the verbs necessarily imparts grammatical meaning, rather than retaining its lexical meaning. In serial verb constructions consisting of three verbs such as in (1b), two of the verbs have grammatical function (cf. §§ 6.1 and 6.2 for the further discussions on the functions of such minor verbs).

In relation to this, one would also ask whether the verbs that convey such grammatical meanings are auxiliary verbs. Although it is possible to assume that the verbs are in the process of grammaticalisation into auxiliaries, it is difficult to treat them as auxiliaries at this stage because they are not fully grammaticalised entities; they are able to occur as lexical verbs in clauses outside serial verb constructions. For instance, the verbs *bòl-* ‘get’ and *tí-* ‘give’, which have a valency adjustment function in (1a) and (1b), and the verb *bùgùl-* ‘drop’, which encodes a deictic or directional information in (1b), have the ability to occur as lexical verbs to express dynamic events as shown in (2) below:

- (2) a. [wànáǵìf ǵìz̀bòlá:]
 wànáǵì-f ǵìzz- *bòl-á:*
 wanagi-NOM money **get**-DCL
 ‘Wanagi got money’.
- b. [wànáǵìf ǵù:dbùǵùlá:]
 wànáǵì-f ǵù:d- *bùǵùl-á:*
 wanagi-NOM garbage **drop**-DCL
 ‘Wanagi dropped (discarded) garbage’.
- c. [wànáǵìf há:té ǵìz̀tíjá:]
 wànáǵì-f há:-té ǵìzz- *tí-á:*
 wanagi-NOM 1SG-DAT/LOC money **give**-DCL
 ‘Wanagi gave me money’.

The occurrence of the verbs as main verbs in simple clauses as in (2) suggests that they are not fully grammaticalised auxiliaries. A verb can be considered to be a member of a serial verb construction if it is able to occur independently without another verb, and is able to express dynamic event outside a serial verb construction. A verb is considered to be a dynamic event expression when it is used in predication function (Haspelmath 2016: 302). However, auxiliaries cannot be used in predication function.

In Sezo, serial verb constructions such as in (1) do not allow any constituent to intervene between them. According to Aikhenvald (2006: 37), such constructions are classified as ‘contiguous’. Their intonational property is also the same as that of a monoverbal construction. This means no pause or intonation break is allowed between the components of a serial verb construction. In Sezo, concordant (multiple) marking of grammatical features on each component of a serial verb construction is not allowed. Markers of grammatical features such as mood, person, tense and negative, and other syntactic dependency markers such as relativisers, coordinators and complementisers occur once per serial verb construction as illustrated in (3) below:

- (3) a. [ʃwá:bòlkéké:dóla:]
ʃw(á:)-bòl-ké-k'é:- dól=j-á:
see-get/REC-NEG-NEG-1PL.INCL=FUT-DCL
 ‘We (including you) shall not meet (lit: we will not see each other)’.
- b. [hèzzàlèzbòlif má:tu:ʃ nams’ap’p’i]
hèzz- hél=-hèzz- bòl-f má:-tú:-ʃ nam=s’ap’p’i
beat.VN 3PL=beat- get/REC-REL man-PAU-NOM 2PL=ROOT
 ‘The few men who beat each other are your (2PL) relatives (lit. your roots)’.

In (3a) the negative markers *-ké* and *-k’é*, the inclusive first-person subject proclitic *dól=*, the tense marker *j-* and the declarative mood marker *-á:* occur only once after the verb in V_2 position, and have scope over the whole verb phrase. In the same way, the serial verb in (3b) is subordinated by a single relative clause marker *-f*.

In terms of their composition, serial verb constructions attested in Sezo can be considered as ‘asymmetrical’² because they are composed of verbs of unequal status. In all the attested serial verb constructions of Sezo, one of the components comes from a semantically and grammatically unrestricted class of verbs and becomes the main verb. Minor verbs, which convey grammatical meaning come from a semantically restricted class (usually motion and posture verbs). These verbs have a variety of semantic properties, in which case they render grammatical functions as valency adjustment, deictic and aspect marking. The following table presents an exhaustive list of minor verbs in Sezo serial verb constructions, along with their position of occurrence and function (cf. §§ 6.1 and 6.2 for the order of minor verbs).

Table 1. Position of occurrence and function of minor verbs

Minor verb	Gloss	Position of occurrence		Function
		Before the main verb	After the main verb	
<i>kw(á:)</i>	‘come’		X	Directional (deictic)
<i>j(á:)</i>	‘go’		X	Directional (deictic)
<i>bùgùl</i>	‘drop’		X	Directional (deictic)
<i>bol-</i>	‘get’		X	Valency changing
<i>hàw-</i>	‘take’		X	Valence changing
<i>ti-</i>	‘give’		X	Valence changing
<i>kw(á:)</i>	‘come’	X		Aspectual
<i>kó-</i>	‘sit’	X		Aspectual
<i>ʔé:w-</i>	‘approach’		X	Aspectual
<i>ʃò-</i>	‘walk’		X	Aspectual

2. Symmetrical serial verb constructions are virtually absent in Sezo. Some of the asymmetrical serial verb constructions in Sezo formally and semantically correspond to those forms analysed as verb compounds in Northern Mao (cf. Ahland 2012: 415–424).

The following section is devoted to the detailed description of the semantic properties of the above listed verbs in serial verb constructions of Sezo.

6. The semantics of minor verbs in serial verb constructions of Sezo

Cross-linguistically, asymmetrical serial verbs possess a variety of semantic properties and cover a vast semantic range. In relation to this, Aikhenvald (2006: 22–27) identifies eight recurrent semantic categories of asymmetrical serial verb constructions. These are serial verb constructions with directional and orientational semantics, serial verb constructions of aspect, tense and extent of change, serial verb constructions of secondary concept serialisation, serial verb constructions of complement-clause-taking verbs, serial verb constructions of increasing valency and specifying arguments, serial verb constructions of reducing valency, serial verb constructions of comparatives and superlatives and serial verb constructions of event arguments. Among these semantic categories, only serial verb constructions of direction, serial verb constructions of increasing valency, serial verb constructions of reducing valency and serial verb constructions of aspect and tense are attested in Sezo.

6.1 Serial verb constructions with directional (deictic) minor verbs

Jacobs (2015: 64) interprets directional serial verb constructions as those consisting of minor verbs indicating the direction of the action expressed by the main verb. In Sezo, directional serial verb constructions are formed from a major verb referring to the action and a minor verb with a deictic function. Verbs with deictic function are motion verbs such as *kw(á:)*- ‘come’, *j(á:)*- ‘go’ and *bùgùl*- ‘drop’. While the first expresses the direction to the speaker (the deictic centre), the remaining two minor verbs express direction away from the speaker. Consider the following:

- (4) a. [jéʔi:nsíja kwèskwámò]
jé-ʔi:nsí-jà kwès- kwá-mò
 DEF-log-ACC *drag-come*-2PL.IMP
 ‘You (PL), drag the log towards here’
- b. [jéʃák’k’íjə báljé]
jé-ʃák’k’í-jà bál-j-é
 DEF-goat-ACC *hold-go*-2SG.IMP
 ‘You (PL), take the goat away from here’.
- c. [ʃwá:kwá:]
ʃwá:-kw-á:
see-come-2SG.IMP
 ‘You (SG), look here’.

- d. [fwá:jé]
fwá:-j-é
see-go-2SG.IMP
 ‘You (SG), look there.’
- e. [jámá:f tùm'té hìnk' káp''já:fté...]
jé-má:-f tùm-té hìnk' káp'-já:-f-té
DEF-man-NOM wall-DAT/LOC like_this look-go-REL-DAT/LOC
 ‘When the man looks at the wall (away from the deictic centre) like this...’
- f. [wànági]f twà:nsíjà kò:lbugùlá:]
wànági-f twà:nsí-jà kò:l-bùgùl-á:
wanagi-NOM spear-ACC throw-drop-DCL
 ‘Wanagi threw the spear (away from the deictic centre).’

As can be observed, the minor verbs in Example (4), i.e. *kw(á:)*- ‘come’, *j(á:)*- ‘go’ and *bùgùl*- ‘drop’ do not impart lexical meaning in such constructions. Rather they encode whether the direction of the event expressed by the major verbs is towards or away from the deictic centre. Cross-linguistically, asymmetrical serial verb constructions involving motion verbs to express deictic function is extremely common in serialising languages (Aikhenvald 2006: 22).

6.2 Serial verb constructions with valency changing minor verbs

Another tendency for languages that display asymmetrical serial verb constructions is that the subset of the relatively closed class of verbs (minor verbs) involved may determine the valence properties of the major verb. In Sezo, too, verbs play significant role in valency changing operations. The following subsections describe such operations.

6.2.1 Serial verb constructions with valency increasing minor verbs

In Sezo, the benefactive (applicative) construction that increases the valence of the verb is indicated by a serial verb construction involving *tí*- ‘give’ as a minor verb. In such constructions, the minor verb introduces an oblique object that benefits from the action carried out by the subject. Examples (5b) and (6b) illustrate the benefactive function of the verb *tí*- ‘give’. Structures without the applicative are given in (5a) and (6a) for contrast.

- (5) a. [jáfá:f]jèmmós's'á:]
jé-fá:-f jèmm-hós's'-á:
DEF-woman-NOM garment- wash-DCL
 ‘The woman washed clothes.’

- b. [jáfá:f] hánmálté fèmmós'tíjá:]
jé-fá:f hán=mál-té fèmm- hós's'-tí-á:
 DEF-woman-NOM 3SG=son-DAT/LOC garment- wash-give/ APL-DCL
 'The woman washed clothes for (the benefit of) her son.'
- (6) a. [jégíz'zìjà k'ázé]
jé-gízzì-jà k'áz-é
 DEF-money-ACC leave-2SG.IMP
 'Leave the money.'
- b. [jégíz'zìjà hín'fá:té k'áz'tié]
jé-gízzì-jà hín=fá:té k'áz-tí-é
 DEF-money-ACC 2SG=woman-DAT/LOC leave-give/APL-2SG.IMP
 'Leave the money for (to the benefit of) your wife.'

As can be observed, in structures where the applicative minor verb *tí-* 'give' is used, an obligatory beneficiary object with dative case role is introduced. The absence of the dative/locative case marked beneficiary object in the presence of the minor *tí-* 'give' verb and the use of the dative/locative case marked beneficiary object in the absence of the minor verb *tí-* 'give' derives ungrammatical (or at least incomplete) structures such as the following:

- (7) a. *[jáfá:f] fèmmós'tíjá:]
jé-fá:f fèmm- hós's'-tí-á:
 DEF-woman-NOM garment- wash-give/ APL-DCL
 Intended meaning: 'The woman washed clothes for (the benefit of) somebody.'
- b. *[jáfá:f] hánmálté fèmmós'tíjá:]
jé-fá:f hán=mál-té fèmm- hós's'-á:
 DEF-woman-NOM 3SG=son-DAT/LOC garment-DCL
 Intended meaning: 'The woman washed clothes for (the benefit of) her son.'

This substantiates that the minor verb *tí-* 'give' has a valency increasing function in such constructions.

6.2.2 Serial verb constructions with valency decreasing minor verbs

In Sezo, minor verbs can also be used in valency decreasing operation. The verbs which are involved in such operation are *ból-* 'get' and *háv-* 'take'. They respectively indicate the reciprocal and the benefactive form of the verb. Semantically, the reciprocal describes action of two agents on each other (8). The benefactive expresses that something is done for one's own benefit (9).

- (8) a. [jémáláqundif t'à:ɲált'à:ɲbòlá:]
jé-máláqundi-f t'à:ɲ- hél=t'à:ɲ-bòl-á:
 DEF-children-nom kick.VN 3PL=**kick-get/REC**-DCL
 'The children kicked each other'.
- b. [dà:fɟwè:l'bòlkék'é:dǎ:]
dà-f ɟwè:l-bòl-ké-k'é:-dǎ -j-á:
 1PL.EXCL-NOM **insult-get/REC-NEG-NEG**-1PL.EXCL-go/FUT-DCL
 'We (excluding you) will not insult each other'.
- (9) a. [kàltúmif wàpála jénàwá:]
kàltúm-f wàpála jén-hàw-á:
 Kaltumi-NOM earring **buy-take/BEN**-DCL
 'Kaltumi bought earring for her own benefit'.
- b. [wànági-gébiɟ hálk'èsijà hùzzàwájǎ:]
wànági-gébi-f hél=k'ès-jà hùzz-hàw- hél-j-á:
 wanagi-AP-NOM 3PL=land-ACC **till-take/ben** 3PL-go/FUT-DCL
 'Wanagi and his associates will till their land for their own benefit'.

Note that the benefactive is not the same as reflexive construction because, as described above, the benefactive indicates that something is done for one's own benefit and the reflexive indicates that the agent does something to, on or by himself. Consider the following:

- (10) [wànágiɟ hínk'èsijà hín?òphùzzàwá:]
wànági-f hín=k'ès-jà hín=?òp- hùzz-hàw-á:
 Wanagi-NOM 3SG=land-ACC 3SG=**self** **till-take/BEN**-DEC
 'Wanagi tilled his land on his own for his own benefit'.

As can be seen, whereas the benefactive is indicated by the minor verb *hàw-* 'take', the reflexive is periphrastically expressed by a noun phrase consisting of the pronoun *hín=* 's/he' as a proclitic and the noun *?òpi* 'self'.

6.3 Serial verb constructions with aspect marking minor verbs

Minor verbs in aspectual serial verb constructions describe the internal temporal constituency of the event identified by the major verb. Based on the syntactic position of the minor verbs, two types of aspectual serial verb constructions have been identified in Sezo. These are serial verb constructions in which the minor verb precedes the major verb, and serial verb constructions in which the minor verb follows the major verb. These are respectively referred to as aspectual serial verb

constructions with minor verbs in V_1 position, and aspectual serial verb constructions with minor verbs in V_2 position.

6.3.1 Aspectual serial verb constructions with minor verbs in V_1 position

In Sezo, the progressive aspect that expresses an ongoing event at the point of temporal locus and the perfect that indicates the relevance of a past action to a continuing event are encoded by minor verbs occurring in V_1 position. The verbs that are used to express the progressive and the perfect aspect are *kó:-* ‘sit’ *kw(á)* ‘come’. In fast speech, the verbs are mostly realised as *kó-* and *ká-* (cf. (11a) and (12a)). In addition, grammaticalised converbs of the same verbs; *kón-* ‘sit and’ *kán-* ‘come and’ have also been attested as markers of progressive and perfect aspect markers (cf. (11b) and (12b)). These are considered as grammaticalised forms because it is impossible to separate the converb marker from the verb root.

- (11) a. [já:má:] kó:n gònzíja kók’á:ǰá:]
jé- má:-f kó:-n gònzí-ja kó-k’á:f-á:
 DEF-man-NOM sit-CNV CORN-ACC sit/PRG-eat_roasted_grain- DCL
 ‘Having sat down, the man is eating corn.’
- b. [jámá’líǰ zíns’ kón-zín’s:á:]
jé-máli-f zíns’- kón-zín’s-á:
 DEF-boy run.VN sit.CNV/PRG-run-DCL
 ‘The boy is running.’
- (12) a. [hà:f hák’ás’ káháhàmpá:]
hà:-f há=k’ás’ ká-há=hàmp-á:
 1SG-NOM 1SG.POS-work come/PFV-1SG=finish-DCL
 I have finished my work’.
- b. [hà:f hák’ás’ kánáhàmpá:]
hà:-f há=k’ás’ kán-ha=hàmp-á:
 1SG-NOM 1SG.POS=work come.CNV/PFV-SG=finish- DCL
 I have finished my work’.

6.3.2 Aspectual serial verb constructions with minor verbs in V_2 position

In Sezo, the habitual aspect that signals an event that is happening as a habit or a regular pattern, and the prospective aspect that expresses that something is about to happen are marked by minor verbs occurring in V_2 position. The two aspectual meanings are respectively encoded by the verbs *ǰé:w-* ‘approach, come nearer’ and *ǰó:-* ‘walk’. Illustrative examples are given below:

- (13) a. [hà:f hákwà:fté ?imsí? pà:t' é:wpí?á:]
há:-f há=kwà:fté ?imsí-f
 1SG-NOM 1SG=come-REL-LOC rain-NOM
pà:t'³ - ?é:w-pí?-á:
rain.v-approach/PRS-be.IRR-DCL
 'When I arrived, the rain was about to rain.'
- b. [wàná?í? pítít-nàf-?àw-té hán'k'éshúz?òwá:]
wàná?í? pítít-nàf-?àw-té hán=k'és- húz-?ò-á:
 wanagi-NOM frequent-ORD-day-LOC 3SG=land **till-walk/HAB- DCL**
 'Wanagi frequently tills his land'.

Imparting aspectual meanings, such as progressive, continuative meanings by verbs of motion is cross-linguistically attested in many languages of the world (Aikhenvald 2006: 23).

7. Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to describe serial verb constructions attested in Sezo based on a synchronic data collected in 2015 in Asosa, the capital of the Benishangul Gumuz Regional State and the Begi town of West Wellezza Zone, Oromia Regional State. The paper has shown that serial verb constructions in Sezo are formed from two or three verb sequences clustered together without any marker of coordination or subordination. Such verb sequences are contiguous because they do not allow syntactic elements to occur between them. Markers of grammatical features such as mood and negative are marked once per serial verb construction. The components of a serial verb construction of Sezo are asymmetrical because they consist of verbs of unequal status: a major verb and one or two minor verbs. The major verb in a serial verb construction is dominant, as it expresses the action or the event and occurs as a head of the whole construction. The minor verbs are semantically dependent on the major verb. They render grammatical functions such as providing deictic information, valency changing and aspect marking.

3. In Sezo, the nominal and verbal forms for 'rain' are suppletive.

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Abbreviations and symbols

1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person	INST	Instrumental
-	Morpheme boundary	LOC	Locative
=	clitic boundary	NEG	Negative
˙	Downstep	NOM	Nominative
[]	Phonetic representation	PAU	Paucal
ACC	Accusative	PL	Plural
AP	Associative plural	POS	Possessive
APPL	Applicative	PRF	Perfect
BEN	Benefactive	PRG	Progressive
CNV	General converb	PRS	Prospective
DAT	Dative	REC	Reciprocal
DEC	Declarative	REL	Relative clause marker
DEF	Definite marker	SG	Singular
DEM	Demonstrative	V	Verb
EXCL	Exclusive	V ₁	Verb occurring in the first syntactic slot
FUT	Future	V ₂	Verb occurring in the second syntactic slot
HAB	Habitual	VN	Verbal noun
IMP	Imperative		
IRR	Irrealis		
INCL	Inclusive		

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