

## *Oblique* Serial Verbs in Creole/Pidgin Languages

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### *Abstract:*

This paper focuses on the syntax of (argument introducing/valency increasing) serial verbs in Creole/Pidgin languages, providing empirical arguments for the model of grammatical relations advanced in a series of recent works by Manzini and Savoia (2011a, 2011b), Manzini and Franco (2016), Franco and Manzini (2017a, 2017b), Manzini *et al.* (to appear a, b). These authors lay out an analysis of the syntax and interpretation of dative *to*, instrumental *with* and Differential Object Marking (DOM) relators, based on the assumption that these elements are predicates endowed with an elementary interpretive content interacting with the internal organization of the event. We assume that these oblique relators, expressing a primitive elementary part-whole/possession relation, may be instantiated also by serial (light) verbs in the grammar of natural languages. We provide a formal approach to cross-categorical variation in argument marking, trying to outline a unified morpho-syntactic template, in which so-called ‘cases’ do not configure a specialized linguistic lexicon of functional features/categories – on the contrary they help us outline an underlying ontology of natural languages, of which they pick up some of the most elementary relations. Such primitive relations can be expressed by different lexical means (e.g. case, adpositions, light verbs, etc.).

*Keywords:* dative, DOM, instrumental, Pidgin/Creole, Serial verbs

### *1. Introduction*

The aim of this paper is to describe the syntax of (argumental) serial verbs of the type represented in (1) in Creole/Pidgin languages, providing empirical support for the model of grammatical relations advanced in a series of recent works by Manzini and Savoia (2011a, 2011b), Franco *et al.* (2015), Manzini *et al.* (2015), Manzini and Franco (2016), Franco and Manzini (2017a, 2017b),



Manzini *et al.* (to appear a, b). These authors lay out an analysis of the syntax and interpretation of obliques (genitive *of*, dative *to*, instrumental *with* and Differential Object Marking (DOM) relators), based on the assumption that these elements are endowed with an elementary interpretive content (inclusion, part-whole, possession) interacting with the internal organization of the predicate/event. We focus on (light) serial verb used as ‘valency-increasing’ devices (encoding benefactives, instrumentals, comitatives, etc.) and/or employed for specifying arguments, that is, to introduce (DOM) direct objects and indirect goal/recipient arguments in ditransitive constructions. In the definition of Aikhenvald (2006: 1), “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 [...] They are mono-clausal; their intonational properties are the same as those of a mono-verbal clause, and they have just one tense, aspect, and polarity value”.

- (1) a. Kêdê mêtê ê ka xikêvê kata ùa **da** mi  
 every month 3SG HAB write letter one give me  
 ‘Every month, he writes me a letter’  
*Principense* (Maurer 2009: 111)
- b. Zon **toma** faka va mpon.  
 3SG take knife slice bread  
 ‘Zon sliced the bread with a knife’  
*São Tomense* (Hagemeyer 2000: 45)

Our main idea is that the same elementary interpretive content (inclusion, part-whole, possession) proposed by Manzini and colleagues for obliques can be shaped through (light) serial verb constructions. Indeed, the serial verbs in (1), taken from two Portuguese based Creoles of West Africa, are light verbs whose basic meaning is that of ‘transfer’ of possession (GIVE/TAKE). In other words, we assume that oblique cases and adpositions are (language-specific) relational devices employed to introduce oblique arguments (cf. Fillmore 1968). Nothing prevents a given language to use, as a relational predicate, a serial (light) verb for this purpose. We clearly assume that the underlying syntax is the same.

Formally, we aim at providing an approach to cross-categorial variation in (oblique) argument marking, trying to outline a unified morpho-syntactic template, in which so-called ‘cases’ or ‘adpositions’ do not configure a specialized linguistic lexicon of functional features/categories – on the contrary they help us outline an underlying ontology of natural languages, of which they pick up some of the most elementary relations. Such primitive relations can be expressed by different lexical means: case, adpositions, light verbs, etc.

In illustrating the model of grammatical relations recently proposed by Manzini, Franco and Savoia, we start from the encoding of datives. As for

dative *to*, the line of analysis of ditransitive verbs initiated by Kayne (1984) is characterized by the assumption that verbs like *give* take as their complement a predication whose content is a possession headed by *to*. Following in part Kayne (1984), Pesetsky (1995), Harley (2002), Beck and Johnson (2004), we may say that in (2) a possession relation holds between the dative (*Mary*) and the theme of the ditransitive verb (*the book*). We characterize the content of *to* in terms of the notion of ‘(zonal) inclusion’, as proposed by Belvin and den Dikken (1997) for the verbal item HAVE. We assimilate this content to an elementary part/whole predication and notate it as  $\subseteq$ , so that (2a) is roughly structured as in (2b). In (2b) the result of the causative event is that *the book* is included by (possessed by) *Mary*.

- (2) a. I give the book **to** Mary  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> give [<sub>predP</sub> the book [[ $\subseteq$  **to**] Mary]]]]

In the tradition of studies in (2), the alternation between Dative Shift (as in *I give Mary the book*) and DP-to-DP structures is not shaped derivationally, but rather as an alternation between two distinct base structures. In many theoretical works, the head of the predication postulated by Kayne for English double object constructions is an abstract version of the verb ‘have’.<sup>1</sup> Franco and Manzini (2017a) assume that this abstract HAVE head assumed for Dative Shift is the covert counterpart of ‘with’. Indeed the *with* preposition can be overtly seen in English alternations of the type represented in (3).

- (3) a. I presented the picture **to** the museum  
 b. I presented the museum **with** the pictures

Hence, it is possible to propose for (3b) the structure in (4), paralleling the one in (2). We notate the relation expressed by *with* as ( $\supseteq$ ), assuming that the possessum is the complement of P and the possessor its external argument. Actually, we face with a relation which is the ‘mirror image’ of *to* datives where the possessor is the complement of  $P\subseteq$  and the possessum is its external argument.

- (4) [<sub>VP</sub> present [<sub>predP</sub> the museum [[ $\supseteq$  **with**] the pictures]]]]

To the purpose of this work, it is relevant to consider that in the Romance languages (as in Indo-European, more generally) the dative adposi-

<sup>1</sup> For instance, for Harley (2002) the head of the predication in an English Dative Shift sentence is an abstract preposition  $P_{\text{HAVE}}$ , for Beck and Johnson (2004), the head of the predication is an abstract verb HAVE. Pesetsky (1995) limits himself to an abstract characterization of the predicate head as G.

tion/case is the preferred externalization for DOM objects (Bossong 1985; Aissen 2003; Malchukov 2008; Manzini and Franco 2016, a.o.). We provide just one example from standard Spanish in (5a). According to Manzini and Franco (2016) the syncretism of dative and DOM, is based on the fact that the same lexical content  $\subseteq$  is instantiated in both contexts, as seen in structure (5b) for sentence (5a). In other words, object DPs highly ranked in animacy/definiteness require for their embedding the same elementary predicate  $\subseteq$  introducing goals/recipients. Indeed, we have seen that in (2b) the arguments of  $\subseteq$  are the two DPs, respectively *Mary* and *the book*, the former being in possession of the latter as the result of the event of giving. In (5b), on the other hand one of the two arguments of  $\subseteq$  is again its object DP *el* ‘him’ – however, it is not clear what its external argument might be.

Manzini and Franco (2016) follow the standard idea of Hale and Keyser (1993), Chomsky (1995), who assume that transitive predicates result from the incorporation of an elementary state/event into a transitivity  $v$  layer. Within such a framework, (5b) can be rendered as ‘S/he causes him to have a call’, where ‘him’ is the possessor of the ‘call’ sub-event. Therefore, the  $\subseteq$  relation holds of a DP (*el*) and of an elementary event ‘the call’ (see Torrego 2009; Pineda 2014 for different implementations of the same basic idea).

- (5) a. lo/le                    llama        a                el  
           him                    s/he.calls    to                him  
           ‘S/he calls him’  
       b. [<sub>VP</sub>  $v$  [<sub>VP</sub> llama [<sub>PP $\subseteq$</sub>  a [<sub>DP</sub> el]]]]  
           *Spanish*

It is important to consider that this syntactic/configurational characterization of syncretism (here DOM=dative) substantially diverge from the views of current realizational frameworks within the realm of theoretical morphosyntax. For instance, in Distributed Morphology (DM), which represents pretty much the standard morphology framework in generative grammar, syncretisms result from the application of morphological rules after the output of the syntax, but before lexical insertion. The argument has been made more than once (Kayne 2010: 171; Manzini and Savoia 2011a) that the morphological rules of DM are powerful enough to generate essentially any lexical string from any underlying syntactic structure. Markedness hierarchies (Calabrese 1998, 2008) are an interesting response to non-accidental syncretism patterns – since contiguity in lexicalization is made to depend on contiguity in the hierarchy. However, they have the same problem as any extrinsic ordering device: is there any internal reason for the ordering? Much the same can be said of the nanosyntactic Case hierarchy of Caha (2009) or Pantcheva (2011) (cf. Starke 2017). On the contrary, we approach obliques (inflectional / prepositional, etc.) keeping Chomsky’s (2001) conclusions on

the non-primitive nature of case in mind. Oblique case is simply the name given to elementary predicative content when realized inflectionally on a noun. Correspondingly, syncretism depends on shared content, namely  $\subseteq/\supseteq$  in the instances discussed and there is no externally imposed hierarchy ordering the relevant primitives, but rather a conceptual network determined by the primitive predicates we use and the relations they entertain with each other. Calabrese's markedness hierarchies or nanosyntactic functional hierarchies are not necessary because syncretism depends essentially on natural class (cf. Müller 2007). Seen from this perspective, case hierarchies take on rather different contours. In essence, they reduce to a binary split between direct case (reduced to the agreement system as in Chomsky 2001) and oblique case, reducing to the part-whole operator, whose lexicalization can be sensitive to the *c*-commanding relation between the possessor and the possessum.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper, we basically claim that serial (light) verbs in Creole Languages may act as  $\subseteq/\supseteq$  relators, providing support for the model of grammatical relation sketched above. Crucially, the model we are interested in pointedly predict that paradigms exist nowhere in the competence of speaker-hearers; in other words linguistic data are organized in non-paradigmatic fashion – exactly like a generative syntax never quite achieves a match to traditional constructions like passive, or ergative, etc. Primitives are too fine grained and the combinatorial possibilities afforded by Universal Grammar too many to achieve a match to descriptive (macro)classes.<sup>3</sup>

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. In section 2, we introduce some basic features of Serial verbs construction, concentrating in particular on their behavior as oblique devices. In section 3, we illustrate the morpho-syntax of ditransitive structures in some Creole/Pidgin languages which employ serial verbs for encoding them, as well as the expression of instrumental (and comitative) relations by means of TAKE predicates. We show that the syntactic and morpho-lexical regularities in the expression of these grammatical relations in Creoles/Pidgins provide strong arguments in favor of the framework of (oblique) case/adpositions illustrated above. Section 4 briefly introduces the phenomenon of DOM serial verbs. The conclusion follows.

<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, other non-core (spatial) cases are analysable into a case core (typically oblique) and some additional structure, yielding something similar to the internally articulated PPs of Svenonius (2006) (cf. also Franco *et al.* 2017 on Uralic languages), who (syntactically) reworks the Gestalt-like perspective of Talmy (2000).

<sup>3</sup> The point is fairly obvious, but while Chomsky has made it over and over again for syntax (Chomsky 1981), we believe it that it is not clearly appreciated that it ought to hold for morphology and morpho-lexical variation, as well.

## 2. Background on serial verbs constructions

Serial verb constructions are widespread in Creole languages, as well as in the languages of West Africa, Southeast Asia, Amazonia, Oceania, and New Guinea (Aikhenvald 2006). Muysken and Veenstra (1995: 290) schematically illustrate a series of definitional criteria to identify a serial verbs construction, arguing that it must contain two (or more) verbs which have: i) only one external argument subject; ii) at most one expressed direct object; iii) one specification for Tense Aspect Mood (TAM) and only one possible negative item; iv) no intervening coordinating conjunction/subordinating particle; v) no intervening pauses. Thus, serial verb constructions are sequences of verbs which act together as a single predicate, without any overt marker of coordination, complementation, or other kinds of syntactic dependency (see Jansen *et al.* 1978; Zwicky 1990; Aikhenvald 2006; Muysken and Veenstra 2006, a.o.).

Indeed, serial verb constructions are commonly represented in the formal literature (cf. Lefebvre 1991; Aboh 2009, among others) as monoclausal, given that they have the intonational properties of a clausal unit and given that all the verbs involved share the same TAM values.<sup>4</sup>

Interestingly, as reported in Muysken and Veenstra (1995), Aikhenvald (2006), generally one verb is fixed (usually it is a light verb), while the other one can be freely taken from a certain semantic or aspectual class. In (6), adapted from Muysken and Veenstra (1995), we sketch the main functions of the light verbs recruited in serial verb constructions:

(6) locational	<i>go</i>	direction away (allative)
	<i>come</i>	direction towards (ablativ)
	<i>belstay</i>	locative
argument	<i>give</i>	benefactive, dative, object
	<i>take</i>	instrumental, comitative, object
	<i>say</i>	finite complementizer
aspectual	<i>finish</i>	perfective
	<i>return</i>	iterative
	<i>belstay</i>	continuative
degree	<i>pass</i>	comparative
	<i>suffice</i>	enough

<sup>4</sup> Some authors have assumed a correlation between the availability of serial verbs construction in a given grammar and the lack of derivational verbal morphology. Baker (1991: 79) explicitly says that: "Notions which are expressed by Serial Verb Constructions [...] in the Kwa languages of West Africa correspond to a large degree to those which are expressed by derivational verb morphology in the Bantu languages of East Africa".

As already said, argument (or valency increasing) serial verbs are the focus of the present paper. We will concentrate exclusively on GIVE and TAKE serial verbs of the type illustrated in (1).

Stewart (1963) was the first to observe that that overt subjects and overt objects in serial verb constructions are semantically related to both verbs. For instance, in (1a) the object ‘letter’ is an object of the light predicate ‘give’, as well as of ‘write’. Similarly, the pronoun ‘he’ is the subject of both predicates. Baker (1989) addresses this observation from a theoretical viewpoint assuming that verb serialization is a unified phenomenon based on ‘argument sharing’.

In a nutshell, Baker argues that the two verbs in a serial construction share same subject and the same object (e.g. the DP *letter* in (1a)). The internal argument is theta-marked by the two verbs. The first verb directly theta-marks the object NP under structural sisterhood), while the second verb theta-marks the same NP less directly, via a predicational theta-marking.<sup>5</sup>

Den Dikken (1991) and Muysken and Veenstra (1995) convincingly show that the argument sharing hypothesis of Baker is untenable on empirical grounds. Consider for instance the data in (7)–(8), respectively from Haitian and Saramaccan.

- (7) Jan        **bay**        Pol        liv        la        **bay**        Mari  
 John      give        Paul      book     the      give        Mary  
 ‘John gave the book to Paul for (to give to) Mary’  
*Haitian* (Muysken and Veenstra 1995: 298)

- (8) A        **de** wan        bunu        mujee        **da**        en.  
 3sg    be a        good        woman      give        3sg  
 ‘She is a good woman for him’  
*Saramaccan* (Muysken and Veenstra 1995: 298)

In (7) there is no subject argument sharing. Conceptually here ‘it is John who gives the book to Paul, who gives the book to Mary’. In (8) the first verb (‘be’) does not license an object theta role, so argument sharing is blocked. Note that in the Applicative framework (Pylkkänen 2008) both the participant introduced by the GIVE verb in second position in (7) and (8) can be rendered as High Appls (beneficiaries, experiencers, cf. Section 3.1). Aboh (2009) argues that light serial verbs of the TAKE and GIVE type are merged into an aspectual projection within the functional domain of the matrix lexi-

<sup>5</sup> Baker (1989) also claims that argument sharing is not random, but is thematically restricted. He assumes that in constructions with more than one internal argument, the order in which arguments show up follows the thematic hierarchy in (i).

(i) Agent<Instrument<...<Theme<Goal<Location

Muysken and Veenstra (1995: 298ff) show that there is great cross-linguistic variation with respect to the thematic restriction on (alleged) argument sharing.

cal verb. We will address Aboh's proposal in some more details in section 3.2, specifically focusing on instrumental TAKE serial verbs.

Another proposal put forth by Seuren (1990), Corne *et al.* (1996) is to consider serial verb constructions as covert (asyndetic) coordinate structures with two juxtaposed finite clauses. For instance, an example like (1b) would be rendered as 'He takes the knife and slices the bread'. However, Jansen *et al.* (1978), Sebba (1987) (cf. also Muysken and Veenstra 1995; Syea 2013) show that serial verb constructions never display the island effects that have been associated with coordinated structures since Ross (1967).

Finally, we must note that a core point of our proposal, already made explicit in Section 1, is that there is a structural analogy between serial verbs and adpositions/oblique cases in natural languages. Muysken and Veenstra (1995) argue against this idea, relying on two empirical observations. First, serial verbs usually allow stranding, as illustrated in (9), while adpositions do not in many languages (including Creoles/Pidgin).

- (9) San Edgar **teki** \_\_\_\_ koti a brede?  
 what Edgar take cut the bread  
 'What did Edgar cut the bread with?'  
*Sranan* (Muysken and Veenstra 1995: 292)

We think that this argument is not decisive at most, considering that preposition stranding is allowed in various different languages. Just consider an example from English in (10).

- (10) Who did you speak with \_\_\_?

The second observation relies on the availability of 'predicate clefts' in Creole/Pidgin languages. Predicate clefts are constructions in which a copy of a verb appears in sentence-initial position (cf. Koopman 1984 and following literature), as illustrated in (11).

- (11) Na **teki** Edgar **teki** a nefi koti a brede  
 FOC take Edgar take the knife cut the bread  
 'Really with the knife Edgar cut the bread?'  
*Sranan* (Muysken and Veenstra 1995: 292)

The main function of predicate clefting is to focus on the verbal action. Muysken and Veenstra (1995) assume that preposition cannot undergo 'predicate cleft', hence highlighting an asymmetry between adpositional items and serial verbs. Actually, there is evidence that light serial verbs of the TAKE and GIVE type disallow predicate clefting in many Romance based creoles, as highlighted for instance in Hagemeyer and Ogie (2011), Hagemeyer (2011) for the Portuguese based Creole São Tomense. Furthermore, predicate

clefing of (complex) adpositions and adverbial particles is possible in various Creoles/Pidgin, as shown in (12) with a Jamaican Creole example involving the item *bak* ‘back’. Thus, we believe again that this argument is not robust enough to tear apart (light) serial verbs and adpositions.

- (12) A      **bak**      mi      wind      **bak**      di      kasset  
 COP    back    1SG    wind    back    the    cassette  
 ‘I am putting the cassette back (i.e. not forward)’  
*Jamaican Creole* (Veenstra and den Besten 1995: 308)

In assuming a clear symmetry between adpositions and verbs, we follow Svenonius (2007), Wood (2015), who basically argue that the only difference between adpositions and verbs is that the latter is endowed with a temporal dimension (i.e. a TP layer). We are aware that in various languages, including Creoles/Pidgins, serial verbs and adpositions co-exist and can express the same meanings. Svenonius (2007: 83), mentioning Chinese as an example, claims that: “in tenseless serial verb languages ... it can be difficult to distinguish between verbs and prepositions.”

Following this basic insight, in the next section, we will try to account for the syntactic behavior of argumental serial verbs in Creole/Pidgin languages.

### 3. Goal, benefactive and instrumental serial verbs in Creole/Pidgin languages: on the (a)symmetry of ‘give’ and ‘take’

#### 3.1 GIVE serial verb as $\subseteq$ predicates

Usually, the serial light verb GIVE appears in second position, namely after the lexical verb and the direct object, introducing the recipient/goal/beneficiary, as illustrated in (13), for a series of Creoles/Pidgins. The data in (13) demonstrate that this pattern seems to show up independently from the substrate and the lexifier.

- (13) a. Amu    da    wan      kuzu      **da**      bo  
 I      give    a      thing    give      you  
 ‘I gave you something’  
*Fa d’Ambu* (Post 1995: 200)
- b. Kêdê    mêzê    Maa    ka    xikêvê    kata    ūa    **da**    mi (=1a)  
 every    month    Maa    HAB    write    letter    one    give    me  
 ‘Every month Maa writes me a letter’  
*Principense* (Maurer 2009: 121)
- c. Siera      bai      shuuz      **gi**      Taam  
 Sarah      buy    shoes    give      Tom  
 ‘Sarah bought shoes for Tom’  
*Jamaican Creole* (Farquharson APiCS structure dataset: 8-135)

- d. I buy chok **give** you  
 1SG buy congee give you  
 'I buy/bought congee to you'  
*Singlish* (Lim and Ansaldo APiCS structure dataset: 21-118)
- e. Ijénie ka pòté mango **ba** Ijenn  
 Eugénie PROG bring mango give Eugène  
 'Eugénie is bringing the mangos to Eugène'  
*Guadeloupean Creole* (Ludwig 1996: 282)
- f. am a kan goi mais mi ris **gi** sini  
 3SG PST HAB throw corn with rice give 3PL  
 'He threw corn and rice to him'  
*Negerholland* (De Josselin de Jong 1926: 18)

It is intuitively possible to argue that the serial verb GIVE is the counterpart of the dative preposition *to* and/or the benefactive preposition *for*. Actually, these are not the sole uses of GIVE serial verbs, given that they are also able to encode experiencers and mono-argumental (intransitive) datives in many different languages, as illustrated respectively in (14) and (15) with examples from Ndyuka and São Tomense.

- (14) A nyanyan sweti **gi** me tee det  
 The food please give me very.much  
 'I like food very much'  
*Ndyuka* (Goury and Migge 2003: 131)
- (15) e fa **da** ine  
 he talk give them  
 'He talked to them'  
*São Tomense* (Romaine 1988: 56, *apud* Heine and Kuteva 2002)

Thus, GIVE serial verbs seem to perfectly match the contexts in which the dative *a* preposition of Romance languages shows up, as illustrated in (16).

- (16) a. Ho dato un libro **a** Gianni *dative*  
 'I gave a book to Gianni'
- b. Ho comprato le scarpe **a/per** Gianni *benefactive*  
 'I bought the shoes for Gianni'
- c. Ho parlato **a** Gianni *intransitive dative*  
 'I spoke to Gianni'
- d. Quel cibo piace **a** Gianni *experiencer*  
 'Gianni likes that food'  
*Italian*

The use of GIVE serial verb is not confined to Creoles/Pidgins. In various non-Creole languages, the verb GIVE lexicalizes both datives and bene-

factives. Consider the example in (17) from Thai, where *háj* ‘give’, introduce both datives and benefactives (cf. Aikhenvald 2006 for a typological overview and Muysken and Veenstra 1995; Heine and Kuteva 2002, for other relevant cross-linguistic examples).

- (17) Dɛɛŋ    sɔɔn    lɛɛg            **háj**            Sɔdaa    **háj**    phyan  
 Dang    teach    arithmetic    give        Suda    give       friend  
 ‘Dang taught arithmetic to Suda for his friend’  
*Thai* (Bisang 1996: 571)

In other languages the verb for GIVE in second position seems to encode a dative content only, as illustrated in (18) for Modern Mandarin Chinese.<sup>6</sup>

- (18) wo            xie            le                    yi-feng        xin            **gei**    ta  
 I.SG        write        ASP                one-class    letter        to            him  
 ‘I wrote a letter to him. Not: I wrote a letter for him’  
*Modern Mandarin Chinese* (Sun 1996: 44)

Based on the discussion in section 1 and on the empirical evidence provided above, we assume that the (serial) light verb GIVE patterns with the adposition *to* in English, *a* in Romance languages or inflectional dative case in realizing the ( $\sqsubseteq$ ) predicate. The serial verb for GIVE is an elementary predicate signaling transfer of possession and heading a projection in which the theme (possessum) is its sister and the recipient (possessor) is its complement, as sketched in (19) for example (13a).

- (19)
- 
- ```

graph TD
  VP --> V[da]
  VP --> PredP
  PredP --> DP1[wan kuzu]
  PredP --> GIVEsqsubseteqP[GIVE (sqsubseteq)P]
  GIVEsqsubseteqP --> GIVEsqsubseteq[da]
  GIVEsqsubseteqP --> DP2[bo]
  
```

We are aware that many different Creoles/Pidgins can also use a double object construction with a goal-theme order for ditransitives, as illustrated for Principense in (20) (cf. example 13b).

<sup>6</sup> There seems to be an implicational hierarchy at work. According to APiCS on line feature 86, with GIVE, it is possible to encode datives and benefactives, datives only but not benefactives only. Thus, the dative content of the verb GIVE must be ‘lexicalized’ in order to also trigger a benefactive meaning.

- (20) Kêdê      mêtê      Maa      ka      xikevê      mi      kata      ũa  
 every    month    Maa      HAB    write    1SG    letter    one  
 ‘Every month Maa writes me a letter’  
*Principense* (Maurer 2009: 121)

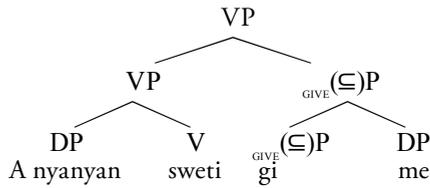
Bruyn *et al.* (1999) assume that the double object constructions are universally available in Creole/Pidgin languages, claiming that they are the unmarked option in Universal Grammar and linking them to language acquisition. From this perspective, they follow a creolization schema along the lines of Bickerton (1981, 1984, 1989)’s Bioprogram Hypothesis. Nevertheless, Michaelis and Haspelmath (2003) have shown that double object constructions can be absent from the grammar of individual Pidgins/Creoles, trying to support a substrate explanation.

For the sake of the present analysis, we can say that for Creole/Pidgin languages that show a surface dative (or better GIVE) alternation like *Principense* in (20)-(13b) both of the main approaches taken by the generative literature on Dative Shift are compatible with our discussion. A first possibility is to assume Freeze (1992)’s ideas, or the earliest transformational accounts of Dative Shift (cf. also Larson 1988), assuming that leftward movement of the Goal argument derive the double object construction. Given that the structure in (19) is the roughly the same as the base structure of Freeze, we assume that nothing prevents a Dative Shift derivation from taking place starting from it. A second possibility is to adopt the view that Dative Shift structures actually involve a different base generated structure – along the lines of Kayne (1984) and following literature (cf. Section 1), and to claim that the Dative Shift alternation is closely comparable to the alternation between ‘He presented his pictures to the museum’ and ‘He presented the museum with his picture’ sketched in (3)-(4) (cf. Levinson 2011; Franco and Manzini 2017).

For what concerns the lexical semantic motivation for the parallelism between dative/to adpositions and GIVE serial verbs, we may follow Givón (1975) who argued – in the framework of generative semantics – the GIVE can be analyzed as the *induction* of a possessive relationship. From this perspective the goal/recipient can be taken as standing for a ‘reference point’, and theme for the ‘target’ (of possession) found in goal/recipient’s domain. We think that this view is coherent with the structure sketched in (19).

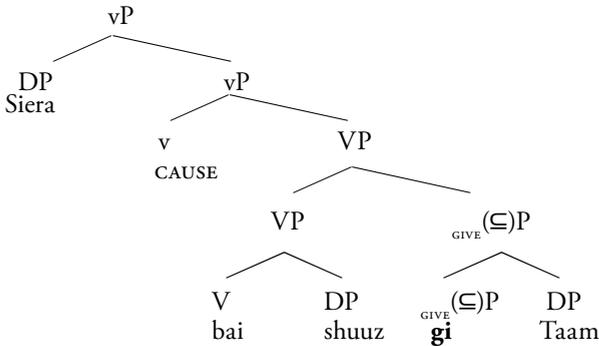
The same Givón assumes that when the theme which is manifested in the goal/recipient’s domain is not a thing/entity, but is rather identified as the event profiled by the main verb, what actually GIVE conveys is the ‘manifestation’ (i.e. possession, inclusion) of the event in the recipient’s (experiential) domain, with the consequence of its interpretation as an experiencer or beneficiary. This view is consistent with the analysis provided in Manzini and Franco (2016) for dative experiencers. A sentence like the one in (14) for *Ndyuka* can be interpreted as saying that ‘liking the food’ is an elementary event/state in the ‘zonal inclusion/possession’ domain of *me* and can be represented as in (21).

(21)



A similar structure/interpretation can be provided also for beneficiaries, as illustrated in (22), where a  ${}_{\text{GIVE}}(\subseteq)$  predicate takes as its external argument the result VP and as its internal argument the beneficiary DP. In fact, a sentence like (13c) can be paraphrased as ‘Sarah causes the result of ‘buying the shoes’ and ‘Tom owns/possesses this result/has this result in his domain’.

(22)

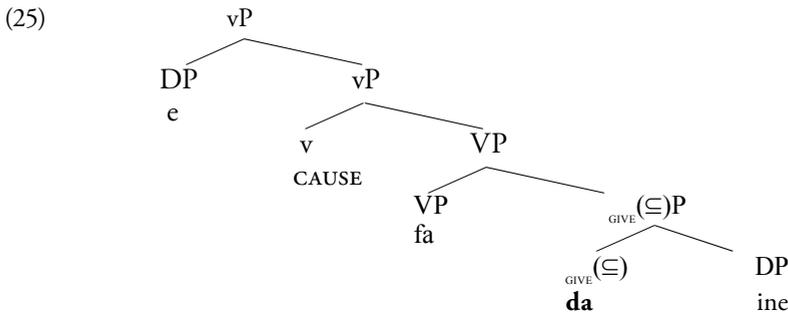


This line of analysis for GIVE is also generally compatible with the applicative literature (cf. Cuervo 2003; Pylkkänen 2008; Boneh and Nash 2012, a.o.), which takes it as not coincidental that the same ‘oblique’ morphology found to express goals also introduces experiencers/beneficiaries. For the Applicative literature, this corresponds to the fact that the same Appl head (externalized by a dative/oblique) can attach at different points in the sentential spine. The low Applicative head establishes a relation between two arguments (namely the goal and the theme, cf. (19)), while the high Appl head introduces relation between an argument (experiencer/beneficiary) and an event (the VP) (cf. (21)-(22)).

For what concerns an example like São Tomense in (15), involving an intransitive (unergative) dative/ GIVE we propose again, following Manzini and Franco (2016), that in this instance the two arguments of  ${}_{\text{GIVE}}(\subseteq)$  are its complement DP and an eventive constituent. Intuitively, both transitive and unergative predicates can be paraphrased as consisting of a causative event and an elementary predicate associated with an eventive name, as shown in (23)-(24).

- (23) ho chiamato Gianni > ho fatto una chiamata a Gianni *transitive*  
 'I called Gianni' 'I made a call to Gianni'
- (24) ho telefonato a Gianni > ho fatto una telefonata a Gianni *unergative*  
 'I phoned Gianni' 'I made a phone call to Gianni'

Hale and Keyser (1993), Chomsky (1995) formalize this intuition about the complex nature of transitive predicates by assuming that they result from the incorporation of an elementary state/event into a transitivizing predicate (CAUSE). In minimalist syntax, the transitivizing predicate is standardly built into the structure in the form of a *v* functional head. Within such a conceptual framework it is clear what we mean when we say that  $\text{GIVE}(\subseteq)$  in (15) takes as its arguments the (elementary) state/event and the DP. Thus, (15) can be informally rendered as 'He caused them to be on the receiving end of some talk', or more directly 'He caused them talk', corresponding to a *v*-V organization of the predicate, as represented in (25) (cf. also the discussion on Section 4).



We argue that, despite the complex organization of the predicate in a *v*-V fashion, direct complements (e.g. of 'call' in (23)) are embedded in a canonical transitive structure comprising a nominative agent and an accusative theme. In other words, 'call' in (23) behaves as a single predicate, its complementation structure displaying no sensitivity to the presence of (potential) sub-events/states in it (cf. Svenonius 2002 on Icelandic). On the contrary, the dative with 'talk' in (15) is a result of the sensitivity of argument structure to the finer event articulation of the predicate, in which the oblique DP is perceived as the 'possessor' of a sub-event/state.

Finally note that sometimes what are labeled GIVE serial verbs in the literature (cf. APiCS on line feature 86) actually behave as matrix predicates, introducing a CAUSE/*v* layer on their own. Consider the examples in (26).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Note that the examples in (26) display DOM arguments marked with a 'with' adposi-

- (26) a. Isti belu **da** sabe kung ile ki esta teng lugar  
 this old.man give know DOM 3SG COMP DEM COP place  
 ‘The old man told him that this was the place’  
*Batavia Creole* (Maurer 2011: 73)
- b. Pírmi yo ta-**dále** prestá mi motor konéle  
 often 1SG IPFV-give borrow my motorcycle DOM.3SG  
 ‘I lend her/him frequently my motorcycle’  
*Zamboanga Chabacano* (Forman 1972: 204)

Here the verb for GIVE is in first position, and does not introduce an argumental DP *contra* what we have seen in the examples we have provided so far. The example in (26a) can be rendered in a Romance language like Italian with a causative structure like the one illustrated in (27), with a *fare* (make) auxiliary.

- (27) Il vecchio **fa** sapere a lui ...  
 ‘The old man told him ...’  
*Italian*

Actually, it is not uncommon to use the verb GIVE as an auxiliary in complementary distribution with *fare/faire* in causative-like predicate in Romance, as illustrated in (28) (cf. also Cuervo 2010 on Spanish).

- (28) a. il caldo **da** fastidio a Gianni  
 ‘the heat annoys Gianni’  
 b. il caldo **fa** male a Gianni  
 ‘the heat hurts Gianni’

Thus, examples like the (26a) can be structurally rendered as in (29). They clearly do not match the ‘argumental’ use of GIVE serial verbs that are the topic of the present paper.

- (29) [<sub>VP</sub> **da** [<sub>VP</sub> sabe ... ]]

### 3.2 TAKE serial verbs as ( $\supseteq$ ) predicates

Considering ditransitive constructions again, on the basis of the considerations above, it is possible to hypothesize that we can also find the ‘reverse’ of the verb GIVE involved in ditransitive construction, specifically in a configuration in which the ‘reverse’ of GIVE introduces the possessum, matching an expression like ‘I presented the museum *with* pictures’ (cf. the example in (4)). Franco and Manzini (2017) show that this is not an uncommon strategy

tion (e.g. *kung/kon*). This is a typical feature of Romance (Spanish/Portuguese) based Creoles of South-East Asia (cf. the discussion of the Kristang data in Franco and Manzini 2017).

among natural languages (see Heine and König 2010). Just consider for instance an example from Chamorro in (30), where the only strategy available to encode ditransitives is precisely by means of an instrumental adposition meaning *with*, in a ‘reverse’ possessor – possessum configuration.

- (30) Ha                    na’i                    i                    patgon                    **ni**                    leche  
 he.ERG                    give                    ABS                    child                    INST                    milk  
 ‘He gave the milk to the child’  
*Chamorro* (Topping 1973: 241)

Finding that a similar pattern is at work also with Creoles/Pidgins would provide substantive arguments in favor of a view according to which Dative Shift structures actually involve a different base generated configuration, in which the possessor is structurally higher than the possessum. Namely, we are asking ourselves if – also in the domain of serial verbs – we can face with a relation which is the ‘mirror image’ of datives/<sub>GIVE</sub> ( $\subseteq$ ), where we have seen that the possessor is the complement of the ‘inclusion/sub-set’ relator and the possessum is its external argument.

Clearly, the best candidate for the role of the ‘double’ of GIVE is the verb TAKE, which stands in a lexical semantic opposition with it. As we have seen in section 2 (cf. (6)), TAKE serial light verbs are widely employed in Creole/Pidgin languages to encode instrument and comitative participants. Thus, they are sorts of counterparts of the adpositions meaning *with* elsewhere (cf. Stolz *et al.* 2006).

Very interestingly, TAKE serial verbs are widely used in Creole/Pidgin ditransitives as illustrated in (31), with examples showing that this strategy is at work independently of the substrate and the lexifier.

- (31) a. Mon                    **pran**                    en                    lit                    donn                    Napoleon  
 1SG                    take                    one                    liter                    give                    Napoleon  
 ‘I give one liter to Napoleon’  
*Seychelles Creole* (Bollée and Rosalie 1994: T2)  
 b. Mwen                    **pran**                    liv                    bay                    Pòl  
 1SG                    take                    book                    give                    Paul  
 ‘I gave the book to Paul’  
*Haitian* (Lefebvre 1998: 291)  
 c. À                    **tek**                    nayf                    giv                    yù  
 1SG.SBJ                    take                    knife                    give                    2SG.OBJ  
 ‘I gave you the knife’  
*Nigerian Pidgin* (Faraclas 1996: 75)

Sometimes both a GIVE and TAKE strategy for encoding ditransitive can be at work in the grammar of a given language, as shown in (32) with an example from Nigerian Pidgin (cf. 31c).

- (32) À        kuk        nyam        **giv**        yù  
 1SG.SBJ    cook        yam        give        2SG.OBJ  
 'I cooked yam to you'  
*Nigerian Pidgin* (Faraclas 1996: 141)

The pattern illustrated above for Nigerian Pidgin is not an exotic feature to be ascribed to Pidgins/Creoles only. Indeed, the same strategy, with both GIVE and TAKE that can be involved in ditransitives, is available for instance in Vietnamese, as illustrated in (33). Note that nothing prevents a given language from instantiating also a double object pattern in its grammar, as illustrated in Vietnamese (33c).

- (33) a. Nó        đưa        cái        chảo        **cho**        con        voi  
 3SG        deliver    CL        pan        give        CL        elephant  
 'It delivers the pan to the elephant'  
 b. Ông-ấy        **lấy**        tiền        đưa        bà-ấy  
 He                take        money    deliver    she  
 'He gives her money'  
 c. Nó                đưa        con        voi        cái        chảo  
 3SG                deliver    CL        elephant    CL        pan  
 'It delivers the pan to the elephant'  
*Vietnamese* (Hanske 2007)

There are two common features to be highlighted in the TAKE ditransitives illustrated above: (i) the verb for TAKE is consistently in first position, namely it precedes the matrix verb; (ii) it always introduces the possessum. In this respect, it is specular to the serial verb GIVE introduced in Section 3.1, which is always in second position and consistently introduces the possessor. At the same time TAKE verbs cannot be treated as the instrumental adposition of Chamorro in (30) which mirrors the 'I presented the museum with pictures' configuration. In fact, it is true that TAKE verbs always introduce the possessum, but they are never 'sandwiched' between the possessor and the possessum.

At first sight, one may entertain the idea of a hidden coordination with two independent predicates, namely of a structure of the type 'he takes the book and gives him (it)' for the examples in (31). Nevertheless, it is suspicious to find that a coordinating particle never shows up in this context, in spite of the fact that an overt coordinator is usually employed at the VP level in those languages displaying a ditransitive TAKE serial verb construction, as illustrated in (34) for Seychelles Creole. Furthermore, I have not find any resumptive pronouns encoding the theme/possessum in Creoles/Pidgins employing TAKE ditransitive. A resumptive pronoun is usually employed in analogous coordinate structures in Romance, as illustrated in (35) for French (cf. also Syea 2013 for a full set of sharp arguments against a coordination analysis, based on data from Indian Ocean French Creoles). Usually, constructions like (31) satisfy all the core requirements of serial verb constructions, behaving semantically and phonologically as a single unit.

- (34) Marcel in manz banan e i 'n lir zournal  
 Marcel PRF eat banana and 3SG PRF read newspaper  
 'Marcel ate a banana/bananas and read the newspaper'  
*Seychelles Creole* (Michaelis and Rosalie 2013: APiCS 56-138)
- (35) Il prend le livre et **le** lui donne  
 'He takes the book and gives it to him'  
*French*

A possible solution to account for TAKE ditransitives in Creole languages would be to assume that we face with a base structure of the type represented in (36) for the Haitian sentence in (31b), with the TAKE constituent that move to a preverbal position, matching a base configuration of the type of 'I provide the museum with pictures'. The target of movement could be a Topic position within the IP domain, as suggested by Belletti (2004, 2005). A possible representation is in (37).

- (36) [<sub>VP</sub> bay [<sub>PredP</sub> Pòl [[ $\exists$ <sub>take</sub> pran liv]]]
- (37) [<sub>TopicP</sub>  $\exists$ <sub>take</sub> pran liv [<sub>VP</sub> bay [<sub>PredP</sub> Pòl [[ $\exists$ <sub>take</sub> pran liv]]]]]

Such interpretation could elegantly account for the (a)symmetry of GIVE and TAKE in ditransitive constructions. However, it would be suspicious to find an information driven movement to be obligatory, without any overt instances of the base structure to surface cross-linguistically.

Actually, we have not retrieved any instance of TAKE serial verbs in second positions. Furthermore, the sequence TAKE – DP – MatrixVerb – (DP) is the only one consistently employed to introduce instrumental and theme argument in Creoles/Pidgins, as illustrated in (38)-(39) for the Portuguese based Creole Angolar.

- (38) N        **tambu**        faka        kota        situ        *Instrument-TAKE*  
 1SG    take        knife        cut        meat  
 'I cut the meat with a knife'  
*Angolar* (Maurer 2013: APiCS structure dataset)
- (39) Kathô **tambu**    n'kila    rê        pê        kosi        bega        *Theme-TAKE*  
 dog    take        tail        his        put        under    belly  
 'The dog put his tail under his belly'  
*Angolar* (Maurer 2013: APiCS structure dataset)

Thus, we propose a different account, in which the serial verb TAKE is actually inserted in the sentential spine in order to convey a causative meaning. Intuitively, ditransitives can be paraphrased with a causative predicate introducing transfer of possession, as illustrated in the Italian minimal pair in (40). Crucially, the 'lexical' verb in the causative structure in (40b) is the verb for HAVE.

- (40) a. Gianni ha **dato** una mela a Maria *Ditransitive*  
 b. Gianni ha fatto **avere** una mela a Maria *Causative*  
 both: ‘Gianni gave an apple to Maria’  
*Italian*

Actually, in many different languages verbs meaning HAVE (i.e. encoding predicate possession) are rendered via a HOLD/TAKE counterpart. This is a widespread pattern in Romance languages. Italian *avere* (HAVE) for instance is rendered in many Southern Italian dialects through the lexical item *tenere* (HOLD/TAKE), as shown in (41) for Cirò Marina (Calabrese).

- (41) **tenəno**            kirə            ɣwəppunə  
 they.have            those            boys  
 ‘They have those boys’ = ‘Those boys are their sons’  
*Cirò Marina* (Manzini and Savoia 2005: 322)

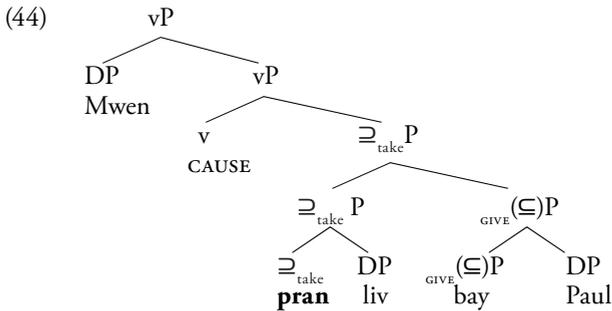
The contiguity between HOLD and TAKE verbs is confirmed by the behavior of the *ba* morpheme in Chinese on historical grounds (cf. Ziegeler 2000), which we will briefly introduce in Section 4, addressing DOM TAKE serial verbs. Further note that in Italian, when one does want to express ‘transfer of possession’ both *tenere* (HOLD) and *prendere* (TAKE) can convey the same meaning as illustrated by the minimal pair in (42). Moreover, Heine and Kuteva (2002) show that TAKE verbs can be recruited cross-linguistically to encode causative predicates, as illustrated in (43) for Twi (cf. also Kim 2012 on English, and the discussion in Section 4).

- (42) a. Tieni queste chiavi  
 b. Prendi queste chiavi  
 both = ‘Takes this keys’  
*Italian*
- (43) o **de** gwañ a-ba  
 He take sheep PFV-come  
 ‘He has brought a sheep’ = ‘He made a sheep come’  
*Twi* (Lord 1993: 137)

Assuming that the structure for ditransitives introduced by TAKE verbs is inherently causative, matching the Italian sentence in (40b), we suggest the representation in (44) for Creole/Pidgin TAKE ditransitives. (44) structurally reproduces the Haitian sentence provided in (31b).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Note that in Haitian also a verb like ‘show’ can trigger a TAKE ditransitive as illustrated in (i).

(i) Men **pran** liv la **montre** Jan.  
 1sg take book the show John



The representation above can be paraphrased as: ‘I cause ‘having/holding/taking a book’ and ‘Paul owns/possesses this result’. Crucially, we assume that the structure is the same as the one provided for benefactives in (25). The strict ‘dative’ interpretation is conveyed by the ‘holding’/ $\supseteq_{\text{take}}$  nature of the predicate.<sup>9</sup> Further note, that in Italian it is quite odd to use the benefactive adposition *per* when a HAVE ‘lexical’ predicate is embedded under a causative layer, as illustrated in (45b). In such case, the dative adposition *a* seems to be required.<sup>10</sup>

- (45) a. Ho fatto cucinare i ravioli **per** Gianni  
 ‘I had the ravioli cooked for Gianni’  
 b. Ho fatto avere i ravioli ?? **per/a** Gianni  
 ‘I gave the ravioli to Gianni’

‘I showed the book to John’  
*Haitian* (Muysken and Veenstra: 297)

Thus, one could object that ‘montre’ in (i) is a full verb, standardly projecting a VP. However, in many languages verbs meaning SHOW are employed as light serial verbs introducing goals and beneficiaries, as illustrated in (ii) for the verb *kyèré* ‘show’ in Twi. Thus, it seems that a representation like (43) can be adequate also when a SHOW item is involved.

- (ii) a. o kasa **kyèré** me  
 he speak show me  
 ‘He spoke to me’  
 b. wò tòw túo **kyèré** borohene  
 they fire gun show governor  
 ‘They fire guns for/in honor of the governor’  
*Twi* (Lord 1993: 31-32)

<sup>9</sup> This is coherent with Svenonius’s (2007) claim that the adposition *with*, to which we can ascribe following Franco and Manzini (2017) a  $\supseteq$  content, is the adpositional counterpart of a HAVE predicate.

<sup>10</sup> Note that this is coherent with what it is reported in the APiCS on line feature 86, namely that GIVE serial verbs are not able to lexicalize the benefactive meaning alone (cf. fn. 6).

The discussion above allows us to easily address TAKE serial verbs in their ‘standard’ use as instrumentals. Recently, Jerro (2017) proposes an analysis of the widespread syncretism between instrumental applicative morphology and causative morphology in Bantu assuming an operation that adds a novel layer (and the associated participant) into the causal chain denoted by the event. Specifically, Jerro’s idea is that this new causal layer can be interpreted as either initial in the overall causal structure – deriving a causative reading – or intermediary – deriving an instrumental reading.

Actually, instrumental relations are quite often encoded by TAKE lexical items in Creoles/Pidgins, as shown in (46). The TAKE verb is again consistently in first position. Again, this pattern seems to arise independently of the substrate and the lexifier.<sup>11</sup>

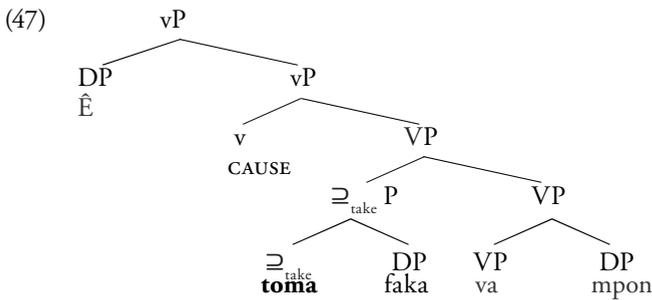
- (46) a. Apre    ou        **pran**    goni            (ou)    toufe    pwason  
 Then    2SG        take    jute.bag      2SG    choke    fish  
 ‘Then you choke the fish with the jute bag’  
*Seychelles Creole* (Bollée and Rosalie 1994: 222)
- b. I            **pwan**    vwati    touché        Lapwent.  
 3SG        take    car        arrive        La.Pointe  
 ‘S/he went to La Pointe by car’  
*Guadeloupean Creole* (Ludwig 1996: 248)
- c. eli        ja            **tomá**    faka            kotrá            kandri  
 3SG        PFV        take    knife        cut            meat  
 ‘She cut the meat with a knife’  
*Kristang* (Baxter 1988: 212)
- d. Ê            **toma**    faka    va            mpon  
 3SG        take    knife    slice        bread  
 ‘He slices the bread with a knife’  
*Sao Tomense* (Hagemeijer 2000)
- e. Kofi        **teki**    a        nefi            koti            a        brede  
*Kofi*        take    DET    knife        cut            DET    bread  
 ‘Kofi cut the bread with a knife’  
*Sranan* (Winford and Migge 2008: 710)

We propose of course that the instrument relation expressed by TAKE verbs can be reduced to a ( $\supseteq$ ) relation, like with ‘causative/possession’ TAKES. This yields a structure of the type in (47), where ( $\supseteq$ )<sub>take</sub> takes as its internal

<sup>11</sup> While it is commonly assumed that serial TAKE verbs in Haitian and the other Atlantic creoles have their origin in the serial verb constructions of West African languages (see Aboh 2009), there is very scarce evidence that those in the Indian Ocean Creoles come from the same source (see Bickerton 1984; Syea 2013). Bickerton (1984) argues that they are the result of language creation guided by an innate bioprogram. Syea (2013) assumes an influence of the lexifier, arguing that they are modelled on French imperative constructions and are the result of internal linguistic changes.

argument the DP instrument, while its external argument is the VP event. The only difference between causative and instrumental take verbs can be reduced to a matter of projection. Following Chomsky (2013), indeed, we may assume that the difference between causatives and instrumental TAKE serial verbs relies on labeling. Upon Merge with a VP/XP, a  $(\supseteq)_{\text{take}}$  may either label the resulting constituent, conveying a causative interpretation, essentially as indicated in (44) above. Alternatively, the resulting constituent may be labeled by V so that  $(\supseteq)_{\text{take}}$  is interpreted as an instrumental.

The structure that we provide in (47) can be actually interpreted as: ‘he causes “bread cutting” and this result includes/has/hold a knife’.



We take instruments to be inanimate objects of  $(\supseteq)_{\text{take}}$  included in a caused event. In other words, the general interpretation of (47) is that the object of  $(\supseteq)_{\text{take}}$  is a concomitant of the VP result state. However, the VP event is in turn embedded under a causation predicate; in this context, it is interpreted with the inanimate object playing the role of ‘instrument of’ the external argument (the initiator of the event) in vP.

Naess (2008: 99) assumes that “An instrument is [...] involved in two separate, though connected, instances of causation: the agent’s causing movement or change in the instrument, and the instrument triggering an effect on the patient [...] It is this intermediate role in a causal chain that gives the instrument the properties of being ‘a Patient and a Causer at the same time’”. Baker (1992: 28) has a similar conception of instruments since he assumes that “[...] semantically, the instrument is a kind of intermediate agent-theme. If I cut the bread with a knife, then I act on the knife, such that the knife changes location. The knife thereby acts on the bread such that the bread goes into a new state”. According to Marantz (1984: 246), in sentences like ‘Elmer unlocked the porcupine cage with a key’, “[...] a key is an intermediary agent in the act of unlocking the porcupine cage; Elmer does something to the key, the key does something to the cage, and the cage unlocks”. On the other hand, in sentences like ‘Elmer examined the inscription with the magnifying glass’, “the magnifying glass is an indispensable tool in Elmer’s examination of the inscription, but it is not an intermediary agent in the examination”.



- b. o **de** aivu enni nada anya ade *means*  
 he de theft and fraud get thing  
 'He has become rich with theft and fraud'
- c. o **de** né nnípa òro bépow *comitative*  
 He take his men ascend mountain  
 'He ascends a mountain with his men'  
*Twi* (Lord 1993: 67)

Crucially, as shown in (52) *de* can be also used as a 'stand-alone' predicate to introduce a 'have/hold/take' meaning (at least from a diachronic point of view, cf. the discussion in Lord 1993: 68ff). Namely, it is fully able to assign a theta role on its own and it is not a purely aspectual device devoid of lexical content.

- (52) a. ɔkɔm **de** me  
 hunger takes me  
 'I am hungry'
- b. ɔno ná ɔ **de** kúró yi  
 he FOC he possess town this  
 'He is the possessor of this town'  
*Twi* (Lord 1993: 68)

Moreover, there is no strong cross-linguistic evidence for an overt realization of the abstract Functional head  $F^\circ$  responsible for the licensing of the instrumental/comitative participant. We expect that this functional head should show up in the grammar of some languages (i.e. in the form of a case morpheme, adposition, etc.). We have found no evidence of such a morpheme in the grammar of Pidgin and Creole languages based on the analysis of the data included in the APiCS on line feature 85. Thus, we follow the classic view (cf. Aikhenvald 2006) that serial verbs introduce (peripheral) arguments and mark them as obliques.

Finally, we briefly address comitative TAKE serial verbs. The possibility to encode comitative relations with TAKE verbs is attested among Creoles/Pidgins, as shown in (53). More generally, this possibility is widely attested among natural languages as documented in (54).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> In serial-verb constructions, comitative is more often expressed by a verb whose basic meaning corresponds to English *follow* (cf. Chinese *gēn* 'to follow' as in *wǒ gēn tā shuohuà* 'I am conversing with him'; Bisang (1992: 182). Cf. Heine and Kuteva (2002) for more data. Consider also the sentence in (i) from Nigerian Pidgin English.

- (i) im go folo dèm dans  
 3sg fut follow 3pl dance  
 'S/he will dance with them'  
*Nigerian Pidgin English* (Faraclas 1996: 80)

- (53) a. mi e **teki** Meri go na foto  
 I ASP take Mary go to town  
 'I go to the town with Mary'  
*Sranan* (Jansen *et al.* 1978: 138)
- b. i **teik** mi go  
 he take me go  
 'He took me with him'  
*Cameroon Pidgin English* (Todd 1982: 153)
- (54) a. o **de** né nnípa fòro bépow (=51c)  
 He take his men ascend mountain  
 'He ascends a mountain with his men'  
*Twi* (Lord 1991: 137)
- b. u a pa-a u **lwo**  
 3SG PERF come-NF 3SG take  
 's/he came with him/her'  
*Supyire* (Carlson 1991: 204)

For the sake of the present work, we can maintain for sentences like the ones represented above the same structure as in (47) for instrumentals (cf. also Bruening 2012). In a sentence like (54a),  $(\supseteq)_{\text{take}}$  takes as its internal argument the comitative 'né nnípa' and as its external argument the VP event. Therefore, we predict again an interpretation under which the comitative participant is included in/part of the event 'ascending a mountain'.<sup>14</sup> Substantially, the TAKE comitatives illustrated above are interpreted as such because the argument introduced by the  $(\supseteq)$  predicate is human. An instrument interpretation results when the two arguments of  $P(\supseteq)$  are an inanimate DP and a caused VP. Quite straightforwardly in (53)-(54), the object of  $(\supseteq)_{\text{take}}$  is a sentient being, blocking an instrument reading (cf. Franco and Manzini 2017 for further arguments and a review of the recent literature on the topic).

<sup>14</sup> Note that a sentence like the one in (i) is ambiguous between an 'instrument human' interpretation as in (ii) and a co-agent/coordination interpretation as in (iii). For interpretations like those in (iii), Franco and Manzini (2017) propose that the comitative participant attaches as the level of v, namely at the causal component of the clause, yielding a 'subject-oriented' (co-agent) reading.

- (i) Gianni ha montato il giocattolo con il babbo  
 'Gianni assembled the toy with his father'
- (ii) > Gianni ha montato il giocattolo con l'aiuto del babbo 'instrument' human  
 'Gianni assembled the toy with the assistance of his father'
- (iii) > Gianni e il babbo hanno montato il giocattolo subject reading  
 'Gianni and his father assembled the toy'

#### 4. DOM serial verbs

In many different languages, TAKE serial verbs are recruited from the lexicon to encode Patients/Themes. Lord (1993) shows that the use of serial verbs for encoding patients is conditioned by their referential properties, namely it can be related to a Differential Object Marking (DOM) scenario. We give below examples from Twi and Mandarin Chinese.

Lord (1993: 111-112) provides the following data from Twi. For ditransitive verbs, there are two possible configurations for indefinite Patients, as illustrated in (55). In (55a) we have with a double object construction. In (55b) we have a TAKE serial verb introducing the theme in a ditransitive structure, just like in the sentences illustrated above in (31).

- (55) a. o                    **ma**                    abofra                    no                    akutu  
          he                    give                    child                    the                    orange  
          ‘He gives the child an orange’
- b. o                    **de**                    akutu                    **ma**                    abofra                    no  
          he                    take                    orange                    give                    child                    the  
          ‘He gives the child an orange’  
          *Twi* (Lord 1993: 111-112)

However, if the theme NP is definite, only the *de* construction is grammatical, as illustrated in (56).

- (56) a. \*ɔ                    ma                    me                    siká                    nó  
          he                    gave                    me                    money                    DEF
- b. ɔ                    de                    sika                    nó                    maa me  
          he                    take                    money                    DEF                    gave me  
          ‘He gave me the money’  
          *Twi* (Lord 1993: 112)

Mandarin Chinese further provides an example of the evolution of a DOM marker from the verb ‘take’ (cf. Lee and Thompson 1976, 1981). In sentences like (57), there are two word order possibilities: SVO, as in (57a), and SOV, as in (57b). The SOV order triggers object marking with the verbal item *bǎ*, meaning ‘take/hold’, which requires the object to be definite.

- (57) a. háizi                    tàng                    yīfu                    le  
          child                    iron                    clothes                    ASP  
          ‘The child ironed some clothes’
- b. háizi                    **bǎ**                    yīfu                    tang                    le  
          child                    bǎ                    clothes                    iron                    ASP  
          ‘The child ironed the clothes’  
          *Chinese* (Li and Thompson 1976: 458)

Chinese *bǎ* sentences have attracted a great deal of interest in the theoretical literature (cf. e.g. Sybesma 1999; Huang, Li and Li 2009; Kuo 2010, among many others). We leave their full treatment to future research.

Here we just want to point out a striking similarity with Creole/Pidgin languages. As documented in the APiCS on line feature 1 the vast majority of Creole/Pidgin languages (practically all of them) employ an unmarked SVO order in declarative sentences. Whenever a patient/theme argument is encoded through a serial verb meaning TAKE the order switches to SOV, as documented in (58)-(61). This is the same pattern reproduced in many Sinitic languages, where the *bǎ* morpheme is in complementary distribution with GIVE serial verbs and instrumental/comitative adpositions (cf. Chappell 2016 for a detailed survey).<sup>15</sup>

- (58) a. no Ngola ka zi kai no kota mionga  
 we Angolar HAB make house POSS.1PL side see  
 ‘We, the Angolars, used to build our houses on the sea side’  
*Angolar* (Maurer 2013: APiCS dataset)
- b. Kathô **tambu** n’kila rê pê kosi bega  
 dog take tail his put under belly  
 ‘The dog put his tail under his belly’  
*Angolar* (Maurer 2013: APiCS dataset)
- (59) a. kooknot bring ail  
 coconut bring.forth oil  
 ‘The coconut produces oil’  
*Creolese* (Rickford 1987: 131)
- b. ii **tek** ii teel put bitwiin ii fut  
 3sg take POSS.3SG tail put between POSS.3SG foot  
 ‘He put his tail between his legs’  
*Creolese* (Devonish and Thompson 2013: APiCS dataset)
- (60) a. Mene ka kopa pêxi na fya sempi  
 Mene HAB buy fish LOC market always  
 ‘Mene always buys fish at the market’

<sup>15</sup> We have found scarce evidence, among Creoles/Pidgins, of GIVE verbs recruited to introduce the object. Early Sranan provides a possible example of this pattern in (i), where the serial verb optionally encodes highly ranked (i.e. pronominal) arguments. In this case, interestingly, the SVO order is not switched to an SOV order. It would be possible to assume that GIVE in (i) is the counterpart of Romance *a* adpositions introducing recipients and DOMs.

(i) Mi sa dini (**gi**) ju  
 1sg fut serve give 2sg  
 ‘I will serve you’  
*Early Sranan* (Schumann 1783: 31) *apud* Bunting (2009).

- b. kasô      **pega**      ponta      urabo      pwê      ubasu      bwega  
 dog      take      point      tail      put      under      belly  
 '[...] the dog put its tail under his belly'  
*Principense* (Maurer 2009: 115ff)
- (61) a. À                      plant      nyam  
 1SG.SBJ                  plant      yam  
 'I planted yams'
- b. A                      **tek**      nyam      kot  
 1SG                      take      yam      cut  
 'I cut the yam'  
*Nigerian Pidgin* (Faraclas 1996: 71)

We have not been able to retrieve any account of the TAKE-encoding of internal arguments in Creoles/Pidgins, as documented in (58)-(61) above, as instances of a DOM marking triggered by the referential properties of the items involved in the serial verb construction. Thus, we leave a full discussion/treatment of this topic to future research, possibly involving first-hand data. Nevertheless, the Twi and Chinese data introduced above are quite suggestive. Hence, in what follows we try to sketch a tentative explanation of TAKE-DOMs.

We have seen above in section 3.2 that a TAKE item can easily include a holding, having, or possession meaning (cf. Lord 1993; Heine 1997).<sup>16</sup> Ziegeler (2000) precisely links the holding/possessing meaning of Chinese *bǎ* with its function as an expression of 'high transitivity', namely the rendering of the events encoded by *bǎ* sentence in terms of a causal {cause-result} chain. Ziegeler (2000: 822) precisely claims that: "[...] possessors are not normally encoded as agents, though the action which brought about the resulting state of possession, such as grabbing or taking, implies the prior actions of an agent". Namely *Bǎ* sentences presuppose a state sub-event in which the object argument is affected as the result of the 'possessor/agent's' prior agency.

Ziegeler (2000) shows that *bǎ* is introduced in constructions similar to have/get-causative in English introducing a perfect/passive participle, as in (62) (cf. Kim 2012; Legate 2014; Manzini 2017).

- (62) Yuehan                      **bǎ**                      the                      xiu-hao                      le  
 John                      bǎ                      car                      repair-RC                      ASP  
 'John has his car repaired'  
*Mandarin Chinese* (Ziegeler 2000: 884)

<sup>16</sup> According to Heine (1997) these meanings encoded by TAKE items can be taken in terms of a "pragmatic extension/implicature: taking an object implies a physical acquisition (possession) of it".



DOM. In particular possession ‘hold’, as illustrated with the Southern Italian dialect of Cìrò Marina (cf. 41). Here, *tenere* ‘have’ excludes the dative DOM adposition *a* (65b), while the (semantically heavier) *tenere* ‘hold’ displays DOM with definite human objects in (65a).

- (65) a.  $\text{tɛnənə}$             **a**             $\text{kkirə}$              $\text{ɣwajɲunə}$   
 they.hold            DOM            those            boys  
 ‘They are holding those boys’
- b. **tɛnənə**             $\text{kirə}$              $\text{ɣwajɲunə}$   
 they.have            those            boys  
 ‘Those boys are their sons’  
*Cìrò Marina* (Manzini and Savoia 2005)

Following Manzini *et al.* (to appear) it is natural to surmise that the pattern in (65) depends on the fact that the content of the verb *have* introducing a ( $\supseteq$ ) relation is the ‘reverse’ of the content of the dative preposition/Case, namely ( $\sqsubseteq$ ). Thus, we may suggest the representation in (66) for the sentence in (65b).

- (66) [ $_{VP} \supseteq \text{tɛnənə}$             [( $\ast P \sqsubseteq$ )  $\text{kirə } \text{ɣwajɲunə}$ ]]

It would appear therefore the grammar avoids duplication of the possession structure – or perhaps specifically the combination of the dative ( $\sqsubseteq$ ) inclusion relator and its ( $\supseteq$ ) reverse. Remember that according to Franco and Manzini (2017), ( $\supseteq$ ) is also the content of instrumental and comitative adposition, as externalized by the preposition *with* (Italian *con*). Most transparently, ‘the girl with a hat’ expresses the same relation between the two arguments as ‘the girl has a hat’ – which reverses the dative (or genitive) relation: (*give*) ‘a hat to the girl’ or ‘the hat of the girl’.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper addressed the syntax of (argument introducing/valency increasing) serial verbs in Creole languages, providing empirical arguments for the model of grammatical relations advanced in a series of recent works by Manzini and Savoia (2011a, 2011b), Manzini and Franco (2016), Franco and Manzini (2017a, 2017b), Manzini *et al.* (to appear a, b). These authors lay out an analysis of the syntax and interpretation of dative *to*, instrumental *with* and Differential Object Marking (DOM) relators, based on the assumption that these elements are endowed with an elementary interpretive content interacting with the internal organization of the predicate/event. Following this line of reasoning, we have to assume that these oblique relators, expressing a primitive elementary part-whole relation, may be instantiated also by serial light verbs in the grammar of natural languages. We have provided a formal approach to cross-categorical variation in argument marking, trying to outline a unified morpho-syntactic template, in which so-called ‘cases’ do not configure a spe-

cialized linguistic lexicon of functional features/categories – on the contrary they help us outline an underlying ontology of natural languages, of which they pick up some of the most elementary relations. Such primitive relations can be expressed by different lexical means: case, adpositions, light (serial) verbs.

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