

How to find serial verb constructions. Spontaneous speech in Central Pame.

By '*serial verbs*' we refer to constructions (SVCs) in which more than one verb is used to describe a single event in one and the same clause. The verbs participating in this construction do not stand in a relation of subordination, they should be able to occur independently as single verbs and they preferably inflect for identical categories. With this definition, we are close to Aikhenvald's (2006, 2018) proposal. We are well aware of further empirical and theoretical discussion on the topic but this is not crucial to the aim of our presentation.

As far as Mesoamerican languages are concerned, we are struck by the wide absence of such constructions in the literature: traditional grammars do not mention this structural type. The records of SVCs in Mesoamerican languages are rather poor. Zavala (2006) describes a related phenomenon of verb root combinations for Olutec, Beck (2011) and Watters (2017) address Totonacan languages. Even more specifically, there is no mention of serial verb constructions for languages of the Otopamean subgroup. Contrary to this apparent lack, serial verbs, exactly as characterized above, have been described for Central Pame (pbs) by Hurch (2018 and in press) as examples 1-3 below illustrate.

Central Pame for sure is an underdescribed language, but it must be mentioned that very solid descriptive linguistic work was done by members of the SIL surrounding Lorna Gibson and Dan Olson in the middle of the last century. The material has remained largely unpublished in the *Language and Culture Archives* of the Summer Institute. The linguistic endeavor of the SIL group working on Pame was quite serious but also following specific, strict and limited guidelines. Unfortunately, SVCs were not part of the list of analytical categories and we suspect this to be one major reason for why we do not find them in their work.

In some rare occasions, we encounter SVCs in published and unpublished SIL material. But the construction type as such lacks any mention (e.g. Olson 1951, Gibson 1966, Gibson/Olson/Olson 1963) as in ex. 4 below.

As it seems, and as we can deduce from our own field experience, SVCs are a phenomenon mostly showing up in and maybe even limited to registers of spontaneous speech in Pame. During quite a few months of elicitation work we never became aware of such forms and we had to wait for the moment of analyzing specific recordings of 'unrestricted' speech which, under our guidance, have been realized by a traditional native speaker with other members of the ethnic group. And it turned out that this construction type is used very frequently in this context.

Still we only have hypotheses about the different grammatical functions it may cover, as we suspect that it goes well beyond being a stylistic peculiarity and that it is of some basic grammatical importance in the expression of TAM-related semantic variables. We furthermore suspect that SVCs are not a phenomenon restricted to Central Pame, and by using appropriate recording techniques and research methods it will turn out that their existence must be assumed also for other languages of the Otopamean subgroup. The scarcity of instances of SVCs in certain types of material depends furthermore, as we suspect, also on the influence of the dominating Spanish language which lacks such constructions altogether. The frequency of occurrence presumably is inversely proportional to the knowledge and exposure of Spanish of the subjects.

SVCs are part of a given grammar and encode specific grammatical functions and meanings, and as such must be part of linguistic description and analysis. So, one of the points of our presentation is to give a clear example of the interdependence between type of field recordings and grammatical analysis.

Examples of SVCs in Central Pame

(1) Felipa Landaverde Durán, 25 de sept. 2013 / Hurch, In press, *Verbos Seriales*

kupú	pe	nu=?ui	ku=má	nu=pup	kauk	ne
ADV	ADV	1S.PT=hacer	1S.PT=ponerse	1S.PT=empezar	PP1S	ART.S
Así	como	hice	me puse	empecé	yo	el

ngul?áho	re	kibie.
NPOS.S.trabajo	ART.PL	NPOS.PL.tejido
trabajo,	los	tejidos.

ESP: Así es como empecé a tejer

ENG: And this is how I started sewing

(2) Gerónima Ramos de Jesús, 19 de feb. 2014 / Hurch, In press, *Verbos Seriales*

wa=?éhē?	wa=sei=k	nda	ntsu'=k	ngon=hĩũ?	Lencha
3S.PC=decir	3S.PC=contar=IO1	NUM	tía=1S	3S=nombre	NPROP
dice	me cuenta	una	mi tía	su nombre	Lencha

ESP: Decía una de mis tías de nombre Lencha **ENG:** One of my aunts named Lencha told me

(3) Fortunata Botello Medina, 26 de feb 2014 / Hurch, In press, *Verbos Seriales*

kuhui	tu=wauc'	lá=tahãõ	kun	diwiehent	kun	či mé?ei
ADV	1S.PC=exprimir	1S.PC=moler	ESP	NPOS.PL.ajo	ESP	DIM NPOS.S.chile
entonces	exprimo	muelo	con	ajos,	con	chilito

ESP: Entonces [...] los [los quelites] exprimo bien, muelo ajo, con un poquito de chilito

ENG: And then I squeeze them [the quelites], grind garlic with a little bit of chilli

(4) Gibson, Olson, Olson 1963, *Four Pame Texts*, 126 / glosses by the author

Va=tsé'=k	y	ra=màⁿ	ló=jua'al=t	[...]
3S.PC=llevar=o3	ESP	3S.PC=ponerse	3S.PC=traer=o3	
She-leads-them	and	repeatedly-goes	she-brings-them	[...]
She would lead them away [...]				

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