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Serial Verbs in Urdu

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the nature of serial verbs in Urdu. Serial verb constructions have two verbs that occur in a sequence, without any intervention between them and the construction indicates two actions simultaneously. The data for this study was collected from personal observation and books. The data was analyzed by applying various tests suggested by Bukhari (2009). The study confirms the existence of serial verbs in Urdu. The Urdu serial verbs have their own domain and are different from complex predicate constructions. They share the tense that is marked on the last verb. These verbs do not permit any marker of coordination or subordination in the structure and share the same subject and object. The serial verbs also share the negation marker when it precedes the first verb in the construction. In Urdu serial verb constructions, the final verb shows agreement and non-final verb appears in root form. This final verb agrees with the highest nominative argument in number and gender.

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Introduction

Double verb constructions have been the focus of recent research in most of the world languages. A double verb construction consists of two verbs in a series: a coverb and a finite verb (Baker, 2008). The finite verb is always a light verb since it inflects tense, aspect, mood and person agreement whereas the coverb occurs in stem form and does not exhibit inflections.

The double verb construction is said to be the complex predicate construction if it represents one action only. Akhtar (2000) is of the opinion that second verb is the light verb in a complex predicate as it provides aspectual information to the predicate. The first verb can either be a main verb or further complex construction. This complex construction can have N + V or Adj + V structure.

A serial verb construction, on the other hand, 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 are different from complex predicates as they represent two actions whereas complex predicates show only one action with two verbs.

The term serial verb construction became popular in the late 1980s with the research study in this field but this study focused only a few languages, such as Yoruba, Malayalam¹ and Gojri. Consider the following example:

- (1). bola se dran ta
 bola cooked meat sell
 'Bola cooked some meat and sold it.' (Yoruba, Lord 1974)

It has been a general perception that serial verb constructions are not frequently found in South Asian languages. However, Pandharipande (1990) refuted this notion and pointed out some serial verb structures in Marathi.² Jayaseelan (2004) has also reported this phenomenon in Malayalam and Tamil.³ He is of the view that aspectual meanings are expressed by serial verbs in these languages which are expressed by auxiliaries in English. He discusses following examples as serial verb constructions in Malayalam:

- (2). naan oru maanga poTTiccu tinnu-u
 i a mango pluck eat-PST
 'I plucked and ate a mango.' (Malayalam, Jayaseelan 2004: 67)

¹ Yoruba is the official language of Nigeria and Malayalam is official language of state of Kerala, India.

² Marathi belongs to the group of Indo-Aryan languages and is spoken by the native people of state of Maharashtra, India.

³ Tamil belongs to the group of four major Dravidan languages. It is first legally recognised classical language of India.

Serial verbs are mono-clausal and have just one tense, aspect and polarity value. Aikhenvald (2003) states that serial verb constructions are frequently used in the languages of South Asia and West Africa. According to him, serial verb constructions do not structure a single grammatical category but cover a wide variety of meanings and functions. These constructions may be adjacent or may have other constituents between them.

Collins (1997) defines serial verb construction as a succession of verbs and their complements with one subject and one tense value. These are not separated by any overt marker of coordination or subordination. Serial verb constructions are analyzed as controlled structures where the second verb incorporates into the first verb.

According to Johnson (2006), serial verb constructions occur cross-linguistically in a number of the world's languages and most frequently in African, Asian, and Creole languages of the Atlantic and Pacific. He describes the structure of serial verb constructions that they consist of two successive verbs. According to him, the serial verbs in English involve a motion verb in the first position. These serial verbs always have only one subject and not more than one direct object. This can be illustrated by the following example where 3(a) is a serial verb construction but after intervention of conjunction in 3(b), it no longer remains a serial verb construction though both the constructions convey the same meaning.

- (3). a. Go get the book.
b. Go and get the book.

However, the function of the serial verbs in most of the South Asian languages is different than those of Indo-European language (Kachru, 1990). These constructions express speaker's attitude, intentions and belief. Some of the serial verbs in these languages have specific meanings such as disgust and disapproval.

Recently, Bukhari (2009) has conducted a detailed study on serial verb constructions in Gojri. He has discussed the serial verbs of Gojri in minimalist framework and proved that these constructions do exist in Gojri too. He asserts that complex predicates and serial verb constructions are intermingled in many ways and thus raise different questions regarding the nature of these structures. He claims that no clear-cut distinction has yet been made between complex predicates and the serial verb construction. He attempts to draw a line of distinction between serial verbs and complex predicates in Gojri. He affirms, demonstrating the following constructions in (4) from Gojri, that when a VV construction indicates two actions, it is named as serial verb construction and when two verbs refer to one action they form complex predicate construction:

- | | | | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| (4) a. | <i>kaloo-ne</i> | <i>seb</i> | <i>chillii</i> | <i>khayo</i> |
| | kaloo-ERG | apple-NOM | peel.PF.F | eat.PF.M |
| | 'Kaloo peeled the apple and ate it.' | | | (SVC) |

- b. kaloo-*ne* *seb* *chill* *diyo*
 kaloo-ERG apple-NOM peel give.PF.M
 'Kaloo peeled the apple.' **(CP)**

He makes another distinction between these two constructions from syntactic point of view. The suffix *-ii* with V₁ in 4(a), to him, is serial verb inflection which is not there in 2(b) and the V₁ appears in infinitive form. This claim can be justified with the help of following example in (5) where CP construction of 4(b) turns into a SVC construction by simply adding *-ii* inflection with V₁.

- (5) kaloo-*ne* *seb* *chillii* *diyo*
 kaloo-ERG apple-NOM peel. PF.F give.PF.M
 'Kaloo gave the apple (to someone) after peeling it.' **(SVC)**

The construction in (5) clearly states that serial verb constructions have two verbs that occur in a sequence, without any intervention between them.

Serial Verbs in Urdu

Complex predicates constructions are abundantly used in Urdu (Butt, 1995) to express aspectual meanings. In complex predicates, two verbs refer to single action where the main verb represents the action while the light verb is marked with the inflections. Unlike complex predicates, Serial verbs in Urdu indicate two actions simultaneously. This difference can be marked in the following examples:

- (6). a. *us-ne:* *tʃo:r-ko: ma:r* *bəghʌ:ja*
 s/he-ERG thief-ACC beat make run.M-PF
 'S/he beat the thief and made him run away.' **(SVC)**
- b. *us-ne:* *məbaɪl* *tʃo:r* *dʒja:*
 s/he-ERG mobile.M-NOM break give.PF.M
 'He broke the mobile.' **(CP)**

The construction in 6(a) is an example of serial verb construction as it indicates the occurrence of two actions. On the other hand, 6(b) represents only one action and thus forms complex predicate construction.

The example given above in (6a) satisfies the basic standard set for these constructions. It indicates that serial verbs in Urdu share the tense that is marked on the last verb. These verbs do not permit any marker of coordination or subordination in the structure and share the same subject and object. In contrast, the first verb of a complex predicate describes the action and second verb is marked for tense and aspect. The distinction

between serial verbs and complex predicates can also be marked in the following examples:

(7). **Serial Verb Constructions**

- a. ʊs-ne: ɑ:m kɑ:t kʰɑ:ja:
 s/he-ERG mangoe.M-NOM cut eat.M.PF
 'S/he cut and ate the mangoe.'
- b. tʃo:r zɛvrɑ:t̪ le: bʰɑ:ga:
 thief- NOM jewellery take run.PF
 'The thief took the jewellery and ran away.'

(8). **Complex Predicates**

- a. ɑ:sɪf-ne: sɑ:p-kɔ: mɑ:r dɑ:lɑ:
 asif.ERG snake-ACC kill put.PF
 'Asif killed the snake.'
- b. səna:-ne: kʰɑ:nɑ: kʰɑ: lɪja:
 sana-ERG meal.M-NOM eat take.PF.M
 'Sana took her meal.'

The above examples show the difference between the serial verb constructions and complex predicates in Urdu. In (7a-b), the constructions are the serial verb constructions because two actions are described by two separate verbs. These constructions also indicates that the object of serial verbs does not occur between the verbs (as it does in African languages) rather it precedes the first verb in Urdu. The constructions in (8), the complex predicate constructions, indicate only one action because the final verb is a light verb and does not give lexical meaning rather it shows agreement features and aspectual meanings. However, a light verb can also function as a main verb depending on its position in the structure. Consider the following example:

- (9). sɑɪm-ne: xət̪ dʒe:b-mel: dɑ:l lɪja:
 saim-ERG letter pocket-LOC put take.PF
 'Saim put the letter in the pocket.'

It is interesting to note that the light verb in (8a) is the main verb in (9) which shows that the function of the verb is indicated by its position in the structure not by the type of the verb. It also verifies that that the second verb in Urdu Complex Predicates is always a light verb that contributes in the aspectual meanings. The main verb describes the action and occurs in root form. Same is true for Urdu serial verb constructions where the final verb shows agreement and non-final verb appears in root form. This final verb agrees with the highest nominative argument in number and gender. It is the meaning of the construction which draws a line of distinction between serial

verbs and complex predicates. Urdu serial verbs exhibit the following features:

Agreement

In Urdu, the last verb always agrees with the highest nominative in terms of tense, gender and person. This rule is also followed by the serial verb constructions. As discussed earlier, the non-final verb in serial verb constructions occurs in root form. Consider the following examples:

- (10). əsləm-ne: to:pi: ʋt̪ɑ:r pʰe:ki:
 əslam.SG.M-ERG cap.SG.F-NOM remove throw-SG.F-NOM
 'Aslam put off the cap and threw it away.'
- (11). sənɑ:-ne: dʒu:t̪ɑ: ʋt̪ɑ:r pʰe:kɑ:
 sanaa.SG.F-ERG shoe.SG.M-NOM remove throw-SG.M-NOM
 'Sana put off the shoe and threw it away.'
- (12). bət̪ʃi:-ne: dʒu:t̪e: ʋt̪ɑ:r pʰe:ke:
 girl.SG.F-ERG shoes.PL.M-NOM removethrow-PL.M-NOM
 'The girl put off the shoes and threw them away.'

The construction in (10) indicates that the second serial verb in the structure agrees with the highest nominative NP *topi* 'cap', which is singular in number and feminine in gender. The second verb does not agree with the subject 'aslam' because it is masculine while the verb is marked for the feminine gender in agreement with the highest nominative NP *topi*. Similarly, the second verb in (11) agrees with the highest nominative *juta* 'shoe, which displays masculine gender. This verb does not agree with the subject which is in feminine gender. (13) exhibits the agreement regarding number and shows that second verb is marked for plural number which agrees with the highest nominative NP *jute* 'shoes' and not with the subject *bachi* 'girl' because it is singular.

Case Marking

In Urdu serial verb constructions, ergative case is subject to the transitivity and form of the final verb. If the verb is transitive and exhibits past tense or perfective aspect, it assigns ergative case to the subject. If any of these two conditions is not fulfilled, then the subject bears nominative case. Consider the following examples:

- (13). a. ʋs-ne: lər̪ke:-ko: xət̪ de: bʰe:dʒɑ:
 s/he-ERG boy.3.SG.M-ACC letter give send-M.PF
 'S/he sent the boy giving him a letter.'

- b. a:ɖmi: bətʃe:-ko: səku:l tʃʰo:ɾ a:ja:
 man.M-NOM child.M.ACC school leave come-M.PF
 'The man came after dropping the child at school.'

In (13a), the final verb *bhej* 'send' is transitive and in perfective aspect, the subject thus requires the ergative case (i.e. *-ne*). On the other hand, the final verb *aya* 'come' in (13b) is intransitive so the subject exhibits the nominative case. The first verb (*tʃʰo:ɾ*-leave) does not affect the case marking in 13(b). It is transitive but has no effect on the case marking.

Scrambling

The components of serial verbs cannot be scrambled in Urdu. The verb group cannot be split up even if it consists of a main verb and auxiliary. This verb group can be scrambled but as a whole unit. This phenomenon is given in (14) below:

- (14). a. əɖəɳ-ne: kʰa:nɑ: [kʰa:ja: hæ]
 adan-ERG meal.M.NOM eat-PF.M.SG be.PRES.3.SG
 'Adan has taken his meal.'
- b. əɖəɳ-ne: [kʰa:ja: hæ] kʰa:nɑ:
 adan-ERG eat-PF.M.SG be.PRES.3.SG meal.M.NOM
 'Adan has taken his meal.'
- c. *əɖəɳ-ne: hæ kʰa:nɑ: kʰa:ja:
 adan-ERG be.PRES.3.SG meal.M.NOM eat-PF.M.SG
 'Adan has taken his meal.'
- d. *əɖəɳ-ne: kʰa:nɑ: hæ kʰa:ja:
 adan-ERG meal.M.NOM be.PRES.3.SG eat-PF.M.SG
 'Adan has taken his meal.'

It is evident from (14c-d) that Urdu does not allow the combination of verbs to be separated. (14b) is a grammatical sentence in Urdu as the constituents of the verb group are not split up. However, (14c-d) are ungrammatical because they deviate the basic principle of scrambling in Urdu. Like most of the Indo-Aryan languages, scrambling in Urdu also brings additional emphasis to the meaning. Thus, (14a) is an Urdu sentence with no particular emphasis on any component, while (14b) highlights that the action of taking meal has actually been performed. This semantic outcome of scrambling can also be cited in complex predicates, such as (15b) below. This rule is also applicable for the serial verb constructions in Urdu.

Complex predicates in Urdu also behave in the similar way. This means that the two verbs (the main and the light verb) cannot be separated from each other but they can move as one unit. Consider the following examples:

- (15). a. $səna:-ne:$ $xəṭ$ $[lɪk^h]$ $ḡjja:]$
 sana-ERG lettterr.M-NOM write give.M-PF
 'Sana has written a letter.'
- b. $səna:-ne:$ $[lɪk^h]$ $ḡjja:]$ $xəṭ$
 sana-ERG write give.M-PF lettterr.M-NOM
 'Sana has written a letter.'
- c. $*səna:-ne:$ $lɪk^h$ $xəṭ$ $ḡjja:$
 sana-ERG write lettterr.M-NOM give.M-PF
 'Sana has written a letter.'
- d. $*səna:-ne:$ $ḡjja:$ $xəṭ$ $lɪk^h$
 sana-ERG give.M-PF lettterr.M-NOM write
 'Sana has written a letter.'

The grammatical structures of (15a-b) indicate that the verb components in Urdu complex predicates can be scrambled as a unit. (15c-d) are ungrammatical complex predicate structures as they show the split of the verb unit. It means that complex predicates in Urdu also allow scrambling of verb group as a unit as the simple sentences do.

Bukhari (2009) provides evidence that this phenomenon is not applicable to the Gojri serial verb constructions. Unlike Gojri, the serial verb constructions in Urdu allow the scrambling of verb group as a whole unit. This means that the position of the serial verbs in serial verb constructions is not fixed. Consider the following examples:

- (16). a. $tʃo:r$ $zəvrɑ:t̪$ $[le:$ $b^hɑ:gɑ:]$
 thief- NOM jewellery take run.PF
 'The thief took the jewellery and ran away.'
- b. $tʃo:r$ $[le:$ $b^hɑ:gɑ:]$ $zəvrɑ:t̪$
 thief- NOM take run.PF jewellery
 'The thief took the jewellery and ran away.'
- c. $*tʃo:r$ $le:$ $zəvrɑ:t̪$ $b^hɑ:gɑ:]$
 thief- NOM take jewellery run.PF
 'The thief took the jewellery and ran away.'

The construction in (16b) shows that scrambling in Urdu serial verb constructions as a complete unit is allowed. The verbs can be scrambled only

as a single entity. Ungrammaticality of (16c) illustrates that the verbs which form a serial verb construction cannot be split up.

Tense/Aspect

All the verbs in a serial verb construction bear their own tense, aspect and agreement features (Durie, 1997). It is important to note that, like serial verb constructions, complex predicates also share the single tense marker and aspect and the first verb appears in stem form. The structure of serial verb constructions and complex predicates is always the same. The difference is marked on semantic grounds. Sometimes, complex predicate constructions also take infinitive form as the first verb whereas this is not possible in serial verb constructions. Consider the following examples:

(17). a. **Complex Predicate:**

ʊse:	xəṭ	lɪkʰnɑ:	pəɾɑ:
s/he-OBL	letter.M-NOM	write.INF	fall.M.PF

'S/he had to write a letter.'

b. **Serial Verb Construction:**

əri:f-ne:	se:b	kɑ:t	kʰɑ:ja:
areesh-ERG	apple.M-NOM	cut	eat.M.PF

'Areesh cut the apple and ate it.'

(17a) shows that *xat*-letter is the highest nominative argument and the second verb agrees with it as they are marked for same number and gender. The first verb is in infinitive form and thus the construction is complex predicate (Butt, 1995). (17b) is a serial verb construction as it exhibits two actions: the cutting of apple and eating it. Both the actions are performed by the same subject-*Areesh*. Similarly, the verbs also share the same object and final verb is marked with tense/aspect and agreement features.

Coordination

Coordination is another test that helps to mark the difference between complex predicates and serial verb constructions in Urdu. The two verbs in a serial verb construction and complex predicate cannot be coordinated by inserting any conjunction. However, in complex predicate construction, there is only one way to describe two actions i.e. insertion of two complex predicates and replacement of second verb with the suffix-*kar*. This is illustrated in the following examples:

(18). a. **Serial verb construction:**

*dɑ:kjɑ:	xəṭ	d̪e:	o:r	ɑ:ja:
postman.M-NOM	letter.M-NOM	give and		come.M.PF

'The postman delivered the letter and came back.'

b. Complex Predicate:

ɑ:sɪf-ne: kəʈɑ:b pʰɑ:[-kəʀ pʰe:ʈ:k dʒi:
 asif-ERGbook tear-PF throw give-PF
 'Asif tore the book and threw it away.'

(18a) shows that serial verbs in Urdu do not allow any coordination marker. Any attempt to separate the series of verbs produces ungrammatical sentence. On the other hand, (18b) shows that a conjunction can be used to describe two actions performed by the complex predicate constructions. However, if the conjunction is used between two main verbs in order to represent two actions, it will result into ungrammatical construction. Consider the following example:

(19). *səna:-ne: se:b [kɑ:t o:r kʰɑ:] lɪjɑ:
 sana-ERG apple cut and eat take-PF
 'Sana cut an apple and ate it.'

The only way to represent two actions by complex predicates is to insert the conjunction between two complex predicates with separate light verbs. The construction in (19) also shows that neither complex predicates nor serial

Confirmation Tests

Serial verb constructions are not easily distinguished from other compound verb constructions in many languages. There are certain tests to confirm the existence of the serial verbs in a language (Bukhari, 2009). These tests are also applicable in Urdu and the following results clearly reveal that serial verb constructions do occur in Urdu.

The Shared Tense Marker Test

Bukhari (2009) observes that only one tense marker is allowed in Gojri serial verb constructions. Same is the case with Urdu serial verb constructions which can be illustrated in the following examples:

- (20). a. ʊs-ne: dʒəʀəxt̪ kɑ:t gira:jɑ:
 s/he-ERG tree.M-NOM cut fell.M-PF
 'S/he felled the tree by cutting it.'
- b. *ʊs-ne: dʒəʀəxt̪ kɑ:tɑ: gira:jɑ:
 s/he-ERG tree.M-NOM cut.M-PF fell.M-PF
 'S/he felled the tree by cutting it.'
- c. ʊs-ne: dʒəʀəxt̪ kɑ:tɑ: o:r gira:jɑ:
 s/he-ERG tree.M-NOM cut.M-PF and fell.M-PF
 'S/he cut the tree and felled.'

The single tense marker in (20a) is shared by both the verbs which is evidence of occurrence of serial verbs in Urdu. The non-final verb occurs in stem form and final verb is inflected for the tense and agreement features. (20b) violates the essential principle of serial verb construction i.e. single tense marker and thus is ungrammatical. On the other hand, (20c) is grammatical because serial verb construction has been split into two clauses and the verbs in both the clauses exhibit their own tense markers.

The Shared Adverb Test

The claim that Urdu has serial verb constructions is also justified by the shared adverb test. When an adverb precedes the serial verbs, it affects both the verbs:

- (21). a. *bəʈʃe:-ne:* *kəpʃe:* *forən* *ʊʈɑ:r* *pʰeɪ:ke:*
 child-ERG dress-NOM at once remove throw.M-PF
 'The child immediately put off the dress and threw away.'
- b. **bəʈʃe:-ne:* *kəpʃe:* *ʊʈɑ:r* *forən* *pʰeɪ:ke:*
 child-ERG dress-NOM remove at once throw.M-PF
 'The child immediately put off the dress and threw away.'

Urdu serial verbs share the object which is essential requirement for serial verb constructions. The ungrammaticality of (21b) shows that serial verbs do not allow an adverb to intervene between them. However, if the final verb is to be focused then adverb can be inserted with an additional suffix *kar* with the non-final verb. Consider the following example:

- (22). *bəʈʃe:-ne:* *kəpʃe:* *ʊʈɑ:r-kər* *forən* *pʰeɪ:ke:*
 child-ERG dress.M-NOM remove-PF at once throw.M-PF
 'The child removed the dress and at once threw away.'

The construction in (22) is no more a serial verb construction because it violates the basic condition for serial verbs i.e. shared tense marker. The suffix added with the non-final verb shows the completeness of the action. It is interesting to note that though both the verbs have their own tense marker but the agreement features are possessed by the final verb which agrees with the highest nominative *kapRe* 'dress'. Consider the following example:

- (23). *bəʈʃe:-ne:* *to:pi:* *ʊʈɑ:r-kər* *forən* *pʰeɪ:ki:*
 child-ERG cap.F-NOM remove-PF at once throw.F-PF
 'The child removed the cap and at once threw away.'

This shows that the suffix '*kar*' is not affected by the gender or number. It is only a tense marker which represents the perfective aspect.

It is important to note that complex predicates in Urdu also do not allow any adverb to intervene in between. The adverb always precedes the

complex predicate or even the subject or object without affecting the meanings. Consider the following examples:

- (24). a. ʊs-ne: geɪd̪ əʈʃa:nək pʰe:ək d̪i:
s/he-ERG ball.F-NOM suddenly throw give.F-PF
‘S/he suddenly threw the ball away.’
- b. * ʊs-ne: geɪd̪ pʰe:ək əʈʃa:nək d̪i:
s/he-ERG ball.F-NOM throw suddenly give.F-PF
‘S/he suddenly threw the ball away.’
- c. ʊs-ne: əʈʃa:nək geɪd̪ pʰe:ək d̪i:
s/he-ERG suddenly ball.F-NOM throw give.F-PF
‘S/he suddenly threw the ball away.’
- d. bətʃa: əʈʃa:nək pʰɪsəl pəɾa:
child.M-NOM suddenly slip fall.M-PF
‘The child slipped instantly.’
- e. əʈʃa:nək bətʃa: pʰɪsəl pəɾa:
suddenly child.M-PF slip fall.M-PF
‘The child slipped instantly.’

The ungrammaticality of (24b) proves that complex predicates, like serial verbs, do not allow any adverb to intervene in between. The constructions in (24c) and (24e) indicate that adverb can also precede the subject or object in Urdu.

The Shared Negation Marker Test

Serial verbs also share the negation marker when the negation marker precedes the serial verbs in Urdu. The insertion of negation marker between the serial verbs affects the second verb only. For instance,

- (25). a. bətʃe:-ne: se:b nəhi: kɑ:t kʰɑ:jɑ:
child-ERG apple-NOM NEG cut eat.M-PF
‘The child did not cut and eat the apple.’
- b. bətʃe:-ne: se:b kɑ:t nəhi: kʰɑ:jɑ:
child-ERG apple-NOM cut NEG eat.M-PF
‘The child cut the apple but did not eat it.’

The Empty Category Test

The empty category test also justifies that serial verbs in Urdu share the object and do not allow any pronoun to occur in the empty position. Consider the following example:

- (26). a. *kəvɑ:* *d̪əɾəxt̪-pər* *dʒɑ:* *bæthɑ:*
 crow.M-NOM tree-LOC go sit.PF.M
 'The crow flew away and sat on a tree.'
- b. **kəvɑ:* *d̪əɾəxt̪-pər* *dʒɑ:* *ʊs-pər* *bæthɑ:*
 crow.M-NOM tree-LOC go that-LOC sit.PF.M
 'The crow flew away and sat on a tree.'

The construction in (26b) is ungrammatical because Urdu serial verbs do not permit any pronoun to occupy the empty position between the two verbs. This shows that both the verbs share the same object/adverb which precedes the verbs.

Conclusion

Urdu has a limited range of serial verb constructions. Serial verb constructions in Urdu are not morphologically different from the complex predicates of the language. Urdu serial verb constructions are different from complex predicates because serial verbs denote two or more actions depending on the verbs used in the constructions, whereas complex predicates represent only one action. Serial verbs are also different from complex predicates in terms of coordination. Serial verbs do not allow any coordination in any way. However, coordination can be added in two complex predicates of the same sentence to represent two different actions. The suffix *-kar* added with the first verb of a double verb construction in Urdu also forms serial verbs as it represents the completeness of the action. It distinguishes the first verb from the second and thus represents two actions. There are three types of serial verb construction in Urdu namely sequential serial verb constructions, resultative serial verb constructions and instrumental serial verb constructions. However, instrumental serial verb constructions cannot be accounted as true serial verb constructions because these constructions involve two objects, which violates the basic requirement of a serial verb construction.

This study confirmed the individuality of the serial verb constructions in Urdu. This leads us to the conclusion that the long-established concept that serial verb constructions do not exist in South Asian languages is wrong. Contrary to the claim that serial verbs are sub type of complex predicates in South Asian languages, it is confirmed that these constructions do exist in Urdu as they display distinctive features.

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