
Serial Verbs in Tetun Dili

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1. Introduction

Tetun Dili (TD) is an Austronesian language spoken as a first language by approximately 50,000–60,000 speakers in an enclave setting in Dili, the capital of East Timor.¹ East Timor is mostly Austronesian-speaking, although four non-Austronesian languages are also spoken there.

Tetun Dili is best characterized as tending towards isolating, with very little truly productive morphology. The language is neither head nor dependent marking, and grammatical relations are expressed by constituent order. Constituent order in TD is essentially AVO and SV, although OAV is possible in some constructions. Verbs may be transitive, intransitive, or ditransitive, as in *fó* ‘give’, with the recipient expressed either as a prepositional or noun phrase. There is no passive. Adjectives today form an independent lexical class from nouns and verbs. This is a recent innovation, due largely to long-term contact with Portuguese.

Although temporarily interrupted (1975–99), a rapid process of Lusification of Tetun Dili is currently under way again. The effects of Portuguese are seen mainly on lexicon and phonology, but are also increasingly apparent in other areas of the grammar, including serialization. The influence of Malay (until the 1850s) and Indonesian (1975–99) is much less evident. A larger sprachbund also exists in the area of East Timor, involving both Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages (see Hull 1998). However, much more information is required, especially with regard to the extent to which TD has been influenced by the surrounding Austronesian language, Mambae.

Serial verb constructions (SVCs) are a feature of Tetun Dili. However, the language is unusual in that it shows strong evidence of being subject to an ongoing process of substantial *deserialization*. A series of independent processes,

¹ Tetun Dili is the preferred lingua franca in East Timor today. It is also known in English as Dili Tetum. For detailed grammatical descriptions of Tetun Dili, see Williams-van Klinken, Hajek, and Nordlinger (2002), and Hull and Eccles (2001). The major work by Catharina Williams-van Klinken on SVCs in Tetun Fehan and Tetun Dili is acknowledged here (see van Klinken 1999, 2000; Williams-van Klinken et al. 2001, 2002). My thanks also go to Sasha Aikhenvald for her generous feedback, Alex Tilman for his patience, and especially Nick Nicholas for debate and discussion when preparing this chapter. All errors remain mine.

such as grammaticalization, lexicalization, and contact with Portuguese (a clearly non-serializing language) have conspired to significantly reduce the frequency and range of SVC types in TD when compared to more conservative varieties of Tetun, such as Tetun Fehan spoken in West Timor (cf. van Klinken 1999).

2. Overview of serial verb constructions in Tetun Dili

Serial verbs in TD show all the prototypical characteristics ascribed to them (see Chapter 1). Verbs in an SVC are part of the same clause, and share the same intonation contour and grammatical features such as negation and tense, in addition to having equal status within the clause. All serial verbs in TD also share the subject of the second verb with the first verb, as either subject, object, or recipient, and are always asymmetrical. They may be directly contiguous, whereby no other element can intervene, but they can also appear in non-contiguous structures.

Serial verbs in TD need to be distinguished from other non-serial verbal constructions. TD allows, for instance, coordination of verb phrases with \emptyset , as in (1):

- (1) ...para [hamonu institusoens demokratikus], [hafraku sistema]
 ..so.that fell institutions democratic CAUS-weak system
 '...in order to knock down democratic institutions, weaken the system'

It also permits complementation with \emptyset . However, sentential complements, unlike serial verbs, have obligatory subjects, as well as independent mood and negation:

- (2) ó la [hatene [ó sei hakerek ba sé]]
 2sg NEG know 2sg still write to who
 'You don't know who you will write to'

Reduced complementation, as distinct from sentential complementation, involves the verb phrase only, with no overt subject. Such complements also occur with an optional TAM marker *atu* 'irrealis', serving as a purposive, which further distinguishes them from serial verbs, as in (3). They can also be independently negated.

- (3) ha'u [promete (atu) (la) kuda fini iha to'os]]
 1sg promise (IRR) (NEG) plant seed LOC field
 'I promised to (not) plant the seeds in the field'

However, the distinction between serial verbs and other verb-like constructions is not always clear-cut. There is some evidence of blurring, largely due to the language's generally isolating nature (hence an absence of morphological clues), as well as secondary grammaticalization of some erstwhile SVCs. Sometimes, this process is complete, but in other cases it is still clearly under way, as discussed below in §5.

2.1. SERIAL VERB AS 'ONE EVENT'

A serial verb typically describes a single event, and there is a close connection between its subparts. This aspect can be made evident with any paraphrase of an SVC: the result is a semantic difference, as seen in the following examples:

- (4) nia [bá joga] iha reinu ida-ne'e (SVC)
 3sg go play LOC kingdom one-here
 'He went and played in this kingdom'

(factive: only used when an actual act of going precedes the act of playing).

- (5) nia [bá atu [joga iha reinu ida-ne'e]] (non-SVC)
 3sg go IRR play in kingdom one-here
 'He went with the intention of playing in this kingdom'

(non-factive: the act of playing may not happen).

The unity of true SVCs is further confirmed by the fact that in interrogation the entire serial verb is typically repeated in response, for example:

- (6) nia [fó han] bebé? — [fó han]
 3sg give eat baby give eat
 'Does she feed the baby?—Yes, she does'

2.2. SHARING ARGUMENTS IN SERIAL VERBS

All serial verbs share the subject of the second verb with the first verb—as its subject, object, or (rarely) recipient:

- (7) sira [bá selu] nia
 3pl go pay 3sg
 'They went and paid him' (S₁ = S₂)

- (8) [lori hahaan bá]
 take food go
 'Take the food over there!' (DO₁ = S₂)

- (9) nia mai hosi Darwin para [fó aluga] karreta
 3sg come from Darwin in.order.to give rent car
 ba ema malae seluk
 to person foreign other
 'He came from Darwin to rent cars to other foreigners' (IO₁ = S₂)

Object sharing is not obligatory in serialization; in instrumental SVCs, the two verbs have distinct objects.

- (10) abó [lori tudik ko'a] paun
 grandparent take knife cut bread
 O₁ O₂
 'Grandfather used the knife to cut the bread'

Switch-function serialization does occur, but is restricted to causatives and cause-effect verbs, and to certain motion-direction serial verbs. For ditransitives (causatives based on *fó* 'give'), the recipient is the shared argument, with the exception of *fó sai* 'give exit = reveal *something* to someone', where the patient is the shared argument:

- (11) *labele [fó sai] lia ne'e!*
 NEG.can give exit voice this
 'You can't reveal this matter!'

There is no cumulative subject serialization, nor is event-argument serialization possible. Whilst *halo* 'do, make' can introduce predicates of manner, post-verbal reduplication in such constructions (in Tetun restricted to adjectives) indicates that these are adverbial phrases, rather than SVCs:

- (12) *nia hatene [dansa [halo di-diak]]*
 3sg know dance do REDUP-good
 'He knows how to dance well'

2.3. ICONICITY OF COMPONENT ORDER AND MULTIPART SERIALIZATION

Most serial verbs are ordered iconically (although this is not necessarily the case for motion-direction). In the case of instrumental constructions, iconicity is a useful test of serialization: optional non-iconic ordering is indicative of grammaticalization, whereby the minor verb has become a preposition (see below at §3.3).

The only multipart serial verbs in TD that have been identified consist of iterations of nested asymmetrical serial verb constructions involving motion-direction, for example *[[monu tún] mai]* (fall descend come) 'fall down (this way)'.

3. Classes of serial verbs

It is claimed here that SVCs in Tetun Dili are always asymmetrical in nature. A small number of apparently symmetrical serial verbs can be found, for example *hanoim hetan* (lit. think find) 'remember'. But their status is problematic: the range of observed combinations is small, they do not seem to be productive, are often subject to ellipsis, for example *hanoim* 'think/remember', and are not always understood or accepted by all speakers. Moreover, they do not seem to be particularly characteristic of more conservative Tetun Fehan with its more extensive serialization (van Klinken 1999). It seems better, therefore, to treat symmetrical examples as fully lexicalized in Tetun Dili.

A number of asymmetrical SVC subtypes can be identified, and these are discussed separately below.

3.1. DIRECTION AND ORIENTATION: MOTION/ACTION

The motion verb, restricted to *bá* 'go', *mai* 'come', precedes the open class verb. Semantically the motion verb is a precondition for the action verb to take place.

- (13) ha'u-nia inan-aman hakarak katak ha'u [*mai* *estuda*] iha Dili
 1sg-POSS mother-father want that 1sg come study LOC Dili
 'My parents want me to come and study in Dili'

The transitivity of the serial verb is not determined in this instance by the first verb, as seen in (14) where *bá* does not subcategorize for humans, unlike *vizita*. Therefore the minor verb is not syntactically the head of this construction.

- (14) prima Maria [*bá* *vizita*] amá iha ospítal
 cousin(f.) Mary go visit mum LOC hospital
 'Cousin Mary went to visit mum in the hospital'

Motion-action serial verbs are non-contiguous structures, seen by the fact that (post-verbal) adverbs can be optionally placed after either the first or the second verb, without any semantic effect:

- (15) sira [*bá* (fali) *hariis*] (fali) iha tasi
 3pl go (again) bathe (again) LOC sea
 'They went to swim in the sea (again)'

3.2. DIRECTION AND ORIENTATION: MOTION/DIRECTION

This construction involves a motion verb, followed by a minor verb giving the direction of motion. There are three motion-direction subclasses:

A. DIRECTION VERBS, following immediately after the major verb (which must be intransitive): *tún* 'descend', *sae* 'ascend', *tama* 'enter', *sai* 'exit'.

- (16) labarik oan [*monu* *tún*] hosi kadeira i baku nia ulun
 child offspring fall descend from chair and hit 3sg head
 'The small child fell from the chair and hit his head'

B. SPEAKER-ORIENTED DEICTIC DIRECTION VERBS (*bá*, *mai*) follow the major, motion verb. They always indicate direction, and are distinct from the historically related and now fully grammaticalized prepositions *ba* 'to (away from speaker)', *mai* 'to (towards speaker)' which have obligatory arguments.

- (17) nia [*sae* fali *bá*]
 3sg ascend again go
 'He went up again'
- (18) [*tuda* bola *mai*]
 Throw ball come
 'Throw the ball over here'

The major verb in this subtype may be intransitive or transitive, and allows for switch-subject serialization, as in (18).

Subtypes (A) and (B) can combine: [[*monu tún*] *mai*] fall descend come = ‘fall down (towards speaker)’, in which case the direction verb from subtype (A) comes immediately after the major verb. Furthermore, *bá* and *mai* follow any adverbs and source location NPs in the phrase, but precede destinations. So the overall structure for subtypes (A) and (B) is:

Motion-verb (*major*) (Direction verb) [*minor: A*] (PP:source)(ADV) (*bá, mai*) [*minor: B*] (PP:destination)

C. FURTHER VERBS SPECIFYING POSTURE OR MOTION: *haleu* ‘surround’, *liu* ‘pass’, *tuir* ‘follow’, *tesik*, *hakat* ‘cross’, *borus* ‘pierce = through’, *hasoru* ‘meet, oppose’.

These are not prepositions, since they show fully verbal behaviour, such as manner modification, and optional object deletion:

- (19) *ami* [lao tesik] (*ponti*)
 1pl.exc walk cross (bridge)
 ‘We walked across (the bridge)’

3.3. INCREASING VALENCY AND SPECIFYING ARGUMENTS: INSTRUMENTALS

The verbs *lori* ‘carry, bring, take’ and *hodi* ‘carry, bring, take’ can be used with other verbs with instrumental effect, as in (20–21). When this occurs, they show signs of (partial) grammaticalization into prepositions, also reported as being under way in Tetun Fehan (Van Klinken 2000). Before other verbs, they function as verbs, although there is some evidence of non-verb-like behaviour, such as a tendency to avoid object fronting and omission.

- (20) *abó* [lori tudik ko’a] *paun*
 grandparent take knife cut bread
 ‘Grandfather used the knife to cut the bread’

- (21) *ema* *Kupang* *sira* [hodi *rupiah* selu] *ami*,
 person *Kupang* 3pl take *rupiah* pay 1pl.exc
maibé *ami* *hakarak* *dolar* *deit*
 but 1pl.exc want dollar only
 ‘People from Kupang pay us with rupiah, but we only want dollars’

These verbs can also appear after the main verb, in which case they are clearly prepositional: they follow post-verbal TAM markers, always appear in the same position as an oblique PP, and cannot omit or front objects.

- (22) *abó* [ko’a *paun* lori] *tudik*
 grandparent cut bread take knife
 ‘Grandfather cut the bread with the knife’

3.4. INCREASING VALENCY AND SPECIFYING ARGUMENTS: CAUSATIVES

There are five causativizing strategies in TD, three of which are serializing:

A. *ha*-prefix:

- (23) ó presiza bee atu ha-mate ahi
 2sg need water IRR CAUS- die fire
 'You need water to put out the fire'

B. *halo* 'make' followed immediately by the major verb in a SVC:

- (24) projetu ne'e tenta [halo buras] hare Japaun iha Timór
 project this try do grow rice Japan LOC Timor
 'This project is trying to grow Japanese rice in Timor'

For some verbs, the *halo* and *ha*- constructions appear in free variation. For others, only *ha*- or only *halo* is allowed (Van Klinken et al. 2002: 96–7).

C. *halo* NP Pred.

- (25) ai-moruk ne'e [halo ha'u [la haree to'o loron tolu]]
 Tree-bitter this do 1sg NEG see until day three
 'This medicine made me unable to see for three days'

This is a periphrastic rather than serial construction, distinct from type (B). Unlike (B), the major predicate can have an almost full range of arguments (except for the subject which is still shared with *halo* as its object), and modifiers. It can also be independently negated, as in (25).

For many speakers, there is a tendency towards a iconic distinction between prefixed causatives (*ha-mate* 'kill'), contiguous serialization (*halo mate* 'make die'), and non-serial causation (*halo* NP *mate* 'make NP die') and the degree of agent control and direct causation:

- *ha*- high actor control, no patient control, and direct causation;
- *halo* V: reduced actor control, more indirect causation;
- *halo* NP Pred: low actor control, increased patient control, indirect causation.

For other speakers, especially those with knowledge of Portuguese, it seems there is often no semantic difference between the two *halo* constructions. They appear in these cases to be syntactic variants, as they are in Portuguese (see §6).

D. The second SVC causative is *fó* 'give' immediately followed by the major verb:

- (26) enfermeira [fó han] tiha ona ema moras
 nurse give eat already person sick
 'The nurse has already fed the patient'

E. There is also the construction *fó* NP V, as a non-contiguous SVC:

- (27) ha'u foin [[fó sasoru-been ba bebé] hemu]
 1sg just give rice.soup-water to baby drink
 'I have just given the rice-broth to the baby to drink'

Both types of *fó*-constructions are serial, but with clear iconic effect:

- *fó* V: it is strongly implied that the causation is successful. The major verb does not always have an explicit non-recipient object (e.g. *fó han* give eat='feed' cannot take such an object, but *fó aluga* give hire='hire out' can). If the major verb lacks an object, the recipient becomes the object of the entire construction. Therefore, the recipient is shifted to direct object from indirect object; this indicates greater agent control.
- *fó* NP V: V is transitive, its object is always explicit, and the recipient is always expressed with a PP. The major verb specifies the purpose of the event, with a strong implication of successful causation. This is consistent with lower agent control:
 - – contiguous *fó hemu* 'give drink': providing fluid to someone unable to drink for themselves;
 - – non-contiguous *fó bee ba nia hemu* 'give water to 3sg drink': the recipients themselves drink the water that has been offered (Williams-Van Klinken et al. 2001:99).

The contiguous *fó* V type might be better treated as lexicalized since it appears to be quite restricted in number, and not productive, in contrast to the alternative *fó* NP V type in which there are no apparent restrictions on the second verb.

3.5. CAUSE-EFFECT SERIAL VERBS

The effect verb in the cause-effect SVC is a very limited class, restricted to directions, *mate* 'die', and, after transitive transfer verbs, *hela* 'stay' (not to be confused with its cognate aspect marker, discussed below at §5). A similar restriction does not appear evident in more conservative Tetun Fehan.²

- (28) ó haree karik karakól [sama mate] tiha
 2sg see perhaps snail step.on die PERV
 'If you see a snail, step on it and kill it'
- (29) nia atu [husik hela] ha'u iha ne'e
 1sg IRR leave stay 1sg LOC here
 'He wanted to drop me off here'

Cause-effect is always switch-function, with iconic ordering. The effect verb can either follow the cause verb immediately (as in 28, 29), or it can follow the cause verb object, as in (30):

² van Klinken (1999) is uncertain as to whether this SVC involves a closed class (asymmetrical) or open (symmetrical) class in Tetun Fehan.

- (30) soldadu Indonézia [[buti nia feen] mate] tiha
 soldier Indonesia squeeze 3sg wife die PERV
 'The Indonesian soldier strangled his wife to death'

4. Formal properties of serial verbs

4.1. CONTIGUITY OF COMPONENTS

The (non-)contiguity of SVCs in Tetun Dili is summarized in Table 1.

In the case of cause–effect serial verbs, structures may be either contiguous or non-contiguous, without semantic effect. For other subtypes, (non-)contiguity is fixed. In the case of causatives, non-contiguity indicates a non-serial construction, with the added semantic effect, for many speakers, of low agent control.

Some serial verb combinations are potentially ambiguous in terms of subtype, and only (non-)contiguity can resolve the issue. The combination *bá sae*, for instance, could be either motion–action (*bá* V, non-contiguous), 'go and ascend', or motion–direction (*V sae*, contiguous), 'go upwards'. Patterns of adverbial modification provide a useful test in determining specific serial verb subtype where ambiguity arises. Adverbs always appear after contiguous serial verbs, but can appear after either verb in non-contiguous SVCs. Because an adverb can be inserted between verbs in (31), it has to be treated as an example of a non-contiguous motion–action serial verb.

- (31) nia [bá (fali) sae] iha foho nia leten
 3sg go (again) ascend LOC mountain POSS top
 'He went and ascended to the top of the mountain (again)'

TABLE 1. SVC types in TD

SVC-type	Contiguity	Verb-type	Degree of control
Motion–action	NC		
Motion–direction (a)	C	(direction verbs)	
Motion–direction (b)	NC	(Speaker-oriented <i>bá</i> , <i>mai</i>)	
Motion–direction (c)	C	(other posture/motion verbs)	
Instrumental	NC		
Causative	C	(<i>halo</i> V)	High/moderate agent control
Causative (periphrastic)	NC (non-serial)	(<i>halo</i> NP Pred)	Low agent control
Causative	C	(<i>fó</i> V)	High agent control
Causative	NC	(<i>fó</i> NP V)	Low agent control
Cause–effect	C, NC		

4.2. TRANSITIVITY OF SERIAL VERBS

The transitivity of serial verbs in Tetun Dili is not always determined by the first verb in the construction: motion–action constructions start with the intransitive, minor motion verb, but have the transitivity of the major, action verb. Nor is the transitivity always that of the major verb: contiguous *fó* causatives turn both intransitive and transitive major verbs into transitive (and not necessarily ditransitive) verbs, through recipient demotion. So we find:

- (a) intransitive X *hariis* ‘bathe’ > transitive Z *fó hariis* X ‘bathe someone’;
- (b) transitive X *hemu* Y ‘drink’ > transitive Z *fó hemu* X ‘give drink to’ (Y is suppressed);

but:

- (c) transitive X *hatene* Y ‘know’ > ditransitive Z *fó hatene* Y *ba* X ‘inform of something to someone’.

4.3. WORDHOOD OF COMPONENTS

In all cases, the verbs in serial constructions can appear as independent words. Native speakers tend to write contiguous serial verbs as two words, although in current recommended orthography, more conventionalized serial verbs are joined by a hyphen, *fó-hatene* (give know) ‘inform’ (Hull and Eccles 2001). The two verbs in a serial construction always constitute two distinct phonological words: they each retain their own stress, although they form one intonation unit. This applies even to contiguous *fó* causatives, which are the most compound-like SVCs in TD.

5. Grammaticalized SVCs and other non-serial constructions in Tetun Dili

Brief reference has already been made to processes of grammaticalization that have led or are currently leading to the development of prepositions from verbs in what were previously fully SVCs, for example post-verbal instrumental *hodi*, and directional *ba*, *mai* ‘to’. Evidence of ongoing grammaticalization can be found in other areas of the grammar. There is considerable variation, and the boundary between verbs and grammaticalized particles is often difficult to establish. In other cases, some of which are also discussed below, grammatical functions and constructions are not serializing in origin.

5.1. ASPECT

The aspect marker *hela* ‘CONT’ is homonymous with its cognate verb *hela* ‘stay’. It is difficult to differentiate *hela*, when in V2 position, as an aspect marker from a serialized verb, given the absence of morphological clues in TD. But there is syntactic evidence to show that where *hela* has aspectual value, it is in the process

of being grammaticalized as a TAM particle, although the evidence can be conflicting. (Most TAM markers in TD are etymologically adverbial or particles.)

Hela appears not to be a full verb when in V_2 position in an SVC, since it cannot be directly modified by a preverbal TAM marker, such as *sei* 'still', as in (32):

- (32) *mestri rona sira ko'a-lia (*sei) hela*
 teacher hear 3pl cut-word (*still) CONT
 'The teacher heard them (*still) talking'

Pre-verbal markers such as *sei* are instead placed before the entire VP that *hela* modifies, as would be expected in an SVC:

- (33) *nia sei toba hela*
 3sg still lie-down CONT
 'She is still sleeping (at the moment)'

But unlike other SVCs, there is no evidence that $V + hela$ can be followed by any other post-verbal TAM marker. If *hela* were part of a serial verb, this would constitute an arbitrary restriction of TAM. The restriction is consistent, however, with *hela* being a post-verbal TAM marker that cannot co-occur with other post-verbal TAM particles.³

5.2. MODALITY

TD modals do not appear to be serializing in behaviour and are better treated as full auxiliaries. They are, in fact, often non-verbal in origin (*keta!* 'Don't!' < adverb), and also show non-serial behaviour by allowing independent negation:

- (34) *sira la [bele han]*
 3pl NEG can eat
 'They cannot eat'
- (35) *sira [bele la han]*
 3pl can NEG eat
 'It is possible for them to not eat'

5.3. COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

Liu 'more, most' (< *liu* 'pass, surpass') is used to form comparatives and superlatives. Although these constructions were clearly verbal in origin (as it is still the case in Tetun Fehan), today no restrictions apply as to which lexical classes can be modified by the comparative *liu*: it follows adjectives most frequently, but also adverbs, nouns, and verbs.

³ Another verb, *hotu* 'finish', is also used aspectually (COMPLETIVE). It shows unusual properties in that when in V_2 position, it can, unlike *hela*, be pre- and post-modified by other TAM markers (Williams-Van Klinken et al. 2002: 76). It is much more verbal and far less grammaticalized than *hela*, but we seem to be observing a shift in this case straight from a biclausal construction to TAM marker, without an intermediate stage as serial verb.

- (36) sira hatene dansa liu duké kanta
 3pl know dance pass than sing
 'They know how to dance better than they know how to sing'

Insertion of an adverb between the verb and *liu* also confirms non-serial status of the construction since it has the effect of shifting scope of the comparative from the action to its manner. In true SVCs, as shown previously in (15), a manner adverb placed between two verbs maintains equal scope over both elements.

5.4. COMPLEMENTIZERS

There are two sentential complementizers in TD, *katak* and *dehan*. The former is a verb ('say') in Tetun Fehan, but has been fully grammaticalized in TD as a complementizer. However, *dehan* is used as both a verb ('say') and as an optional quotative:

- (37) makikit boot ida [mai husu] ba nia, dehan] 'Eh,
 eagle big one come ask to 3sg say hey,
 hanu'usá?
 how?
 'A big eagle came and asked him: "What's up?"'

When used as an optional quotative, there is no evidence that post-verbal TAM markers can follow *dehan*. This is an idiosyncratic restriction for a verb, which suggests that *dehan* is no longer verb-like in this construction.

5.5. COMITATIVE

The comitative construction in TD is formed with the fully grammaticalized preposition *ho*. Its cognate in Tetun Fehan is *hó* 'accompany, be with', which is used in an SVC with the same function. It maintains verbal properties such as subject-marking, but incipient grammaticalization is already evident. Unlike other verbs, it does not allow object fronting or omission. As a result, van Klinken (1999) refers to it as a prepositional verb in that variety.

5.6. A SUMMARY OF GRAMMATICALIZATION IN SERIAL VERBS

As we have seen above, and summarize in Table 2, many elements of TD grammar clearly have their origins in SVCs. Some elements are more grammaticalized than others along an evident continuum. The comitative *ho* shows no verb-like properties at all, but instrumentals *lori* and *hodi* are verb-like when placed before another verb, and fully prepositional after it. It is worth noting that the causative *ha-* prefix is not grammaticalized from the causative verb *halo*, as is often assumed, but is a reflex of the Austronesian causative prefix **pa-*.

TABLE 2. Serial verb constructions and extent of grammaticalization in TD

		SVC		Grammaticalized
1a.	Direction/orientation	yes	<i>go, come, surround, pass, follow, cross, meet, oppose</i>	<i>ba</i> 'to' < <i>bá</i> 'go' <i>mai</i> 'from' < <i>mai</i> 'come'
1b.	Aspect	no		'stay'
2.	Modal	never		auxiliaries
3.	Valency increasing (instrumental, causative)	yes (no)	<i>take, give, make</i>	('take') only if post-verbal
4.	Valency increasing (comitative)	no		'accompany'
5.	Comparative	no		'pass'
6.	Valency decreasing	no		
7.	Serialization as complementation	no		'say'

6. Areal diffusion, language contact, and deserialization in Tetun Dili

Serialization is a property of East Timor and much of eastern Indonesia surrounding it, including the islands immediately north and east of East Timor. It also shows evidence of diffusion through contact in this same area, seen in its marked appearance in the local contact variety of Malay (van Engelenhoven 2002). SVCs also remain highly productive in Tetun Fehan, Tetun Dili's closest but more conservative relative. It is also true that Tetun Fehan already shows the first signs of the serial verb grammaticalization evident in Tetun Dili. The instrumental *hodi* 'take' has, for instance, shifted from verb to prepositional verb (with subject marking and obligatory object) in post-verbal position in Tetun Fehan, but is already fully prepositional in Tetun Dili in the same position. The same applies to the Tetun Fehan prepositional verb *hó* 'accompany', used as a comitative.

Yet within its areal context, TD stands out as undergoing *significant deserialization* over time. This phenomenon is especially evident when one compares the extent of serialization in Tetun Fehan and Tetun Dili. In the latter, the range, type, and frequency of serial verb constructions are much more restricted. Where a particular SVC occurs in both, membership of the closed verb class of that SVC is always smaller in Tetun Dili. Part of the difference is explained by the more advanced stage of grammaticalization of SVCs in Tetun Dili, as discussed above and in the previous section, as well as by the lexicalization of symmetrical combinations and some constructions with *fó* 'give'. But in our view, the most significant factor in deserialization is the effect of long-term contact with Portuguese.

Portuguese influence on SVCs is manifested in several ways, some more obvious than others. The first is the massive influx of single word Portuguese loans, which allow for the easy replacement of serial verbs, for example *informa* ~ *fô hatene* (give know) 'inform', *umenta* ~ *haboot* ~ *halo boot* (make big) 'enlarge/increase'. The second is the rise of an independent Adjective class, also triggered by the influx of loans. In Tetun Fehan adjectives are still verbs and appear frequently in serialized constructions. But in Tetun Dili, adjectives no longer align with verbs, given the strongly noun-like nature of Portuguese adjectives. As a result, causatives with adjectives are no longer SVCs. Similarly, the verb *liu* 'go further' forms the comparative with adjectival verbs in a serial verb type construction in Tetun Fehan (van Klinken 1999: 232), but in Tetun Dili, in addition to being a verb 'pass', it is also a grammaticalized comparative particle.

There is evidence to suggest some semantico syntactic interference as well. Causative and cause-effect constructions in Tetun Dili may be contiguous and mono-clausal, for example *halo buras X* (make grow X). But as noted, there is an additional periphrastic causative construction, for example *halo toba X* (make lie.down X) and *halo X toba* (make X lie.down), while the cause-effect SVC is optionally (non-)contiguous. Whilst for some TD speakers the word-order difference in causatives is interpreted as iconically reflecting the relative degrees of control and direct causation, for others (apparently bilinguals) they are simply variants. This greater observed flexibility appears to reflect the fuller range of word order in Portuguese. It allows the object of the first verb in the case of causatives to appear before or after the second verb, without a difference in semantics:

- (38) ele [faz-me fumar]
 3sg make.3sg.PRES-1sgO smoke
 'He makes me smoke'
- (39) ele [faz fumar] a minha mãe
 3sg make.3sg.PRES smoke the 1sg.POSS mother
 'He makes my mother smoke'

In the case of cause-effect, Portuguese prefers a biclausal construction, where the object of the cause verb is placed between the two verbs:

- (40) [estrangulei o homem até ele engasgou]
 strangle.1sg.PAST the man until 3sg cough.3sg.PAST
 'I strangled the man until he coughed'

The deserializing impact of Portuguese influence is also obvious when one considers the text frequency of SVCs in Tetun Dili. There is a close inverse relationship between the number of SVCs and the number of Portuguese loans (and the extent of other kinds of linguistic influence) in any given text and register. Traditional stories have much higher frequencies of SVCs than do

other text genres. They are also marked by a much lower proportion of Portuguese loans. On the other hand, technical and high register show a marked reduction in the use of SVCs. In newspaper reporting, which shows significant Portuguese influence, they are almost completely absent. A text analysis, for instance, of a lengthy newspaper discussion of East Timor's draft constitution shows extreme levels of borrowing from Portuguese, involving both lexical items and grammatical structures.⁴ But we find only one (lexicalized) example of a serial verb (*fó sai* give exit 'announce/reveal') in the same text.

Given the return to official status of Portuguese in East Timor, including its progressive reintroduction into the school system as the preferred medium of instruction, Portuguese influence on Tetun Dili and the other languages of East Timor will only increase. Coupled with grammaticalization, all of these signs suggest that the process of deserialization in Tetun Dili will only accelerate in the coming years.

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⁴ *Voz de/Suara Timor Lorosa'e*, 'Draft konstituisaun TL ditadura parlementar, inkopetensia Presidensial ho Inefisiensi Konstitusional', 21.2.2002. The title of the article is evidence enough of the degree of Portuguese influence.



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