

Syntactic Analysis of Serial Verb Constructions in Arabic Language

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses Serial Verb Constructions found in both written and spoken Arabic language. The study is conducted using Syntax Analysis, employing a qualitative descriptive research design. Data collection is done through document analysis and fieldwork by collaborating techniques of reading, listening, and note-taking. Data sources are obtained in two forms, written data sourced from the Quran, and field data acquired from conversations with students at Darularafah Islamic boarding school. The data analysis stage employs the method proposed by Sudaryanto (2015:15), which emphasizes language analysis tools derived from the language itself, delineated in basic techniques only. This research aims to classify the Serial Verb Constructions in the syntactic formation of Arabic language based on the relationship between the first verb (V1) and the second verb (V2). The findings show that there are patterns in forming serial verbs in Arabic, such as V1 + V2 Pattern, V1 + the letter *أ* /an/ + V2 Pattern, V1 + the letter /lan/ + the letter *أ* /an/ + V2 Pattern, *إن* /in/ + V1 + V2 Pattern, *لم* /lam/ + V1 + V2 Pattern, and *كَيْفَمَا* /kayfama/ + V1 + V2 Pattern.

KEYWORDS

serial verbs; Arabic language; syntax

INTRODUCTION

Word is defined as the smallest unit in a language that can function as one of the syntactic elements such as subject, predicate, object, or adverbial in a sentence. In the Indonesian language, words are classified into four main categories: verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Besides these, there is another group called function words, which consist of smaller subgroups such as conjunctions, prepositions, and particles (Department of Education and Culture, 1988: 30). According to Keraf (1991: 44), a word is the smallest units obtained after dividing a sentence into its parts and contains an idea.

Aligned with the classification of word classes mentioned above, this research focuses on discussing the class of verbs. In the Arabic language, verbs are termed as /fi'il/. Semantically, verbs (or verbs) are words that express an action (act or movement), process, or state. For instance, the verb "throw" carries the notion of movement caused by someone's action directed towards someone or something else and is of an active nature. Similarly, the verb "thrown" indicates a movement caused by an action towards something else. From a syntactic perspective, verbs fill the predicate function of a clause or sentence (Sugono et al., 1994: 3). Here are examples of predicates in the Arabic language:

The examples of Arabic predicates would be included:

(1) يقرأ احمد الكتاب (1)

'ahmadu yaqra-u alqur'ana'

Ahmad is reading a book.

In example (1), it can be observed that the verb /yaqra-u/ functions as the predicate of the word /ahmadu/, which serves as the subject in sentence (1).

If verbs, which are part of word classes, can occupy a function in the structure of a sentence, phrases can do the same. A phrase is a grammatical unit consisting of two or more words that do not extend beyond functional boundaries (Ramlan in Yohanes, 1991: 112). A verbal phrase has several constructions. One of them is a construction consisting of a first verb (abbreviated as V1) followed by a second verb (abbreviated as V2). This construction is termed by some Indonesian linguists as serial verbs (VB), as found in the theses of Young Ho (1995) and Kim Geung Seob (1995). According to some Western linguists, the V1 followed by V2 construction is termed as serial verbs (VS), as found in the writings of Huddleston (1984), Foley and Olson (1985), Crowley (1987), Sebba (1987). In the literature review chapter, the author only discusses Huddleston as a comparison of VB in English with Arabic (bA).

Several experts have different opinions regarding the term "serial verbs"; some refer to two predicates following the subject as a complex predicate. Durie (1997) says that among those who use the term "serial verbs." Kroger (2004: 222) states that serial verb construction is a construction where a single clause contains two or more verbs that are not auxiliary verbs. The term "serial verbs" in 1963 was used by Stewart. VS is merely a sequence of verbs (surface string of verbs) or units resembling verbs (V-like) and verbal phrases (FV) that appear within a single clause (Sebba, 1987: 2). According to Bradshaw in Crowley (1987), verb serialization is a term used to describe a grammatical construction in a sentence containing two or more basic verb stems. Here are some basic characteristics of verb serialization:

1. All verbs in VB constructions refer to subparts of an entire event.
2. There is no intonation or grammatical marker between the two verbs forming the VB construction.
3. There is a clear boundary on the noun associated with each verb.
4. There is no contrast in meaning between the ordered verbs.

Additionally, VS has two construction types. First, V1 and V2 refer to the same subject. Second, V1 and V2 refer to different subjects, but the subject of V2 becomes the object of V1 (Foley and Olson in Crowley, 1987: 38).

Research on serial verbs in Nusantara languages has been extensively conducted, involving their constructions and semantic types. It is necessary to establish that the Arabic language plays a key role in the lives of Muslims, while English has become a vital global language (Sharah & Hasibuan, 2023: 1). Therefore, this research is crucial to describe the construction of serial verbs in the Arabic language as an additional effort in the knowledge domain of foreign languages, specifically Arabic.

The Arabic language also recognizes the Serial Verb (VS) construction endorsed by several linguists, such as Haywood and Nahmad (1965). Among these linguists, only Holes expounds VS semantically, while the other three focus on the syntactic aspect by mentioning verbs that can form the VS construction. In this research, the discussion focuses on verbs used as markers of modality, aspect, and tense when occupying V1 in the VS construction. Modality expresses the speaker's attitude or mood concerning actions, events, situations, or characteristics. Aspect describes an action, event, situation, or characteristic that is ongoing (durative), completed (perfective), incomplete (imperfective), or starting (inchoative). Tense indicates the time when an event occurs, whether in the past, present, or future (Samsuri, 1975: 249-259). Here are examples of VS in the Arabic language:

عسى ربكم ان يرحمكم (6)

'*asa rabbukum an yarhamakum* "Hopefully, your Lord will bestow His mercy upon you. *Ya kadu du al-barqu yakhtafu absa-rahum*"The lightning almost snatches their sight."

In example

يكاد البرق يخطف ابصارهم (7)

/'*asa:/* functions as V1 and /*yarhamakum/* as V2, forming the VS construction. The verb /'asa:/ is a modality marker meaning 'hopefully.' In example /yaka:du/ serves as V1 and /yakhtafu/ as V2, forming the VS construction. The verb /yaka-du/ is an aspect marker meaning 'almost.'

The pattern of forming VS in the Arabic language is interesting to be studied because these verbs serve as parameters to determine a situation. However, the research is focused only on the formation patterns. It is stated that if there are two VSs occupying one function in a sentence, the meaning of a situation will undoubtedly become clearer.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method employed is qualitative descriptive research. The data collection method involves document and field studies. The gathered data primarily consists of written data sourced from the Quran, while additional oral data is collected from everyday conversations among students at Darularafah Islamic boarding school.

Data collection techniques are strategies applied to implement the method (Sudaryanto, 2015: 9). The data collection techniques used include observation, reading, and note-taking. Observation is used to listen to conversational outcomes. Reading is carried out to find data in documents and fields, while note-taking is conducted to record the findings and serial verbs derived from the Quran and the field. The data analysis stage utilizes the agih method by Sudaryanto (2015: 15), a language analysis tool derived from the language itself, outlined in basic techniques, complemented by the use of syntactic analysis. The research aims to identify patterns and the formation of Arabic serial verb constructions. This involves an understanding of how verbs are combined in sentences and how the sequence of these verbs can influence sentence meaning.

In addition to examining grammatical and structural aspects, the research also analyzes the changes in meaning resulting from the use of serial verbs. This includes understanding how serial verbs can be used to convey nuances of cause and effect, event sequence, or aspects and tenses in the Arabic language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis results indicate that the patterns of forming serial verb constructions (KVS) in the Arabic language encompass:

Formation Pattern of KVS Based on the Relationship V1 and V2

Data 1 Surah At-Taha, verse 121:

فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتَ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفْنَ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَّرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ

'*fa akala minha fabadat lahuma sau-a:tuhuma wa tafiqa yaghsifa:ni 'alaihima: min waraqi al-jannati wa 'asa a:damu rabbahu: fa āawa:/'*

"Then they both ate of the tree, and so their nakedness appeared to them, and they began to fasten together over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred."

In Data 1, the KVS has a direct relationship without barriers. V1 represents a perfective verb, which according to Comrie (1976: 2) regarding tense and aspect in language,

provides an explanation about tense and aspect in the Arabic language. The opposition of perfective and imperfective aspects in Arabic is indicated by two verb forms: the past and the present. V1 is followed by an imperfect V2 in the indicative mood. In this example, verbs have a direct relationship and occupy a single function in the sentence as a predicate. In this example, nominals in KVS are presented solely within the verbs.

Data 2 Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 205:

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ
'*Wa izaawallaa sa'aa fil ardi liyufsidea fiha wa yuhlikal harsa wannasl; wallaahu laayuhibbul fasaad*'

"And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption."

In Data 2, KVS is also found to have a direct relationship without barriers. In Data 2, V1 (perfective) is followed by V2 (perfective) in the indicative mood, but there is the word "idza" at the beginning of the sentence, meaning "And when," so V1 and V2 have a strong connection in meaning in the serial verb, producing a clearer intention and purpose.

Data 3 Surah Al-Muddathir, verse 6:

وَلَا تَمُنُّنَّ تَسْتَكْبِرُ
'*Wa laa tamnun tastaksir*'

"And do not give to receive more."

KVS occurring in Data 3 is formed with V1 as a prohibitive serial verb and V2 as an imperfective serial verb. In Arabic sentence patterns, there is a distinct difference compared to verb forms in other foreign languages. Any verb followed by the letter "la" which means 'do not' must have the subsequent verb in the bare form.

Data 4 Surah Al-Muddathir, verse 46:

وَكُنَّا نَكُذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ
'*Wa kunnaa nukazzibu bi yawmid Diin*'

"And we used to deny the Day of Recompense."

KVS occurring in Data 4 is specifically focused on the aspect of tense in the Arabic language because the KVS is followed by the verb "kana." Holes (1995: 188-194) states that "kana" is a verb functioning as "to be" and plays a significant role in determining tense alongside other elements like speech context. V1 is a perfective verb followed by an imperfective verb. Syntactically, "kana" in this context has a pronoun meaning 'we,' hence, the sentence has an KVS that conveys meaning.

Data 5 Surah Al-Waqi'ah:

وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا ءَأِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ
'*Wa kaanuu yaquuluuna a'izaa mitnaa wa kunnaa turaabanw wa izaaman'ainnaa lamab'uusuun*'

"And they used to say, 'When we have died and become dust and bones, are we indeed to be resurrected?'"

KVS occurring in the sentence above also indicates that V1 is "kana" followed by V2 as an imperfective verb. Pronouns are directed at the third person plural, having a perfective aspect concerning tense.

Pattern of KVS Formation V1 + particle أَنْ + V2

Data 1 from Surah Al-Kahf, verse 77:

فَأَنطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَا أَهْلُهَا فَأَبَوْا أَن يُصَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنقَضَ فَأَقَامَهُ
فَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا

'Fanṭalaqā, hattā izā atayā ahla qaryatinistaṭ'amā ahlahā fa abau ay yuḍayyifūhumā fa wajadā fihā jidāray yurīdu ay yangqadda fa aqāmah, qāla lau syi'ta lattakhaṣṭa 'alaihi ajrā'

"So they set out, until when they came to the people of a town, they asked its people for food, but they refused to offer them hospitality. Then they found in it a wall about to collapse, so Khidhr restored it. [Moses] said, 'If you wished, you could have taken for it a payment.'"

In this example, the Serial Verb Construction (KVS) has an indirect relationship because there is a connecting particle (huruf) "أن /an/" between the two verbs. Between V1 "يريد /yuri-du/" (imperfect) and V2 "ينقض /yanqadda/" (subjunctive), there is the particle "أن /an/" connecting them, making V2 in the subjunctive mood for the third person singular masculine, indicated by the vowel "/.a/".

Data 2:

ظَنُّ أَنْ يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ

'Tazunnu ay yuf'ala bihā fāqirah

"They thought that a severe calamity was to fall on them."

In this example, the KVS also has an indirect relationship because there is a connecting particle "أن /an/" between the verbs. Between V1 "تظن /tazunnu" (you think) and V2 "يفعل /yuf'ala" (will be done), there is the particle "أن /an/" connecting them, making V2 in the subjunctive mood for the third person singular masculine, indicated by the vowel "/.a/". However, the verb "يفعل /yuf'ala/" is a passive verb, termed in Arabic as "fi'il majhul."

Data 3 Surah Al-Hashr, verse 2:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مَانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ

'Huwallaṣṭi akhrajallaṣṭina kafaru min ahlil-kitābi min diyārihim li'awwalil-ḥasyr, mā ḡanantum ay yakhruju wa ḡannū annahum māni'atuhum ḥuṣunuhum minallāhi fa atāhumullāhu min ḥaiṣu lam yaḥtasibu wa qaḡaḡa fi quluḡbihimur-ru'ba yukhribuḡa buyuṭahum bi'aidiḡhim wa aidil-mu'miniḡa fa'tabiriḡa yā ulil-abṣār

"He it is who expelled the ones who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think they would leave, and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allah. But [the decree of] Allah came upon them from where they had not expected, and He cast terror into their hearts. They destroyed their houses by their [own] hands and the hands of the believers. So take warning, O people of vision."

The KVS occurring in Data 3 shows that V1 "ظننتم /ḡanantum" (you thought) is a perfective verb with its pronoun directed at 'antum' meaning 'you' (masculine plural). However, V2 "يخرجوا /yakhruju" (they will leave) is a verb in the imperfective aspect, directed at 'they'. Yet, in this KVS, the sentence is followed by the particle "أن /an/" meaning 'that,' hence establishing a clear semantic relationship within the KVS.

Data 4 from Surah Al-Mujadila, verse 13:

ءَأَسْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُتَدَمَّرُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقْتُمْ فَأِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

'A asyfaqtum an tuḡaddimuḡa baina yadai najwākum ṣadaḡāt, fa iz lam taf'alu wa tāballāhu 'alaikum fa aḡimuṣ-ṣalāta wa ātuz-zakāta wa aṭi'ullāha wa rasuḡlah, wallāhu khabīrum bimā ta'maluḡn'

"Are you afraid of spending [for the cause of Allah] before your consultation [takes place]? So when you do not and Allah has forgiven you, then [at least] establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is Aware of what you do."

The KVS in Data 4 follows a similar pattern to that in Data 3. V1 "أشفقتم" /'A asyfaqtum" (you fear) is a perfective verb followed by V2 "تقدموا" /tuqaddimu" (you spend), which is in the imperfective aspect. However, in this KVS, both pronouns are directed at the same target 'antum' (you), and the sentence is followed by the particle "أن" /an/", thus establishing a very clear semantic relationship within the KVS.

Pattern of Formation V1 + particle أن + Particle لَنْ + V2

Data 1 Surah Al-Anbiyaa, verse 87:

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ
إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

'Wa Zan Nuuni iz zahaba mughaadiban fazaanna al lan naqdira 'alaihi fanaanna al lan naqdira 'alaihi fanaadaa fiz zulumaati al laaa ilaaha illaaa Anta Subhaanaka innii kuntu minaz zaalimiin'

"And when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darknesses, 'There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.'"

In this example, the Serial Verb Construction (KVS) has an indirect relationship because it includes the particles أن /an/ and لَنْ /lan/ as connectors between the two verbs. Between V1 "ظن" /zonna" (thought) and V2 "نقدر" /naqdira" (we would decree), there are the particles أن /an/ and لَنْ /lan/ connecting them, making V2 in the subjunctive mood for the first person plural masculine, indicated by the vowel /..a/.

Pattern of Formation Particle إن + V1 + V2

Data 1 found in Arabic conversation:

إِنْ تَأْكُلْ تَسْبَعُ

'in ta'kul taysba'

"If you eat, you will be full."

The KVS in this example is followed by the particle "إن" /in/" functioning to indicate a conditional clause "if." V1 "تأكل" /ta'kul" is an imperfect verb followed by V2 "تسبع" /tasba'" also in the imperfect aspect, thus confirming the pattern of the verb being in the final (majzum) form.

Data 2 in Arabic conversation:

إِنْ تَجْلِسْ أَجْلِسْ

'in tajlis ajlis'

"If you sit, I will sit."

Similar to the previous example, the KVS is followed by the particle "إن" /in/" indicating a conditional clause "if." V1 "تجلس" /tajlis" is an imperfect verb followed by V2 "أجلس" /ajlis" also in the imperfect aspect, confirming the pattern of the verb being in the final (majzum) form.

Pattern of Formation Particle لام + V1 + V2

Data 1 Al-quran verse:

مَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

'kamaaa arsalnaa fiikum Rasuulam minkum yatluu 'alaikum aayaatina wa yuzakkiikum wa yu'alli mukumul kitaaba wal hikmata wa yu'allimukum maa lam takuunuu ta'lamuun

"We have not sent among you a messenger from yourselves who recites to you Our verses and purifies you and teaches you the Book and wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know."

The KVS pattern in this example, with V1 "كانوا /kaana" being an imperfect verb and followed by V2 "يقدرُوا /yuqaddiruu" as an imperfect verb, confirms the pattern of KVS in this context.

Pattern of Formation Particle كَيْفَمَا + V1 + V2

Example sentence

كَيْفَمَا تَجْلِسُ أَجْلِسُ

'kaifama tajlis ajlis'

"However you sit, I will sit."

The KVS pattern in this sentence is followed by the auxiliary particle "كَيْفَمَا /kaifama/", where V1 "تجلس /tajlis" denotes an imperfect verb followed by V2 "أجلس /ajlis" also in the imperfect aspect. The verb in this sentence has a first-person singular masculine pronoun as its target.

CONCLUSION

Based on the syntactic analysis of VS in the Arabic language, the author draws the following conclusions:

1. KVS is a construction consisting of the first verb (V1) followed by the second verb (V2), holding a single functional position in a sentence.
2. In terms of the agent, KVS can be categorized into two types. Firstly, when V1 and V2 refer to the same subject, and secondly, when the subject of V2 is the object of V1.
3. The KVS pattern in the Arabic language can be formed by various patterns of relationships between the two verbs, including: a. Formation Pattern of V1 + V2. b. Formation Pattern of V1 + the letter أن /an/ + V2. c. Formation Pattern of V1 + the letters /lan/ + the letter أن /an/ + V2. d. Formation Pattern of the letter إن /in/ + V1 + V2. e. Formation Pattern of the letter لم /lam/ + V1 + V2. f. Formation Pattern of the phrase كَيْفَمَا /kayfa-ma/ + V1 + V2."

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