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*Verb Serialization As Cognitive Universal*

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# VERB SERIALIZATION AS COGNITIVE UNIVERSAL

(Slavonic and Iranian Data)<sup>1</sup>

Oleh Kshanovsky

## Abstract

The serialization is considered a phenomenon in which two or more verbs or other part of speech in a sentence are following each other in the same aspectual and tense form; the subject and the object in such constructions is expressed only in the first verb. Verb serialization (or serial verbs) is typical for the so called “exotic” languages in different parts of the world. Despite the complete lack of tradition of the selection of the category serialization in Persian language, our results demonstrate the existence of two-verb and three-verb chains in modern colloquial Persian, as well as past participle chains in modern written Persian.

**Key words:** serialization, verb-chains, typology, Persian language, syntax, semantics.

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## 1. Introduction

*Verb serialization* (or *serial verbs*) is typical for the languages in different parts of the world, notably West Africa, Southeast Asia, New Guinea, Oceania, Central America, as well as for a number of pidgins and creoles. Normally, serialization is called a phenomenon in which two or more verbs in a sentence are following each other in the same aspectual and tense form, the subject and the object is expressed only in the first verb. In other words, it is used a few verbs, but they acting like a single semantic predicate. In different languages, this phenomenon has a rather large number of specific lexical-semantic and grammatical features. Broadly speaking, the syntactic structures with several (usually two) identical word forms are typical, perhaps, for more languages than has traditionally been considered and they claim to universal status.

So, the constructions with a doubling of the forms are widespread in the Russian spoken language. They are primarily the so-called double verbs and double case forms of nouns.

(1) a. *Poyd-u skazh-u*

go:FUT-1SG tell:FUT-1SG

‘I will go and tell.’

b. *Na stol-e na skatert-y*

on table-LOC on tablecloth-LOC

‘On the table and the tablecloth’.

In Russian grammar such constructions are called *paratactic*, understanding parataxis as syntactic relationship between two similar grammatical word forms associated with each other in meaning. They occupy in a sentence either an independent position, or they depend on the same the third (another) word form. Paratactic constructions are different from subordinating by the fact that they lack a formal expression of the dependence of one form from another. On the other hand, they cannot be called a subordinate also because: there is not the intonation of enumerating between members of the group; the group is limited to only two terms, but from a semantic point of view, members of the pair are heterogeneous; they come in a number of logical relations of subordination (Krasilnikova 1971; Shvedova 1960). Components of such structures can be verbs in different aspectual and temporal forms (see Krasilnikova 1971: 80-81):

- Present tense, indefinite

(2) *Ya yemu uže khož-u zakazyvay-u bilet-y*

I he:DAT already go:PRES-1SG order:PRES-1SG ticket-PL

‘I already go and order tickets for him.’

- Past tense, imperfect

(3) *Ya v gorod vezd-il-a poluch-al-a eti posylk-y*

I into downtown go-PAST-FEM received-PAST-FEM these parcel-PL

‘I went downtown and received these parcels.’

- Future tense, perfect

(4) *My dogovor-il-is' chto ya zavtra prid-u podpish-u bumag-i*

we agree-PAST-PL that I tomorrow come:FUT-1SG sign:FUT-1SG paper-PL

‘We agreed that I would come and sign these papers tomorrow.’

- Past tense, perfect

(5) *On dogad-al-s'a kup-il tsvet-y*

he guess-PAST-MASC:1SG buy-PAST(MASC:1SG) flower-PL

‘He guessed and bought flowers.’

- Imperatives

(6) *Ladno idi uzynay*

okey go:IMPER(2SG) have.supper:IMPER(2SG)

‘Ok, go and have supper.’

- Infinitives

(7) *Može-te poyekha-t' posmotre-t'*

may:PRES-PL go-INF see-INF

‘You may go and see.’

- Subjunctive

(8) *Yesli by ty poshel zaraneye*

if SUBJUNCT you:SG go:PAST(MASC:2SG) in.advance

*uznal, to teper' nie nado bylo by...*

check:PAST(MASC:2SG) CONJ now NEG need be:PAST(3SG) SUBJUNCT

‘If you went checked in advance, now we would not have to...’

Among the most frequent lexical-semantic relations within these forms in Russian one can note:

- action and its qualitative characteristics in the form of action

(9) *Khokhoch-et zalivay-et-s'a*

laugh:PRES-3SG trill:PRES-3SG-REFLEX

‘He is laughing and trilling.’

- Specific action, carried out during the stay in a particular state, that is two related to each other actions or states:

(10) a. *Siz-u pish-u*

sit:PRES-1SG write:PRES-1SG

‘I am sitting and writing.’

b. *Leż-yt sp-it*

lie:PRES-2SG sleep:PRES-2SG

‘He is lying asleep.’

- the intention to take a certain action (or awareness of the need to implement it) and the action itself

(11) a. *Soobraz-il-a priviez-l-a*

Realize-PAST-FEM:3SG bring-PAST-FEM:3SG

‘She realized to bring.’

b. *Dogada-l-a-s’ vymy-l-a pol*

realize-PAST-FEM:3SG-REFLEX wash-PAST-FEM:3SG floor

‘She realized to wash the floor.’

c. *Soglasil-a-s’ pieriediela-l-a*

agree-PAST-FEM:3SG-REFLEX remake-PAST-FEM:3SG

‘She agreed to remake.’<sup>2</sup>

In a study of serial verb constructions with data of the languages of different structures one of the main and still unsolved problems is the formal definition of the grammatical status of these units. If they are a unit phrase of the sentence, whether they should be considered as one (complex) word or sentence? The predicate argument structure depends on this definition. In favor of the definition of such constructions as a single word-form pattern in many languages says, firstly, that a serial construction represents a single indivisible action. This implies that the translation of these forms

from exotic languages to the languages of other structures (e.g. English) in many cases only needs one word. Secondly, all the verbs of the chain, as a rule, have both a common grammatical meaning of tense, aspect, modality, etc., and a common formant, which expresses these meanings. Third, these verbs also have a common argument. In general, as noted by researchers (see Kjelsvik 2002: 31), in the languages where the phenomenon of serialization is grammatically legislated, these forms have a strong tendency either for lexicalization (verbal forms become one word-form, that is complex word) or to grammaticalization (separate from the chain verb forms becomes auxiliary elements of the main verb form). In order to give an adequate assessment the identified in any language serial verbal (and other) structures (to determine the status, location, characteristics and patterns of functions), this phenomenon must be approached from the point of view the rules of the human ability to conceptualize the semantic space and to structure (to build the sequence of events) concepts.

## 2. **Functional-typological definition of serialization**

According to Leonard Talmy's (see 2000, Chapters 1 and 3) typological conception of the Event integration, the process of speech is the interaction of two independent but closely interrelated domains - semantic (inside) and the lexical-grammatical (external). The semantic domain of events consists of categories such as: Motion, Path, Figure, Ground, Manner and Cause. Lexical-grammatical domain of events consists of the word forms, prepositional and postpositive elements of phrases, and so on. The relationship between these two domains is not symmetrical: one semantic category can be expressed by a combination of lexical and grammatical elements; on the other hand the

combination of semantic categories can be transmitted by only one surface element. However, despite this there are a wide range of universal principles and typological patterns (i.e. regularities) that define the relationship of semantic categories and lexical-grammatical elements (Ibid. 21).

The idea of the “event” is central to the cognitive-semantic theory of Leonard Talmy, and, according to the researcher, is the basic category of human cognition. He regards mind as a cognitive process, constantly aiming at the conceptual distribution (classification) of events and phenomena of reality and to describe them. The essence of this process lies in the demarcation of the continuum in the sphere of space, time, and quantity etc. This is the reason for the existence of nouns in all languages of the world, that is, names for the objects of human environment.

“Event” is a subspecies of the conceptual partitioning which makes discrete space-temporal continuum in certain portions. This is the reason for the existence of verbs, that is, names for portions of time, space and movement, in all the languages of the world. Conceptually, the event can be unitary and complex (Ibid. 215). In turn, a complex event can be expressed either by subordinating clause in the complex sentence, either in the same sentence:

(12) *The candle went out.*

(13) *The candle went out because something blew on it.*

(14) *The candle blew out.*

In the first sentence (12) the main idea (stop burning candles) has been expressed as a single event (by simple sentence). In the second sentence (13) the idea of

ending burning candles supplemented by part (way / cause the extinction of the candles) has been expressed as a complex event (by complex sentence). In the third sentence (14) the complex event is expressed as a single (by simple sentence again). To denote the latter phenomenon (sentence 14), that is, expression of complex event by a single predicate, L. Talmy coins the term **macro-event**. The macro-event contains two components: the **main**, or the **framing event**, for example, sentence (12), as well as a **subordinate** event or **co-event**, for example, sentence (13). Framing event is the main idea of each complex (and single) events – Motion (of Agent or Patient) or four ideas metaphorically derived from it – Temporal contouring, State change, Action correlation and Realization. The five conceptual domains express the semantics of predicate argument structure, which express the macro-event in the sentence (Ibid. 17-18). The structure of framing event that is the bearer of the idea of Motion consists of: **Figure**, that is, moving entity (this can be Agent or Patient, depending on the type of sentence); **Ground** with respect to which Figure is moving; **Path** in which the figure moves, and that points to the place of its **Location** relative to the Ground (Ibid. 26).

On the other hand, co-event in the structure of macro-event makes framing event more substantive or perceptually palpable. For instance, in the structure of the verb to *blow out* (a candle) built-in frame-event “State change” (a state of burning stopped) and the subordinate event “Cause” (due to the movement of air). In the structure of such Russian verbs like: *v-o-yti* ‘to come into; to enter’, *v-biezhat* ‘to run into’, *v-yekhat* ‘to drive into’, *v-skochit* ‘to jump into’ and so on frame-event “movement of the subject (Figure) with respect to the internal space (Ground) on the inward (Path), which determines the location of the subject” and the subordinate event “Manner” (walking on foot, by vehicle, etc.) are built-in. Thus, these verbs express a complex event consisting

of two (or more) of actions.

The idea of framing (main) event in the structure of macro-event can be expressed either by the verb (stem, root), or by the auxiliary element, formant (L. Talmy coins the term satellite) (cf. Ibid. 222). Hence, L. Talmy introduces from the behavior of verbs and satellites two main groups of languages – satellite-framed and verb-framed (Ibid. 221-224). The languages within each group may be quite different both genetically and typologically. Thus, the verb-oriented languages are Romance, Semitic, Japanese, Tamil, Polynesian, Bantu and others. Satellite-oriented are the Uralic, the Chinese, and most of Indo-European except for Romance. The frame schema of the event (Figure + [Background] + Path) in the structure of satellite-oriented languages is expressed without using a verb in the sentence structure and in the structure of verb-oriented languages it is expressed in the verb and its arguments. Subordinate event in satellite-oriented languages is expressed by the main (semantically) verb (it is typically for the English verb phrase), and in verbal-oriented languages is expressed by satellite elements, the individual (prefix, postposition, gerund) or their combination (formant + prefix / postfix ), for example: Rus. *v-katit's'a* ‘to roll in’ (Path in framing event Motion is expressed in the prefix *v-* ‘-in’), *do-govorit* ‘to finish talking’ (Aspect in the framing event Temporal contouring is expressed in the prefix *do-* ‘to finish’), *za-dut* ‘blow out’ (Change in the framing event State change is expressed in the prefix *za-* ‘out’), *pere-pisat* ‘to rewrite; to copy out’ (Correspondence in the framing event Action correlation is expressed in the prefix *pere-* ‘re-’), *pri-khvatit* ‘to grab’ (Completeness in the framing event Realization is expressed in prefix *pri-* ‘over’). For example, in the English sentence:

(15) *The bottle floated out (from the cave)*

in (15) the framing event “Figure (bottle) + Path (out)” expressed without a verb (float), which, in turn, expresses the co-event, “Manner” (in water). The same is observed for example, in the Russian translation:

(16) *Butylka vy-ply-l-a (iz pesher-y).*

bottle out-float-PAST:3SG-FEM (from cave-GEN)

‘The bottle floated out (from the cave).’

Thus, Slavic and Latin verb prefixes, the English verb (adverbial) particles, German separable and inseparable verb prefixes, and Persian incorporated nouns in compound verbs are in principle functionally common linguistic phenomenon. However, in Spanish (verb-oriented language) the same sentence has a fundamentally different cognitive-semantic structure.

(17) *La botella salio flotando (de la cueva)*

‘The bottle exited floating (from the cave)’.

In (17) the framing event of Motion is expressed in the semantic verb *salir* ‘to exit’, and the co-event of Manner in gerunds *flotando* ‘floating’. Thus, if serialization is the process of verbal expression of the conceptually unitary complex of events, different particles of which lexicalized in different verbs, it is obvious that the best conditions for a chain of semantic verbs expressing macro-event, have verb-oriented languages

(Kjelsvik 2002: 52) (in which these constructions have widespread use and are grammatically legislated).

### 3. Verb serialization in Persian

The Persian language belongs to a mixed (satellite-verb-framed) type of languages with a strong satellite orientation, cf.: *birun raft* ‘He went out; He left’, *bālā raft* ‘He went up’, *foru raft* ‘He sink’ (where the verb *raftan* has only an idea of Motion, and the elements *birun*, *bālā*, *foru* have the idea of Manner). However, the agglutinative structure of the Persian word forms and phrases makes it easy to integrate not only the stems, but also the whole word forms (within the equal forms). Fairly frequent verb serialization occurs in the Persian spoken language, and even certain forms are an integral part thereof. Our data suggest that a sentence in the modern Persian language may contain up to three verbs in a row.

#### 3.1. Two-verb chains

Two-verb chains contain the idea of Motion, as well as metaphorically extension of Motion the idea of State change.

(18) [*Bā khod=ash*] *Yani kojā gozāsht-e raft-e?*

[With<sub>he</sub>=3SGPOSS] So where leave:PAST(3SG)-PASTPART go:PAST(3SG)-PASTPART?

‘[To himself] So where has he left and gone to?’

The connecting the two verbs *gozāshtan* ‘to put; to lay; to place’ and *raftan* ‘to go’ is very common in modern Persian speech. The approximate English equivalents of this expression are the verbs *to disappear*, *to dart off*, which transmit the idea of the unexpected, unplanned, sudden leaving.

- (19) *Jor’at ne-mi-kard-am beh=et chiz-i be-guy-am,*  
 courage NEG-CONT-do:PAST-1SG to=2SG thing-INDEF SUBJ-say:PRES-1SG

*mi-tars-id-am bā=hām qahr-i kon-i va*

CONT-fear-PAST-1SG with=1SG:PERS anger-REL do:SUBJ-2SG and

*be-gozār-i be-rav-i*

SUBJ-leave-2SG SUBJ-go-2SG

‘I did not dare anything to say to you, I was afraid you were not going to talk to me and would leave me.’

In this way one goes after the quarrel, dispute, as a result of injury or another important and unplanned reason.

- (20) *Cherā bi khodāhafezi gozāsht-i raft-i?*

Why without goodbye leave:PAST-2SG go:PAST-2SG?

‘Why did you suddenly go without saying goodbye?’

In (20) we have the classical macro-event - semantically unitary and complex at the same time. The framing event Motion has been expressed by the verb *raftan*. The subordinate event has been expressed by the verb *gozāshtan*. To cover the latter L.

Talmy coins the term Enablement. This event precedes the main one and makes it possible (but does not cause it), helps the main event to take place.

(21) *Mādarbozorg=am mowqe=e aqd gozāsht va*

grandmother=1SG:POSS time=GEN engagement leave:PAST(3SG) and

*raft Mashhad*

go:PAST(3SG) Mashhad

‘My grandmother during the engagement suddenly has moved to Mashhad.’

The subordinate event, expressed by *gozāshtan* ‘to put; to lay; to place’, as if completes the previous step (cf. Rus.: *stavit’ tochku; položyt’ konets* ‘to finish’, lit. ‘to place a full stop; to put the end’) and makes possible the beginning of another event, in this case Motion. Not completed, to some extent even the transitional nature of the integration of these two events in one macro-event in the Persian language is illustrated by the ability of the optional use of the conjunction *va* ‘and’. Sometimes both variants - with and without conjunction are used within a single utterance.

(22) *Man che mi-dān-am zan=esh kojā gozāsht-e*

I what CONT-know-1SG woman=3SG:POSS where leave:PAST(3SG)-PASTPART

*raft-e. magar man be-pā=ye u bud-am?*

go:PAST(3SG)-PASTPART. Whether I to-leg=GEN she be:PAST-1SG?

*ākher to=rā khodā in ham shod showhar?.. khob kār-i*

at.last you=OBJ god this also become:PAST(3SG) husband?.. good job-INDEF

*kard agar gozāsht va raft!*

do:PAST(3SG) if leave:PAST(3SG) and go:PAST(3SG)!

‘How [do] I know, where has his wife put gone away. Was I really put in charge to her? At the end Oh God, that is the husband? ...Good as (she) did, in the case she put and left!’

In general, the Motion event accompanied by an event, which precedes and creates the conditions for it, is most clearly expressed by chains of verbs in the imperative form.

(23) *Chāyi var-dār bi-yār*

tea up-take:IMPER(2SG) IMPER-bring:PRES(2SG)

‘Bring some tea.’

In (23) the framing event Motion the Figure (a tea), is expressed by the verb *āvardan* ‘to bring’. The subordinate event Enablement is expressed by the prefixed verb *b(v)ar-dāshtan* ‘to take, to pick up’. In order to bring the tea, one must first take it. Thus, the subordinate event occurs before the framing one, making it possible, but no way is a Cause of it.

In addition, the framing event Motion may be accompanied by a co-event, which indicates the Manner of its proceeding.

(24) *Qambari dav-id va raft*

Gambary run-PAST(3SG) and go:PAST(3SG)

‘Gambary ran and went.’

In (24) the framing event Motion has been expressed by the verb *raftan* ‘to go’. The subordinate event has been expressed by the verb *davidan* ‘to run’. For the latter L. Talmy uses the term Manner. The semantics of this verb has not a component that clearly pointed to the direction of motion (as well as the English equivalent).

A metaphor derived from the idea of Motion is the framing event State change. In the modern spoken Persian two-verb chains can express macro-event, the main (framing) event of which is precisely the State change.

- (25) *Ba'd=esh zad pedar=e man mord*  
 after=3SG:DEMONSTR hit:PAST(3SG) father=GEN I dead:PAST(3SG)  
 ‘Thereafter my father suddenly died.’

In (25), the framing event State change has been expressed by the verb *mordan* ‘to die’ (the transition from one state to another). The subordinate event has been expressed by the verb *zadan* ‘to beat, to hit’. This verb gives the main event the effect of surprise (cf. bang!), that is, the main event is accompanied by an indication on the way of its course.

- (26) *Tāze yek sāl az ezdevāj=eshān mi-gozasht ke ān-vaqt*  
 just one year from wedding=3PL:POSS CONT-pass:PAST(3SG) when that-time  
*zad [va] showhar-e oftād tu=ye hachal*  
 hit:PAST(3SG) [and] husband-DEF fell:PAST(3SG) in=GEN awkward.situation  
 ‘Just one year after their wedding passed as, then bang [and] the husband got in trouble.’

In (26) the framing event State change (acceptable state to unpleasant state) has been expressed by the verb *oftādan* ‘to fall’. The subordinate event Manner has been expressed by the verb *zadan*, which gives the main event the effect of surprise. As can be seen from the above example, the verb forms of such phrases can be located distantly. This fact points, as noted above, to not finally formed phenomenon of serialization in the modern Persian language.

The framing event State change, which is expressed by two-verb chains, as in the following example may have other subordinate events:

(27) *Hālā bi-yā [va] dorost=*esh* kon*

now IMPER-go:PRES(2SG) [and] correct=3SG:DEMONSTR do:PRES(2SG)

‘Now go/come [and] do it correct.’

(28) *Hālā bi-ya *khub-i* kon*

now IMPER-go:PRES(2SG) good-REL (IMPER)do:PRES(2SG)

‘Now go/come do [it] good.’

In (27) and (28) the framing event State change (improperly done to properly done) is expressed by complex verbs *dorost kardan* and *khobi kardan* ‘to do properly, to amend’. The subordinate event is expressed by the verb *āmadan* ‘to come’, which (especially in the form of the imperative mood, but not required) may also refer an event that precedes the main event and is the initial stage of it (but is not its cause!), the so-called Precursion.

- (29) *Āmad-am [va] goft-am*  
 come:PAST-1SG [and] speak:PAST-1SG  
 ‘I up and spoke.’

The framing event State change (silent to speaking), has been expressed by the verb *goftan* ‘to say, to speak’. The subordinate event Precursion, which is its initial stage – has been expressed by the verb *āmadan* ‘to come’ (cf. the same function in Russian of the verb *vz’at’* ‘to take’). Such Precursion (previous) subordinate event can be expressed by the verbs like *to take*, *to get* and so on.

- (30) *Aqab=e doqqān yek tekke=ye zilu andākht-e bud. ba’zi vaqt-hā*  
 behind=GEN shop one piece=GEN carpet throw:PAST(3SG)-PASTPART. some time-PL  
*mi-gereft mi-khābid*  
 CONT-take:PAST(3SG) CONT-sleep:PAST(3SG)  
 ‘Behind the shop he threw a piece of pileless carpet. Sometimes he used to sleep.’

In (30) the framing event State change (from staying awake to sleep) has been expressed by the verb *khābidan* ‘to sleep’. The subordinate event Precursion has been expressed by the verb *gereftan* ‘to take’ (cf. the use of this verb in Russian: *vz’al zasnul* ‘He up and slept’ (lit. ‘took slept’); *kazdy den’ beret spit* lit. ‘Every day he takes sleeps’), cf.:

- (31) *Dar dars=e musiqi hasan eyn=e chub=e khoshk mi-gereft*  
 in lesson=GEN music Hasan substance=GEN stick=GEN dry CONT-take:PAST(3SG)

mi-neshast

CONT-sit:PAST(3SG)

‘At the lessons of music Hasan was taking sitting exactly as dry stick.’

(32) Be-gir-im be-khāb-im, be-bin-im

IMPER-take:PRES-1PL IMPER-sleep:PRES-1PL IMPER-see:PRES-1PL

*fardā che pish mi-yāy-ad*

tomorrow what forward CONT-come:PRES-3SG

‘Let us take some sleep and see tomorrow what will occur.’

In (32) the third verb *didan* ‘to see, to look’ tends to be a component of a verb chain, but its own argument structure separates it from the chain (by the way, the author of the analyzed text separated the two-verb series from the next clause by a comma).

The subordinate verb *gereftan* may be used with a complement, that is, have its own arguments, which may apply to the main verb (the common argument structure, as noted above, is one of the main features of serial verbs).

(33) Rāh=eshān=rā gereft-and [va] raft-and

way=3PL:POSS=OBJ take:PAST-3PL [and] go:PAST-3PL

‘They took [and] went their own way.’

(34) Gereft sar=esh=rā borid

take:PAST(3SG) head=3SG:POSS=OBJ cut:PAST(3SG)

‘He took cut its [lamb] head.’

The same sense of Precursion can be expressed by prefixed verb *b(v)ar-dāshtan*

‘to take, to pick up’.

(35) *Dast=esh ne-mi-shekast agar bar-mi-dāsht*

hand=3SG:POSS NEG-CONT-break:PAST(3SG) up-CONT-have:PAST(3SG)

*do kalame mi-nevesht*

two words CONT-write:PAST(3SG)

‘His hand would not brake if he took and wrote two words.’<sup>3</sup>

The framing event State change may be accompanied by an action, which is its cause.

(36) *Negāh kard-am did-am*

look do:PAST-1SG see:PAST-1SG

‘I took a look and saw.’

In (36) the framing event State change (from not seeing to seeing) has been expressed by the verb *didan* ‘to see, to look’ and the subordinate event has been expressed by the verb *negāh kardan* ‘to look, to take a look’ (lit. ‘to do a look’). This action causes the main event that occurs (there cannot be “to look” without “to see”).

In addition, State change may be accompanied by an action, which is not its cause, but only makes it possible, assists it.

(37) *Raft [va] zan=e digar-i gereft*

go:PAST(3SG) [and] woman=GEN another-INDEF take:PAST(3SG)

‘He went [and] took (married) another woman (once more).’

In (37) the framing event State change (from absence to presence) has been expressed by the verb *gereftan* ‘to take, to get’ and the subordinate event has been expressed again by the verb *raftan* ‘to go’<sup>4</sup>. This verb means action which precedes the main event and helps in its occurrence, making it possible (but is not its cause!).

### 3.2. Three-verb chains

Three-verb series as well as two-verbs contain the idea of Motion as well as metaphorically derived from it the idea of State change.

(38) *Bi-yāy-id ru=ye khosh be mardom neshān be-dah-id,*

IMPER-come:PRES-2PL face=GEN good to people sign IMPER-give:PRES-2PL,

*pizi=shān=rā jā be-gozār-id, ...ān-vaqt do qort*

ass=3PL.POSS=OBJ place IMPER-put:PRES-2PL, ...DEMONSTR:SG-time two gulp

*va nim=eshān ham bāqi ast*

and half=3PL.POSS too enough be:PRES(3SG)

‘Let show our good attitude to the people, do their work for them, ... then they will still want more.’

In (38) two framing events State change (from not the shown to the shown and from not the made to the made) are expressed, respectively, by two complex verbs *neshān dādan* ‘to show, to demonstrate’ (lit. ‘to give a mark, a sign’) and *jā gozāshtan*

‘to leave’ (lit. ‘to put the place’). Both events have a common one for two subordinate event Precursion (which is the initial stage of the main events, but does not cause them!). It has been expressed by the verb *āmadan* ‘to come’ which, as noted above, in some contexts has some Precursion sense:

(39) *Bi-ya be-gir*

IMPER-come:PRES(2SG) IMPER-take:PRES(2SG)

‘Come and take.’

In three-verb series the framing event State change, as usual, is expressed by a single verb, accompanied by two events expressed by two verbs:

(40) *Mahmud bas ast digar. Bo-ru be-gir*

Mahmood enough be:PRES(3SG) more. IMPER-go:PRES(2SG) IMPER-take:PRES(2SG)

*be-khāb*

IMPER-sleep:PRES(2SG)

‘Mahmud, that is enough! Go and take some sleep.’

In (40) the framing event State change (from staying awake to sleep) has been expressed by the verb *khābidan* ‘to sleep’. The first subordinate event Enablement has been expressed by the verb *raftan* ‘to go’, which precedes the framing event, creates the conditions for its occurrence, but is not its cause. The second subordinate event Precursion has been expressed by the verb *gereftan* ‘to take, to get’, which is the first step to change the state.

In another example, the structure of macro-event consists of chain of coherent events:

(41) *Khānom mi-goft: doctor-hā be andāze=ye khar ham*

Lady CONT-tell:PAST(3SG) doctor-PL to extent=GEN donkeys also

ne-mi-fahm-and va bi-khod hey bar-mi-dār-and

NEG-CONT-understand:PRES-3PL and without-REFLEX keep up-CONT-have:PRES-3PL

be bache=*am āmpul mi-zan-and*

to child=1SG:POSS injection CONT-beat:PRES-3PL

‘Aunt told: doctors like donkeys don’t understand and just keep take and prick injections to my baby.’

In (41) the framing event Motion (physical manipulation with a needle) has been expressed by the complex verb *āmpul zadan* ‘to prick injection’ (lit. ‘to shot ampoule’). The first subordinate event has been expressed by the verb *fahmidan* ‘to understand’. This event is the cause of the main one. The second subordinate event has been expressed by the prefixed verb *bar-dāshtan* ‘to take, to pick up’. This event is the initial stage, that is, Precursion of the main one, but (!) is not its cause.

The same structure of macro-event expressed by three-verb series, but with a different set of subordinate events has been presented in the following example:

(42) *Vaqt-i rasid-am, khabar na-kard-am sarzade*

Time-INDEF reach:PAST-1SG information NEG-do:PAST-1SG unexpected

vāred=e manzel=esh shod-am

incoming=GEN house=3SG:POSS become:PAST-1SG

‘When I came I did not inform and unexpected arrived to her house.’

In (42) the framing event Motion (entering the room) has been expressed by the complex verb *vāred shodan* ‘to come in, to enter’ (lit. *vāred* ‘incoming’, *shodan* ‘to become’). The first subordinate event Enablement, which precedes the main event and facilitates its occurrence, has been expressed by the verb *rasidan* ‘to arrive, to reach’. The second subordinate event Manner, which indicates the way of the occurrence of the main one has been expressed by the complex verb *khabar kardan* ‘to inform, to let know’ (lit. *khabar* ‘news’, *kardan* ‘do’). It is this verb that gives character to the main event.

The sequence of subordinate events may be different. It depends on what kind of Precursive verb is used in three-verb series: the verb *gereftan*, as we see from the examples is used directly before the verb, which expresses the framing event, and the prefixed verb *bar-dāshtan* takes always distant position on the verb, which expresses the framing event:

(43) *Moalem goft: bache-hā, sar-e kelās! Mansuri va Rezāyi khomre=ye*

teacher say:PAST(3SG) child-PL top=GEN class Mansur and Reza jar=GEN

*shekaste=rā bar-dār-and be-bar-and bi-yāndāz-and*

broken=GEN up-have:PRES-3PL IMPER-carry:PRES-3PL IMPER-throw:PRES-3PL

*tu biyābān-e posht-e madrese*

into wasteland=GEN behind=GEN school

‘The teacher said: children, go to the class! Mansur and Reza take, carry and

throw the broken jar on the wasteland behind the school.’

In (43) the framing event Motion (moving a jar from place to place) has been expressed by the verb *andākhtan* ‘to throw’. This verb contains the main idea to get rid of something of the macro-event analyzed. The event, which immediately precedes the main one, has been expressed by the verb *bordan* ‘to carry’. It is this verb that makes the main event possible and facilitates its occurrence, but is not its cause (what will be seen in the following example). The event, which represents the initial stage of the main event, has been expressed by the prefixed verb *bar-dāshtan* ‘to take, to pick up’. This verb, by the way, is Precursive for subordinate event of Enablement also. The analogous case one can observe in Russian:

(44) a. *voz'm-i vy-bros-i*

take:IMPER-2SG out-throw:IMPER-2SG

‘Take it and throw out.’

b. *voz'm-i o-tnies-i*

take:IMPER-2SG out-carry:IMPER-2SG

‘Take it and carry out.’

c. *voz'mi otniesi vybros'*

take:IMPER-2SG out-carry:IMPER-2SG out-throw:IMPER-2SG

‘Take it, carry out and throw out.’

In the following example, another framing event has a similar set of co-events:

(45) *asbāb va asās=ash=rā bar-dāsht, bord,*

chattels:PL and things:PL=3SG:POSS=OBJ up-have:PAST(3SG) carry:PAST(3SG)

*gozāshht jelow=e kelās=e dovvom*

put:PAST(3SG) front=GEN class=GEN second

‘He picked up, carried and put his chattels and things in front of the second class.’

In (45) the framing event Motion (things in a certain place) has been expressed by the verb *gozāshhtan* ‘to put’. The action, which immediately precedes the main event, has been expressed by the verb *bordan* ‘to carry’. It is this verb makes it possible to begin and the course of the main event. At the same time this subordinate event Enablement is not a cause of the main event. As we saw in the above example this event is accompanied another framing event. Precursion of the main event has been expressed by the prefixed verb *bar-dāshtan* ‘to take, to pick up’.

#### 4. Past participle serialization in Persian

Because in agglutinative languages, particularly in Turk, the basic syntactic structure is a simple sentence, it tends to absorb such substitutes of subordinate sentences, the structure of which does not contradict to the rules of the simple sentence structure. A number of subordinating relations are transmitted by participial syntactic constructions (Gajiyeva 1990: 529). Under the influence of Persian and Arabic languages, of course, a complex sentence in the Turkic languages has evolved, but nevertheless, it was under the influence of the Turkic languages past participle has become one of the most common categories in the written standard modern Persian. Having a tangible tense semantics (see Rustamova 1997: 45–46), the Persian past participle, but the marker

function of not-main, co-event (function that is common for participles in many languages), also has a particular ability to be used in a sentence instead of verbs, that contains the main event.

The use of past participle as a verb predicate already took place in Old Persian (see Rastorguyeva, Edelman 1975: 182-183):

(46) *Hamiçi-yā hagmatā paraitā*

rebel-PL gathered stood.out

‘The rebels gathered and stood out.’

(47) *Ima tya manā kartam Bābirauv*

that what I:GEN do:PASTPART Babylon

‘That's what I did in Babylon.’

This use of the forms involved in both intransitive (first example) and in transitive (second example) structures has led to the use of pronominal enclitics as a subject:

(48) *Manā Auramazdā pā-tuv utā tya maiy kartam*

I:GEN Ahuramazda (IMPER)protect:PRES-3SG and what I:GEN do:PASTPART

‘Let Ahuramazda protects me and that what I did.’

In the Middle Persian period the use of past participles with a copula (for intransitive verbs) and past participles with pronominal enclitic (for transitive verbs) as person and number markers totally displaced ancient Persian forms of the past indefinite

and past perfect (ibid.183). Over time, in the Middle Persian period the preterit and perfect stems of Persian verbs were formed from these participles. It is the regular use of past participles as verb predicative caused the loss of their own participle meaning and its gradual transformation into verb stem (see ibid. 200-204).

In the modern Persian the use of the past participle instead of the main verb in a sentence is common (see Samare 1993: 71):

(49) *Majid kif=ash=rā bar-dāsh-t-e az khāne birun david*

Majid briefcase=3SG.POSS=OBJ up-take:PAST-PASTPART from home out run:PAST(3SG)

‘Majid took his briefcase and ran out of home.’

In (49) the past participle *bardāsh-te* ‘taken’ (comes from the verb *bardāsh-tan* ‘to take, to pick up’) is used in place of the main verb, cf. example (50):

(50) *Majid bar-dāsh-t va david*

Majid ou-have:PAST(3SG) and run:PAST(3SG)

‘Majid took and ran.’

The ability of such participles to build chains in the modern Persian language proves the fact that they are used in the grammatical function of verbs. In many languages, similar to the verbal the doubling system is implemented in forms like, for example, nouns. Thus, in the modern Russian language among of case forms the highest frequency has so called double nominative and double prepositional forms. Among the semantic relationships within these forms are noted.

- Relation of genus and species.

(51) *Ya da-l-a yey den 'gi shest' rubl-ey*

I give-PAST-FEM:1SG she:DAT money six rubl-PL

‘I gave her six rubles of money.’

- Object and its quantitative characteristics, in particular, the measure of a substance.

(52) *Po-moyemu, oni nikto ne mog uže slusha-t'*

obviously they no.one NEG can:PAST(3SG) now hear-INF

‘I think, no one of them could hear.’

- Object and its essential feature, in particular, its characteristic feature.

(53) *Vot takoy fason tarelochk-i vse*

here such style plate-PL all

‘Such a style of all plates.’

- Relation of part and whole.

(54) *Na taksi bylo tri rubl- 'a na schetchik-e*

on taxi:LOC be:PAST(3SG) three rubl-GEN taximeter-LOC

‘Three rubles were per taximeter of the taxi.’

In addition, this phenomenon for the Russian language is not new. These forms were inherent in the everyday spoken language in the Old Russian period (see Krasilnikova 1971: 81-82), that is, one can talk about a very strong tendency, which finds its expression in the syntax of spoken language, in the whole system of doubling (subordinate constructions of literary language in many cases correspond to paratactic constructions of spoken language). Serialization of past participles in the literary standard modern Persian also is widely spread:

(55) *Qāsem ke shāhed=e begumegu=ye ān do bud-e*

Kasem which witness=GEN conversation=GEN that two be:PAST-PASTPART

*va az tars jor’at na-kard-e dekhālat kon-ad,*

and from fear dare NEG-do:PAST-PASTPART interference (SUBJUNCT)do-3SG

*bā dide=ye tahsin be Said negāh mi-kon-ad*

with glance=GEN applause at Said look CONT-do:PRES-3SG

‘Kasem, which was a witness of the conversation of those two from the fear, did not dare to exit, looks at Said with approving glance.’

In (55) (author's remark in the play) past participles (*bude* ‘being’ and *jor’at nakarde* ‘no daring’) follow one another, acting as the verbs, cf.: *Kasem was a witness to a conversation of some two people and of fright did not dare to come out ...* Such participles chains may alternate with verb chains:

(56) *Did-am pesare kerker mi-kon-ad. Negāh kard-am did-am*

see:PAST-1SG boy tittering CONT-do:PRES-3SG. Look do:PAST-1SG see:PAST-1SG

*vardāsh-t-e be lā=ye dar va chārchub yek take kesh=e tirkamān*

take:PAST-PASTPART at fold=GEN doors and trucks one piece rubber=GEN bow

*kubid-e*

pound:PAST-PASTPART

‘I saw the boy laughs. I took a look and saw him took and pounded between the doors and trucks a piece of rubber from the bow.’

In (56) a past participle chain (*vardāsh-t-e* ‘taken’ and *kubid-e* ‘pounded’) follow the verb chain (*negāh kardam* ‘took a look’ and *didam* ‘saw’).

## 5. Conclusions

Thus, the data analyzed indicate that the phenomenon of serialization in the modern Persian language, despite the total lack of tradition of its selection, is taking place. On the material of the modern spoken and written Persian language two-verb, three-verb and past participle series has been revealed.

Though from five possible frame events (Motion, Temporal contouring, State change, Action correlation and Realization) in the structures of macro-event only two are found (the main – Motion and the most important derivative of it – State change), and from possible eight co-events (Precursion, Enablement, Cause, Manner, Concomitance, Subsequence, Concurrent result and Constitutiveness) in the structures of macro-event are only identified the first four (those that either precede the framing

event or is its cause), it is safe to talk about some features of this category in the Persian language:

1) First, a large number of syntactic constructions in modern Persian language is based on very close to the serialization pattern:

(57) *Qambari, bo-ru be kadkhodā be-gu bi-yāy-ad*

Qambary, IMPER-go:PRES to headman IMPER-tell:PRES CONJ-com:PRES-3SG

‘Qambary, go and tell the headman to come.’

In (57), the framing event State change (from silence to speaking) has been expressed by the verb *goftan* ‘to talk; to tell’. The subordinate event Enablement has been expressed by the verb *raftan* ‘to go’, which precedes the framing event, creates the conditions for its occurrence, but is not its cause. These verbs have a common argument: *boru pishē kadkhodā* ‘go to the headman’, *begu be kadkhodā* ‘tell the headman’. This is an evidence of merging of two predicates in a single complex predicate. However, the main verb *goftan* ‘to talk; to tell’ has its own argument (*biyāyad*). The final merge predicate has not yet come, although the main features are already present. The number of such expressions in the modern spoken Persian in fact is striking. Often such expressions hard to distinguish from verb idioms, which indicate the prevalence of this phenomenon:

(58) *Khob shod shod na-shod*

good become:PAST(3SG) become:PAST(3SG) NEG-become:PAST(3SG)

*na-shod, khod=esh ākhar=esh khub*

NEG-become:PAST(3SG) good=3SG:REFLEX end=3SG:REFLEX good

*mi-shav-ad*

CONT-become:PRES-3SG

‘Well, then, it became so, everything itself will work out at last.’

2) Second, the main features of verb serialization - the common argument structure and the final position of the main verb, which expresses the framing event - demonstrates the material of Persian two-verb and three-verb series discussed above;

3) Third, a set of verbs that are components of serial constructions in Persian, as noted above, correlates with a similar set of verbs in other languages where the verb serialization has the status of the grammatical category.

As we see, on the one hand, these features of Persian serialization correspond to the same attributes of this category in other languages; on the other hand, they demonstrate the prevalence of this phenomenon in modern colloquial Persian, and one can conclude that this category in the Persian language has the strong further development. It must also be noted that other parts of speech in the Persian language can be subjected to this tendency too. Thus, the ability to be an integral part of a single unitary event in a written style of modern Persian language is inherent for past participles.

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#### *Abbreviations*

SG	Singular
PL	Plural
FEM	Feminine suffix
MASC	Masculine suffix
CONJ	Conjunction
POSS	Possessive clitic
REL	Relative clitic
PAST	Past stem
PASTPART	Past participle
PRES	Present stem
FUT	Future stem
NEG	Negative
CONT	Continuous
DEF	Definite article
INDEF	Indefinite article
SUBJ	Subject
SUBJUNCT	Subjunctive mood

PERS	Personal pronoun
DEMONSTR	Demonstrative pronoun
REFLEX	Reflexive pronoun
IMPER	Imperative mood
GEN	Genitive case
DAT	Dative case
LOC	Locative case

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<sup>1</sup>This article is the first publication resulting from the research project on the description of Persian language within typological and universal approach and its consequences for the theory of Persian grammar. The author presented the ideas discussed here at the IV International Conference on Iranian Linguistics (Uppsala University, Sweden 2011) and XIX International Congress of Linguistics (University of Geneva, Switzerland 2013). We thank the audiences at these events for their comments.

<sup>2</sup>More on serial constructions in the Russian language see Weiss 2013<sub>1</sub>; 2013<sub>2</sub>; 2012.

<sup>3</sup>The present and past progressive forms in Persian are built precisely on the principle of serialization. The macro-event combines the framing event, expressed by the main verb, and the subordinate event, expressed by the auxiliary verb:

- (i) a. *Dār-am mi-rav-am*  
 have:PRES-1SG CONT-go:PRES-1SG  
 ‘I am going;’
- b. *Dāsht-am mi-raft-am*  
 have:PAST-1SG CONT-go:PAST-1SG  
 ‘I was going.’

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The framing event (in this case, Motion) is expressed by the main verb *raftan* ‘to go’, and the subordinate event is expressed by the auxiliary verb *dāshdan* ‘to have, to possess’ (cf. *to have* in English), both at the same aspectual and temporal forms.

<sup>4</sup>The existence of the stable set of the same verbs in different languages is noted by all researchers of the phenomenon “serialization” (cf., e.g. the frequency lists of verbs in Benue-Congo language Nizaa in Kjelsvik 2002: 22-33). In Persian with only these verbs is formed quite a large number of idioms:

(ii) a. *Na gozāshd [va] na bar-dāshd va goft ...*

not leave:PAST(3SG) [and] not up-take:PAST(3SG) and say:PAST(3SG) ...

‘For no reason, without shame, tactless.’

b. *U ham na gozāshd-e na bar-dāshd-e bud ...*

he also not leave:PAST-PASTPART not take:PAST-PASTPART be:PAST(3SG)...

‘He/she behaved ugly, as like as two peas’.