Title : "Directional serial verb construction in Burmese and Arakanese dialects"

Abstract:

   Burmese (standard Burmese) and Arakanese dialects use serial verb constructions, that is to say, groups of verbs that are not separated by connectors, that share the same grammatical information and sometimes the same arguments, and that describe a single event and has the intonation of a single phrase (see Durie 1997, Aikhenvald & Dixon 2006, etc.).
However none of these properties is defining per se, and most of the authors, after agreeing on this core of properties, propose sub-types of SVC, based on their semantic and morpho-syntactic properties. One very common sub-type of SVC is the "directional's one" (see Lord 1993[1], Bisang (1996 : 149), Durie (1997 : 335))). This SVC subtype is labeled "as directional" because the VP shows motion or location verbs in the string of verbs.
As shown by example (1) & (2), directional SVC do exist in Burmese and in Arakanese.

The aim of this talk is to give an account of SVC that express motion and path in Burmese dialects. I also aim to show that although Arakanese is considered as a Burmese dialect, the situation is not simple. We indeed face a dialectal continuum, with no intelligibility from the two ends, that is to say between North-Arakanese (Sitway, Mrauk-U) and Standard Burmese (SB). They show slight difference as for their verbal grammatical device. As for the directional SCV, Arakanese dialects also diverge from Standard Burmese (SB). A first analysis shows that motion verbs have different forms in SB and Arakanese dialects ; for instance, North-Arakanese dialect (Sitway, Mrauk-U) keeps using old verb forms. Moreover, verbs may also be used in different patterns although the two dialects are intelligible to each other. Last, I notice that Arakanese dialects make a smaller use of SVC that Standard Burmese.

My proposal is based on fieldtrips done in Burma in 2006, 2008, 2010 where I mainly used a tool developed by the "Trajectory Project" — supported by TUL Federation" (Federation Typologie et Universaux Linguistiques[2]). The aim of this "Trajectory Project" is to develop a typology of path expressions. As we want to be able to compare data from various type of languages, each participant of the project used the same material for its field work, that is to say : short videos that show figures involved in motion. I also used the 'frog story' picture book to elicit motion verbs.

BURMESE

(1) ကျွပ် ပြောင်းရွှေ့ နေလိုက်ရင် ၊

cənɔ²	pyɔN³	ʃwe³	ne²	laiʔ	yiN²...
1SG	[change	**move**	**to be, to stay**	**follow**/AUX.]	if

If I move to live [in...]

ARAKANESE (SITWAY)

(2) ပြန်လို့ ပေါ် လာရေ ။

praN²	**lo¹**	pɔ²	la²	re²
AUX/return	**SUB**	appear, become visible	AUX:COME	PVF.R.

[After falling in the water,] (he) came to appear again.

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[1] Lord (1993 : 9) : « Verbs of motion and location are among the most likely to occur in serial constructions [...]".

[2] See http://www.ddl.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/trajectoire/

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