Manner expressing verbs are (hidden) serial constructions

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Recent approaches to the syntax of manner expressing verbs establish a consensus about a primitive syntactic nature of the manner component. Due to its problematic nature, works like Haugen (2009) or Mateu (2011) assume a special syntactic operation through which manner is syntactically generated, which they call conflation. This operation externally merges a manner root with the verbal head by head adjunction. With many others, Acedo-Matellán & Mateu (2011) insist that “[a] sharp distinction between syntactically nontransparent conceptual content and syntactically transparent semantic construal” has to be assumed, and that manner is directly contributed by syntactic elements that belong to the former class.

(1) Manner incorporation via conflation

One (partial) exception to this tendency is Zubizarreta and Oh’s (2007) analysis of Korean, where the manner component is treated as a structural complex projected by a lexical verb, which joins another verb in a serial verb construction. However, they still consider manner expressing verbs in the Germanic and Romance type languages to be formed by compounding with a light verb and/or with the result component, due to the particular parameter setting in the respective languages (along the lines of Snyder 1995 and the subsequent work).

(2) John-I kongwen-ey talli-e ka-ss-ta. (Korean)
    John-Nom park-Loc run-L go-Past-Decl
    ‘John ran to the park.’ (Zubizarreta & Oh 2007: 91)

In this paper, I offer a series of arguments from English and Serbo-Croatian (S-C) that even in languages of this type, the manner component is syntactically and semantically complex. The arguments include the following: 1) the component contributing manner is subject to selection requirements along different dimensions, implying that it comes with a set of formal features, hence is not primitive, see (3a) for illustration, 2) from the morphological perspective, the items lexicalizing the manner component sometimes carry a significant morphological complexity (i.e. inflection) and are clearly semantically transparent (anaphors, demonstratives), as in (3b), 3) the manner contributing component can be directly modified, as in (3c), 4) it can surface in the form...
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of cognate objects, as in (3d), implying that it has a syntactic position and enters complex syntactic relations, and 5) it shows syntactic effects typical of complex syntactic items, such as triggering islands at its point of base generation, as in (3e).

(3) a. only atelic unergative stems undergo manner incorporation

John danxed/*knew/*killed Mary out of the room.

b. the manner component may involve an anaphor or a deictic expression in S-C:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{svoj-at-ati} \\
\text{PossRefl-V-Inf} \\
\text{‘behave as if X belongs to you’}
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{(raz)-ono-di-ti (se)} \\
\text{de-that.NSg-V-Inf Refl} \\
\text{w/out the prefix: ‘act in that way’} \\
\text{with the prefix: ‘have rest/fun’}
\end{array}
\]

c. this is argued to be the case in evaluative readings of proportional modification:

John half ran. (what he did is close to running, but not really running).

d. ‘adjunctive’ cognate objects express manner in S-C and other languages:

Jovan je trčao brzim trkom.

Jovan Aux run Fast run.Inst

‘Jovan was running in a fast-running way.’

e. manner of speaking bridging verbs are islands, unlike other speaking verbs:

Who did John say*/whisper that Mary wanted to meet?

I argue that Zubizarreta & Oh’s model of Korean manner verbs applies universally, also in languages where serial construction never shows at the surface. In other words, the manner component is universally contributed by a complex, compositionally interpreted syntactic item. In a large number of languages, including Germanic and Slavic, syntactic and phonological constraints apply and filter out structures with more than one lexicalized verbal head. Only those configurations converge, in which the incorporation of the material in the serial construction is complete, as in the S-C example in (4).

(4) Derivation of the verbal stem vid ‘see’

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{VP} \\
\ (\ldots) \quad \text{V'} \\
\ (\ldots) \quad \text{V} \\
\ [\text{v DO}] \quad \text{\textit{vid}}_i \\
\ \quad \text{\textit{DO}} \\
\ \quad \text{\textit{vid}}_i
\end{array}
\]

In a discussion of the analysis, I draw some consequences of this approach in respect of certain empirical and theoretical issues, such as the manner-result complementarity, verb-prefixation patterns in S-C and the status of verbs as open class words.