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review of Multi-Verb-Constructions in Sri Lanka Malay
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revised version

The revised version of this paper is significantly improved over the first version, since changes suggested to the author have been taken into account, including provision of examples from relevant varieties of Malay spoken elsewhere, more background for the reader on how this language came into existence, and in general, more clarity of exposition. Nevertheless, certain problems remain which detract from the generally high quality of the author's descriptive work and its presentation. This suggests that further revision is in order, however I reiterate that the content is interesting and publishable. I would like to apologise to the author for any new comments that refer to material also present in the previous version.

Most importantly, contextualization for the field and hence for the JPCL readership is still weak. Simplifying greatly: serialization is a phenomenon that has long attracted the attention of creolists who have found parallels across creoles, and across geographical regions. How do South Asian languages fit into this picture, and how does Sri Lanka Malay as a South Asian contact language do so? Answering these questions will tell us significant things about contact language development and about the origins of serialization, as well as about cross-linguistic parallels and contrasts with respect to serialization. But how? Couldn't these matters be presented in such a way that the reader doesn't have to hunt and squint to find out what the author is trying to say?

The author claims in section 4.8 that the origin of the compound verbs, specifically, is clearly Malay, since Sinhala and Tamil do not make use of these. What is the larger significance of this observation? I will add that I am skeptical of the adjunct observation that this is a non-productive construction in Sri Lanka. The evidence for this is the number of individual compounds that are found. In fact, just using the example of *kasi*-, there are several more items than the author suggests. Consulting B.D.K. Saldin's published *Concise Sri Lankan Malay Dictionary* (2007), which is a limited source ("concise"), we find *kasi berat* (to hand over), *kasi kennal* (to introduce), and *kasi muka* (to face, to confront). The author only provides *kasi thau* (to inform), whereas his other examples are drawn from Indonesian varieties. This is deceptive and the claim comes across as simply an impression. More data and comparison would help him to make his point. Saldin provides standard Malay equivalents for these items, none of which are compounds. (Standard Malay is of course irrelevant, so the author of this paper should provide vehicular Malay examples.) I have no trouble with the claim that the compound verbs are retentions from (vehicular) Malay, but the claim that the compounding process is unproductive in Sri Lanka Malay has not been demonstrated. The author further states that this "could be analyzed as 'negative borrowing', i.e. the reduction of a construction from the inventory which does not exist in the contact language". This sounds as (though it is being treated as) an active process in the development of Sri Lanka Malay, and consequently its description and explanation should be expanded, otherwise the compound verb section comes across as parenthetical, and therefore belongs in a footnote. (It is also unclear why genuine compounds, parsed as one phonological word, would necessarily be treated as multi-verbal, and perhaps this too should be explained.)

From the substantive to the text-linguistic issues that remain, the entire text needs to be carefully edited by a native speaker. This is not a negative reflection on the author, but is actually predictable. We all know that the dominance of English in scientific publishing places an unfortunate extra burden on non-native speakers. It nevertheless remains a burden that has to be met in a high-profile journal such as JPCL. In this text, there are still frequent errors of idiom, punctuation, capitalisation, spelling, and even morphology. As an example of the last category, see page 6: "11. Is the relation between the verbs symmetric [21]"? Is this actually a direct quotation from Aikhenvald? If so, a footnote is needed, because this reads oddly. Similarly, we also find "asymmetric" in place of "asymmetrical". Why are nouns of terminological significance capitalised in the text? Why are there Serial Verb Constructions and Multi-Verb-Constructions? Aside from the capitalisation issue, what is the logic behind the hyphenation inconsistency?

The author states in footnote 7 that "Scholars on Sri Lanka Malay do not agree how to apply the terms 'substrate' and 'superstrate' to the languages involved in its formation. In order to keep the paper accessible to people outside the field of Sri Lanka Malay studies, I keep on using the terms here. What I say is that both

substrate and superstrate are relevant. Switching the meaning of the terms will not alter the truth conditions of this proposition (*both superstrate and substrate are relevant*). He then proceeds to use the terms, as stated. Unfortunately, given the context (which is something like Fon speakers maintaining Fon in Haiti, while replicating the grammar of French at the expense of the original grammar of Fon), it is difficult to know for certain what the author is referring to when he uses the terms, and will be that much more so for the reader unfamiliar with Sri Lanka Malay. For example, on page 20, the author states "Like many other structures in Sri Lanka Malay (SOV, postpositions, bound morphology), they are the result of metatypy through superstrate influence." Does Ross use the term superstrate at all with reference to metatypy? (It is not mentioned in Ross 1999, the "Exploring Metatypy" paper.) Doesn't this imply that Sinhala/Tamil were literally target languages for Malay speakers? If this were so, does it make sense that they rejected the most accessible component in Sinhala/Tamil, by retaining the Malay lexicon? This is a minefield for the uninitiated reader. I would add that "people outside the field of Sri Lanka Malay studies", or at least the readership of JPCL, are familiar with alternatives to this terminology.

Note also that "I keep on using the terms here" is a clear example of the need for native English speaker editing. The meaning of this sentence is different for a native speaker than the obviously intended meaning, and the register is wrong. It should read: "I will continue to use the terms here." This leads directly to my next point. Would the author characterize "keep" in "I keep on using the terms here" as "non-past" when using it to refer to the future, or is it simply a present tense form used to refer to the future? The characterization **non-past** for the tense morpheme *ara-* on page 9 requires justification, otherwise it is unmotivated. The same can be said for the characterization of *anti-* as **irrealis**, rather than as future. The application of the term *irrealis* is fairly precise in creole linguistics, and this morpheme does not fit that characterization. Rather, it is simply a future tense marker. The convention for redescribing a phenomenon that has previously been described in a small and readable body of specialist literature is that changes such as this one need to be explained.

The link in footnote 18 still does not work. Should it be included?

The term "upcountry" is essentially meaningless to people unfamiliar with Sri Lanka. Is it genuinely a dialect area, or could there be dialect diversity within that area? In footnote 27, contrary to the author's claim, the progressive meaning of *ambel* is in fact attested in all dialect areas, including the upcountry. I am not certain about Kandy, although it would be surprising if Kandy were exceptional in this. It may be more **frequent** in other areas, but again, it is certainly not unattested in the upcountry. Discussion of this by Slomanson that the author attributes to Slomanson (2008) is in fact unpublished, although currently in press. Presumably based on conference presentations, the author misrepresents the analysis. The actual analysis is that progressive *ambel* is a temporal complementiser (as it is in vehicular Malay), and not a verb. Consequently, it is a bit problematic (or at least pre-emptive) to claim conclusively that "In any case, both the Southern type described by Slomanson and the Upcountry type described here qualify as a Vector Verb construction." The reader will have seen no examples of progressive *ambel* with which to evaluate this claim, and cannot consult the research paper to which this author refers.

Going back to the introduction, all historical periods seem to be conflated here. Did the Indonesian soldiers brought by the Dutch enjoy "high literacy in several languages"? This is a reference to the modern period, however it is blended in a kind of faulty parallelism with facts about other historical periods.

It is the final discussion that should contextualize the value of all this description and analysis for the language contact/creolistics field, however this discussion is significantly weaker than the discussion in the body of the text, in addition to introducing new points that are not developed here, and which at most were alluded to in passing elsewhere. The third to last paragraph highlights one of the most interesting issues in the author's findings, however that matter is left for future research. Specifically, what are the implications of the absence of what the author refers to as subordination markers in the relevant constructions? The fact that this is left open is disappointing. The challenge to Veenstra (1996) is interesting, but this part of the paper is not the best place for it. I feel strongly that the final discussion section should be rewritten, although it opens quite strongly. Again, what are the implications? The second sentence in the following sequence is particularly vague: "As far as Serial Verbs are concerned, it seems fair to say that substrate and superstrate forces have both had an impact. This was possibly filtered by universal communicative and cognitive preferences, which can explain the the [sic] dropping of subordination markers." This point should be developed in the body of the text.

