“Serial verbs in Cameroon too”


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Two broad traditions have emerged in the serial verb literature, not necessarily in conflict. One has focused on the hierarchical syntactic representation of serial verb constructions (SVCs) within a mostly generativist framework, whereas the other has focused on what semantic meanings SVCs are used to express, situated within a more functionalist approach. Tying these two approaches together is the goal of establishing clear criteria for classifying different types of SVCs, as compared to other types of multi-verb constructions. Kießling’s in-depth investigation of verb serialization in Isu can be placed squarely in the latter tradition, and is a welcome and valuable contribution. We have found this monograph to be well-organized, extremely well-exemplified, and quite theoretically intriguing. This book should be of most interest to those with areal and typological investment in Cameroon and West Africa, but it also provides an invaluable case study for theoretical syntacticians and semanticists, as well as cognitive linguists (particularly its discussions of metaphorical extension).

The main goal of this book is to present the first in-depth investigation of serialization in Isu, a language of the Ring subgroup of the Grassfields Bantu family, spoken by approximately 10,000 people in NW Cameroon. Isu is part of what can be understood as a West Ring dialect continuum, which includes Aghem, Bu, Kuk, Weh, and Zoa, only the first of which has received extensive documentation prior to the author’s work on Isu (see especially Anderson 1979, Hyman 1979a, and Watters 1979). This West Ring continuum has lost much of the inherited verbal derivational and inflectional morphology, displaying an analytic syntax more in line with westerly located languages of the Kwa-type. Part of the challenge of the present work is to describe and catalogue the expressive capability of verb serialization in Isu in the absence of the polysynthetic verbal head-marking found in Bantu languages spoken further East. An example of a typical SVC is provided in (1) involving 4 serialized verbs with no overt linkage marker other than surface concatenation.

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1. **Example of serial verb construction (SVC) in Isu (p. 44)**

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
ú & 'tú & ní & tswí & dzóñí & tsọ & sọʔọ
\end{array}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3sg.P3</td>
<td>escape</td>
<td>enter</td>
<td>descend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
á'ńọ & 'mwí & á'ńọ & tsóm & 'k-ọ
\end{array}
\]

to 6a.water to 7.deep.pool 7-D1

“She also dived back into the water of the deep.”

Kießling’s study provides a comprehensive and thickly descriptive account of a wide range of such serial constructions, their structure and interpretation.

The work is organized into 7 main chapters, as well as an introduction, a conclusion commenting on “a West Ring type of serialisation”, and a reference appendix of Isu coverbs and (hybrid) adverbials, sorted alphabetically for easy navigation. Following the introduction, chapter 2 (“Serial verb constructions vs. other multi-verb constructions”) presents a detailed description of what distinguishes serial verb constructions in Isu from other multi-verb constructions, including coordination, subordination, and conjoined clause constructions. Though coordination and subordination should be straightforward to the reader (being clauses introduced with unambiguous markers of coordination and subordination), conjoined clause constructions are more idiosyncratic to Isu grammar. This type of construction involves two clauses, the first of which has full grammatical marking, and the second of which consists of only a subject marker at the left edge of the clause and the verb, permitting no additional grammatical markers. Kießling (p.12) presents an excellent summary of diagnostics used to differentiate the multiple types of multi-verb constructions. Diagnostic summaries like these are found throughout this book, which we found to be helpful references to return to while reading.

In chapters 3 (“Types of serial verb constructions”), 4 (“Symmetrical serial verb constructions”), and 5 (“Asymmetrical serial verb constructions”), Kießling expands upon how SVCs are differentiated from one another and from conjoined clause constructions. Two main types of serial verb constructions are introduced: symmetrical SVCs (a.k.a. clause chaining/core layer serialization) and asymmetrical SVCs (a.k.a. integrated/nuclear layer serialization). Kießling (p. 32) provides a minimal pair roughly expressing the same situation, showing the distinction between asymmetrical SVCs, symmetrical SVCs, and conjoined clause constructions, shown in (2).
2. Same situation expressed as asymmetrical SVC, symmetrical SVC, and conjoined clause construction (p. 32)
   
a. Asymmetrical SVC
   
   \[ntwà \ mɔ́ \ bvɔ̀ \ wìy\]
   
   9.pot  P1.FOC  fall  crack
   \[V_1 \ V_2\]
   
   “The pot has fallen and got a crack/crushed.”

b. Symmetrical SVC

   \[ntwà \ mɔ́ \ bvɔ̀ \ tswí \ wɔ̀, \ wìy \ diàŋí \ yɔ́\]
   
   9.pot  P1.FOC  fall  descend  CPT  crack  pass.through  CFG
   \[V_1 \ V_2\]
   
   “The pot has fallen down hither and crushed also.”

c. Conjoined clause construction

   \[ntwài \ kì \ bvɔ̀ \ tswí \ wɔ̀ \ gwɔ́\]
   
   9.pot  F1  fall  descend  CPT  CF
   \[V_1\]
   \[li \ wìy \ diàŋɔ́ \ yɔ́\]
   
   9  crack  pass.through  CFG
   \[V_2\]
   
   “The pot will fall down hither and crush also.”

In (2.a-2.b), both serialization constructions appear with no overt subject marker coreferential with the structural subject \(ntwà\) “pot”, in contrast to (2.c) whose second clause begins with the coreferential subject marker \(l\). Further, in the symmetrical SVC in (2.b) each verb appears with its own directional adverbials: \(V_1\) with the centripetal directional adverbial \(wɔ̀\), and \(V_2\) with the centrifugal directional adverbial \(yɔ́\). In contrast, in the asymmetrical SVC in (2.a) such dual adverbial occurrence is not found and is not possible.

Kießling (p. 30) succinctly summarizes properties such as these which differentiate types of multi-verb constructions. Asymmetrical SVCs are primarily distinguished from symmetrical SVCs in (i) being monophasal, (ii) having only one verb come from a semantically open set, (iii) obligatorily sharing grammatical properties between the serialized verbs (e.g. temporal setting, modality, aspectual value, negation, arguments, adverbials, among others), and (iv) word order facts of the verbs and direct object. In asymmetrical SVCs, the verb from the semantically open set is referred to as the “core verb”, whereas the modificational verb is referred to as the “coverb”. In general, the sharing of grammatical
properties in symmetrical SVCs is possible though not obligatory, whereas in asymmetrical SVCs this sharing is obligatory. With respect to event structure, asymmetrical SVCs emphasize the simultaneity of event-components, whereas symmetrical SVCs – like conjoined clause constructions – emphasize sequentiality of its event-components.

Further, one can note that in (2.a) above that the verbs are adjacent, a structure not found in (2.b-2.c). This is a strict feature of asymmetrical SVCs, which Kießling understands as “verbal bunching” (p. 23) or “verbal attraction” of $V_2$ to a single verbal field (i.e. the “predicational frame”) (p. 295). An example of an asymmetrical SVC with 4 verbs bunched together was provided in (1) above. Verbal bunching in asymmetrical SVCs occurs irrespective of the valency and selectional relationships of the verbs to any objects within the clause. For example, when the intransitive verb $fyí$ “exit, go out” is used as a coverb, it appears adjacent to the core verb $nìy$ “take” within the predicational frame, and appears before the direct object. This shows that verbal bunching takes place even though intransitive $fyí$ does not form such a configuration with an object in non-SVC environments.

3. Intransitive verb $fyí$ “exit, go out” acting as coverb within a transitive frame (p. 47)

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
ú & nìy & fyí & bò & diy \\
3sg:PObj & take:PF & go.out:PF & hither & Div \\
V_{\text{Transitive}} & V_{\text{Intransitive}} & O
\end{array}
\]

“He brought out Diy.”

From other serial verb languages (e.g. Edo, Esan, Yoruba, Dagaare, Ewe), one might expect the intransitive verb to remain outside of the predicational frame, which is not the case in Isu.

One extremely interesting fact emerges from these verb bunching phenomena. Although intransitive verbs are incorporated without modifying the valency of the entire predicational frame, this is not so for all transitive verbs incorporated, e.g. the transitive verb $ná$ “keep” shown in (4).

4. Terminative coverb $ná$ “keep” assigns a patient role to direct objects overriding assignments set by the core verb (p. 174)

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
mô & nù & wò \\
1sg & hide & O2sg
\end{array}
\]

“I have hidden (something) from [you]_{SOURCE}”
When the core verb \textit{nù “hide”} appears on its own, it assigns a source role to its direct object (4.a), expressing “hiding from someone”. However, when the coverb \textit{ná “keep”} is incorporated and appears with the core verb \textit{nù}, this verbal complex expresses “hiding someone” in which the direct object receives a patient role interpretation assigned from the coverb \textit{ná} (4.b). These facts show the ability of coverbs to manipulate the predicational frame as a whole, and “override” specifications of the core verbs. These and other examples illustrate the complexity of the interaction between argument structure and semantic role assignment with the different types of asymmetrical SVCs.

In contrast to asymmetrical SVCs, symmetrical SVCs display a more limited type of verbal bunching, shown in (5).

5. **Symmetrical SVCs and verb bunching**

   a. \textbf{[…VOV…] Order - Symmetrical serialization with intervening direct object (p. 39)}

   \begin{tabular}{lllll}
   \textit{Tsâŋ-Kây} & \textit{wíy} & \textit{’mbám} & \textit{zùw} & \textit{kwè} & \textit{fwú} \\
   Tsang-Kay & kill & 9.cobra & skin & cook & chew \\
   V & O & V & V & V \\
   \textit{nò} & \textit{vôb} & \textit{k-íy} & \textit{kô} & \textit{kém-ð} \\
   and & 7.bone & 7-OF & NEG & break-IPF \\
   \end{tabular}

   “Tsang-Kay killed a cobra, skinned (it), cooked (it), ate (it) without a bone getting broken.”

   b. \textbf{[…VVO…] Order - Verb bunching (p. 40)}

   \begin{tabular}{lllll}
   \textit{ù} & \textit{ki} & \textit{niy} & \textit{túm-ð} & \textit{uvôb} & \textit{áwɔ̀} & \textit{wè} \\
   3sg & F1 & take::*L & send-IPF::*L & 8.bones & to & 3sg \\
   V & V & O \\
   \end{tabular}

   “He will take the bones and send (them) to him.”

   c. \textbf{[*…VVVVO…] Order – Verbal concatenation size restrictions (p. 40-41)}

   \begin{tabular}{llllll}
   *\textit{Tsâŋ-Kây} & \textit{ki} & \textit{wíy} & \textit{zùw} & \textit{kwè} & \textit{fwú} & \textit{’mbám} \\
   Tsang-Kay & F1 & kill & skin & cook & chew & 9.cobra \\
   \end{tabular}

   “Tsang-Kay will kill, skin, cook, and eat the cobra.”
The symmetrical SVC in (5.a) conveys a series of distinct events with no verbal bunching in the pre-object field\(^2\). However, example (5.b) shows that when only two verbs occur which share the same semantic object, they may exhibit verbal bunching. This appears to be restricted only to two verbs, though precise claims about the size and content of verbal bunching with symmetrical SVCs are not made explicit. The example in (5.c) shows that four verbs cannot bunch in the predicational frame with symmetrical SVCs. A full diagram of the syntactic order of elements within asymmetrical SVCs is provided later in chapter 8 (p. 285).

While chapter 4 is short, covering basic criteria of symmetrical SVCs (much of which we have already covered), chapter 5 describes asymmetrical SVCs at some length. As previously mentioned, the asymmetrical SVC is composed of a core verb and one (or more) modificational coverbs. Coverbs often have undergone semantic extension from their non-coverb use, e.g. ɲìə “give” \(\rightarrow\) beneficiary marking, táw “become strong” \(\rightarrow\) manner, number, and duration intensification, among others. The majority of this chapter is dedicated to how grammatical categories are marked on verbs within asymmetrical SVCs forming two main types: single-marking and concordant-marking of grammatical categories. These two types are detailed in a table on p. 52.

In the single-marking pattern, the grammatical category is only overtly marked on one of the verbs; the other verb or verbs surface unmarked. Grammatical categories which involve single-marking pattern include person, tense, mood/modality, negation, focalization, nominalization, and number. In contrast, concordant marker involves a grammatical category which is overtly marked on all verbs within the SVC. This pattern occurs with aspect, subordination, and some mood marking. Two examples are provided in (6).

6. Different types of marking of grammatical categories in asymmetrical SVCs

   a. Single-marking – Immediate future (F1) tense marker ƙì (p. 56)

   \[
   \begin{array}{cccccc}
   \text{ù} & \text{ƙì} & \text{byíŋọ} & \text{*[ƙì]} & \text{miàʔà} & \text{*[ƙì]} \\
   3sg & F1 & \text{roll.IPF} & \text{[F1]} & \text{throw.IPF} & \text{[F1]} \\
   \text{àtái} & \text{ɪʃ́} & \text{6.stones} & \text{here} \\
   \text{“He will roll down stones this way.”}
   \end{array}
   \]

---

\(^2\) Although the three post-object verbs appear adjacent, they are not understood as “verb bunching” because one can append each verb with the deleted coreferential object mbàm “cobra”, i.e. …wìj́ i mbàm, zùw mbàm, kwè mbàm… “…killed a cobra, skinned a cobra, cooked a cobra…” (shown in ex. 39b, pp. 39-40).
b. Concordant marking – terminal floating *L tone expressing imperfective aspect
(p. 76-77)

ù kì tê `nî-ə `twî
3sg F1 escape.IPF[:*L] enter-IPF[:*L] descend.IPF[:*L]

dzɔ́ŋə́ tsə́ ŋwɔ́
return.IPF[:*L] IMM CF

“She will dive back to escape.”

In (6.b), imperfective aspect is indicated by a terminal floating L tone on each verb. Imperfective aspect can also be marked segmentally through affixes (suffixes and infixes) and/or through internal vowel changes. In general, grammatical categories expressed through changes to the tonal or segmental shape of the verb display concordant marking whereas grammatical categories expressed through independent grammatical words/clitics display single marking, a curious fact not sufficiently addressed.

Chapter 6 discusses an additional multi-verb construction “Verbal compounds”. We found the treatment of this construction type less fully developed, and oddly placed in the otherwise excellent organization of this book. The short discussion of verbal compounds as a distinct category remains unconvincing, the main criteria separating them from asymmetrical SVCs being that one verb of the verbal compound does not clearly behave as a minor verb, and that verb compounds form idiomatic meanings, e.g. tɔ́m “shoot” + ní “eat” > tɔ́m-ní “win”. However, there is no discussion of distinct syntactic or morphological restrictions which might suggest a distinct representation or categorization, and in particular it is not clear to us why idiomaticity should warrant a separate classification. In addition, the use of the term “compound” is puzzling for two reasons. First, it does not align with other semantic and syntactic treatments of compounds elsewhere in the Africanist literature, e.g. Lord’s (1975) study of Igbo verb compounds. Second, the term “compound” suggests to us a tight syntactic unit with a single syntactic head; however Kießling shows that syntactic contiguity “is no defining criterion” as the verbal compound may be split up by a coverb fôrî “increase” (pp. 88-89).

Chapter 7 (“The coverbs”) is dedicated to describing the semantic function of the many dozens of coverbs used as minor, modifying verbs within an asymmetrical SVC. This is perhaps the strongest chapter in terms of its detailed coverage and organizational logic and clarity. It is also the densest chapter which will be excellent for the West Africanist linguist and act as an authoritative reference guide for other interested parties. These coverbs are classified
into 5 distinct types: motion, aspectuality, valency-altering, result, and manner; examples are in (7).

### 7. Types of coverbs

- **a. Motion:**  $zù$ “go”
- **b. Aspectuality:**  $mài$ “finish”
- **c. Valency-altering:**  $zìŋŋí$ “do, make”
- **d. Result:**  $pfɔ́$ “die”
- **e. Manner:**  $fwʊ́ři$ “do in wilful and evil intention for pleasure”

In going through this chapter, one is struck with the breadth of expressivity of these coverbs, conveying concepts such as deictic orientation and path, separation, inchoation, initiation, intention, immediacy, intensification, iteration, comparison, termination, completion, as well as conveying more subtle semantic nuances, e.g. $mwâmi$ “touch repeatedly”, $zóři$ “pass the day”, and $twaʔ$ “take a closer look (at)”.

Another striking aspect of these coverbs is that they are not unified within a dedicated syntactic position. Certain coverbs appear before the core verb and some after it; a list given in the appendix provides the syntactic position of individual coverbs. This issue is one of many treated in chapter 8 (“Grammaticalisation”), the last substantive chapter of the book before the conclusion and index. There are numerous topics discussed in this chapter, some of which could have stood as chapters in their own right, divided into three main sections: (1) the development of a new word class “hybrid adverbials” from coverbs, (2) syntactic patterns of SVCs and their historical development, and (3) the semantic extensions exhibited by coverbs from their autonomous core verb meaning.

Kießling identifies two types of “hybrid adverbials” - types A and B - and lays out properties associated with this grammaticalized word class (pp. 239-240) which differentiate them from verbs (and also other non-hybrid adverbials). These include the loss of (i) the capacity to act as an autonomous verb, (ii) the capacity to act as the single base of nominalization by the class 5 prefix $i$-, and (iii) morphological aspectual distinction, as well as different tonal properties. Like the previous chapter on coverbs, much of the discussion of this section is dedicated to contextualizing and exemplifying these hybrid adverbials in detail.

The next two sections of ch. 8 are more analytic in nature. In §8.2, Kießling lays out syntactic generalization associated with asymmetrical SVCs, including very helpful templatic schemas of coverb and hybrid adverbial positions (pp. 285-286). He then goes on to put forward a historical scenario which can account for these present syntactic construction types,
though this is more of a sketch than a fully developed theory (p. 294). In §8.3, Kießling provides a more developed analysis of the processes of semantic extension involved in the modificational use of coverbs and hybrid adverbials, “extracting general conclusions regarding the relationship of metaphor and metonymy” (p. 238). Some of these extensions are more or less straightforward, for example path adverbials denoting “up” have spatial and temporal extension, whereas adverbials denoting “down” extend to meanings of intensification, concentration, and punctiliarity. In other cases, however, a more telescopic analysis is required to account for the extensions, e.g. the verb *fyi* “exit” extending to mean “do intensively, excessively” (p. 144) and the verb *díanjí* “pass through” extending to “immediately, without delay” (p. 167). This section will surely be of interest to more cognitively oriented linguists interested in the metaphorical capability of language in aiding and refining meaning targets.

Although the strengths pointed out outweigh any weaknesses, we feel it would have been beneficial to readers, especially those unfamiliar with this language family and typological profile of the area, if there had been a short chapter providing more background information on Isu morphology and syntax. In the initial stages of reading, we were left with questions such as what the differences are between verbal “monoclusalit[y]” and “monophrasalit[y]”, what the conditions are governing the alternating SVOX and SOVX word orders, whether it is possible to drop the subject (conditions of pro-drop), what the distribution and use of logophoric pronouns is, among others. We are happy to note that Kießling is engaged in larger grammatical studies of Isu and the rest of West Ring, studies which should address these matters in a single document (e.g. Kießling in preparation).

Further, Kießling makes multiple claims that specific syntactic constructions follow iconic principles in line with the semantics and cognitive organization of the events involved (in particular, on pp. 10, 198, 228, 284-5). However, we feel that the concept of “iconicity” presented here is insufficiently supported and requires further elaboration. One strong claim related to iconicity is that syntactic “tightness” reflects event cohesion, noting that “serialisation, clause conjoining, coordination and subordination might be viewed as distinct points in a scale of syntactic tightness which is an iconic reflection of semantic tightness”, with “SVCs represent[ing] the extreme of maximal conceptual tightness or compactness” (p. 10) given that they are not linked with any overt linker. This is in contrast with subordination and coordination which “represent a maximally loose association of events”, and conjoined clause constructions which “tak[e] an intermediary position.” (p. 10).

However, concepts underlying this statement such as “tightness” and “intermediary position” would need to be refined if iconicity were to serve as an explanation rather than a correlation, perhaps by drawing upon advances in syntax/semantics interface studies. In any
case, a full explanation of the syntactic patterns in this work will likely require additional mechanisms and explanatory principles. Kießling himself points to a number of places in which violations of iconicity exist, e.g. with coverbs such as mālə “throw” and fōrə “increase” (p. 48). An issue he does not discuss is whether examples of verbal bunching in symmetrical SVCs violate iconicity principles, such as example (5.b) above. Here, the two verbs are associated with distinct events which presumably would warrant distinct syntactic units, yet they appear within a single tight syntactic unit reflected by their verbal bunching. Examples such as these illustrate that although iconicity is surely relevant to understanding syntactic patterns, the principles of iconicity need to be precisely defined so as to not over- or under-generate the grammar.

To conclude, we would like to touch upon a few places we recommend for future study. One is comparison with Aghem verbal constructions. As in Isu, Aghem displays serial verbs and verbal bunching, with real morphological and phonological repercussions such as tonal changes (Hyman 2001). For example, (8.a) shows a serial verb construction involving two verbs ni “take” and kia “cut” separated by an object. When this serial verb construction appears in a subordination context, the first verb receives a subordination HL tone pattern (a pattern also found in Isu – e.g. ex. 95a, p. 79). When the serial verbs appear with an intervening object, only the first verb receives this HL tone pattern (8.b); the second verb kia maintains its underlying /L/ tone. However, when both verbs appear adjacent with no intervening object, then both of the verbs appear with the HL tone pattern (8.c), similar to the pattern described for Isu (p. 79).

8. Comparison with Aghem – Tonal patterns of verbs

```
a. ìò mò ni fiíí kia finwín
   s/he past1 take 19.knife cut 19.bird
   “s/he took the knife and cut the bird”

b. wìzín  wílà ìò mò ni ni fà kia fi-nwín
   woman rel s/he past1 take knife 19.det cut bird
   “the woman who took the knife and cut the bird”

c. ni fiílà ìò mò ni kia nwín ‘fà
   knife 19.rel s/he past1 take cut bird 19.det
   “the knife that s/he took and cut the bird”
```

Further, in some cases in Aghem, a verb’s segmental shape can be altered depending on context. For example, in (9) the verb /dzɔ̃mlɔ̃/ “groan” can be realized without modification
(9.a), or realized with its second syllable reduced to a syllabic nasal in this context before a
verb (9.b). Other contexts allow this segmental shape change, as well.

9. **Aghem segmental reduction in verbs**
   
a. ̀ò mɔ̀ dzɔ̀mlɔ̀ tsìghà tìbvù
   s/he past1 groan pass dogs
   “s/he groaned more than the dogs”
   
b. ̀ò mɔ̀ dzımǹ tsìghà tìbvù
   s/he past1 groan pass dogs
   “s/he groaned more than the dogs”

Given the close relationship between Aghem and Isu, we believe it would be worthwhile to
further explore the different phonological shapes of verbs in a comparative light, particularly as
it relates to verb serialization and other multi-verb constructions.

Finally, although this study is generally theory-neutral, we believe that syntacticians of
different stripes will find it a very informative case study, presenting a great wealth of
empirical data worth examining to refine their own theories. Research in the last two decades
and more – e.g. Collins (1997), Hiraiwa & Bodomo (2008), Aboh (2009), and earlier work in
Baker (1989) – have produced a number of substantial proposals regarding the syntactic
structure correlate of serialization. We believe that syntacticians whose research interests
intersect with such concerns would be benefited by incorporating Isu and West Ring into these
discussions. Of particular theoretical interest is the verbal bunching phenomenon, which may
be evaluated with respect to specific theoretical operations, e.g. verb movement, head
movement, post-syntactic phonological deletion, etc. Verbal bunching in SVCs is also found in
other African languages, such as !Xun (Kx’a family, i.e. a “Khoisan” language – König 2010)
and Degema (Edoid branch of Benue-Congo – Kari 2003a, 2003b, 2004), showing the need for
larger comparative syntactic studies. If we also acknowledge some of the theoretically
interesting semantic issues which this study presents (e.g. the definiteness effect on objects in
conjoined clause constructions vs. SVCs – p. 25), Isu grammar presents a number of
challenging phenomena which the interested reader can incorporate into wider theoretical
debates.

**References**


Abbreviations:

CF  clause focus       O  object
CFG centrifugal       OF out-of-focus marker
CPT centripetal       P1  immediate past
D1  proximal demonstrative       P3  distant past
det  determiner (Aghem data)       PF  perfective
F1  hodiernal (near) future       rel  relativizer (Aghem data)
FOC  focus       S  subject
IMM immediacy marker       V  verb
IPF imperfective       X  adjunct
*L  floating low tone
NEG negative

“Numbers refer to person when followed by sg (singular), pl (plural), incl (inclusive), excl (exclusive) or log (logophoric). Otherwise, they refer to noun classes”  (p. x).