# Narrativity in Digital Discourse: Constructing Conceptual events in Egyptian Female Facebook Communication

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## Abstract

Digital discourse, as a new genre, has gained its distinctive features that re-conceptualize both social and linguistic practices in the virtual world of communication. The aim of this paper is to scrutinize the verbal narrative potential underlying the construction of speech events in digital discourse. The main manifestation is the sequence of, at least, three consecutive serial verbs. The compiled corpus consists of 9823 tokens from Facebook status updates in three Egyptian female groups during a six months' time (January-July 2018).The data is collected, filtered, electronically stored and analyzed using aConCorde 0.4.3 (Roberts 2018) and discussed in the light of Pawley's (2011) views. The results shed light on a set of formal and functional features concomitant with conceptual event construction, as an unexplored feature of narrativity in digital discourse; one of them is that language users tend to create 'meaningful chunks' out of linguistic clues.

> <u>Keywords</u>: Conceptual event units; digital discourse; narrative serial verb constructions; Egyptian Arabic; female Facebook communication

## 1. Introduction

The relationship between language and thought is controversial and has gone through a long path of scrutiny among philosophers and linguists. Thus, it renders defining a 'conceptual event' to be, by no means, an easy task. The way events are segmented in language is often assumed to mirror the way we segment them conceptually (Defina 2016b, p.1). *'What is an event?'* is a question whose answer has been attempted by many in the fields of linguistics and philosophy, since Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 1048b. Stemming from the premise that a '*verb*' is a linguistic sign that denotes 'an action or a state' (Biber et al 2011), therefore, a combination of a group of serial verbs constitutes an event or a 'short story' (Gradinaru, 2015).

For the purpose of the present study, event segmentation operationally refers to a single clause that contains more than two serial (consecutive) verbs which have one subject. These types of verbs are referred to as 'serial verb constructions' (Stewart (2001), Aikhenvald & Dixon (2006), Haspelmath (2016). In the English example,

[1]  He **has been trying to fix** the dishwasher

the four verbs belong to the same phrase and refer to only one conceptual event. In Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, it is hypothesized in this paper, that the more serial verbs that occur in the clause, the more potential narrative

elements, and hence more functions, that are added. Consider the following examples that are found in the collected data:

[2 (a)]هات الكتاب

hæt-ikkitæb

bring-you (masc. sing.) the book

[2 (b)]قوم هات الكتاب

u:m hæt-ikkitæbʕ

bring-you (masc. sing.) the book

[2 (c)]قوم روح هات الكتاب

u:m ru:ḥ hæt-ikkitæb ʕ

get up go bring-you (masc. sing.) the book

[2 (d)]قوم اتحرك روح هات الكتاب

ʕu:m-itḥarrak ru:ḥ hæt-ikkitæb

bring-you (masc. sing.) the book

[2 (e)]قوم انجر اتحرك روح هات الكتاب

ʕu:m-ingarr-itḥarrak ru:ḥ hæt-ikkitæb

you (masc. sing.) get up-run- hurry- move- bring- the book

The varying formal features in the examples [2 (a-e)] are definitely concomitant with different functions. In this paper, it is hypothesized that there is a correlation between the narrative element suggested through using serial verb construction patterns and the portrayal of a conceptual event.

Conceptual events in digital discourse, as investigated in this paper, are constructed through the frequent use of serial verbs in posts and status updates. Distinctive features of digital discourse, as a newly investigated genre, are now definitely coming to see light, due to the increasing attention they gain in recent research work (e.g. Jones et al. 2015); though this has been rather preliminary to date and there is no agreement on methodological standards. While the excessive use of pictograms, as one of its main features, for instance, has encompassed scrutiny, little focus has been drawn to other formal or functional verbal manifestations for constructing conceptual events. Hiding – but not eliminating- one's face while using Facebook may entail more freedom of expression and representation. Viewed as text alone, Page (2010, p. 427) posits 'narrative characteristics of the status update' in Facebook as a free social platform. As a self-contained unit, it has a writer who tells about an experience.

Like all social media, it is characterized by the automatic generation of the writer's 'preferred' identity and hence recognition on the part of the recipient(s). This gives way to an immediate response; no anonymous author is there in all cases. Timestamp is also automatically generated in Facebook posts and updates. 'As the time of narration is understood to be near simultaneous with the time of reported events, this enables the audience to reconstruct a chronological position for the updated events' (Page 2010, p. 427). Worth noting is that due to the specific nature of digital discourse in general, and Facebook communication in particular, some issues like gender can hardly submit to scrutiny. This is due to the possibly disguised or concealed identity of the user. So, this study will only be confined to groups created by females and joined by females, and that mostly discuss life problems of women.

The study is an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the serial verb patterns that constitute a conceptual event?
2. What are the formal and functional features of each?
3. How is verbal narrativity constructed in digital discourse via 'conceptual events'?

For answering these questions, the paper is designed as follows: § 2 is a background through which major theoretical preliminaries are introduced. In § 3, research method is defined through utilizing corpus linguistic tools. The data is described and how it is collected and analyzed is explained. § 4 shows the results through analyzing and discussing data.

## 2. Background

In this section, major theoretical preliminaries are discussed. 'Narrativity', 'serial verb construction' and 'conceptual events' are the main concepts around which the theoretical framework of the study revolves. The term 'Narrativity is generated by the recognition of reported events, ordered within a temporal framework, and experienced by an individuated existent who acts as a filtering consciousness which makes sense of them' (Page 2010: p. 472).

A serial verb construction is a 'succession of verbs and their complements (if any) with one subject and one tense value that are not separated by any overt marker of coordination or subordination' (Collins 1997, p. 491). The construction SVC should have the following properties (Aikhenvald 2006):

1. A sequence of two or more verbs which can both also function independently

2. Mono-clausality, with all the intonational properties of a mono-verbal clause

3. No markers of subordination, coordination or any kind of syntactic

dependency

4.One core argument is being shared by all verbs in the construction

5. There is only one grammatical subject

6. The construction refers to a single event

Linguists mostly felt ill at ease in dealing with complex structures as multi-word units. The question now is: 'Are different linguistic representations of events associated with different ways of thinking about the events?' (Pawley 2011, p.26). Narrative serial verb constructions 'tell a short story' (Pawley 2011, p. 29). The 'small stories' approach in digital discourse, especially Facebook platform, is a blossoming genre that gives way to study free linguistic practices.

Why, one may ask, would speakers wish to cram several stages of a narrative into a single clause? What is to be gained by such compression? To answer this, we need to see narrative SVCs as part of a set of syntactic structures that contrast with each other in terms of information packaging. Narrative SVCs are preferred when speakers do not want to individuate the stages. In narrative SVCs individual events in the sequence are mentioned but in the most minimal way.

*Major constituents of reports of successful collecting episodes*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MOVEMENT** | **COLLECTING** | **TRANSPORT** | **PROCESSING** | **CODA** |
| **TO SCENE OF COLLECTING** | | **TO SCENE OF PROCESSING** | | |

The first three stages describe the complicating action. Stage 4 is the resolution, telling how the action was processed. Sometimes there is a fifth stage, a kind of coda, that closes off the episode by saying, e.g., that the actor(s) slept or came home.

The question that emerges at this point is: are different linguistic representations of events associated with different ways of thinking about the events? Pawley's (2011, p. 28) view is that this must be true, by definition, to the degree that the linguistic representations give different information. However, Pawley (2011, p. 26) distinguishes between representations that are: (a) *fully isomorphic*, i.e. have the same linguistic structure and content, differing only in superficial details of form;(b) *quasi-isomorphic*, specifying the same conceptual elements and relations

but packaging them in a more condensed or diffuse manner; and (c) *not isomorphic*, because they mention different entities and/or relations.

## 3. Research Method

For a proper data collection, Egyptian serial verb patterns are identified and defined operationally as 'the construction in which three or more verbs are strung together in one clause without any intrusive element and without subject change'. Tense and aspect are excluded here and postponed for further research. Intonational and phonological aspects are also beyond the scope of this study.

Through three Facebook closed groups that are created by females for females, and after having secured consent from the members, the corpus for this study is compiled through observing the status updates and comments over a period of six months (January-July 2018). The resultant corpus size is around 1.2 million tokens, but the actual number of Egyptian words is less than this number (9823 tokens), as it was manually filtered for code switching with Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) structures, as well as foreign words, and numbers which were all removed.

The software aConCorde0.4.3 (Roberts 2018) provided the concordance for each sentence, which was useful in checking the context in which the sentence occurred and making sure it is colloquial. All the sentences were then saved and the structures in which the verbal predicate occurred were analyzed. Verbs were searched for through the corpus using Arabic orthography in the same way the online texts are written. The major focus in analyzing the data is on the formal features (syntactic behaviour) as well as functional features (pragmatic behaviour).

## 4. Results and Discussion

In the light of the theoretical preliminaries discussed in § 2, the results of the analysis are discussed in this section with a view to shedding light on the formal and functional characteristics of the conceptual events formed by serial verb constructions in three Facebook Egyptian female groups. The research hypothesis is that there is a narrative element in this sequence that draws a portrayal of a 'short story' in the mind of the recipient. The analysis draws heavily on the five stages or episodes suggested by Pawley (2011) for forming narrative serial verb construction. Major constituents of reports of successful collecting episodes are:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MOVEMENT | COLLECTING TO SCENE OF COLLECTING | TRANSPORT TO SCENE OF PROCESSING | PROCESSING | CODA |

A narrative SVC is defined as any SVC that contains two or more of stages 1–5. The extent of the time gaps between stages usually remains unspecified…but is understood from pragmatic knowledge (Pawley 2011, p. 30).

### 4.1 Patterns of Conceptual Event Construction

Three major patterns are depicted for the formation of a conceptual event through serial verb construction, in a 9823 tokens data:

Table 1: *Patterns of Conceptual Event Construction*

| CEC | No. of verbs | frequency | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pattern I** | 3 verbs | 4652 | 47.5 |
| **Pattern II** | 4 verbs | 3488 | 35.5 |
| **Pattern III** | 5 verbs | 1683 | 17 |

In Table 1, it is indicated that there is a positive correlation between the number of serial verbs in each pattern, and the frequency of occurrence in the corpus. The empty slots applying Pawley's model are almost typical in each pattern. For example, all manifestations of pattern I lack slot number 1, that is the 'movement to the scene of collecting', as well as slot number five, that is the coda. The same applies to pattern II, where all examples lack the 'coda'.

**Pattern I: V$_{pres}$+ V$_{pres}$ + V$_{pres}$**

الست **تقدر تفضل تستحمل** لحد ما يفيض بيها[3]

ʔissiti-tiʔdar tifḍal tistaḥmil liḥaddi ma yifi:ḍ bi:ha

       A woman can persistently bear up until she is fed up

ست سنين ولسه **بيحاول يجرب يهاجر**[4]

sitti sni:n wi lissa biyḥa:wil yigɑrrɑb yiha:gir

       It has been six years now and he is still trying to immigrate.

[5]ياريت **نبقى نبص نشوف** كلامنا بيجرح ولا لأ

nibʔa nbuṣṣI nʃu:f kalamna biyigraḥ walla laʔ

Why don't we just watch our own words

*Table 2: Pattern I*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MOVEMENT TO SCENE OF COLLECTING** | **COLLECTING** | **TRANSPORT TO SCENE OF PROCESSING** | **PROCESSING** | **CODA** |
| - | tiʔdar | tifḍal | tistaḥmil | - |
| - | biyḥa:wil | yigarrɑb | yiha:gir | - |
| - | nibʔa | nbuṣṣ | nʃu:f | - |
| - | **ma**-tiʔdari:ʃ | tiḥawli | taxdi | - |
| - | **ma**-tinfaʕʃ | tinzil | tiwaṣṣɑl | - |

[6]كده ما **تنفعش تنزل توصل** الولاد المدرسة

kida matinfaʕʃi-tinzil tiwaṣṣɑl-ilwila:d-ilmadrasa

In this case she cannot give the kids a ride to school.

[7]عِندها هو اللي خلاه **يجري يروح يجيب** شقة إيجار

ʕindaha howa-lli xalla:h yigri: yiru:ḥ yigi:b ʃaʔʔa ʔiga:r

Her stubbornness made him hurry up to rent a car.

[8]**فكرت تحاول تكون** شخصية لها وزنها في المجتمع

fakkarit tiḥa:wil tiku:n ʃaxṣiyya laha waznaha f-ilmogtamaʕ

She thought of trying to be an elite in society.

[9]**جربت تبدأ تستخدم** مكونات صحيه في الاكل

garrabit tibdaʔ tistaxdim mokawwina:t ṣiḥḥiyya fi-lʔakl

She has tried to use healthy ingredients in food.

[10]**صممت تنزل تشتغل** عشان تجيب عربية

ṣammimit tinzil tiʃtaɣal ʕaʃa:n tigi:b ʕarabiyya

She persisted to work in order to buy a car

**Pattern II: $V_{pos\ (past/pres)} + V_{pres} + V_{pres} + V_{pres}$**

[11]**بدأت تفكر تحاول تعمل** دايت

badaʔit tifakkar tiḥa:wil tiʕmil dayit

She considered trying to go on a diet

[12]**تحبى تقومى تشوفى تطبخى** لهم إيه؟

tiḥibbi tʔu:mi tʃu:fi hatiṭbuxi lhom ʔe:h

You (fem. sing.) like to get up and see what you want        to cook for them?

[13]ما **تحاول تجرب تقدر تستغنى**عن العربية اليومين دول؟

ma tḥa:wil tigarrab tistaɣna ʕan-ilʕarabiyya-lyome:n do:l

Why don't you try doing without the car for a couple of days?

An attempt to convince through mitigation appears in [13], for if the serial verb construction is reduced to one, testaɣna ( do without) it would seem like a command rather than a mild suggestion.

*Table 3: Pattern II*

| 1 MOVEMENT TO SCENE OF COLLECTING | 2 COLLECTING | 3 TRANSPORT TO SCENE OF PROCESSING | 4 PROCESSING | 5 CODA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| tiḥibbi | tʔu:mi | tʃu:fi | hatiṭbuxi | |
| bitifḍɑl | tiliff | tigri | tiʃtiri | - |
| yitnayyil | yiru:ḥ | yigɑrrɑb | yitgawwiz | |
| **ma**-tinsa:ʃ | tinzil | tiru:ḥ | tigi:b | |

**Pattern III: $V_{(past/pres)} + V_{pres} + V_{pres} + V_{pres} + V_{pres}$**

[14]**إوعى تكونى ابتديتى تفكرى تسافرى** تانى

ʔiwʕi tku:ni-btade:ti tfɑkkɑri tsafri ta:ni

Don't ever start to think that you can travel again

[15]**خافت تكون نسيت تروح تجيب** الشهادة

xa:fit tku:n nisyit tru:ḥ tigi:b-iʃʃaha:da

She was afraid that the had forgotten to bring her degree

[16]ماﺑتفكرش تيجي تقوم نروح نزور طنط علا؟

ma bitfakkarʃi ti:gi tiʔu:m niru:ḥ nizu:r ṭanṭi ʕola

Don't you think of going visiting aunt Ola?

*Table 4: Pattern III*

|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | **MOVEMENT TO SCENE OF COLLECTING** | **COLLECTING** | **TRANSPORT TO SCENE OF PROCESSING** | **PROCESSING** | **CODA** |
| 1 | ʔiwʕi | tku:ni | **-**btade:ti | tfɑkkɑri | tsafri |
| 2 | xa:fit | tku:n | nisyit | tru: ḥ | tigi:b |
| 3 | **ma**bitfɑkkɑrʃ**I** | ti:gi: | nʔu:m | nru:ḥ | nzu:r |

For each of stages 1–5, speakers can choose to say what happened in more or less detail. Thus, it is possible to compress all five stages into a single clause or to give them more extended treatment, spread over two, three or many clauses. There is no single construction type that is uniquely dedicated to the encoding of events (Pawley 2011, p.65). Each small VP may contain a single verb or a verb series, i.e., it may describe a single event, or an event sequence that hangs together.

The maximum number of serial verb construction in Egyptian Arabic as found in the data collected is six. All these verbs share the same subject. The following example is no exception. Though it consists of six verbs, yet there is a subject shift. The first verb in the series has the subject (you/ plural), whereas the rest six verbs have the subject (we/ plural).

In example (17), though seven consecutive verbs occur, only six are considered a serial verb construction: (niḥæwil niru:ḥ niʃu:f haniʕrɑf niḥill). The first verb, taʕa:lu, does not fall under the category under investigation; i.e. those group of consecutive verbs that has one subject and that has no intrusive element or 'any overt  marker of coordination or subordination' that separates them. There is a subject shift in the verb 'taʕa:lu', that renders the sentence into two verb phrases; each of which has a different conceptual event.

[17]**تعالوا نحاول نروح نشوف هنعرف نقترح نحل** المشكلة دي ازاي

taʕa:lu    nḥawil nru: ḥ niʃu:f  haniʕraf naqtari ḥ niḥill-ilmoʃkila di-zzay

Come on! Let's try to know how to suggest solving (a solution to) this problem

Examples of this type are very rare in the corpus collected. Accompanying prosodic features such as pauses, and intonation contour variation are observed, but postponed for further research since they are beyond the scope of this study.

### 4.2 Formal features

All the verbs in a narrative Egyptian Arabic SVC in the collected data are contiguous. The first verb in the sequence, episode 1 in the serial verb construction, is usually the movement to scene, that attracts more verbs to follow. Table 5 summarizes the verbs that carry the initiative in the collected data and that are followed by two or more consecutive verbs in the construction of a conceptual event. The table illustrates the syntactic behaviour of these verbs in terms of whether they are finite or non-finite – in the data collected.

*Table 5: syntactic behaviour of episode 1 verbs in the collected data*

| | | *Finite* | *Non-finite* |
|---|---|---|---|
| يعوز | yiʕu:z | ✓ | ✓ |
| يحتاج / محتاج | y/miḥta:g | ✓ | ✓ |
| إستنى / مستني | ʔ/mistanni | ✓ | ✓ |
| إتعود/ متعود | ʔ/mitʕawwid | ✓ | ✓ |
| فضل | fiḍil/ yifḍal | ✓ | |
| عرف | ʕirif/ʕarif | ✓ | ✓ |
| فكر | fɑkkɑr | ✓ | ✓ |
| حب | ḥabb/ḥabeb | ✓ | |
| قرب | ʔɑrrɑb | ✓ | |
| قدر | ʔeder/ʔa:der | ✓ | ✓ |
| بطل | baṭṭɑl | ✓ | |
| بدأ | badaʔ | ✓ | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| صمم | ṣammim | ✓ | ✓ |
| جرب | garrɑb | ✓ | |
| راح/ رايح | rɑːḥ/rɑːyiḥ | ✓ | ✓ |
| قام | ʔaːm/ʔaːyem | ✓ | ✓ |
| بقى | baʔa | ✓ | |
| خاف/ خايف | xaːf | ✓ | ✓ |
| قعد/ قاعد | ʔaʕad/ʔaːʕed | ✓ | ✓ |
| شاف/ شايف | ʃaːf/ʃaːyef | ✓ | ✓ |
| يطيق | yiṭiːʔ | ✓ | ✓ |
| تعالى | taʕaːla (imperative only) | ✓ | |
| وعد | waʕad | ✓ | |
| اتفق | ʔittafaʔ | ✓ | |
| إتطوع | ʔiṭṭawwaʕ | ✓ | |
| إوعى | ʔiwʕa (imperative only) | ✓ | |
| حاسب | ḥaːsib (imperative only) | ✓ | |
| حاول | ḥaːwil | ✓ | |

## Negation

The data analysis revealed that the negative particle *ma-*, together with the suffix -ʃ, are only cliticized with only one verb in the serial; be it in episode 1 (movement to scene of collecting), or episode 2 (collecting).

| | |
|---|---|
| ما نصلح العربية ليه؟ عينيها | بقتش تقدرتشوف بيهم |
| ما تشوفي تطبخي لهم إيه؟ | تحاول تجرب تقدر تستغنى |
| ما بيهم من كتر العياط | تقدريش تحاولي تاخدي منه |
| ما عن العربية اليومين دول؟ | تنساش تنزل تروح تجيب |
| ما دياب الحفلة الجاية كده | تنفعش تنزل توصل الولاد |
| ما قدرت تفكر تسيب جوزها | جيتيش نروح نصلح العربية |
| ما الولاد المدرسة سناء عمرها | قدرت تفكرتسيب جوزها |
| ما تقدر تفضل تستحمل لحد | يفيض بيها ست سنين |
| ما نصلح العربية ليه؟ عينيها | قدرتش تحتفظ بنصيبها |
| ما نسيت تروح تجيب الشهادة ما بتفكرش تيجي تقوم نروح نزور | |

*Figure I: the negative particle ma* ما *insample concordance lines of the data*

A negative clitic may precede the initial verb in a narrative SVC.

[20]سناء عمرها ما **قدرت تفكر تسيب** جوزها

sana:ʔ ʕomraha ma ʔidrit tifakkar tisi:b go:zha

Sanaa was never able to think of leaving her husband.

[21]ما **جيتيش نروح نصلح** العربية ليه؟

ma giti:ʃ tiru:ḥ niṣallaḥ-ilʕarabiyya le:h

Why didn't you come and fix the car?

[22]عينيها ما **بقتش تقدر تشوف** بيهم من كتر العياط

ʕini:ha ma baʔitʃi tiʔdar tiʃu:f bi:hom min kotr-ilʕiya:ṭ

She was not able to see with her eyes because of crying.

[23]ما**تقدريش تحاولى تاخدى** منه غير كده

ma tiʔdari:ʃ tiḥawli taxdi minu ɣe:r kida

You cannot try take anything out of him.

However, negation can be extended to any episode taking into account that 'single negatability' is one of the criteria suggested by Haspelmath (2016) for defining serial verb construction. Usually with the negative particle preceding one verb, the conceptual event constructed by serial verbs is negated.

[18]**حاولى ما تقعديش تفتكري** اللي حصل كل شوية

ḥawli ma toʔʕodi:ʃ tiftikri-lli ḥaṣal kolli ʃowiyya

Try not to stay and think so often of what has happened.

[19]ياريت **نبقى نتعلم مانفتحش** السيرة دي تاني

ya re:t nibʔa nitʕallim ma niftaḥʃ-issi:ra-di ta:ni

Would we please learn not to talk in this topic again?

## 4.3 Functional features
**Functions of using serial verbs in event construction:**
Holding the premise that a short story is being told through serial verb constructions, a multiplicity of functions is being served, even though narrativity is only backgrounded:

## 1. intensifying (expressing tense emotions)
[24]سيبيه **يتنيل يروح يجرب يتجوز** واحدة تانية

sibi:h yitnayyil yiru: ḥ yigɑrrɑb yitgawwiz waḥda ta:nya
Let him go and try marrying another woman.
In this example, the conceptual event comes after an imperative ' sibi:h'
(=let him), which is not included in the serial verb construction since it
does not meet the criteria of having the same subject, besides it is
separated by a pronoun. Then the four serial verbs act harmoniously to
raise the emotional level of the 'short story'.

**2. prolonging (giving more details)**

[25]يوم الخميس **بتفضل تلف تجري تشتري** الطلبات

       yo:m-ilxami:s bitifḍɑl tiliff tigri tiʃtiri-iṭṭalaba:t
       On Thursday, she keeps moving running for buying things.


The scene seems pregnant with details as verbal signs that portray an
image of a tired woman who keeps on wandering in a hurry to buy things
for the household. Using serial verb pattern helps constructing the
conceptual event in a way that the recipient perceives it in an extended
panoramic view.

**3. mitigating (requesting or suggesting politely)**

[26]قلت له ما **تنساش تفتكر تنزل تروح تجيب** البنطلون

ma tinsa:ʃ tiftikir tinzil tiru:ḥ tigi:b-ilbanṭalo:n   ʔoltilu

I said to him, 'don't forget to get downstairs to bring the trousers'.

[27]قالولي **هنبقى نحاول نجتهد نجيب** درجات أحسن الإمتحان الجاي

ʔalu:li hanibʔa nḥa:wil nigtihid nigi:b daraga:t ʔaḥsan-illimtiḥa:n-
iggayy

They said to me 'we'll try exert an effort to get higher marks in the
next exam.

In example [27], a mother is reporting how her two kids apologized to her
because of their low marks in the exam. Though narrativity is rather not
dominant here in the sense of storytelling, yet a conceptual event is
portrayed through the use of a serial verb construction. The kids are
forming a future event in which they will attempt to get higher marks.


**5. Findings and Conclusion**

      In this study, an attempt has been made to scrutinize constructing
conceptual events in digital discourse in the light of Pawley's (2011)
views. Serial verbs are the medium through which conceptualizing
narrativity is achieved. Through analyzing a corpus of three Facebook
female groups, formal and functional features of 'digital narrativity
through conceptual events' are depicted. As the data analysis reveals,
ongoing dynamic events seem to be automatically chunked into discrete
units. Language users tend to create 'meaningful chunks' out of linguistic

clues. Individual isolated verbs are only mere signs, so that by chunking them together a conceptual event emerges. Hence, narrativity is an essential characteristic of how the human brain perceives and produces events. Digital discourse, in this case, is no exception. So, similar results are expected to take place when conducting the same method and analysis to other genres.

A cursory glance at the analysis of serial verb patterns in the collected data reveals that the conceptual events constructed in the status updates are quite distinct from the forms typically used to narrate more canonical personal experience narratives     or life histories. In this, it seems that the conceptual event brings to mind what is more than narrating an event. Conceptual events relate narrativity through the formulation of a 'short story'. However, 'telling a story' is not the only explicit aim in constructing conceptual events. Using extended serial verb forms serve other functions such as: expressing tense emotions, giving more details providing extra information, requesting or suggesting politely. Though, implicitly, narrativity is there, it is not the major purpose of constructing the conceptual event.

The formal and functional analysis of the corpus of the study shed light on how verbal narrativity is constructed in digital discourse via 'conceptual events'. For creating 'a small short story', language users tended to resort to complex constructions that give way to portraying a wider scene. Each verb is a 'linguistic sign' that has a connotation of its own. So, chunking verbs together constitute an event segmentation that can be either long or short according to the conceptual event that the language user intends to construct, providing a narrative effect to the message conveyed.

There is an inversely proportional relation between the number of the serial verb construction in conceptual event representation in each pattern, and their frequency of occurrence in the corpus. Assigning a one-to-one correspondence between each pattern and the function(s) it fulfills is not linguistically guaranteed.  This can be viewed in the light of Pawley's theory that 'the analyst's search for water-tight categories cannot be fully successful. Ordinary language users are comfortable operating with categories that leak' (Pawley 2011, p.38). 'Events' are ideas, conceptual constructions that exist in the minds of language users, mental representations of bounded happenings. However, as illustrated above, some functional reasons still lie behind. Further research is still needed for studying this phenomenon in different genres, as well as the various supra-segmental features concomitant with them.

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