

*Serial verb constructions in  
Austronesian and Papuan languages*

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# Serial verb constructions in Austronesian and Papuan languages

edited by  
Gunter Senft



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The Australian National University

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# *List of contributors*

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**Louise Baird**

Department of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia and Oceania  
Leiden University  
Postbus 9515  
2300 RA Leiden  
The Netherlands  
E-mail: [L.Baird@hotmail.com](mailto:L.Baird@hotmail.com)

**John Bowden**

Department of Linguistics  
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies  
The Australian National University  
P.O. Box 4  
Canberra ACT 0200  
Australia  
E-mail: [john.bowden@anu.edu.au](mailto:john.bowden@anu.edu.au)

**David Mead**

SIL  
P.O. Box 81439  
8000 Davao City  
Philippines  
E-mail: [mead2368@gmail.com](mailto:mead2368@gmail.com)

**Volker Heeschen**

Institute of Ethnology and African Studies  
University of Munich  
Oettingenstr. 67  
D-80538 Munich  
Germany  
E-mail: [VHeeschen@t-online.de](mailto:VHeeschen@t-online.de)

**Andrew Pawley**

Department of Linguistics  
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies  
The Australian National University  
P.O. Box 4  
Canberra ACT 0200  
Australia  
E-mail: [Andrew.Pawley@anu.edu.au](mailto:Andrew.Pawley@anu.edu.au)

**Ger Reesink**

Department of Linguistics  
Radboud University Nijmegen  
PO Box 9103  
NL-6500 HD Nijmegen  
The Netherlands  
E-mail: [ger.reesink@hccnet.nl](mailto:ger.reesink@hccnet.nl)

**Gunter Senft**

Max-Planck-Institute for Psycholinguistics  
PB 310  
NL-6500 AH Nijmegen  
The Netherlands  
E-mail: [Gunter.Senft@mpi.nl](mailto:Gunter.Senft@mpi.nl)

**Miriam van Staden**

Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication  
University of Amsterdam  
Taalwetenschap  
Spuistraat 210  
1012 VT Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
E-mail: [M.vanStaden@uva.nl](mailto:M.vanStaden@uva.nl)

**Catharina Williams-van Klinken**

Dili Institute of Technology  
P.O. Box 293  
Dili, Timor Leste  
E-mail: [cvk@iinet.net.au](mailto:cvk@iinet.net.au)

**Scott Youngman**

SIL International  
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road  
Dallas TX 75236  
USA  
E-mail: [scott\\_youngman@sil.org](mailto:scott_youngman@sil.org)





# 1 *Introduction*

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GUNTER SENFT

During my first fieldtrip to the Trobriand Islands in 1982/83 Weyei, the weather magician of Tauwema, gave me five formulae of his weather magic as a sign of his friendship (see Senft 1985, 1997). He also provided me with much information with respect to how he prepares and performs his magic. During one of our first discussions about these matters he mentioned ginger which plays a prominent role for a number of weather magical (and other magical) spells. The weather magician goes to the bush and collects ginger; he chews this ginger and then spits it out before, sometimes also during, and after he whispers his various magical formulae. Ginger is believed to increase the power of the spoken words. During this conversation Weyei produced the following sentence:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) *nubyeya ba-la o laodila ba-ne'i ba-kau neya –*  
tomorrow 1.FUT-go Loc bush 1.FUT-look.for 1.FUT-take ginger  
'Tomorrow I will go to the bush – I will look for and take ginger –
- ba-ka'ita ba-ka'ui ba-migai e*  
1.FUT-return 1.FUT-chew 1.FUT-whisper eh  
I will return I will chew (it) I will whisper – eh –
- ba-ka'ita ba-ka'ui ba-puli ba-migai megwa*  
1.FUT-return 1.FUT-chew 1.FUT-spit 1.FUT-whisper magic  
I will come back I will chew (it) I will spit (it) I will whisper magic.'

In this sentence we notice three interesting things: First of all this is one of the rather rare instances where a speaker of Kilivila, the Austronesian language of the Trobriand Islanders, self-repairs his utterance (see Schegloff et al. 1977) — the fact that the utterance needs a repair is indicated by the editing term 'e'. Second, Weyei does not start his repair by repeating just the verb that preceded the part of the clause that needed to be repaired ('baka'ui'); on the contrary, he goes back to where the last clause of this sentence begins and repeats the two verbs ('baka'ita baka'ui') that preceded the instance to be repaired, inserts the verb he forgot to produce (i.e. 'bapuli') and then finishes the sentence.

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1 Abbreviations used are: A - subject of a transitive verb; excl - exclusive; DEP - dependent; FUT - future; HAB - habitual; CP - classificatory particle (see Senft 1996); O - object of a transitive verb; obj - object; Perf - perfective; Pl/pl - plural; R/real - realis; S - subject; Seq - sequential; Sg/sg/s - singular; V - verb.

Obviously he considers the last clause of the sentence as one construction, as one unit, and if this unit needs to be repaired he has to start with this repair at where the unit begins (see Levelt 1983a, b; 1984). Finally, we note that this sentence consists of a number of verbs that are realised so that one follows the other, in a series-like way; and we also realise that Weyei uses these serialised verbs to describe his planned actions in great detail from the beginning to the end.

However, this last observation is far from being exciting or new. The phenomenon of so-called ‘serial verbs’ was first described for African languages as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century! In 1875, Christaller (1875:69–73, 143ff.) discussed this phenomenon in his grammar of Twi, and 32 years later Westermann, in his grammar of Ewe (which was published in German in 1907), pointed out:

... a peculiarity of Ewe is that we often find a row of verbs one after the other. The chief features of this are that all the verbs stand next to each other without being connected ... In English these consecutive verbs are partly rendered by composite sentences. But very often several Ewe verbs may be expressed by a single verb in English. The explanation for this is that the Ewe people describe every detail of action or happening from beginning to end, and each detail has to be expressed by a special verb: they dissect every happening and present it in its several parts, whereas in English we seize on the leading event and express it by a verb, while subordinate events are either not considered or are rendered by means of a preposition, adverb, conjunction, or a prefix on the verb. (Westermann 1930:126)

In 1914 Hugo Schuchardt noted similarities with respect to these verb constructions between Ewe on the one hand and Suriname Creole on the other hand (see also Muysken and Veenstra 1994:289), and in 1963 Stewart — another scholar of African languages — coined the term ‘serial verbs’ to describe this phenomenon (see Senft 2004:51). So far, most research on serial verbs and serial verb constructions (from now on abbreviated as ‘SVCs’) has been done on African languages and on pidgins and creoles; however, SVCs are also to be found in Hmong-Mien, Mon-Khmer, Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai, Papuan, Austronesian (especially Oceanic), Australian, Semitic, Amazonian and Central-American languages as well as in Japanese (for references see Bisang 1992; Brill 2004; Crowley 2002; Senft 2004). The honour of being the first to describe the presence of more than one verb within a sentence for an Austronesian language — namely Jabêm — is due to Otto Dempwolff (1939; see also Bisang 1986; Bradshaw 1983).

The publication of Mark Durie’s seminal paper on serial verb constructions in 1997 led to a resurgence of interest in this phenomenon. But so far there are only a few studies on SVCs in Austronesian and Papuan languages and Durie (1997:291ff.) emphasises rightly that those languages are largely underrepresented in the present linguistic literature. However, this situation is slowly but gradually changing. Thus, all the grammar sketches presented in the volume ‘The Oceanic languages’ (Lynch et al. 2002) have a section on verb serialisation; moreover, in the same year Terry Crowley published his long awaited monograph on ‘Serial verbs in Oceanic’, in 2004 Isabelle Brill and Françoise Ozanne-Rivierre published their edited volume on ‘Complex predicates in Oceanic languages’ which provides interesting information on SVCs and other forms of complex predicates from a relatively broad range of Oceanic languages, and just recently Alexandra Aikhenvald and Robert Dixon (2006) published their edited volume on *Serial verb constructions — a cross-linguistic typology* which includes one chapter on Dumo (also Vanimo), a Papuan language (Ingram 2006) and three chapters on the Austronesian

languages Mwotlap (François 2006), Tetun Dili (Hajek 2006) and Toqabaqita (Lichtenberk 2006). The present volume that originated in a workshop on ‘Serial verb constructions’ organised by Miriam van Staden and me at the 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics in Canberra in January 2002 is another attempt to provide more information not only with respect to theoretical and methodological approaches to researching complex predicates, but also and especially with respect to linguistic data, descriptions, and analyses of SVCs in Austronesian and in Papuan languages.

In this introduction I take it for granted that the interested reader is familiar with the phenomenon of SVCs and the technical terms that are used to describe them. The literature just mentioned asks and discusses all the questions which are relevant and central for researching these complex predicates like, for example: What are SVCs? What about the syntactic description of SVCs? Is there a comprehensive definition of SVCs? Which types of SVCs do we find? What about the functions SVCs fulfill? Which kind of verbs constitute SVCs? What about the order of verbs within SVCs? What kind of lexicalisation processes can we observe in SVCs? What is expressed as an event in a SVC and how is it expressed? Are there any language- and/or culture-specific rules for the combination of verbs in these constructions? And: Can we infer from SVCs to language- and/or culture-specific conceptualisations of events? Therefore, in what follows I will first make a few remarks on why I think this volume is an important contribution to linguistic research on SVCs in Austronesian and Papuan languages and briefly summarise the papers presented in this book.

In Senft (2004) I gave a rather personal (and therefore certainly biased) report on the state of the art with respect to research on SVCs in Austronesian and Papuan languages. I can briefly summarise this report as follows:

- There is a strong need for detailed morphosyntactic and semantic descriptions of the phenomenon in Austronesian and Papuan languages.
- Only on the basis of more such research on individual languages we can overcome the bias with respect to typological and areal-typological studies on SVCs in Austronesian and Papuan languages. There is obviously a strong need for such studies!
- Moreover, besides the detailed morphosyntactic and semantic descriptions of SVCs in Austronesian and Papuan languages we also need minute pragmatic, and thus anthropological linguistic analyses for an as comprehensive as possible understanding of the phenomenon of SVCs.
- Finally, we have to research what a speech community conventionalises verbally within the frame of a SVC as an ‘event’ — this implies that we have to find evidence for verifying — or for falsifying — the claim that the ‘verbs in the SVC are interpreted as expressing a single event’ (Comrie 1995:26; see also p.36ff.).

It goes without saying that these desiderata for further research also imply that we have to develop new methods — or test out well known approaches that have been neglected so far — in our research projects. This anthology presents contributions that try to meet in their own way at least some aspects of the relatively high requirements of these research desiderata. Given the number of Austronesian and Papuan languages this anthology inevitably has to face the possible criticism of an arbitrary and eclectic selection of papers.

As the editor of this volume I concede that this is so. However, the attentive reader of these papers will realise that the problems emerging and the questions raised are strikingly similar. The anthology consists of eight papers.

Miriam van Staden's and Ger Reesink's paper 'Serial verb constructions in a linguistic area' gives a first typology of SVCs in a linguistic area labelled 'East Nusantara', covering parts of eastern Indonesia and East Timor. The question is whether serialisation in languages can be related to genealogical classification or to areal proximity and the more generally shared typologies of the languages in this area. After an outline of the sample languages for which data are presented, the authors define SVCs as 'all constructions in which two or more verbs occur in a single clause and none of the verbs is apparently formally subordinated to the other'. On the basis of this definition they distinguish, describe and illustrate the following four different morphosyntactic types of SVCs:

- independent serialisation,
- dependent serialisation,
- co-dependent serialisation, and
- complex verb serialisation.

van Staden and Reesink then address the discourse function of SVCs in relation to the notion of SVCs as single event expressions. They propose two functions that serial verb constructions fulfil in discourse: SVCs either serve to link verbs in a single event representation — van Staden and Reesink call this strategy for communicative packaging 'component serialisation', or they link multiple events into a larger single clause narrative — the authors call this strategy for communicative packaging 'narrative serialisation'. van Staden and Reesink then discuss the semantic contribution of fixed verbs in SVCs in their language sample, linking the semantic relations that are expressed in component serialisation — in which one of the verbs in the sequence typically is from a restricted class of verbs — to the four different morphosyntactic types of SVCs distinguished before. They list the semantic relations that can be expressed and show for each of these relations which morphosyntactic structures are used in the different language types researched. Considering the distribution of the different types of serialisation in a linguistically complex area where Austronesian and Papuan languages have a long history of language contact the authors conclude that in terms of morphosyntax and semantics some weak patterns can be described, but in terms of discourse function, a clear difference between the Austronesian and Papuan languages of the East Nusantara region is found:

- 'Serialisation on the whole is more characteristic of the Papuan languages than of the Austronesian languages'.
- Narrative serialisation is 'typically Papuan'.
- Component serialisation is found more frequently in the Papuan languages than in in the Austronesian languages.
- Frequent serialisation in the Austronesian languages can be 'contributed to prolonged contact with the Papuan languages.
- Papuan speakers generally prefer 'to distribute information in smaller packages'.

Louise Baird discusses SVCs, especially ‘Motion serialisation in Kéo’. Kéo is one of the seven or so Austronesian languages spoken in the central Flores dialect chain on Flores in eastern Indonesia. After a brief summary of the general features of Kéo SVCs — that follow Durie’s key characteristics for defining SVCs (see above) — the author describes and illustrates the following six types of SVCs that can be distinguished in this language:

- benefactive/purposive serialisation,
- causative serialisation,
- cause-effect serialisation,
- synonymic serialisation  
(which she defines as ‘a construction type where two verbs are closely related in meaning, being either synonyms or antonyms with identical argument structure and which are not ordered causally or temporally),
- manner serialisation, and
- motion serialisation.

Louise Baird then focuses on describing three motion serialisation types that can be identified in Kéo, namely:

- constructions consisting of only motion verbs,
- constructions containing a motion verb and a non-motion verb, and
- constructions consisting of a motion verb and a directional.

Pointing out that motion serialisation is the most commonly occurring type in Kéo, the author emphasises that this reflects not only the salience of the concepts of place and space in Kéo discourse, but also the way in which Kéo speakers construe their world. Thus she concludes that the ‘frequency with which the type of motion serialisation compared to the others is used highlights the importance of the concepts of place and space, and understanding the spatial setting of discourse’.

John Bowden explores nuclear and core verb serialisation in Taba, an Austronesian language from the South Halmahera which belongs to the West New Guinea subgroup. Taba is spoken in the eastern part of Indonesia, on Makian Island and some nearby areas of the North Maluku province. After a brief overview of the Taba language that covers basic sociolinguistic and historical matters and provides the reader with a short overview of the morphosyntax that is relevant for his discussion of serialisation, Bowden presents a fairly wide variety of types of Taba SVCs that are highly productive. He illustrates sequences of Actor intransitive verbs, sequences where a transitive verb is followed by an Actor intransitive verb, co-occurrence of two transitive verbs, sequences where a ditransitive verb is followed by a transitive verb, sequences where an Actor oriented intransitive verb is followed by an Undergoer oriented intransitive verb, and sequences of two Undergoer intransitive verbs. Running through Mark Durie’s (1997:291) checklist of key cross-linguistic characteristics of SVCs (quoted above) Bowden justifies and further supports his analyses of the presented constructions as SVCs. He then presents a semantically based functional typology of Taba SVCs in which he differentiates between motion serialisation, cause-effect serialisation, causative serialisation, instrumental serialisation, modal serialisation, aspectual serialisation, and manner serialisation. The paper ends with a discussion of the distinction between core and nuclear serialisation and its ramifications for

Taba grammar. Revising his 2001 analyses where he came to the conclusion that this distinction was of little relevance to Taba (Bowden 2001), Bowden now shows that this is not the case: Only in cases of nuclear serialisation a human argument ‘may co-occur with underived Undergoer oriented intransitive verb ... because the SVC complex taken as a whole does have an overt Actor’. Moreover, he also finds some evidence for the fact that ‘nuclear serialisation may arise from core serialisation by a simple process of deletion of pronominal cross-referencing in fast or casual speech’. Finally, contrary to the claim that nuclear serialisation only occurs in verb final languages, Bowden — like Durie (1997), Crowley (2002) and Brill (2004) — can show that nuclear serialisation can also occur in languages with other basic word order patterns.

Tetun Dili is an Austronesian language — with strong Portuguese influence — that is spoken in and around Dili, the capital of East Timor. In her paper on ‘Boundaries of serialisation: non-serialised verb sequences in Tetun Dili’ Catharina Williams-van Klinken addresses the general question ‘What characterises serial verb constructions in Austronesian languages?’ especially by investigating verb sequences in Tetun Dili which lie beyond the boundaries of verb serialisation. Williams-van Klinken begins by providing a general characterisation of SVCs in Tetun Dili. She points out that we find same-subject serialisation and switch-subject or causative serialisation in this language, that most serialisation patterns have one slot which is highly restricted lexically, and that serialisation can be either at the ‘nuclear’ or the ‘core’ layer. Following this, the author presents and discusses verb sequences that differ from prototypical serial verb constructions both syntactically and semantically. The result is that, for Tetun Dili, serial verb constructions are restricted syntactically to those in which the subject of the second verb corresponds to one of the arguments of the first verb, while semantically the second verb phrase always represents in some sense a further development, result, or goal of the first. That is, Tetun Dili provides no support for syntactically extending the concept of serial verb to ‘ambient serialisation’, in which the subject of the second verb does not correspond to an argument of the first. In tandem with this, Catharina Williams-van Klinken’s analyses do not support a serial verb analysis for multi-verb expressions of concepts such as tense-aspect, modality and manner.

David Mead and Scott Youngman discuss ‘Verb serialisation in Tolaki’. Tolaki is a Western Malayo-Polynesian language that is spoken in South-Eastern Sulawesi, Indonesia. So far descriptions of SVCs are largely lacking for Sulawesi languages. Thus, the detailed description of core layer and nuclear layer serialisation constructions in Tolaki are highly interesting especially for cross-linguistic research on the fascinating topic that is in the focus of this anthology. After a brief description of the Tolaki agreement marking system, the authors first describe core layer serialisation which is ubiquitous in all genres of Tolaki discourse. The verbs in this construction must all have the same subject — which is indexed pronominally only on the first verb. The main content verb appears last in the construction, and the verbs preceding it may be drawn from four different subclasses of intransitives, namely motion verbs, temporal relator verbs, aspectual verbs, and the verbs ‘*tekeno*’ (hit) and ‘*alee*’ (take it) that have developed uses in SVCs which depart from their literal meanings. However, many of these preceding verbs have developed grammaticalised functions which are now distinct from their meanings when used as independent verbs. This observation confirms the general tendency that SVCs provide a rich context for verbs to grammaticalise into other parts of speech. In nuclear layer serialisation two verbs occur adjacent to each other and share a set of clausal arguments.

The overall transitivity of the construction is determined by the main verb, the head (initial) verb (and not the second verb in the series). In these constructions ambient serialisation rather than same subject serialisation is the rule. However, the analyses of nuclear SVCs reveal that in Tolaki the second verb in the series can be negated, and once negated, the second verb can even appear with its own argument (so long as this argument is realised as a noun or a noun phrase). This observation shows that Tolaki nuclear SVCs violate the general maxim that in these constructions the serialised verbs should not exhibit independence in regard to the expression of nominal arguments! The authors outline a diachronic scenario to explain this typologically rather odd finding in regard to verb serialisation: they provide interesting data to support their hypothesis that second-verb negation may have developed within nuclear layer ambient serialisation. Thus, — contrary to Catharina Williams-van Klinken, who describes a similar situation in Tetun Dili but does not regard her examples as constituting SVCs — David Mead and Scott Youngman, on the basis of the plausible diachronic pathway provided, suggest that second-verb negation is indeed an appropriate phenomenon to study within the general field of verb serialisation. In Tolaki all SVCs are monoclausal and therefore clearly distinct from juxtaposed clauses — which are biclausal. However, in Tolaki we also find constructions that the authors label ‘compressed clauses’. These compressed clauses occupy a grammatical position in between clause juxtaposition and verb serialisation. The authors show that the four construction types — clause juxtaposition, clause compression, core layer serialisation and nuclear layer serialisation — form a cline from least to tightest integration of events. With respect to juxtaposed clauses the events described are clearly distinct; in clause compression events are presented as more integrated — as ‘a series of events in a kind of stream action’ — as the authors have it. At the level of core layer serialisation the first verbs in the series either provide a ‘temporal contouring’ or specify the ‘path contour’ of the main event. In nuclear layer serialisation we observe the tightest verbal integration: the two verbs do not represent distinguishable events, instead, the second verb indicates the manner in which the action or event of the first verb is carried out. However, the authors emphasise that nuclear layer serialisation distinguishes itself formally — with respect to word order, argument coreference, clitic placement, and nasal ligature — from the other three constructions. Thus, it may well be that nuclear layer SVCs have a diachronic source separate from that of core layer SVCs.

Volker Heeschen describes and analyses ‘Verb serialisation in Eipo and Yale (especially in children’s narratives)’. Eipo and Yale are members of the Papuan Mek language family spoken in the eastern, central mountains of Papua Barat (formerly: West New Guinea, Irian Jaya), Indonesia. After a brief characterisation of the specific features of SVCs that can be found in Eipo and Yale — features that partly deviate from how SVCs are generally defined — the author points out that much alternation and stylistically conditioned variability can be observed with SVCs in these languages. These variations observed are the theme of this contribution. The aim of the paper is to illustrate alternations between discourse, grammar and the lexicon, to show how ‘successive pieces of information aligned in clause-chaining structures develop into cohesive serialised structures or into systematically interdependent grammatical units, and serialised structures develop into fixed formulas for routines or into compounds’. These serialised structures are taken as descriptions of everyday routines and events, representing preferred ways of speaking and demonstrating the interplay between discourse, clause structure, and word formation. The description of the morphology and syntax of verb serialisation in Eipo and

Yale shows that clause chaining and verb serialisation on the one hand and verb serialisation and compounding on the other hand can be kept distinct on clearly definable formal grounds (although alternations between chaining and serialisation and compounding are well attested). The inventory of serial verb constructions to be found in these two Mek languages is presented in form of the following five patterns:

- serialised (intransitive) verb referring to manner of movement or bodily activities + finite verb referring to movement or position in space;
- serialised (transitive) verb referring to human activities + finite verb referring to movement or position in space;
- serialised (transitive) verb referring to human activities + finite intransitive verb referring to human activities of transfer;
- one object or class of objects + serialised transitive verb referring to that object and to human activity + finite transitive verb referring to that object and to human activity; and
- object related to the finite verb + serialised verb + finite verb.

These patterns are illustrated, their functions and semantics are described and analysed and emerging patterns of grammaticalisation and some most probably culture-specific ways of conjoining stems are discussed. On the basis of children's 'accounts of everyday walks and doings' that constitute small pieces of narratives the author illustrates that 'children's words and worlds do not display the riches of adults' speech'. However, Volker Heeschen takes this as a starting point that may shed some light on 'why and where verb serialisation in these languages comes into being'. The author points out that what 'children narrate in apparently not yet stylistically varied wordings and communicative genres, is later differentiated into backgrounding recapitulations and accounts of event sequences. Background information, then, the constructions in the head of tail-head-linkages and piecing together previous information in summarising acts call into being serialised structures'. With this philological approach the author illustrates that it is style that mediates between chaining, serialisation, and compounding. The philological approach is also taken as a possible means for clarifying the relationship between SVCs and 'event' description — a relationship that is explicitly or implicitly assumed by almost all linguists dealing with this phenomenon. Volker Heeschen argues that 'to define an event one cannot ... start from the linguistic findings concerning the number of verbs and their underlying concepts. Verb serialisation is a matter of surface grammar, it does not give hints at what constitutes an event. The number of possible events could be reduced by looking for what can be backgrounded, for what can be summarised and for what is always important information and, accordingly, never, backgrounded'. And if the philological approach is combined with the ethnographic-ethological approach, it may become clear what speakers of a language take as 'events'. Thus, the author argues that 'structures' like serialisation, chaining and compounding 'and correlating events' should be tied to 'basic human needs, rules of social life, and persistent cultural peculiarities. Thus moving around, giving, adventures, warding off, missing etc. represent events. Speakers refer to them making creative use of the grammatical forms, thus 'events' emerge, oscillate, disappear and flash up following the strain of words and forms which evoke, excite or lull into sleep or inattentiveness'.



In his paper ‘Compact versus narrative serial verb constructions in Kalam’ Andrew Pawley describes these syntactic and functional types of SVCs that can be found in the Papuan language Kalam which is spoken on the northern fringes of the central highlands of Papua New Guinea. A compact SVC is a construction that ‘expresses a sequence of conceptual events that are tightly integrated, grammatically and semantically’, they are ‘strictly V-serialising’, and generally contain two or three verb roots, but are not limited to this range. Narrative SVCs ‘express a sequence of more loosely integrated events which together make up an episodic event sequence’; they ‘provide a means for packaging episodic reports into a single clause structure without omitting mention of any of the component events that Kalam discourse structure requires of minimal well-formed event reports’. After a brief sketch of the language and its specific grammatical features that are relevant for the discussion of SVCs, Andrew Pawley defines the grammatical, semantic and phonological characteristics of what he calls ‘canonical’ SVCs and then describes the distinctive features of various types of SVCs which depart from this. These subtypes include cause-effect SVCs with V1 and V2 having different logical subjects, do-support SVCs, a type of SVCs where a negative marker negates only the final verb (or verb phrase) in a series, aspectual SVCs, iteration of verb roots, SVCs that denote acts by the same actor that are more or less simultaneous or overlapping in time, and multi-phrasal SVCs with internal intonation juncture. The author then distinguishes several types of compact SVCs by semantic features. Here he describes and illustrates cause-effect SVCs, SVCs of testing or discovering, SVCs of actor’s movement along a path, SVCs of transport, manipulative-positioning SVCs, SVCs of transfer and connection, SVCs of process, and SVCs of food-getting. Finally, he discusses the lexical status of compact SVCs, pointing out that a strong case can be made for saying that most compact SVCs are lexicalised, although some compact SVCs appear to be less fully lexicalised than others. Pawley then deals at some length with the structure and discourse functions of narrative SVCs. Here he illustrates that Kalam narrative SVCs can be understood as schemas for constructing well-formed narratives and exemplifies this in some detail with Kalam reports of gathering events. In discussing the levels of structure in narrative SVCs Andrew Pawley points out that ‘narrative SVCs have at least three levels of constituent structure, represented respectively by the whole SVC, its first order constituents and the individual verbs within these. Each primary constituent may itself consist of a verb series. Usually such a verb series is a compact SVC although it may consist of more than one compact SVC’. In his contribution the author is particularly concerned with the following two questions:

- When can a speaker use a SVC to encode a sequence of combination of conceptual events?
- When must a speaker use a SVC, i.e., what conditions require it?

The paper concludes with a critical discussion of the questions whether or not SVCs encode single events and whether or not their main function is to augment the verbal lexicon. With respect to the first question the author points out that there ‘is no question that each SVC denotes *a semantically coherent unit of some sort*’. But at the same time he emphasises that ‘SVCs vary enormously in the complexity of their internal event structure’ and critically asks ‘[w]hat is gained by saying all these diverse kinds of units represent a single event’? Discussing this issue in some detail he concludes with the suggestion ‘that rather than argue about when a series of verbs might be considered to denote a single event

linguists studying verb serialisation would do better to deal with a more fundamental task: defining the conditions that must be met in order for a sequence of events (each represented by a verb root) to be eligible for serialisation, or to require serialisation'. With respect to the second question Andrew Pawley points out that in a rather 'broad sense of 'lexicalised expression' most verb series ... attested in Kalam can be considered to be lexicalised. But this is very different from saying that they are like words. Narrative SVCs in Kalam rather fall into 'a category of productive and semi-productive phrase- and clause-sized constructions or formulae whose lexical content is partly fixed and partly variable' and these 'constructions are a much more complex bundle of elements than typical lexical units'.

My paper on 'Event conceptualisation and event report in serial verb constructions in Kilivila: Towards a new approach to research an old phenomenon' presents the types of SVCs in the Austronesian language of the Trobriand Islanders. Some of these constructions are documented in my overall corpus of Kilivila speech data; however, most constructions presented in this paper were especially elicited during a field trip in 2001. After a brief definition of the notion 'verb' in Kilivila I point out that verb serialisation in this language takes place at the core layer only. We find the following three types of serialisation:

- same subject serialisation, same TAM marking,
- same subject serialisation, different TAM marking, and
- switch subject serialisation — serial causative verbs.

On the basis of van Staden's and Reesink's new approach towards a typology of SVCs (presented in this volume) and after a brief discussion of the methodology used to not only elicit such constructions but also to get an idea of what Trobriand Islanders conceptualise as an 'event' I analyse examples of Kilivila SVCs and re-define this concept for Kilivila as follows:

Kilivila is a language with multi-verb constructions (MVCs). These MVCs are differentiated into SVCs and 'contiguous serial verb constructions' (CSVCs). Verbs constituting CSVCs have to be contiguous. We find three types of verb serialisation: narrative independent serialisation, component independent serialisation and, though rather rarely, component co-dependent (or: switch subject) serialisation (see van Staden and Reesink this volume). Verbs constituting MVCs have shared polarity, but they need not have shared tense, aspect and modality, and they need not all refer to the same subject, either. MVCs are produced under a single intonation contour without internal pauses. MVCs are used not only to describe what is conceptualised as a single event but also what is conceptualised as a complex event or as an episode which may consist of both macro- and subevents. This classification is not only based on morphosyntactic criteria but also on semantic and pragmatic considerations that are important for both the conceptualisation and the report of 'events' in and for this speech community.

After this redefinition of MVCs I briefly illustrate how we can empirically test whether languages with MVCs really segment events with finer granularity than languages without these constructions, and if so, how and where they do this. Comparing Kilivila and English descriptions of a number of identical 'staged events' scenarios I found that it is an overgeneralisation to state that 'events are segmented with finer granularity in serialising languages than in non-serialising languages'. With respect to Kilivila this observation

holds only for some of the reported events. And these events seem to include motion events, take events, and events that are marked with respect to an action and its end. Here we have to find out which events are ‘segmented with finer granularity’, why this is so, and how the serialised verbs establish this ‘finer granularity’. I also observed that Kilivila uses verbs, CSVs and SVCs to link certain, but not all, macro-events in reports of scenarios. Here we have to find out which of these events are linked, why they are linked, and why other events are not linked in this way. Finally, it seems that event reports in Kilivila need a minimum of ‘framing’ or ‘contextualisation’ of the most important part of the report — and the CSVs and SVCs meet this requirement for producing well-formed, acceptable and minimally situation adequate event reports. I finish my paper with a critical evaluation of the new approach to research such complex constructions presented and illustrated with data from Kilivila and with an outline of my future research on this fascinating topic.

All but one of the preceding papers (i.e. John Bowden’s contribution on verb serialisation in Taba) refer to the notion of ‘event’ and its relationship to SVCs. William Foley (in press) takes up this topic in his paper ‘The notion of ‘event’ and serial verb constructions: arguments from New Guinea’. In Yimas — a Papuan language belonging to the Lower Sepik family — some SVCs are permitted in non-finite nominalisations and some are not — although there are no formal differences whatsoever between the respective constructions. All these SVCs have the same structure and fit the general diagnostic tests proposed in the literature for SVCs. So why do we find this difference with respect to their derivational possibilities? To answer this question the author first discusses the distinction between component and narrative serialisation made by van Staden and Reesink (this volume) and the notion of ‘event’, or rather the notions of ‘macro-event’ and ‘sub-event’ that is crucial for this distinction (see also my paper in this volume). The distinction between component and narrative serialisation obviously ‘capture something about the contrast between the Yimas constructions in question. Further analyses show that the SVCs that are permitted in non-finite nominalisations are fixed, lexicalised forms, whereas those SVCs that are not permitted in these nominalisations are generated by productive grammatical rules of Yimas. For Foley this finding shows that in a language like Yimas ‘lexicon and grammar and conventionality and creativity interpenetrate each other in complex ways’ (Foley in press). This observed flexibility precludes the predetermination of any interrelationship between lexicalisation and componential serialisation and production by rule and narrative serialisation. Then the author discusses in some more detail the notion of ‘event’ — with examples from Watam, a Sepik-Ramu Papuan language, and from Yabem, the Austronesian language spoken in the Morobe Province of Papua New Guinea. He shows that ‘the mapping between the semantic notion of the event and the structural notion of the clause is crosslinguistically variable and complex’ (Foley in press). With this ‘paradigmatic approach to syntax’ Foley discards the notions of component and narrative serialisation as (probably interesting but actually) ‘not particularly important’ (Foley in press). What is crucial for him and his analyses is ‘where such structures fit in the overall system of [what he calls the system of] expressive space [of a language], ranging from lexicalised forms, through SVCs as realisations of semantic events, then SVCs as the result of clause integration, through textual reasons for clause chaining, and finally to full clausal coordination and subordination’ (Foley in press). Thus, central for his approach to understanding SVCs in a comparative perspective ‘is the range and type of syntactic structures to which they are in opposition’ (Foley in press). He

postulates that within the New Guinea context we can distinguish two basic typological profiles, which he calls ‘the Papuan type’ and ‘the Austronesian type’. He discusses and illustrates these two types in detail, referring to examples from Watam and Yimas to illustrate the Papuan type and examples from Erromangan (a southern Vanuatu language), Yabem and Mangap-Mbula (both members of the North New Guinea sub-group of Oceanic) to illustrate the Austronesian type. In the conclusion to this paper Foley emphasises once more that ‘the range of what we would define as SVCs on language internal grounds is very variable across languages’ (Foley in press). Therefore he questions the overall usefulness of the notion of SVC as a theoretical concept. He understands SVCs as being ‘the result of various pressures, both semantic and pragmatic/discoursal, to express complex information in a single clausal unit’ (Foley in press). Moreover, in the same provoking vein, he ‘put[s] to bed permanently the old chestnut that SVCs express a single event’ because ‘our knowledge in this area is woefully insufficient to allow us to read off from the formal crosslinguistic variation in the data, semantic and perhaps ultimately conceptual notions like single or multiple eventhood’ (Foley in press; see also Heeschen (this volume) who argues that ‘serialisation is a matter of surface grammar, it does not give hints at what constitutes an event’, and also Pawley (this volume) who refers to Givon’s caveat that ‘event’ is a cognitive construct and we should be wary of using grammatical testing to determine whether speakers conceptually bind a sequence of events into a single complex event’).

More than ten years ago Bernard Comrie already pointed out the following: ‘The claim that serial verb constructions encode a single event is made with great regularity in the literature on serial verbs but is a claim that I find difficult to test in critical cases’ (Comrie 1995:36). Louise Baird (this volume) also points out that the ‘characteristic ... that serial verbs are conceptualised as representing single events ... is somewhat difficult to confirm or disconfirm for any language due to inconsistent ways in which ‘conceptualisation’ is judged’. This problem brings us back to the last of my desiderata for further research that I listed above. Baird attempts to solve the problem by taking up Andrew Pawley’s argument that SVCs can only be considered to represent single events if they are single predicates. And in my paper I refer to research by Bohnemeyer and his notions of a ‘macro-event’ and ‘macro-event expressions’ that may entail multiple ‘subevents’ of particular kinds (see e.g. Bohnemeyer 1999, Bohnemeyer, Calen 2001). In a more recent paper Bohnemeyer and others have introduced the so-called ‘macro-event property (MEP)’ and they argue that ‘an expression has the MEP iff any time-positional operator denoted by a time-positional adverbial, temporal clause, or tense which ‘locates’ a subevent entailed by the expression in time also locates all other subevents in time’ (Bohnemeyer et al. 2007:505). They claim that this ‘measure of event segmentation’ can be used to decide whether a ‘serial verb’ or ‘multi verb construction’ can be regarded as a construction that has the property of a macro-event’. This is an interesting proposal that may help us decide (— if we want to —) whether or not the claim is true that the verbs in SVCs are interpreted as expressing a single event. I am sure that this controversy will continue. However, be that as it may I agree with William Foley’s remark: ‘While SVCs may not constitute a theoretically and typologically coherent notion, whatever they are, their continued detailed study will pay rich dividends in unraveling the role of lexical, semantic and pragmatic constraints on the formal structure of language’ (Foley in press). I hope this anthology may contribute its share to this endeavor.

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# 2 *Serial verb constructions in a linguistic area*

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MIRIAM VAN STADEN AND GER REESINK

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In this article we want to investigate the phenomenon of verb serialisation in the context of genealogical and areal relationships between some Papuan and Austronesian languages of eastern Indonesia. As will become clear (see §3), we do not consider verb serialisation as a coherent theoretical concept with clearly definable properties valid in all languages for which it is reported. Rather, we consider the phenomenon as a heuristic metatheoretical notion covering constructions in which a few verbs co-occur within what seems to be one clausal intonation contour expressing the construal of one event. We are interested to find out (i) what kind of morphological constraints such constructions place on the verbs figuring as their members, (ii) for what kind of semantic relations they are used, either obligatorily or as an option, and (iii) whether some of these traits can be linked to some grouping of languages, be it genealogical or areal.

Why should serialisation be either genealogical or areal? Genealogically, the languages have a common ancestor and have all developed independently and at a different pace. Languages may develop (grammaticalise) in similar directions because these are the ones favoured by the general typology of the language, or they may show similar discourse organisation because of their shared origin. In a linguistic area languages may become more similar in their ‘ways of expressing things’ through language contact, viz. Ross’s metatypy (Ross 1996:182). Serialisation is relevant then both at the word level in terms of which word classes express which notions, and at the sentence and discourse levels in terms of the ways in which smaller units are integrated into larger wholes.

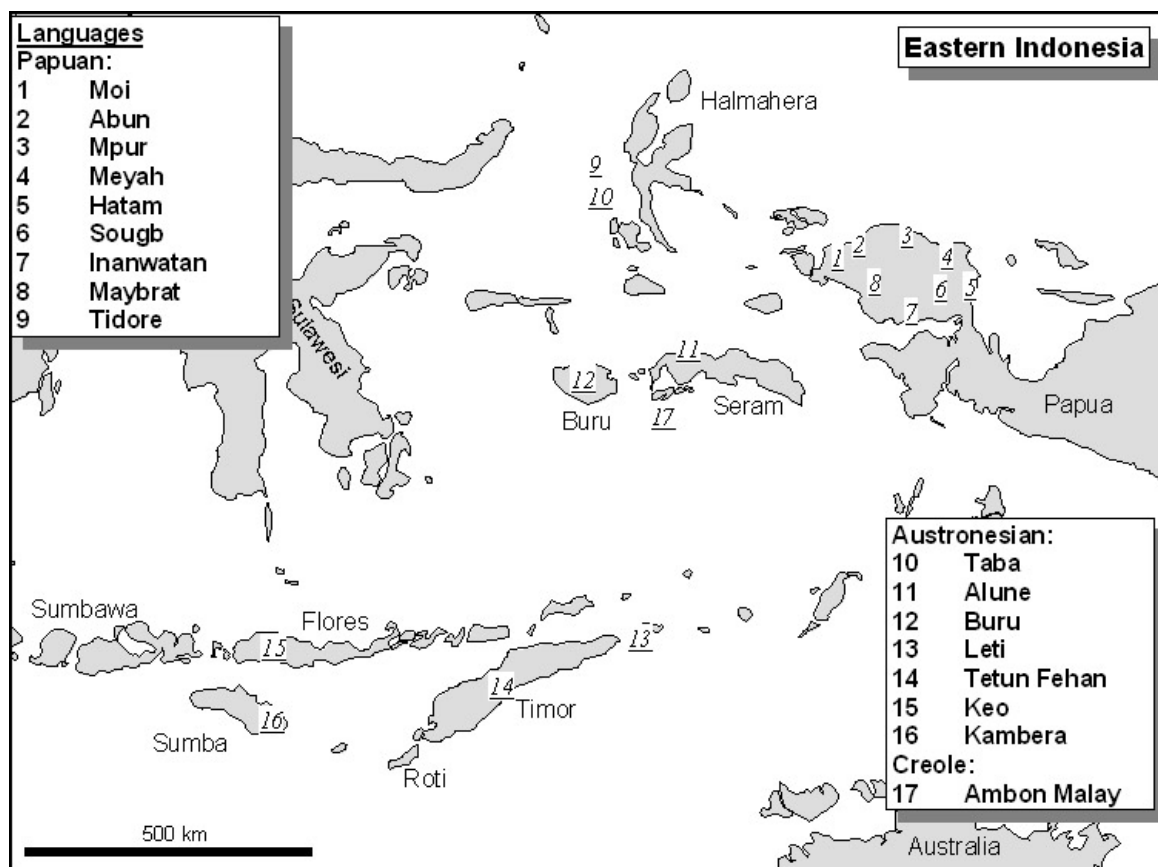
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1 Abbreviations used in this paper are: A - actor; ABIL - ability (mood); ACC - accusative; ADD - additional participant; AN - Austronesian; ANAP - anaphor; APPL - applicative; ART - article; C - Creole; CAM - completive aspect; CAUS - causative; CLF - classifier; CNJ - conjunction; CONT - continuative (aspect); CTR - control (subordinator); D - dative; DEF - definite; DEI - deictic; DEX - index; DL - dual; DS - different subject; EMP - emphatic; EXC - exclusive; F - feminine; G - genitive; INC - inclusive; INCEP - inceptive (aspect); IND - indicative; INS - instrument; INTR - intransitive; IRR - irrealis; LOC - locative; M - masculine; MIT - mitigating; N - nominative; NEG - negation; NH - non-human; NOM - nominalisation; OBJ - object; P - Papuan; PL - plural; POSS - possessive; POT - potential; PRF - perfect; PUR - purposive; RECIP - reciprocal; RED - reduplication; REL - relativisation; RES - result; SG - singular; SU - subject; SVC - serial verb construction; TOP - topic; U - unmarked/neutral; VIS - visible.

The article is structured as follows: In §2 we first outline the sample of languages for which we present data. In §3 we define a Serial Verb Construction (SVC), followed by discussion of four morpho-syntactic structures that could be called ‘serial’. In §4 we address the discourse function of SVCs, in relation to the notion of an SVC as single event expression. There we distinguish component versus narrative serialisation as two strategies for communicative packaging. In §5 we list the semantic relations that can be expressed and for each we show which morpho-syntactic structures are used in the different language types. In the conclusion we will return to the questions raised above and show that some rough typology of communicative packaging can be applied to languages of different genealogical origins, in spite of apparently universal tendencies to use SVCs for some semantic relations.

## 2 The East Nusantara languages

For a first exploration of this theme we have examined data from six Austronesian and six Papuan languages that are spoken in the area East of Bali to and including the Bird’s Head of Papua (formerly Irian Jaya), which we refer to as ‘East Nusantara’. The demarcation of the region is motivated by the observed intense contact relations between speakers of these languages, and by the co-occurrence of Austronesian and Papuan languages. For this reason, the languages of the mainland of Sulawesi are not now included, although it may appear that they should be in future research. The area is indicated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** The languages of East Nusantara

The languages of our sample and the main sources of information are given in Table 1. They were chosen because of the detailed descriptions of these languages that are available and because of their distribution, roughly covering all of ‘East Nusantara’, with Kambera in the west, Hatam in the east and Tidore in the north. For some of these languages we have additional (unpublished) material specific on serial verb constructions and clause integration that was collected for the third East Nusantara conference held in Leiden, June 2001. These are starred. Ambon Malay has been included with the Austronesian languages, but note that it is a Creole language. It has many closely related dialects in the East Nusantara region, although most of these appear to be spoken East of Flores. Table 1 also lists a number of other languages that are spoken in East Nusantara for which we have scanty or tentative information, to which reference will be made at various occasions.

**Table 1:** Languages of East Nusantara

Papuan		Austronesian	
Languages of the sample			
Hatam*	Reesink (1999, 2001)	Buru	Grimes (1991)
Inanwatan*	de Vries (2001, 2004)	Kambera*	Klamer (1998)
Maybrat*	Dol (1999, 2001)	Leti*	van Engelenhoven (1995, 2001)
Moi*	Menick (1996, 2001, n.d.)	Taba*	Bowden (2001a, b)
Mpur*	Odé (2001, 2002a and b)	Tetun (Fehan)	van Klinken (1999)
Tidore*	van Staden (2000, 2001)	Ambon Malay (Creole)	Tjia (1997), van Minde (1997)
Occasional reference will be made to:			
Abun	Berry and Berry (1999)	Keo*	Baird (2001)
Meyah*	Gravelle (2000, 2001)		
Sougb	Reesink (2002)		

## 2.1 History

The Austronesian and Papuan languages in East Nusantara have been in contact for a very long time. The Austronesians arrived in this part of the world approximately 2000 to 4000 years ago, and it is supposed that to some extent they settled on hitherto unpopulated islands, but in some areas they may have replaced the original Papuan people, while in other areas the two groups mixed. The result is a group of languages that differ considerably in their basic lexicons and show remarkable idiosyncrasies, but most of all, also have many of their basic typological characteristics in common.

Genealogically, the Austronesian languages are classified partly as Central Malayo-Polynesian (Kambera, Leti, Tetun, Buru) (Blust 1993)<sup>2</sup> and partly South Halmahera West New Guinea (Taba), which together with Oceanic subgroups make up the Eastern Malayo-Polynesian subgroup (e.g. Tryon 1995:34). The classification of the Papuan languages in

2 The Central Malayo-Polynesian subgroup is one of the most problematic among the Austronesian subgroups. Ultimately it is based on only a few lexical innovations that are shared **among** all the languages, but not **by** all the languages in the subgroup. Blust (1993:263ff.) proposes that a complex dialect network may be the source of this present-day diversity.

this area is less clear. The Papuan languages of North Halmahera, such as Tidore, are perhaps related to some languages of the Western Bird's Head, such as Moi, in a West Papuan Phylum (Voorhoeve 1987) but the evidence for this is very weak. Recently, Reesink (2005) proposed that this phylum is made up of six basically unrelated groups of languages that may have a very distant genealogical relationship: 1. West Bird's Head with North Halmahera, three isolates: 2. Abun, 3. Maybrat, 4. Mpur, and two small families in the Eastern Bird's Head: 5. Meyah and Sougb, and 6. Hatam and Mansim. The South Bird's Head languages clearly form a separate group, whose internal homogeneity has not been established yet. Inanwatan (de Vries 2002) forms a sub-family with some neighbouring languages within this group.

## 2.2 Typology

Despite the fact that in this area we are dealing with possibly as many as eight different language families, it is nevertheless possible to give some general characterisation of the typology of these languages. The vast majority of languages in East Nusantara (and all the languages in our sample with the exception of Inanwatan) have SVO word order, prepositions, and attributes following nouns. Main word classes are verbs and nouns, plus a closed class of adjectives or stative verbs that can be used both attributively and predicatively. Adverbs form a small closed class. Adpositions and conjunctions are few. Most languages have borrowed at least several conjunctions from Malay, but except for Kambara and Hatam the languages freely allow for asyndetic co-ordination. In general, there is no fusional morphology, languages being either isolating or agglutinating. Again with the exception of Inanwatan, none of the languages have grammatical tense. Aspectual and modal distinctions are usually expressed by enclitics, adverbs, or through reduplication. Most languages cross-reference the subject by a prefix on the verb, some also mark object, although there are a few languages that do not have verbal inflections at all (Austronesian Keo, Ambon Malay and Papuan Abun).

For the discussion in this paper it is furthermore important to note that most of the languages lack clear structural criteria to distinguish between coordination and subordination — notoriously difficult, see Haiman and Thompson (1984) — apart from relativisation and the general requirement for a complementiser for clausal objects of speech verbs. Both are straightforward when they do occur in the sense that they involve a single complementiser and do not give special clause types. Speech verbs generally take a complementiser, usually a form related to a speech verb, such as 'say'. Perception and cognition verbs, and in some language modal verbs, however, do not require complementisers. Their clausal objects are normal clauses, which results in constructions that on the surface are very similar to serial verb constructions, as for instance in the following examples from Mpur (1) and Moi (2).

- Mpur
- (1) *Do-bwana do-bep nton.*  
 3DU-want 3DU-carry:in:cloth child  
 'They want to carry the child.' (Odé 2002b:116)

Moi

- (2) *Y-oowo lek p-au mala p-e-sa.*  
 3PL:H-see lightning 3SG:NH-lie:down:SG mountain 3SG:NH-POSS-head  
 ‘They saw lightning at the top of the mountain.’ (Menick n.d.)

The verb *bwana* is probably derived from the speech verb *bwa* ‘say’ followed by an adposition *na* ‘for’. This very common extension of speech to intention verbs even more clearly shows that the second clause is indeed a complement. Kambera and Leti stand somewhat apart in that nominalised clauses in these languages express subordination constructions for various semantic relations. All the languages invariably show a strong preference for iconic ordering of clauses and some resort to Indonesian loan conjunctions to give reason or result after action (*karena* ‘because’, *sebelum* ‘before’).

In several respects some of the languages are rather distinct from the others. For example, Kambera has four cases and uses these in a highly complex cross-reference system, where none of the other languages have a case system. Papuan Moi is the only language that lacks a category of adpositions, using instead verbs that cross-reference either the subject of intransitive main verbs or the object of transitive main verbs, in a pervasive ergative alignment. Papuan Inanwatan, too, is markedly different from the other languages, having SOV word order, postpositions and grammatical gender as well as tense. It also appears that Inanwatan is the only language in our sample that does not have verb serialisation at all, although it does have a productive rule of verb incorporation, and it employs relative constructions for the expression of adverbial notions, such as condition and reason, which is a general Papuan trait (Foley 1986:201). Because of these broad similarities briefly reviewed here, we believe it is sensible to investigate to what extent they agree in the types of SVCs, both in terms of morphological form and semantic functions.

### 3 Defining serial verb constructions

Research on serial verb constructions (SVC) has an extensive history (see the introduction to this volume). First reported in the nineteenth century for African languages, such as Ewe, now there seem to be only very few language families where serial verb constructions are *not* found in some form or another. After the Bantu language families, Austronesian and Papuan languages are probably best known for the extensive use of serial verb constructions. Despite the by now impressive literature on serial verb constructions (e.g. Foley and Olson 1985, Sebba 1987, Lefebvre 1991, Lord 1993, Bradshaw 1993, to name only a few), there is still surprisingly little agreement on what exactly defines ‘serial verb constructions’ nor is there even general consensus on the necessary and sufficient properties of SVCs.

When we look at descriptions of serial verb constructions cross-linguistically, we find very different surface constructions, i.e. different formal properties or characteristics. For some researchers, serial verb constructions must contain only one inflected verb, while the others are not or less inflected (Dol 1996, 1999), while for others all verbs must be inflected (van Staden 2000). Even so, whether all verbs must have the **same** inflections (Baker 1989) or not (Durie 1988, 1997) is an issue. At the same time there are languages for which this issue is purely theoretical since verbs are never inflected in the first place. Another issue is whether all subjects in the construction must be the same (Foley and

Olson 1985), or whether ‘switch-subject serialisation’ and ‘ambient serialisation’ (Crowley 1987, 1990) are also instances of serialisation.

What often obscures the discussion on serial verb constructions is firstly that criteria that can be applied in one language to distinguish, for instance, SVCs from subordination or compounding, simply may not be applicable for other languages. Secondly, not all criteria uniquely identify serial verb constructions as distinct from any other construction type in a language. For example, the absence of inflectional morphology on one of the verbs could be an argument for a subordination construction rather than a SVC. Fully inflected verbs, on the other hand, may indicate that none of the verbs are formally subordinated to any of the others, but now again the question is whether the sequence is then not an instance of (asyndetic) coordination.

Finally, discussions of serial verb constructions are often presented in a context of grammaticalisation issues: coordinated constructions or clause chaining may turn into SVCs, or verbs in an svc may become increasingly more grammaticalised to auxiliary verbs, adverbs or adpositions. For some linguists these signs of grammaticalisation would indicate that the verbs are no longer independent lexical verbs and therefore could not constitute a serial verb construction (Givón 1991), but others hold that grammaticalisation is actually a property of serial verb constructions, to the extent that one of the verbs in the construction has a broader meaning than it would have in a simple clause construction (Bisang 1986).

There are, however, several properties that are mentioned *almost* universally: (i) a single intonation contour covers the entire construction, (ii) no conjunction can be inserted between the verbs, and (iii) the entire construction represents a single notional event. The first two criteria together are taken to mean that the construction is in fact a single clause, and this single clause analysis is also what *almost* all linguists agree on. Interestingly, the evidence for some of these properties is sometimes rather weak, if not altogether lacking. Intonation contours and pausing are given impressionistically, the notable exception being Givón (1991) on absence of pausing in SVCs as opposed to coordinated clause. Eventhood is usually determined through translation into a contact language that does not have SVCs or by reference to native speaker intuitions. And if almost all linguists agree, there are exceptions too. For instance for Tok Pisin a serialising conjunction has been described (Verhaar 1991). Likewise, Yimas (Foley 1991) and Ewe (Ameka 1991, in press) have been described as having special (sequential) markers linking verbs in serial verb constructions when these denote consecutive actions. We return to the SVC as the expression of a single unitary event in §4 on conceptual packaging.

For this article we decided to take a rather liberal view of what may count as a serial verb construction. Indeed, we are interested not so much in whether the label ‘SVC’ is correctly applied by some standard, but in what the various multi-verb constructions in Austronesian and Papuan languages that are described as ‘serial’ in some way have in common or how they are different. We have, therefore, included all constructions in which **two or more verbs occur in a single clause and none of the verbs is apparently formally subordinated to the other**. Explicitly, we do not make an *a priori* distinction between auxiliaries or prepositions and SVCs, although we realise that the former often originate as main verbs (Croft 2001:260–265).

On the basis of this definition we distinguish four basic types of SVCs for the East Nusantara area: (i) independent, (ii) dependent, (iii) co-dependent, and (iv) complex verb

serialisation.<sup>3</sup> These distinctions are based on the morphosyntactic properties of the construction types. Since they are heuristically based on the data that we have examined so far, it is possible that for other parts of the world additional categories may be relevant, or that distinctions that we have made here may be collapsed elsewhere. There is no theoretical model of language underlying this typology, as there is for instance in the distinction between nuclear, core and peripheral layer serialisation (Foley and Olson 1985), nor were these categories set up to contrast with other constructions types. Nevertheless, it is notable that the four types that turn out to be relevant for this area roughly correspond to four major types of multi-verb constructions that are not instances of serialisation, namely compounding, co-ordination, subordination, and complementation (raising).

### 3.1 Independent serialisation

In independent serialisation all the verbs in the construction have the complete range of verbal inflectional morphology that single verbs in simple clauses would have, such as subject agreement, Tense, Aspect, and Mood, when applicable. At the same time, the construction has one or more, possibly language specific, properties that show that this construction is distinct from asyndetic coordination. For one language, this may be the scope of negation or placement of negation particles, for another it may be a radical change in meaning when a conjunction is inserted, or a characteristic prosodic contour.

For instance, in the Tidore and Hatam examples, (3) and (4), all of these criteria apply to the sequences of verbs, printed in bold.

Tidore

- (3) ...*ui* *ngge* *ngone* ***fo-tagi*** ***fo-oro*** *ino*  
 sand 3NH:there 1PL 1PL:INC:A-go 1PL:INC:A-fetch this:way

***fo-wohe*** *wange*.  
 1PL:INC-dry sun

‘... the sand we go fetch it here (and) dry it in the sun.’ (van Staden 2000:238)<sup>4</sup>

Hatam

- (4) *Nok* *lene* *ni-mbut* *hanyen* *bu* *ni-kwei* *ei* *igbei*  
 like then 1EXC-walk in:turn again 1EXC-come at home

*lene* *nyeni* ***ni-hara*** ***ni-nggum*** *bak* *nye-de* *andigpoi-nya*.  
 then we 1PL:EXC-ask 1PL:EXC-hungry to 1PL-POSS parent-PL

‘So then we would walk around again and come home and then we’d hungrily ask our parents (for food).’ (Reesink 1999:97)

It is not always easy to determine whether a construction should be analysed as an instance of independent serialisation. If a language does not have verbal inflection, as in Ambonese Malay for instance, the distinction between dependent and independent verb forms is difficult to make.

3 A first typology of Papuan and Austronesian languages in general (van Staden and Senft 2001; see also Kelly and Melinger 2001:87–92) confirmed that the serial verb constructions found belong to these four morpho-syntactic types.

4 In the Tidore example, the three verbs *tagi*, *oro* and *wohe* are serialised in an independent serial verb construction. The directional verb *ino*, however, is not inflected and it will have a different analysis.

Independent serialisation is found in all the Papuan languages from our sample with the exception of Inanwatan, which does not have serialisation at all. In the Austronesian languages in our sample independent serialisation occurs regularly only in Tetun and Taba, and it is a marginal construction type in Leti.

### 3.2 Dependent serialisation

Dependent verb serialisation is defined as a construction in which only one of the verbs carries all the inflections, while the others are given either in their ‘bare’ form or in a stripped-down form, possibly with an affix indicating, for instance, that the word is a predicate (despite not being inflected for subject, tense, etc.). It appears that almost universally the verbs in a dependent SVC share at least one argument — the subject. If independent series resemble asyndetically coordinated clauses, dependent series are easily conceived of as verb phrases containing an auxiliary or a (subordinated) adverbial. In the following example from Tidore, the second verb *ia* ‘move in a direction away from speaker’ cannot be inflected, and no conjunction can be inserted, but at the same time there is no formal sign of subordination, nor is there any indication that *ia* is an adverb rather than a verb:

- Tidore
- (5) *Gure nyao kohu ngge ia.*  
 put fish raw 3NH:there that.way  
 ‘Put in the raw fish.’ (van Staden 2000:456)  
 (lit: put the raw fish in a direction away from speaker and — most likely  
 — along the coast)

A similar case can be made for Hatam in the following example. It does not allow the verb following a directional verb to be inflected, but there are no clear arguments to assign directional verbs to a category of auxiliaries:

- Hatam
- (6) *Di-kwei buwak di-sutbatnya i-bou poi bu ba*  
 1SG-come gather 1SG-friends 3PL-head few again and  
*i-bit da ba n-ug ngat ei bigbehei.*  
 3PL-follow 1SG and 1PL:EXC-go see LOC forest  
 ‘I came (and) got a few of my friends together again and they’d follow  
 me and we’d go look in the forest (for game).’ (Reesink 1999:99)

In other languages, like Taba, the cross-referencing prefix is optional on the second verb in the series if the first argument is the same for both verbs (Bowden 2001a:300), with no clear difference in meaning:

- Taba
- (7) *N=sopang (n=)mul hu.*  
 3SG=descend (3SG=)return CONT  
 ‘She is still coming back down.’ (Bowden 2001a:300)



- Taba  
 (8) *N=han (n=)ait te-su.*  
 3SG=go (3SG=)ascend NEG-POT  
 ‘(S)he hasn’t yet gone up.’ (Bowden 2001a:300)

Similarly, when the second verb is an undergoer intransitive verb and its argument is human and coreferential with the Actor of the first verb, this argument may, but need not be expressed by a free morpheme following the verb:

- Taba  
 (9) *N=wosal máddodang (i).*  
 3SG=stand be:straight (3SG)  
 ‘He’s standing up straight.’ (Bowden 2001a:301)

Such optional inflection of the second verb in a series we consider as a sign of dependent serialisation, since the uninflected verb could not function as a predicate of an independent sentence.

A similar phenomenon identifies dependent SVCs in Austronesian Leti. In Leti, main verbs can either be inflected by just a subject prefix or in addition host a subject clitic. In SVCs containing directional verbs, however, only a subject prefix is possible on the directional verb, as in (10); a cliticised verb, as in (11), suggests a coordination of two actions carried out by different actors (van Engelenhoven 1995:250–251).

- Leti  
 (10) *R-el-e loua:-nu r-ti kòta // na:n-e.*  
 3PL-take-DEX trunk-POSS 3PL-arrive word name-DEX  
 ‘They take his trunk to the clan on purpose.’

- Leti  
 (11) *R-el-e loua:-nu i=r-ti kòta // na:n-e.*  
 3PL-take-DEX trunk-POSS CLIT-3PL-arrive word name-DEX  
 ‘They<sub>i</sub> take his trunk and they<sub>j</sub> arrive at the clan.’

Dependent serial verb constructions are found regularly, both in the Papuan and the Austronesian languages of our sample. With seven out of twelve languages having this construction type, it is the second most frequent type after independent serialisation. For Kambera, this is even the only type of serial verb construction, which is used for the expression of Instrument, see §5.4.

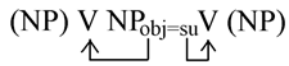
### 3.3 Co-dependent serialisation

Co-dependent verb serialisation is characterised by a shared argument and as such the parts of the construction depend on each other. The object of the first clause is the subject of the second, but there are no signs of raising or gapping, as illustrated by Austronesian Taba (12) and Papuan Mpur (13).

- Taba  
 (12) *N=babas welik n=mot do.*  
 3SG=bite pig 3SG=die REAL  
 ‘It bit the pig dead.’ (Bowden 2001a:311)

- Mpur  
 (13) *E-kum a-ja(p)-yep pa.*  
 1PL-smoke 3SG:M-sit-dry already  
 ‘We’ve already smoked him dry.’ (Odé 2000:65)

Schematically, the co-dependent construction is as follows:



In a sense, this type of serialisation crosscuts the distinction between dependent and independent serialisation, since it hinges on the roles of the arguments rather than on the status of the verbal element. Theoretically we may expect to find both dependent and independent verb forms with this construction, but in the East Nusantara languages it appears that co-dependent constructions involve fully inflected verbs.

In the literature this type of serialisation is also referred to as the ‘causative’ or ‘resultative’ serialisation based on the semantics of the construction: the first verb generally expresses a causing event and the second the result. This is not necessarily the case, however. Papuan Moi, for instance, uses this construction type to express a number of semantic relations including path (14) and instrument (15):

- Moi  
 (14) *Yi-sik kuwok p-ama.*  
 3PL-take stringbag 3SG:NH-come  
 ‘They brought the stringbag here.’ (Menick 1996:51)

- Moi  
 (15) *W-aala ton p-ai sin-keelik.*  
 3SG:M-cut first 3SG:NH-‘with’ knife-machete  
 ‘First he cut it with a machete.’ (Menick n.d.)

Co-dependent serialisation is not a very regular pattern in the East Nusantara languages. In the Austronesian languages it is only found in Taba and in Ambon Malay. It is more widely attested in the Papuan languages (Moi, Mpur, Abun, Maybrat) but it is never a frequent pattern.

### 3.4 Complex verb serialisation

The fourth morphosyntactic type of serialisation we distinguish is complex verb serialisation. Two or more verbs share one set of affixes; prefixes attach to the first and suffixes to the last verb in the sequence. In languages lacking verbal affixation, or with either prefixes or suffixes, all verbs are strictly adjacent overruling other placement rules for constituents. For instance, in an SVO language with complex verb serialisation, the object of the first verb must occur after the second verb even if this second verb is intransitive. Although it is evident that complex serialisation captures the same surface level pattern as what Foley and Olson (1985) have labelled ‘nuclear serialisation’, we will avoid this term for possible ensuing theoretical claims and because it would not be used in opposition to the other two types of serialisation, core layer and peripheral layer serialisation that they also propose.

Complex verb serialisation is very close to compounding, and indeed it is often predicted that complex verbs will in due course become compounds, as for example in Alamlak (Bruce 1988). Like compounds the construction as a whole has only one set of structural positions for arguments and modifiers, and for tense, mood, negation etc. affixes. Synchronically they are distinguished from compounding for morpho-phonological and syntactic reasons, but the line is thin indeed. The main distinction between compounding and serialisation is the presence (serialisation) or absence (compounding) of a primary accent on each part verb stem individually. This means that for instance in Kambera no complex verb serialisation is found, but instead extensive verb compounding, (Klamer 1998:278).

- Kambera
- (16) *Na-tila wàru-ma-nya<sub>k</sub> [na lau-na]<sub>k</sub>*  
 3SG:N-kick dispose:of-EMP-3SG:D ART sarong-3SG:G  
 ‘She kicks away her sarong.’

On this evidence we also conclude that Papuan Inanwatan does not have complex verb serialisation. In this language we find productive patterns that resemble complex verb serialisation, but in all cases word formation has occurred, evidenced by a single primary accent, as in:

- Inanwatan
- (17) *Mé-de-wo-re.*  
 3:SU-go:across-come-PAST  
 ‘They came across.’ (de Vries 2004:57)<sup>5</sup>

For Moi, Menick (1996:49, 57) describes what he calls ‘verb co-lexicalisation’ or ‘complex verbs’, as in *umu-faafu* ‘leave-collect’ translated as ‘leave together’, and *ana-toowo* ‘go-get’, translated as ‘go to get’. He stipulates that only the first verb carries the subject prefix, that the order of the verbs is not reversible, that nothing may intervene, and that aspect and negation have both verbs within their scope. Since no phonological constraints are mentioned, we could analyse such sequences either as complex verbs or as dependent serialisation as well, since the distinction here is not clear.

Complex verb serialisation is found somewhat more frequently in the Austronesian languages of East Nusantara (Tetun, Buru, and Ambonese Malay) than in the Papuan languages (see Maybrat aspectual SVC in §5.6.1).<sup>6</sup>

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5 Following the orthographic conventions given by de Vries (2004:21) initial /w/ has in this example been changed to /m/.

6 The only possible exception is Hatam where one example was found in which the object of the first verb followed the intransitive second verb:

- (1) *A-ttei mbut gerobak.*  
 2SG-carry walk wheelbarrow  
 ‘Push the wheelbarrow.’ (Reesink 1999:100)

Here we see that the object of the first verb follows the second verb. However, this example appears rather exceptional. The uniqueness of this one example has led us to believe that what we deal with here is an idiomatic expression, while other cases of serialisation in Hatam that involve an uninflected verb had best be treated as instances of dependent serialisation.

#### 4 Conceptual packaging: component and narrative serialisation

As we noted in §3, in the discussion of serial verb constructions the notion of eventhood is a recurrent theme. In fact, it is one of the few areas where there is apparent agreement among linguists: a serial verb construction expresses what is conceived of as a single event. But how should the notion of a ‘single event’ be defined? In this section we explore this question further and examine whether a link can be made between different kinds of verb serialisation related to event integration and representation in discourse.

Consider the following two descriptions of the notion of the ‘single event’ in a serial verb construction. The first description is from Pawley and Lane (1998:202) writing on Kalam, a Papuan language of the highlands of Papua New Guinea:

We argue that SVCs illustrate the general principle that speakers will find short and standardised ways of reporting highly recurrent complex events and situations. ... In many respects SVCs, and especially multi-scene SVCs, look like sequences of clauses that have been compressed into a single clause.

The second quote is from Bowden (2001a:297) writing on Austronesian Taba, one of the languages of East Nusantara:

It has often been noted by people writing on verb serialisation that SVCs fulfill a function in serialising languages similar to that of individual verbs in languages without serialisation. SVCs thus describe what native speakers conceptualise as single events with the individual verbs referring to subcomponents of those events.

What is notable is how these different researchers approach the matter of eventhood from different angles: either as a number of clauses compressed into one, or as spelling out in a multi-verb construction of what can be captured by a single verb in other languages. In this section we argue that this difference in approach actually stems from two different functions that serial verb constructions fulfil, namely to compose so-called ‘macro-events’ out of smaller units that we refer to as ‘subevents’, and to compose larger event complexes out of macro events. We refer to these two functions as component serialisation and the narrative serialisation respectively.<sup>7</sup>

The term macro-event was coined by Talmy (2000) and our use of the term relies partly on his and partly on Bohnemeyer’s (1999, 2001) amended use of this term and his corresponding notion of the ‘subevent’. A macro-event, or macro-event construal, is seen as the treatment of a portion out of the continuum of experience and perception as if it were an entity.<sup>8</sup> A macro-event is uniquely bounded in time, like objects are bounded in space. They also have a single set of semantic arguments. Like objects, macro-events, too, consist of parts (cf. Zacks and Tversky 2001a, b; Tversky, Bauer Morrison, Zacks 2002). These event parts can be of different kinds depending on the relation they bear to other parts and to the whole. Some event parts are related to the whole in time, i.e. the parts occur sequentially; other event parts are more like ingredients to the event and express an

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7 As John Lucy (pers. comm.) pointed out the label ‘narrative’ here could be slightly misleading since it might imply that component serialisation would not have a function in narrative discourse. This is clearly not our intention, although as we shall see, narrative serialisation is often more tied to specific genres of speech, e.g. instruction and narration, than component serialisation. We will continue to speak of narrative serialisation until we have a better term.

8 In psycholinguistic literature reference is regularly made to different types of events in terms of scripts, intentional actions and physical changes (cf. Zacks and Tversky 2001a, b). The macro-event — sub-event distinction approaches to some extent the distinction between intentional actions and physical changes, but they are certainly not identical.

aspect of one temporal segment. Subevents, by Bohnemeyer's definition, are the smallest event entities that can be lexicalised in a particular language, but which in themselves do not further entail other events.

Talmy (2000) gives a number of typical relations between subevents, whereby one of the events is the framing event and the other the co-event. The framing event determines to a large extent the temporal framework, syntactic structure and the semantic roles of the arguments, and a co-event that is often lexically the more specific of the two (Talmy 2000:213). Framing events typically contribute Path information (*the man walked OUT*), Temporal contouring (*they KEPT ON arguing about the bill*), State change (*the twig broke OFF*), Correation of events (*she sang ALONG with the others*), or the implicated Result (*he was struck BLIND by the light*). The co-event 'bears a support relation to the framing event' (Talmy 2000:220) typically expressing Cause, Manner, Purpose, and Enablement. In non-serialising languages only one of these two events will be expressed by the main verb, the other will appear as a satellite. This gives the distinction between 'verb framing languages' in which the verb in a clause expresses the framing event, as in Spanish, and 'satellite framing languages' in which the main verb gives the co-event and the framing event is expressed in a satellite, as in English. For serialising languages this distinction is problematic since both the framing event and the co-event are expressed by verbs and, as we see in the next section, neither corresponds directly to a 'fixed' verb in the construction. For example, we find both fixed sets of directional verbs (framing events) and manner verbs (co-events).

An interesting property of macro-events is that the internal order of the subevents within the macro-event does not have to reflect the order of occurrence iconically. This holds even when the language demands strict iconicity in the order in which macro-events are presented. For example, Tidore has a very strong preference for iconic ordering of events, so that the order in which the events are presented reflects the order in which they have occurred. However, within a macro-event such iconicity is not needed. In the following example the verb *mote* 'follow, accompany' expresses the path notion 'via'.

Tidore

- (18) *Ngone fo-tagi Rum mote Mafututu.*  
 IPL:INC IPL:INC:A-go Rum follow Mafututu

'We go to Rum via Mafututu.' (Slightly adapted from van Staden (2000:315))

On an iconic interpretation, this sentence would mean that having gone to Rum, Mafutu was then passed. But clearly, this is not what the sentence means. Here, *Rum* is reached after *Mafututu* has been passed. As Bohnemeyer points out (1999, 2001), a single macro-event only has one set of semantic roles which all pertain only to this macro-event regardless of the construction and the number of verbal elements in the construction. This means that the order in which the subevents within this macro-event occur is not of crucial importance to their interpretation.

We find that most of the serial verb constructions discussed in §5 make up single macro-events, that is, one set of semantic arguments is shared by the verbs and the scope of Aspect and Mood and (other) adverbials is always over the entire construction. We have labelled this component serialisation. An example illustrating this type of serialisation is from Austronesian Taba.

- Taba  
 (19) *N=han ait te-su.*  
 3sg=go ascend NEG-POT  
 ‘(S)he hasn’t yet gone up.’ (Bowden 2001a:298)

Bowden (2001a:298) remarks on this utterance:

Although neither going nor ascending have yet occurred, the speaker expects such an event including both subcomponents to occur soon. Again, such non-occurrence and expectation must be understood as applying to the whole unitary event referred to by the entire SVC and not just a part of it. For example, the agent cannot be understood as having already left but not yet having started to ascend.

The construction as a whole is a single event in time. These properties of component serialisation hold regardless of the morphosyntactic properties of the construction.

If macro-events are uniquely bounded in time and have a single set of semantic arguments, the unit of the clause appears to be natural domain for the expression of a macro-event. But mismatches do occur. Some languages will not allow for the expression of all the subevents of a single macro-event in a simple clause. Tidore is a case in point where source and destination of a single motion event must be expressed in separate clauses. A construction as in (20) is unacceptable, because it contains movement from source to location (they rowed from a seaward location landwards to Tidore). This must be expressed in a sequence of two clauses, as in (21).

- Tidore  
 (20) \**Ona yo-horu ka-tai isa toma Tidore.*  
 3PL 3N.A-paddle PRED-seaward landwards LOC Tidore

- Tidore  
 (21) *Ona yo-horu ka-tai isa si ona toma*  
 3PL 3N.A-paddle PRED-seaward landwards first 3PL LOC

*Tidore rai.*

Tidore already

‘They were rowing to a landward destination and now they have already reached Tidore.’ (van Staden 2000:349)

Other languages allow for the expression of more than one macro-event in the single clause. This is the kind of serialisation that Pawley and Lane (1998) describe for Kalam and that is so characteristic of many New Guinea languages.

- Kalam  
 (22) ... *tk ad ñ-b-al ak, ...*  
 break cook eat-PRF-3PL this  
 ‘... break off (the leaves of the cordyline plant) and cook and eat  
 (the animal) (with them) ...’ (Lane 1991:82)

It is now clear how these constructions ‘look like sequences of clauses that have been compressed into a single clause’ (Pawley and Lane 1998:202): they are series of macro-events packed together into a single clause. Interestingly, the syntactic constraints on numbers and kinds of arguments in these constructions are in conflict with what would be allowed on the basis of the semantics. Semantically, each macro-event can have its own set

of arguments and time or location modifiers but syntactically, there is only one structural position for them. This results in scope ambiguity typically of the locative and temporal adverbials. Such integration of more than one macro-event into a clause through serialisation, we refer to as narrative serialisation.

There seems to be an obvious connection between narrative serialisation and another feature that is attested in many of the Sepik-Ramu and Trans New Guinea languages, namely clause chaining, often (but not always) co-occurring with a system of switch reference. Consider the following example from Usan, a TNG language (Reesink 1987:194). Some of the verbs are ‘bare’: *yar* ‘come’, *di* ‘come.up’, which may suggest verb serialisation; some are compounded (*gumot-neri* ‘stab-take out’, presumably a further development from a complex verb construction; some form a shared argument sequence (*ariram-a* ‘throw-3s<sub>i</sub>’ *dar-a* ‘come.down-3s<sub>j</sub>’ = ‘he (the moon) threw (the stopper) down’), comparable to what we identified as ‘co-dependent’ serialisation. What is interesting is that the continuative aspect (i.e. the final verb *igo* ‘be, stay’) applies to ALL the preceding verbs.

- Usan
- (23) *Ende at nam qur goat igam-a wai yar*  
 thus do.SS tree fruit wait.SS be-3SG.DS animal come
- saragaim-a ig-ub magi-b ar-a inaun ig-ub*  
 rustle-3SG.DS hear-SS whistle-SS call-3SG.DS moon hear-SS
- di-ab igurau gumot-neri ariram-a dar-a*  
 come.up-SS stopper stab-take.out.SS throw-3SG.DS come.down-3SG.DS
- wei-b di begen eng wai sir wo-t ariram-a*  
 open-SS come.up light the animal exactly 3SG-at throw-3SG.DS
- Sarag qamar wai eng w-ab igo-ai.*  
 Sarag first.born animal the 3SS.O.shoot-SS be-3SG.FARPAST
- ‘Doing this (while) he would be lying in wait at the fruits of a tree (and) an animal would come, make a rustling noise, he would hear it, whistle and call (and) the moon would hear it, come up, knock the stopper out (of the bamboo container in which the moon = the spleen of a killed man was kept) and it (= the stopper) would come down and he (= the moon) would come up in the open and he would throw the light right on the animal and Sarag the first born would be shooting the animal.’

Structures like these show how discourse in general is organised in these languages in paragraph-like sentences.<sup>9</sup> The fact that tense-aspect-mood as well as polarity are all marked on the final verb of such a long series, suggests that the whole series of events are packaged into one super-macro-event. It has been suggested that diachronically, too, there is a link between clause chaining and narrative serialisation, in particular in these languages with SOV word order. Yet, they do not always co-occur as is clear in the languages of East Nusantara where we do not find clause chaining.

In the languages of the area we are discussing we do not find the kind of clause chaining that we have in Usan. Narrative serialisation of the magnitude found in Kalam is

9 Frequently, this is combined with a system of tail-head linkage, whereby the last verb of the previous sentence is repeated as the first part of a new sentence. The effect is that where languages like English give text cohesion through the use of adverbial conjunctions, these languages do it in the way in which macro-events are distributed over clauses and sentences.

also not attested. But a few (Papuan) languages in the East Nusantara region do have constructions that qualify as narrative SVCs. We will discuss a few examples. First, consider the Tidore construction in (24) repeated from (3) above.

- Tidore  
 (24) ...*ui ngge ngone fo-tagi fo-oro ino*  
       sand 3NH:there 1PL 1PL:INC:A-go 1PL:INC:A-fetch this:way  
       *fo-wohe wange.*  
       1PL:INC-dry Sun  
       ‘... the sand we go fetch it here (and) dry it in the sun.’ (van Staden 2000:238)

This construction contains two macro-events expressed by *fotagi fooro ino* and *fowohe wange*, which happen to share both the first argument, expressed only in the verbal prefixes, and the second argument, which is topicalised and occurs only once in the sentence initial position. That this is indeed one serial verb construction and not two asyndetically coordinated clauses can be shown under negation.

- Tidore  
 (25) ...*ui ngge ngone kama fo-tagi fo-oro ino*  
       sand 3NH:there 1PL NEG 1PL:INC:A-GO 1PL:INC:A-fetch this:way  
       *fo-wohe wange ua.*  
       1PL:INC-dry sun not  
       ‘The sand we do not go fetch it here and dry it in the sun.’

Here we see that the negation focus particle *kama* precedes the first verb while the negation particle *ua* occurs in final position, following the last verb in the sequence. The two particles must always occur in the same clause, so that the insertion of a conjunction in this negated utterance would render it ungrammatical (van Staden 2000).

Arguably, Maybrat has such narrative SVCs as well. Dol (1999:249) discusses the following example as a problematic case, holding a middle ground between coordination and serial verb construction:

- Maybrat  
 (26) *Y-fat aof m-tie m-ai tapam.*  
       3M-fell sago 3U-break 3U-hit ground  
       ‘He felled the sago tree (and) it broke (and) hit the ground.’ (Dol 1999:248)

The construction is indeed one clause because it may appear in a single relative clause to either *aof* ‘sago tree’ or *tapam* ‘ground’.

- Maybrat  
 (27) *Aof ro y-fat 0 m-tie m-ai tapam m-anes oh.*  
       sago REL 3M-fell (it) 3U-break 3U-hit ground 3U-old already  
       ‘The sago tree that he felled and it broke and hit the ground was already old.’

- Maybrat  
 (28) *Tapam ro y-fat aof m-tie m-ai 0 hatat m-siar.*  
       ground REL 3M-fell sago 3U-break 3U-hit (it) mud 3U-many  
       ‘The ground on which he felled the sago tree and it broke and crashed was very muddy.’

The scope of a final aspectual adverb *oh* ‘already’ is ambiguous.

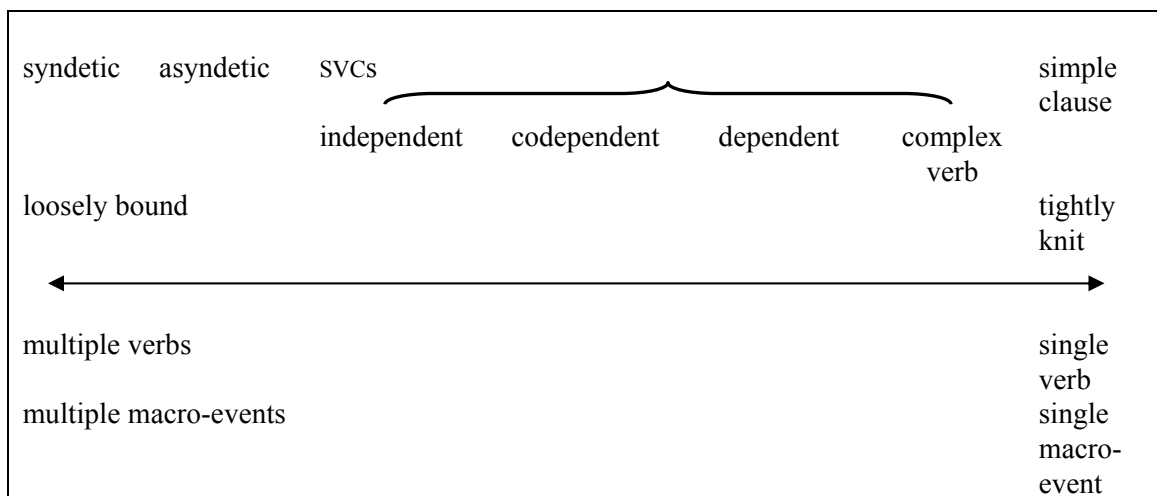


Maybrat

- (29) *Y-fat aof m-tie m-ai tapam oh.*  
 3M-fell sago 3U-break 3U-hit ground already  
 ‘He felled the sago tree (and) it broke (and) hit the ground — already.’

The sentence could be interpreted as either ‘he has already felled the sago tree and it broke and hit the ground’ or as ‘he felled the sago tree and it has already broken and hit the ground’ (Dol, pers. comm.). Narrative serialisation is infrequent in the Papuan languages of Eastern Indonesia, but it is unattested in the Austronesian languages.

The five different construction types identified here can be seen as forming a continuum from loosely bound constructions to tightly knit ones. At one end of the continuum we find asyndetically coordinated sentences, in which the relationship between the macro-events is implicit, and syndetic co-ordination involving conjunctions that mark this relationship (cf. Matthiessen and Thompson 1988; Lehmann 1988), such as reason, cause, purpose, condition, etc. At the other end there are simple clause constructions in which a single verb expresses a single macro-event. Constructions with compound verbs or with adverbials are found towards this end. In between these two extremes we find constructions in which the number of verbs, the number of clauses and the number of events do not line up, breaking the natural affinity between single clause and macro-event. There may be multi-clause constructions that constitute single macro-events, or, alternatively, there may be simple clauses in which subevents are expressed by different elements, such as satellites and verbs. On this continuum, narrative serialisation is closer to coordination and complex serialisation to simple clauses. This is illustrated in Figure 2.<sup>10</sup>



**Figure 2:** Five different SVC constructions

From this perspective, the notion of verb serialisation, like subordination, subsumes a number of distinct morpho-syntactic construction types. Languages may have more than one construction type and use these for the expression of different semantic relations. In the following section, we examine the construction types in the expression of specific semantic relations.

<sup>10</sup> For other continua of complex sentence types in Lehmann (1988:213) and Croft (2001:322).

**Table 2:** SVCs in Austronesian (white) and Papuan (shaded) languages of East Nusantara

	Complex verbs	Independent serialisation	Dependent serialisation	Co-dependent serialisation	Total
Motion	Buru	Tetun	Taba		3
		Maybrat Moi Mpur Tidore	Hatam		5
Direction	Buru Keo Ambon Malay	Tetun Ambon Malay	Tetun Taba		7
		Hatam Maybrat Moi Mpur Tidore	Hatam Tidore	Hatam Moi	9
State change (resultative/ purposive)	Buru Ambon Malay Tetun			Ambon Malay Taba	5
	Moi			Maybrat Mpur Moi Hatam	5
Instrument		Tetun	Taba Kambera		3
		Tidore	Hatam	Maybrat Moi	4
Comitative		Leti			1
		Tidore Moi Maybrat			3
Manner	Buru		Taba		2
		Hatam Mpur Tidore			3
Aspect	Ambon Malay Maybrat	Tidore Maybrat	Tidore Maybrat	Moi Maybrat Hatam	1 8
					0
Mood			Tidore		1

**Table 3:** Semantic types expressed by different SVCs per language  
(P= Papuan, AN = Austronesian)

	Complex verbs	Independent serialisation	Dependent serialisation	Co-dependent serialisation	Total
Hatam (P)		direction manner	motion direction instrument	direction state change aspect	8
Inanwatan (P)					0
Maybrat (P)	aspect	motion direction comitative aspect		state change instrument aspect	8
Moi (P)	state change	direction comitative		direction state change instrument	7
Mpur (P)		motion direction manner		state change	4
Tidore (P)		motion direction instrument comitative manner aspect	direction aspect mood		8
Buru (AN)	motion direction state change manner				4
Kambera (AN)			instrument		1
Leti (AN)		comitative			1
Taba (AN)			motion direction instrument manner	state change	5
Tetun Fehan (AN)	state change	motion direction instrument	direction		5
Ambon Malay (Creole)	aspect direction resultative	direction		state change	5

## 5 The semantics of serial verb constructions

When one of the verbs in the construction is taken from a small(ish) group of verbs that can be characterised by their common semantics, then the construction as a whole is typically described by reference to this closed set of verbs. Almost invariably there is some indication that the contribution of the ‘fixed’ verb in the construction is becoming grammaticalised. In the following sections, we discuss the semantic contribution of the fixed verbs in the serial verb constructions in the languages of East Nusantara. We link the semantics of the constructions to the construction types discussed in §3. Table 2 and Table 3 present a summary of the four morphological types of serial verb constructions, the semantic notions expressed in the construction and the languages in which we found these distinctions.

As the tables show, the different constructions do not easily link up to specific semantic relations expressed in them. Co-dependent serialisation is not found to express motion, comitative, and manner. But it is the favoured construction for the expression of state change serial verb constructions. However, before we make further generalisations, we first need to discuss each of these semantic types in somewhat more detail.

### 5.1 Motion

In many languages we find verb sequences expressing a motion, typically ‘go’, that precedes some action carried out by the same actor.<sup>11</sup> The construction indicates that the agent moves (in a particular direction) in order to perform the event specified by the second verb (purposive), or that the agent is about to enter the event specified by the second verb (resultative), but it can also have a more aspectual interpretation whereby the inception of the event itself is stressed. Cross-linguistically, this kind of relationship expressed in serial verb constructions appears to be very common. Durie (1997:310) notes:

Every serializing language I have encountered includes a category of motion serialisation, where a verb of motion is combined with some other verb in such a way that the motion verb comes first and the moving argument is the Agent of the second verb.

This observation is not confirmed by our sample. We do not find this particular type of serialisation in three of the Austronesian languages: Kambera, Leti, and Ambon Malay.

Where we do find motion serialisation, it is predominantly expressed in independent SVCs, as in Austronesian Tetun (30) and Papuan Moi (31). The latter also has complex verbs or a dependent series (32). Austronesian Taba (33) and Papuan Hatam (34) have dependent SVCs:

- Terun  
(30) *K-tone k-á.*  
1SG-go 1SG-eat  
‘I go (and/to) eat.’ (van Klinken 1999:262)

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<sup>11</sup> In an earlier version we used the term Precursion to refer to this semantic relation but the semantic relation that Talmy (2000:42) captures by this term is rather different, and to avoid confusion we now use ‘motion serialisation’ as distinct from ‘direction serialisation’.

- Moi
- (31) *Dewe mun w-ai di-mem*  
 tomorrow father 3SG:M-be:with:SG 1SG-mother  
*aa-y-iini yo-soolo suk.*  
 DL-3PL-go:PL 3PL-pound:sago again  
 ‘Tomorrow father and mother will go (and/to) pound sago again.’ (Menick n.d.)
- Moi
- (32) *Te-feden kemaina t-amu san nin.*  
 1SG-arrive because 1SG-come get 2SG  
 ‘I came because I (wanted) to meet you.’ (Menick n.d.)
- Taba
- (33) *N=han tuli.*  
 3sg=go sleep  
 ‘(S)he’s going to sleep.’ (Bowden 2001a:307)
- Hatam
- (34) *Di-kwei buwak di-sutbatnya i-bou poi bu ba*  
 1SG-come gather 1SG-friends 3PL-head few again and  
*i-bit da ba n-ug ngat ei bigbehei.*  
 3PL-follow 1SG and 1PL:EXC-go see LOC forest  
 ‘I came (and) got a few of my friends together again and they’d follow me and we’d go look in the forest (for game).’ (Reesink 1999:99)

The verb ‘go’ expressing a motion sub-event is easily (further) bleached of its deictic meaning. Often, it conveys an inceptive aspectual or purposive notion. van Klinken (1999:262), for instance, comments on example (30) that native speakers of Tetun hesitate between two possible interpretations: either the speaker is going in order to eat or the speaker is about to start eating. Similarly, (33) can be used to convey ‘going off in order to sleep’ or ‘already being in bed and falling asleep’ (Bowden 2001a:307), while (34) may or may not be seen as purposive.

Meyah is an example of a language in which the verb *eja* ‘go’ has already become an inceptive marker *ej-* and now combines with the lexical verb *eja*, again in a serial verb construction:

- Meyah
- (35) *Ri-ona-ir ri-eja ri-ej-of mega jeska mekeni insa.*  
 3PL-male-PL 3PL-go 3PL-INCEP-fell tree from garden ANAP  
 ‘The men go and begin to fell trees in the aforementioned garden.’  
 (Gravelle 2001)

Austronesian Buru illustrates a development from multi-clause constructions to word formation in its various constructions for the expression of a motion event. Two consecutive macro-events in separate clauses can develop into a single macro-event containing a subevent of motion preceding an action, and from there even more clearly aspectual meanings such as progressive may evolve:

- Buru
- (36) *Da iko pa/la (da) linga-h.*  
 3SG go REAL/IRR (3SG) look-it  
 ‘He went and (result) he looked at it.’  
 ‘He went in order to look at it.’ (Grimes 1991:208)  
 [two syndetically linked clauses]
- Buru
- (37) *Da iko, da linga-h.*  
 ‘He went, he looked at it.’ (Grimes 1991:208)  
 [two asyndetically linked clauses]
- Buru
- (38) *Da iko linga-h.*  
 ‘He went and looked at it/He went to look at it.’ (Grimes 1991:208)  
 [one clause, complex verb]
- Buru
- (39) *Daik.linga-h.*  
 ‘He went-and-looked at it.’ (Grimes 1991:208)  
 [compound]

In (36) explicit conjunctions signal the semantic relation between two macro-events. When the two clauses are asyndetically co-ordinated, as in (37), or brought into an even tighter relation, as in (38) and (39), ‘interpretation of the second verb is often indeterminate from the immediate clause as to whether it is purpose (irrealis) or result (realis). The modality of the particular relation is interpreted from the larger discourse.’ (Grimes 1991:208)

In conclusion, we find that Motion serialisation is very common among the languages of East Nusantara, but not universal. Several languages have more than one construction type for this semantic relation, but co-dependent SVCs are not found in this category.

## 5.2 Direction

The construction expressing the semantic relation of direction is defined by a sequence in which the second verb, the direction verb, specifies the path or location of a motion or action event (see also Talmy 1985, Talmy 2000 especially 226ff.). The manner or circumstance is given by the first verb. It seems useful to distinguish between direction specified for a generic motion verb that is generally intransitive, and direction specified for an action performed on an object, in which the first verb is transitive, because the two are generally encoded in different constructions.

### 5.2.1 Intransitive verbs

In constructions with an intransitive verb followed by a directional verb, it is the only argument of the first verb that is moving in a particular direction. All the Papuan languages in the sample have independent serialisation of an intransitive verb and a direction verb, for instance, Maybrat (40) and Hatam (41). Among the Austronesian languages, independent serialisation is found only in Tetun (42). Taba (43) has dependent serialisation, with optional subject marking on the second verb:

- Maybrat
- (40) *T-ama t-pat Sorong.*  
1SG-come 1SG-move:from Sorong  
'I came from Sorong.' (Dol 1999:230)
- Hatam
- (41) *Sop cin i-mbut i-kwei su.*  
woman pair 3PL-walk 3PL-come already  
'The two women had already walked (and) come.' (Reesink 1999:107)
- Tetun
- (42) *Nia mós n-alai n-atutuk fahi matem.*  
then also 3SG-run 3SG-go:direct pig corpse  
'(Having heard the news) he ran straight to the dead pig.'  
(van Klinken 1999:264–265)
- Taba
- (43) *N=sopang (n=)mul hu.*  
3SG=descend (3SG=)return CONT  
'She is still coming back down.' (Bowden 2001a:295, 300)

### 5.2.2 Transitive verbs

When the first verb is transitive, the object is typically the moving entity. It is therefore the natural subject of the second, directional verb. Co-dependent SVCs are then expected and found, as in Moi (44). In Hatam, the directional verb is obligatorily inflected when it follows an intransitive motion verb, such as *mbut* 'walk' in example (41) above, but it is obligatorily uninflected after an action verb with accompanying direct object, as in (45).

While this condition has been used to analyse the Tidore example (5) as an instance of dependent serialisation, see §3.2, one may also consider that in Hatam the directional verb in such constructions has lost its verbal status and become an adverb. It does contrast with co-dependent serialisation expressing state changes in Hatam, see §5.3. As stated in §3, however, we have decided to be 'inclusive' rather than 'exclusive' for the purposes of this study and so include it as a serial verb construction.

- Moi
- (44) *Yi-sik kuwok p-ama.*  
3PL-take stringbag 3SG:NH-come  
'They brought the stringbag here.' (Menick 1996:51)
- Hatam
- (44) *Ji-krau munggwom cin pi-ma kwei.*  
2PL-hold child two ANAPH-that come  
'You bring the two children.' (Reesink 1999:99)

Complex verb serialisation expressing direction with a transitive verb is found in two Austronesian languages, Keo and Buru, and in Ambon Malay, from which the following example has been taken:

Ambon Malay

- (46) *Dong su ba pi antua pung barang-barang.*  
 they PRF bring go he POSS thing-thing  
 ‘They have brought his stuff away.’ (Tjia 1997:39)  
 (lit. ‘they have carry-gone his things’)

This language also allows a construction akin to what we describe as co-dependent serialisation, but which, in this language, cannot be distinguished from independent SVCs due to the dearth of morphology:

Ambon Malay

- (47) *Dong su ba antua pung barang-barang pi.*  
 they PRF bring he POSS thing-thing go  
 ‘They have brought his stuff away.’ (Tjia 1997:39)  
 (lit. ‘they have carried his things go’)

The semantic/pragmatic differences that are the result of these alternative orders are discussed in the following section when we consider a similar choice with respect to Change of State constructions. Complex verb serialisation never expresses Direction in the Papuan languages of our sample. Inanwatan is the nearest candidate, but the verb complexes in this language are all analysed as either compound verbs, in which two verbs are phonologically and morphologically integrated, as in (17) above, or complex phrasal verbs, in which there is only phonological integration. Thus, in the complex phrasal verb (48) the bare verb stem *mogo* ‘carry’ attracts primary stress, and the prefix *me-* ‘3SG’ is always realised by its intervocalic allophone [w] (de Vries 2004:57).

Inanwatan

- (48) *sugére mógo-we-wo-re.*  
 sago carry-3s-come-PAST  
 ‘He brought sago.’ (de Vries 2004:57)

The constructions found for Direction in the Papuan and AN languages of our area, then, conform closely to the general patterns described for Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:47): ‘if the first verb is intransitive, the moving object/person is the subject of both verbs’ and generally marked as such; ‘if the first verb is transitive, the moving object/person is the object of the first verb and the subject of the second verb’.

### 5.3 State change

For the expression of state changes, only codependent SVCs and complex verb constructions are found. But since the codependent series involve fully inflected verbs these constructions can also be considered instances of independent serialisation. Most of the Papuan languages use serial verb constructions for the expression of state changes, but it is never a frequent pattern. Only three of the Austronesian languages express state changes in serial verb constructions and no one construction is favoured. Instead, the entire continuum from multi-clause constructions to simple clauses is explored for the expression of state changes, and often one language will have more than one construction available. Papuan Meyah, for instance, can express a change of state in a sequence of clauses involving a ‘heavy’ adverbial conjunction (49), but also has co-dependent serialisation (50).



Meyah

- (49) *Didif di-agob mek fogora agos.*  
 I 1SG-hit pig PUR/RES die  
 ‘I hit the pig so it died.’ (Gilles Gravelle pers. comm.)

Meyah

- (50) *I Saibin agos fob.*  
 3SG.strike Saibin die already  
 ‘S/he already struck Saibin dead.’ (Gilles Gravelle pers. comm.)

In Hatam, but also in Sougb, a language that is closely related to Meyah, a light conjunction, *bi*= ‘purpose’, cliticises onto the second verb.

Meyah

- (51) *Di-bui napia bi=mai.*  
 1SG-hit wild:pig PUR=die  
 ‘I hit the wild pig dead/so that (it) died.’ (Reesink 1999:102)

Among the Austronesian languages, only Taba and Ambonese Malay employ co-dependent SVCs for state changes. The latter also uses complex verb constructions, but there is a difference in meaning between the two constructions. In the codependent series emphasis is on the result state (52), while in the complex verb construction, emphasis is on the manner in which the state change is brought about (53) (Tjia 1997:56).

Ambon Malay

- (52) *Be pukol anjing mati.*  
 I hit dog die  
 ‘I killed dog (by hitting).’ (Tjia 1997:56 and pers. comm.)

Ambon Malay

- (53) *Be pukol mati anjing.*  
 I hit die dog  
 ‘I killed dog (by hitting).’ (Tjia 1997:56 and pers. comm.)

Other languages with complex verb constructions for state changes are Papuan Moi, and Austronesian Buru and Tetun. Dependent serialisation is unattested.

#### 5.4 Comitative and instrument

Cross-linguistically, the same resources are often used for the expression of comitative and instrument. The common ground between the two may be captured by Talmy’s description of the category ‘action-correlating as framing event’. In this event type ‘a first agency executing a particular activity is associated with a second agency whose activity is correlated with the first’ (Talmy 2000:253–254).<sup>12</sup> It may be expected that similar marking is also found when languages use serial verb constructions. But this expectation is not borne out for the East Nusantara languages. The expression of comitative and instrument may not only involve verbs with different semantics (cf. Tidore), also the construction types are sometimes different, even when both are serial verb constructions (cf. Moi,

12 Note, however, that Talmy does not himself explicitly include ‘instrument’. Types of correlation that are included are: ‘concert’, ‘accompaniment’, ‘imitation’, ‘surpassment’, and ‘demonstration’ (Talmy 2000:254).

Maybrat). It is also not possible to posit an implicational hierarchy so that if *x* is encoded in an SVCs, then so is *y*. One language in the sample (Leti) has a comitative but no instrument SVC, while four languages, Papuan Hatam and Austronesian Tetun, Taba and Kambera show the reverse.

#### 5.4.1 Comitative SVCs

Comitative SVCs are found in fewer languages than instrument serialisation (four to seven). This is just the opposite of what Durie (1988:9) found for Oceanic languages where comitative-coding strategies tend to be more verbal than the instrument strategies. Leti is the only Austronesian language of our sample that expresses the comitative by means of a multi-verb construction, in this case an independent SVC, as in (54). Three Papuan languages, Moi, Maybrat and Tidore (55), employ the same means.

Leti

- (54) *E=n-òra      muani      r-sòpl-e=la      Ralìavan-ø.*  
 S=3SG-be:with man:DEX 3PL-sail-DEX=go Timor-IND  
 ‘He sails to somewhere on Timor together with the man.’  
 (van Engelenhoven 1995:253)

Tidore

- (55) *Ngone fo-mote                      mansia yo-tagi      yau.*  
 1PL:INC 1PL:INC:A-follow people 3PL:A-go fish  
 ‘We go fishing with people (lit. we follow people go fish).’

The ordering of the subevents is not the same for all languages. Leti and Moi both express the comitative first, while in Maybrat and Tidore the comitative verb may either precede or follow the other verb in the construction, provided that the subject of both verbs is the same when the comitative follows the other verb.

#### 5.4.2 Instrument SVCs

Austronesian Tetun (van Klinken 1999:272–73) is the only language in our sample that expresses instrument in an independent SVC. Meyah and Sougb, both Papuan languages of the Bird’s Head but not included in our sample, also have independent serialisation.<sup>13</sup> In Tetun, the verb *odi* ‘use’, can either follow or precede the other verb in the series. In both positions it carries a subject prefix, which agrees with the marker on the other verb.<sup>14</sup>

13 Meyah and Sougb instrument serialisation (Reesink, ed. 2002:14, 134, 205) may even be analysed as narrative serialisation. Take the following example from Sougb:

*Len l-oho      besa                      l-a(o)uma      minc*  
 they 3PL-carry bird.of.paradise 3PL-INS-buy cloth

They carried birds-of-paradise (to) buy cloths (= *Kain timur*) with them. (Reesink 2000:106)

This sentence is a monoclausal variant of information spread over two sentences in a text about the use of valuable cloth. Meyah, Sougb and Hatam lack the option of expressing the instrument by means of an oblique constituent under one predicate. These languages appear to have conventionalised an instrument script in which the first action consists of some handling of an instrument, expressed by an open class of verbs, followed by a second activity which normally is marked for ‘instrument’.

14 Recall that Tetun verbs beginning with a consonant, such as *ko’a* ‘cut’, do not allow subject prefixation for phonological reasons.

Tetun

- (56) *Nia n-odi tudik e'e ko'a sit ti'a, ...*  
 3SG 3SG-use knife this cut be:cut:off already  
 'He took the knife and cut through (the umbilical cord) ...'  
 (van Klinken 1999:273)

Tetun

- (57) *Ha'u la k-atene tán ha'u la k-aré k-odi matan.*  
 I not 1SG-know because I not 1SG-see 1SG-use eye  
 'I don't know as I didn't see (it) with (my) eyes.' (van Klinken 1999:274)

Austronesian Taba and Kambera and Papuan Hatam have dependent serial verb construction. In both languages, the instrumental verb follows the first verb. In Kambera, this is the only type of serialisation found. The number of enclitics on the first verb is reduced to one. The object noun phrase of the first verb may follow the second verb (58), or occur between the two verbs (59). In Hatam (60) the instrument verb precedes the action verb which often carries a derivational instrumental prefix *bi*. Both instrument prefix and subject marker are optional:

Kambera

- (58) *Na-wànda-ta wà-nya na pulung yena.*  
 3SG:N-call-1PL:ACC use-3SG:D ART word DEI:3SG  
 'He calls us by means of this message.' (Klamer 1998:285)

Kambera

- (59) *Ku-taku uhu wàngu huru.*  
 1SG:N-scoop rice use spoon  
 'I scoop rice with a spoon.' (Klamer 1998:287)

Hatam

- (60) *Di-ba hamboi (di-bi-)wim biei.*  
 1SG-use machete 1SG-INS-fell tree  
 'I felled the tree with a machete.'

Papuan Moi and Maybrat express Instrument in co-dependent SVCs. The Maybrat construction is analysed as a co-dependent SVC because the subject prefix on *kah* is third person unmarked, regardless of number and person of the (agentive) argument in the clause.

Maybrat

- (61) *T-fat ara m-kah pam.*  
 1SG-fell tree 3U-with axe  
 'I felled the tree with an axe.' (Dol 1999:233)

The prefix *m-* can be analysed as cross-referencing the entire preceding constituent *tfat ara* as the first argument of *kah*, as an instance of what Crowley (1987) labels 'ambient serialisation'.

In conclusion, it is difficult to make generalisations in relation to the expression of 'action correlating' events in the Austronesian and Papuan languages of East Nusantara. Both the construction types and the verb semantics in these languages vary.

## 5.5 Manner

In manner serialisation, one of the two verbs expresses the manner in which the event expressed by the other verb is carried out. Universally, the manner verb follows the other verb in the sequence. Serial verb constructions for the expression of manner are found in only five of the languages of our sample (2 Austronesian, 3 Papuan). Most languages use adverbs or adjectives. Some languages have more than one option. For example, Buru uses complex verb serialisation as well as manner adverbs, the latter being more common.

In Taba undergoer intransitive verbs expressing manner occur in dependent serial verb constructions, compare example (9) above, here repeated.

Taba

- (62) *N=wosal máddodang (i).*  
 3SG=stand be:straight (3SG)  
 ‘He’s standing up straight.’ (Bowden 2001a:301)

Tidore uses independent serial verb constructions to express manner. Person marking on both verbs is co-referential.

Tidore

- (63) *Rustam wo-oyo wo-dedo.*  
 3M 3M:A-eat 3M:A-fast  
 ‘Rustam eats fast.’ (cf. van Staden 2000:320)

Although manner serialisation is observed in Mpur and Hatam (see example (2)), these languages prefer manner adverbs and adjectives as in the following example from Hatam.

Hatam

- (64) *Nyeni ni-bong kei big.*  
 we 1EXC-sleep good not  
 ‘We do not sleep well.’ (Reesink 1999:95)<sup>15</sup>

It is noticeable how in all the Papuan languages dedicated lexical items expressing manner are infrequent in narratives. What we do find is manner lexicalised in activity verbs. For instance, Tidore, like many other Papuan languages, has a large number of verbs for ‘cutting’ that distinguish not only the type of instrument used, but also the manner in which the cut is made so that *reno* ‘to cut finely while holding the object in the hand’ is distinguished from *toga* ‘cut along the long axis while holding in the hand’ and *sepi* ‘cut diagonally on a plank’, etc. (cf. van Staden 2007)

## 5.6 Aspect and mood

The categories of aspect and mood are only marginally expressed by serial verb constructions in the languages of our sample. The only language that makes extensive use of SVCs in this domain is Papuan Tidore, with both modal and aspectual serial verb constructions for various distinctions, such as inception, completion, continuation, ability, and possibility. Most Papuan languages have only a small set of aspectual distinctions and

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15 Since adjectives in Hatam behave predicatively as verbs, and since verbs are zero marked for 3SG, one could analyse this sentence as ambient serialisation, in which *nyeni nibong* ‘we sleep’ is the subject of the predicate *kei* ‘good’.

none at all for mood. None of the Austronesian languages use serial verb constructions to express aspect or mood, with the exception of (Creole) Ambonese Malay.

### 5.6.1 Aspect

The most commonly found distinction is completive aspect — at the opposite end of the range from inception to completion. The second verb in the series means something like ‘finish’, ‘complete’ or ‘over’. For this relation we again find that some languages have several constructions. The following examples from Papuan Maybrat illustrate independent, dependent and complex verb serialisation. The verb cross-references the object in the first example, but is uninflected in the other two. In the last example, the object of the first transitive verb follows the entire verbal complex. The three differ in meaning to the extent that in the latter two examples, the result state is not as permanent as in the first one: (65) ‘is used when an object [...] is left behind for good’ (Dol 1999:216); (66) and (67) imply ‘that the object [...] will be picked up later’ (Dol 1999:216).

Maybrat

- (65) *T-se sasū m-akus.*  
 1SG-place sweet:potato 3U-leave:behind  
 ‘I place the sweet potato and it is left behind.’ (Dol 1999:216)

Maybrat

- (66) *T-se sasū akus.*  
 1SG-place sweet:potato left:behind  
 ‘I place the sweet potato and leave it temporarily.’ (Dol 1999:216)

Maybrat

- (67) *T-se akus sasū.*  
 1SG-place left:behind sweet:potato  
 ‘I place the sweet potato and it is left behind.’ (Dol 1999:216)

Independent SVCs for the expression of aspect are found only in Tidore (68). Hatam and Moi both have co-dependent serialisation. Perfective *ein* ‘finish’ in Moi patterns just like the directional and state change SVCs in this language: the second verb cross-references the subject of the first verb if it is intransitive (69) the object if it is transitive (70). Ambon Malay has complex verb serialisation (71).

Tidore

- (68) *una wo-maleko wo-reke.*  
 3M 3M:A-continuously 3M:A-cry  
 ‘He cried on and on.’ (van Staden 2000:309)

Moi

- (69) *Ta-laagi-m t-a m-aagi m-ein se.*  
 1S-woman-3F 1S-possess 3S:F-die 3S:F-finish PERF  
 ‘My wife has died already (lit. My wife died, she is already finished).’  
 (Menick n.d.)

Moi

- (70) **W-akdos**      *aabus*      **p-ein**      **se**  
 3SG.M-chew.SG    concoction    3SG.NH-finish    PERF  
*wu-fuulu*      *p-oosu*      *gii*      *p-e-sa.*  
 3SG.M-saliva    3SG.NH-towards    sago.forest    3SG.NH-POSS-head  
 ‘He chewed the concoction, it was already finished, he spat it to the  
 head of the sago forest.’ (= ‘After he had chewed the concoction,  
 he spat it to the head of the sago forest.’)

Ambon Malay

- (71) *De seng makang abis ikan tu.*  
 3SG not eat      finish fish that  
 ‘He didn’t eat up the fish(es).’ (van Minde 1997:334)

### 5.6.2 Mood

Modal distinctions are expressed in SVCs only in Tidore. In van Staden (2000:322ff.) they were considered adverbials, but in our treatment of serial verb constructions, they can be considered instances of dependent serialisation. The modal verbs refer to possibility (72), permissibility (73), desirability (74), or truth (75) of what is expressed by the other verb(s) in the clause.

Tidore

- (72) *Memelaksa=re loca maya moju.*  
 giant=here      wobble want still  
 ‘The giant could still wobble if he wanted to.’ (van Staden 2000:323)

Tidore

- (73) *Wo-koko paha rea.*  
 3M:A-stand    endure not:anymore  
 ‘He could no longer stand.’ (van Staden 2000:323)

Tidore

- (74) *Mina tagi gou ma.*  
 3F go true MIT  
 ‘It is true she went; she really did go.’ (van Staden 2000:327)

Tidore

- (75) *Laha mina gahi ngam rasi.*  
 good 3F make food first  
 ‘It is better if she makes the food now.’ (van Staden 2000:327)

## 6 Discussion

In §5 we explored how the different ‘semantics’ that serial verb constructions typically encode map onto four of the five different types of serial verb constructions as defined in §4. Narrative serialisation, characterised as a construction that allows the expression of multiple macro-events within one clause, does not easily allow for a description of the semantic import of the various verbs. Rather, it appears that this construction type is used

in the narration of steps in a procedure, or parts of a script. The other four construction types expressed are all subtypes of component serialisation. They constitute a single macro-event, combining in one clause a framing event and a co-event, both expressed by a verbal lexeme. Component serialisation can be described in terms of the semantic contribution of one of the two verbs, either the verb expressing the framing event (direction, result), or the co-event (manner, mood). In our sample, we find that although several languages favour one SVC type for all notions, e.g. Buru (complex verb serialisation) and Taba (dependent SVCs), the majority have more than one construction type if SVCs express more than one semantic relation in that language (see Table 4).

**Table 4:** Number of semantic notions expressed per construction type in each language

	Complex verbs	Independent	Dependent	Co-dependent	Totals
Inanwatan					0
Mpur		3		1	4
Tidore		5	3		8
Hatam		2	3	3	8
Moi	1	3		4	8
Maybrat	1	4	2	2	9
Kambera			1		1
Leti		1			1
Buru	4				4
Tetun (Fehan)	1	3	1		5
Taba		1?	4	1	6?
Ambon Malay (Creole)	3	1		1	5

There are two qualifications to make with respect to Table 4. First, some gaps in the table may be due to the typology of the language. Ambon Malay, for instance, cannot have dependent serialisation because there is no verbal inflection at all. This means that the three different construction types here constitute a maximum score. The second qualification is that, as mentioned before, our definitions are such that a construction can be at once be analysed as a co-dependent SVC and either an independent or dependent SVC. When both analyses were possible, we sorted this construction with the co-dependent SVCs. The consequence of this approach is that examining Tables 2, 3 and 4 the impression may be that, for example, independent and dependent constructions do not occur at all for the expression of state changes. But this is not correct. Yet, this is a drawback only of our presentation of the data in the tables. In our discussion of the data and in the conclusions we have taken into account the more complex situation.

In the literature predictions have been made on the types of verbs and relations that are most likely expressed in serial verb constructions. Foley and Olson (1985), for instance, predict that directional verbs *come* and *go* are the most favoured for serialisation, closely followed by posture verbs *stand*, *sit*, and *lie*. In serial verb constructions, posture verbs often indicate that the event had some extended duration, so that the difference between ‘they talked’ and ‘they sat talking’ is that the latter implicates that the event lasted for an extended period of time. This could be considered an aspectual contribution of the posture verbs, analogous to the motion event that emphasises the inception of the event, or the

verbs of the ‘finish, deplete, leave behind’ that focus on the termination of the event. Third are stative or process verbs that we described in the discussion of state changes. In East Nusantara directional verbs indeed occur very frequently both in direction and in motion serialisation. State change serialisation is also found regularly, but posture verb serialisation is completely absent. A few odd examples of verb plus posture verb combinations are found in Kambera (Klamer 1998:276) *uhuk haria* ‘sit + lean against – sit leaning against’, but these are analysed as compounds.

Of course in a sample of this size no far reaching conclusions can be drawn. And we certainly do not wish to present the numbers as somehow statistically valid. But what we can observe is a set of general tendencies in this area that needs to be further explored. One such tendency is that independent serialisation is by far the most commonly found type. Co-dependent serialisation is very common for the expression of state changes, a finding also reported for many Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:47). Otherwise, predicting the construction type on the basis of the semantics is not possible. There is no good explanation for the absence of complex verbs expressing instrument and comitative, nor is there any a priori reason why co-dependent serialisation does not express comitative.

Another is that the Papuan languages on the whole use more serial verb construction types and also express more semantic notions in serial verb constructions. For instance, only Papuan languages in our sample have narrative serialisation (Maybrat, Tidore, and perhaps Meyah and Sougb, particularly for the introduction of instruments). And on average, the Papuan languages (with the exception of Inanwatan, to which we return shortly) have two to four different types of component serialisation and express between four and eight different semantic notions in them. Of the Austronesian languages three have only one type of serialisation: Kambera uses dependent serialisation for ‘instrument’; Leti has independent serialisation for ‘comitative’; and Buru only has complex verb serialisation, but uses it for the expression of four different semantic notions: motion, direction, state change, and manner. The two Austronesian languages that make most extensive use of serialisation are Taba and Tetun. The question is then whether these findings follow from the general typologies of the languages, and possibly from genealogical ties, or whether they are areal phenomena. Two findings stand out: the absence of serialisation in Inanwatan, and the frequency of serialisation in Taba and Tetun, as compared to the other Austronesian languages.

Firstly, Inanwatan is exceptional as it has no serial verb constructions at all. In other respects too, Inanwatan is the ‘odd one out’. It is the only language that is synchronically verb final, and it has gender distinctions and tense. As outlined in §2, the six Papuan languages in our sample perhaps all belong to different language families. Five of the Papuan languages have been tentatively grouped together in a West Papuan Phylum (Wurm 1982, Voorhoeve 1987). But the evidence is extremely weak, relying mainly on the cognate forms in the pronominal systems. The Inanwatan language is possibly a member of the Trans New Guinea Phylum (TNGP) (de Vries 1998, 2004), along with other languages of the south coast of New Guinea, such as Marind. Although the other Papuan languages of the Bird’s Head were probably more in contact with each other than with Inanwatan, it is not the case that this language was isolated. Inanwatan had intensive trade relations with Tidore for a long period of time (de Vries 2001).

Yet can we hold this exceptional position of Inanwatan responsible for some of our findings? This is not at all obvious. For example, Inanwatan also does not have narrative serialisation. But this type of serialisation is found in various TNGP languages, e.g. Kalam,



and also in other Papuan languages, for instance in Yimas and Alambalak, both Sepik-Ramu languages. It appears that narrative serialisation is found more commonly in languages that are verb final and that have two additional recursive strategies, namely clause chaining and switch-reference. Also, it has been linked to extensive verbal morphology and the existence of a closed class of verbs. Inanwatan is the only Papuan language in the sample that is synchronically verb final and it is the only language with extensive verb morphology. None of the Papuan languages in our sample have clause chaining or switch-reference, and all have an open class of verbs. In other words, from this perspective Inanwatan would be the most likely language to have narrative serialisation, but nevertheless it does not occur. The three languages in which we do find narrative serialisation are, if genealogically related at all, a very distant family. This makes both a genealogical explanation and a typological explanation less likely for the distribution of narrative serialisation in general. Why Inanwatan does not have serialisation at all cannot be explained on the basis of our study. To date, we still know very little about the surrounding (Austronesian) languages spoken in the Onin Bay area, and it remains a question whether an explanation can be found in contact with these languages.

Secondly, how can we account for the difference between Kambara, Leti, and Buru that make restricted use of serial verb constructions and Taba and Tetun that each have more types of SVCs and express more relations in them. Genetically, Taba is the only one of these languages that belongs to the Eastern Malayo Polynesian languages; the others are all Central Malayo Polynesian languages (cf. §2). As an explanation for the differences between the languages this is not likely because it cannot account for the fact that in Tetun we do find SVCs. Typologically, as shown in §2.2 the languages are also similar, except that Kambara has a complex system of verbal inflections. However, the exceptional position of Taba and Tetun can be addressed from a contact point of view. They are the languages that historically seem to have had the most intensive contact with Papuan languages. Tetun is spoken on Timor where to date we still find some 20 odd Papuan languages on Timor itself and some neighbouring islands; Taba used to be known as East Makian, West Makian is its Papuan neighbour. Furthermore, Taba people used to hold important positions in the sultanate of Ternate, where a Papuan language is spoken, and still have trade relations with many of the surrounding Papuan speaking communities.

## **7 Conclusion**

In this paper we have established two major types of serialisation: narrative serialisation in which two or more macro-events are combined in a single clause, and component serialisation, in which various subevents together form a single macro-event. This distinction offered an explanation for the two perspectives on serialisation, as either multiple clauses compressed into one, or single events expressed with more than one verb.

Because the definitions of serial verb constructions vary from language to language (or linguist to linguist) it appeared fruitful to recognise a number of different construction types within the broader category of component serialisation. In our study of the languages of East Nusantara four types emerged: complex verb serialisation, independent serialisation, dependent serialisation, and co-dependent serialisation. Using these categories, we then examined the different semantic relations that were expressed in component serialisation. In component serialisation it is typically the case that one of the verbs in the sequence is from a restricted class of verbs, and by identifying the common semantic denominator of these verb classes we arrived at eight further categories.

Applied to a sample of twelve languages of East Nusantara, we found that serialisation on the whole is more characteristic of the Papuan languages than of the Austronesian languages, both in terms of the number of different serial verb construction types and in terms of the number of semantic relations expressed in these constructions. Component serialisation is found more frequently in the Papuan languages of East Nusantara, but it also occurs in the Austronesian languages. Where serialisation is especially frequent in the Austronesian languages, this can be contributed to prolonged contact with the Papuan languages. Narrative serialisation, too, is typically ‘Papuan’, although we do not claim to have identified a genealogical marker. The distribution of narrative serialisation among the Papuan languages is likely a contact phenomenon. As a result of prolonged and intensive language contact, discursive strategies in the Bird’s Head and the North Moluccas have become aligned. The higher frequency of constructions to the left of the continuum in Figure 2 among Papuan languages may reflect a general trait, shared by Papuan speakers of different stocks: a preference to distribute information in smaller packages.

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# 3 *Motion serialisation in Keo*

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LOUISE BAIRD

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Keo is an Austronesian language spoken in eastern Indonesia by approximately 40,000 speakers. It is one of the seven or so languages spoken in the central Flores dialect chain. These languages are said to belong to the Bima-Sumba sub-group of the Central Malayo-Polynesian branch of Austronesian languages (Grimes, Therik, Dix Grimes and Jacob 1997). However, at this point in time there is very little evidence to support the notion of the Bima-Sumba sub-group, and the existence of a Central/Eastern Malayo-Polynesian branch is not strongly supported by the comparative method (Ross 1995:81–83). Being a part of a dialect chain there is a great deal of dialectal variation within Keo, with slight phonological and lexical differences apparent between almost all villages. Unless otherwise stated, the examples in this paper come from textual data from the variety of Keo as spoken in the village of Udiworowatu.

Keo is a highly isolating language, having no inflectional or derivational affixation. It has basic AVO/SV word order, and modifiers, generally, follow their heads. There are four basic mono-predicate clause types: ambient, intransitive, transitive and ditransitive. Ambient clauses have a predicate, but no arguments; intransitive clauses have a single subject argument; transitive clauses have a subject and an object argument; and ditransitive clauses have a subject, primary object and secondary object. Ellipsis of arguments within clauses is very common. Membership into the open classes of noun and verb is not always clear-cut at the lexical level due to the multifunctional nature of the majority of words. This means that a particular item without any change in form may at one point in discourse fulfil the syntactic criteria for being a noun, and at another fulfil the syntactic criteria for being a verb. Therefore, an item may be categorised as belonging to a particular lexical

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1 Some of the analysis in this paper can be found in a different form in Chapters 11 and 13 of my PhD dissertation (Baird 2002). Parts of this paper were also presented in Baird (2003). Data for this paper comes primarily from textual data, and some elicited data collected from fieldwork trips conducted between 1998–2001. Some of the examples in this paper are taken from stories which can be found in Baird and Tule (2003).

Abbreviations used are: Cl - classifier; Excl - exclusive; Imp.Inc - imperfective, incomplete; Incl - inclusive; Neg - negative; Per.Per - persistent perfect aspect; Per.Inv - persistent perfect aspect with inevitability; Pl - plural; Poss - possessive particle; Prog - progressive aspect; Sg - singular; 1, 2 3 - first, second, third person; (...) - optional constituent; \* - indicates ungrammatical utterance

class, for example ‘directional’ or ‘noun’, but may be able to occur syntactically as, for example, a verb. The precise role of a particular constituent cannot be disambiguated in all circumstances due to Keo’s isolating nature, the many multifunctional lexical items and frequent ellipsis (Baird 2002).

Keo speakers appear to regard the spatial location of people, places, objects, events and so forth of great importance, whilst the temporal location of such things is not so important. Evidence of spatial location being more important comes from the presence of more grammatical devices encoding spatial location rather than temporal location in the language, and by speakers mentioning spatial location more frequently than time. This noticeably contrasts with, for example English speakers, for whom temporal setting is very important. Some of the grammatical devices used to encode spatial setting include prepositions, directionals, demonstratives and motion verbs.

## 2 Features of Keo SVCs

In general, Keo serial verb constructions (hereafter SVCs) follow Durie’s (1997) key characteristics for defining SVCs. Some of the characteristics he mentions are more salient than others. It is important to note that one verb is not embedded in the serial verb complex nor does it occur as a complement of another. Complementation is strictly restricted to verbs of cognition and speech act verbs, which do not occur in SVCs (Baird 2002).

The following criteria are diagnostic of SVCs in Keo and are each discussed with examples below.

1. A SVC contains two or more verbs, which occur in the same clause describing a single event;
1. The whole serial verb complex is negated by a negator preceding the first verb;
3. All verbs come under the scope of one aspect particle (or combination of particles) which either precedes, follows or surrounds the verb complex in the same way it would a single predicate;
4. A serial verb complex shares a single subject;
5. The construction falls under one intonation contour. That is, there are no pauses between the verbs in a serial construction. (Baird 2002:286–287)

### 2.1 A SVC contains two or more verbs, which occur in the same clause describing a single event

Keo SVCs consist of two to four verbs, as in (1). Four verbs in the verb complex have only been found in motion SVCs, as in (2). In all other types two or three verbs in the verb complex is the norm.

- (1) *Bapa kai tu mama.*<sup>2</sup>  
 father go accompany mother  
 ‘Dad went accompanying Mum.’

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2 Non-indigenous Keo words are indicated in texts by the lack of italics. Most of the non-indigenous words are from Indonesian. Keo numerals, especially, are very commonly replaced by their Indonesian equivalents.



- (2) *'Imu simba palu mbana nggae wado meo.*  
 3sg immediately run go search return cat  
 'He immediately ran returning to search for the cat.'

In addition to items that are unambiguously identifiable as lexical verbs, other multifunctional lexical items that may syntactically behave as verbs may also occur in SVCs.

It appears that serial verbs are conceptualised as representing single events. This characteristic is somewhat difficult to confirm or disconfirm for any language due to inconsistent ways in which 'conceptualisation' is judged. If the evidence used to establish whether something is a single event is that it is represented by a single predicate, then insofar as SVCs are single predicates they can be considered to represent single events (A. Pawley pers. comm.).

## 2.2 The whole serial verb complex is negated by a negator preceding the first verb in the construction

There are two synonymous negators in Keo *mona* and *nggedhe*. They either negate predicates, or behave as predicates themselves. As with mono-verbal clauses the negator precedes the predicate it modifies in SVCs. It is not possible for some verbs in a SVC to be negated and others not to be negated. A negator has scope over the entire serial verb complex, as in the SVC in (3).

- (3) *Nga'o mona demba moni 'imu-ko'o.*  
 1sg NEG come watch 3pl  
 'I didn't come and watch them.'

If only one or other of the verbs in (3) were to be negated then the intonation contour over the two verbs would be broken. If only the second verb were to be negated, then it would intervene between the two verbs, creating two clauses, as in (4). Additional evidence that this would no longer be a SVC comes from the fact that a clausal conjunction, such as *bhodo* 'but' could be inserted between the two clauses.

- (4) *Nga'o demba (bhodo) mona moni 'imu-ko'o.*  
 1sg come but NEG watch 3pl  
 'I came, but didn't watch them.'

## 2.3 All verbs come under the scope of one aspect particle (or combination of aspect particles) which either precedes, follows or surrounds the verb complex in the same way it would a single predicate

There are six aspect particles which denote seven aspects in Keo. All, bar two of these, precede the predicate that they modify, the other two follow the predicate they modify. It is not obligatory for a clause to contain an aspect particle, and certain combinations of aspect particles may occur within a single clause. The aspect particles behave the same way in mono-verbal clauses as they do in clauses containing SVCs. That is, only one particle or combination of particles can modify the predicate, whether expressed by a single item or multiple verbs, as in a SVC, as in (5), which contains the persistent perfect aspect particle *negha*.

- (5) *Bapa negha mbana ndua dau ma'u.*  
 dad PER.PER walk go.down down beach  
 'Dad has already walked down to the beach.'

If different verbs are modified by different aspect particles the only possible interpretation is that they belong to two separate clauses, as in (6), in which the first verb *mbana* 'walk' is modified by the persistent perfect aspect particle and the second verb *ndua* 'go down' is modified by the imperfective incomplete aspect particle. The two clauses in (6) could occur in sequence with or without the conjunction *bhodo* 'but', with an intonational break between them.

- (6) *Bapa negha mbana, (bhodo) da'e ndua dau ma'u.*  
 dad PER.PER walk but IMP.INC go.down down beach  
 'Dad has gone, but hasn't yet gone down to the beach.'

#### 2.4 A serial verb complex shares a single subject

Subjects are identifiable in Keo as being the immediate pre-predicate argument, and the argument to which the reflexivisation particle *dhato* refers (Baird 2002:73–77). A serial verb complex has a single subject. Although the individual verbs within a serialisation may take different subjects, the complex as a whole only has one subject. This can be seen in the benefactive SVC in (7), where 'Peter' is the subject of both *ngatu* 'to send' and *ti'i* 'give'. This subject, as in clauses containing a single predicate may be ellipsed.

- (7) *Peter ngatu sura ti'i nga'o.*  
 Peter sent letter give 1sg  
 'Peter sent a letter to me.'

If each of the verbs in (7) were to have different subjects, the construction would be two separate clauses, as in (8). In this context *ti'i* 'give' becomes ditransitive, with an ellipsed object (*sura* 'letter').

- (8) *Peter ngatu sura, Bapa ti'i nga'o.*  
 Peter send letter dad give 1sg  
 'Peter sent a letter, Dad gave me (it).'

In some cases SVCs share objects as well as subjects. When both a subject and object are present they are treated in the same way as they would be in mono-verbal clauses.

#### 2.5 A SVC falls under one intonation contour

Based on auditory analysis, the verb complex falls under the one intonation contour. Therefore, in fluent speech there are no pauses with a grammatical function between contiguous verbs in SVCs.

Intonation does not fall nor rise on non-final verbs in a serial verb complex. A break in intonation, either in the form of a marked rise or fall on a non-final verb in a series, indicates that the verbs belong to different clauses. This difference can be seen in sentences (9) and (10). In (9) intonation falls only on the final syllable of the utterance, showing that it is the end of the utterance, while in (10) the first verb *kai* 'go' takes falling intonation, showing that it is the end of a clause (also indicated orthographically with a comma).

(9) *'Imu kai mbana pasa rede So'a.*  
 3sg go walk market up Sa'a  
 'She went to the market in So'a.'

(10) *'Imu kai, mbana pasa rede So'a.*  
 3sg go walk market up Sa'a  
 'She went, (she) walked to the market in So'a.'

The distinction between nuclear and core serialisation does not seem to be a particularly important one in Keo. The reason for this in Keo is linked to the lack of verbal cross-referencing, or any other morphological processes in the language. However, it is possible to make the distinction based on one primary piece of evidence: the contiguity of the verb complex. Non-contiguous verb sequences may include an argument in between the serialised verbs. This is indicative of core serialisation. On the other hand contiguous verb sequences do not permit an argument within the serial complex. Clause operators, such as negation and aspect markers, have scope over the whole serial verb complex and so cannot be used as evidence to support a distinction between nuclear and core serialisation. Likewise, as mentioned, there is no verbal cross-referencing or other morphology that could support a claim of a difference between nuclear and core serialisation. Due to the lack of evidence Keo SVCs are not analysed using a nuclear versus core distinction.

### 3 Serialisation types

Six types of verb serialisation in Keo have been identified based on either their grammatical functions or most salient inherent semantic concepts.<sup>3</sup>

1. benefactive/purposive serialisation;
2. causative serialisation;
3. cause-effect serialisation;
4. synonymic serialisation;
5. manner serialisation; and
6. motion serialisation. (Baird 2002:292)

A description of each is provided in the following sections. Particular attention has been paid to the most commonly occurring serialisation, motion serialisation.

#### 3.1 Benefactive/Purposive serialisation

Benefactive or purposive may be encoded in four ways in Keo: 1. as the First Object in a ditransitive 'give' clause; 2. within a prepositional phrase; 3. within an adnominal possessive construction or 4. within a serial verb construction. Benefactive/Purposive

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3 A typology of Keo SVCs is not without problems. Most SVCs are prototypical examples of one or another type of the serialisation types presented here. However, there are a few exceptions that are not prototypical, that could potentially fall into more than one category. Despite possible exceptions it seems to be more useful to identify features common to different types of serialisations rather than merely labelling them 'serial verb constructions' and leaving the analysis there.

SVCs contain two verbs, the second of which is always one of two verbs *ti'i* or *pati*, meaning 'to give'.<sup>4</sup>

The two verbs in the SVC may be either contiguous or non-contiguous, with the object of the first verb intervening between the two verbs. Examples (11) and (12) are both non-contiguous. The beneficiary or purposive is encoded as the object of the second verb. Beneficiaries are always expressed as nominal objects, as in (11), and purposes are always expressed as complement clause objects, as in (12)<sup>5</sup> (underlined).

- (11) *Ja'o kéma dapu ti'i 'ine.*  
 1sg build kitchen give mum  
 'I built a kitchen for mum.'

- (12) *'One sa déza 'oto sa pudu ta paku dai*  
 in one day vehicle one ten REL carry sand  
*ti'i 'ata péta.*  
 give people buy  
 'In one day there are ten trucks that carry sand for people to buy.'

### 3.2 Causative serialisation

In Keo causation is expressed either lexically or in a SVC. The verbs in causative SVCs are always contiguous. The first verb in the complex is always the verb *tau* 'do, make', and the second is typically an intransitive verb. This can be seen in (13), which contains the intransitive verb *iso* 'half cooked'.

- (13) *'Ine tau iso 'uwi-jawa.*  
 mum make half.cook sweet.potato  
 'Mum half-cooked the sweet potato.'

### 3.3 Cause-effect serialisation

Cause-effect serialisation differs from causation serialisation in that it contains semantically 'fuller' first verbs, as opposed to the 'make' verb *tau* used in causative SVCs. There is also more of a temporal aspect to cause-effect serialisation. Cause-effect SVCs are conceived of as consisting of distinct sub-events which are temporally ordered. By contrast, in causative constructions containing *tau* 'make' there is no sense of sequence. Instances of cause-effect serialisation are in bold in the examples below.

- (14) *Ngere mbe'o muku ta nambu wode ena dudu keka*  
 suddenly banana REL when stem LOC backyard hut  
***mboka téni keka ke.***  
 fall crush hut that  
 'Suddenly the banana tree that was standing in the backyard fell,  
 crushing the hut.'

4 Note that these verbs, at this point in time, have not grammaticalised into benefactive adpositions. Synchronically *ti'i* and *pati* retain all of the characteristics of verbs.

5 This example comes from the variety of Keo as spoken in Sorowea, located in the north-east part of the Keo-speaking area.

- (15) *Taku 'ata podo pongga mata kau.*  
 afraid person sorcerer hit die 2sg  
 '(I'm) afraid the sorcerer will beat you to death.'

If the subject of the second verb within a cause-effect serial complex is the object of the first verb within the complex the construction may be either contiguous, as in the examples above, or non-contiguous. Therefore sentence (15) could also be expressed as in (16) below, with the object occurring between the two verbs.

- (16) *Taku 'ata podo pongga kau mata.*  
 afraid person sorcerer hit 2sg die  
 'I'm afraid the sorcerer will beat you to death.'

Note also in (15) and (16) *kau* '2sg' is the subject of *mata* 'to die', and the object of *ponnga* 'to hit.'

### 3.4 Synonymic serialisation

Durie (1997:337) identifies a serial construction type where two verbs are closely related in meaning, being either synonyms or antonyms with identical argument structure and which are not ordered causally or temporally. This construction is given the label of 'synonymic serialisation'.

Keo has many verbs with synonymous meanings and often two such synonymous verbs will be used contiguously in the same clause as a single predicate, as in (17) and (18). The two synonymous verbs are of the same syntactic transitivity.

- (17) *Ongga péka ke ma'e ka'o ghako 'ari nga'o.*  
 young.man finish that don't carry carry younger.sibling 1sg  
 'None of the young men are allowed to carry my little sister.'
- (18) *'Imu kai mbana pasa rede So'a.*  
 3sg go go market east So'a  
 'She went to the market in So'a.'

Synonymic serial verbs are typically highly lexicalised. There are strict restrictions on which synonymous verbs can co-occur. In many synonymic SVCs there are also restrictions on the ordering of the verbs. For example, in sentence (19) the ordering of the two verbs must be *sépo ngépo*. Likewise in sentence (20) the order of the verbs must be *lita nangi*.

- (19) *Mona, 'imu sépo ngépo nio nde.*  
 Mona 3sg gather gather coconut that  
 'Mona gathered up that coconut.'
- (20) *Sira todo lita nangi.*  
 3pl random cry cry  
 'They cried all over the place.'

In the east Nusantara region<sup>6</sup> it appears that synonymic SVCs only occur in those languages that have ritual speech genres containing extensive parallelism,<sup>7</sup> such as

6 East Nusantara refers to the geographic area encompassing eastern Indonesia and East Timor.

7 See Fox (1988) on parallelism in eastern Indonesia.

Kambera, spoken on the island of Sumba (Klamer 1994:276). In Keo it appears that synonymic serial verbs originate from parallel pairs in various ritual speech genres, and this accounts for the co-occurrence restrictions. In all of the examples of synonymous verbs presented here each verb in the pair can be used in mono-verbal clauses in everyday speech. However, it is likely that in an earlier stage of the language only one of the pair was used in every day speech, while the other was used exclusively to match it in parallel constructions in ritual speech genres (Baird 2002).

### 3.5 Manner serialisation

‘Manner serialization involves use of a serial verb to describe the manner in which an action is done ...’ (Durie 1997:336). Such SVCs are often called ambient as the status of arguments is not always clear. In Keo, the second verb in this type of SVC indicates the manner of the first verb, as in sentences (21) and (22).

- (21) *“Modo miu paké dama,” ’Embu-Ngembu dhéwo.*  
 alright 2pl dress be.fast whale answer  
 ‘“Alright dress her quickly,” the whale answered.’

- (22) *Modo, mbana ri’a-ri’a.*  
 alright go be.good  
 ‘Have a good trip.’

The manner verb in the series cannot be considered an adverb, for two reasons. Firstly, it cannot move around the clause as other adverbs can, but always occurs as the second verb in a serial construction. Secondly, it shares arguments with the first verb, as with the subject *’imu* in sentence (23).

- (23) *’Imu muri pawe ena nua-’oda.*  
 3sg live be.good LOC village  
 ‘He lives a (morally) good life in the village.’

Both the first and second verbs in this kind of serial construction may occur in mono-verbal clauses, as can be seen in sentences (24) and (25), containing the verbs *muri* ‘to live’ and *pawe* ‘to be good’.

- (24) *’Imu negha muri ebho mere, da’e mata.*  
 3sg PER.PER live long time big IMP.INC die  
 ‘He’s already lived a very long time and hasn’t died yet.’
- (25) *Numai ’ana ke ngau. Dera te ’imu negha*  
 yesterday child that naughty day this 3sg PER.PER  
*pawe wadi.*  
 good again  
 ‘Yesterday that child was naughty. Today he’s already been good again.’

### 3.6 Motion serialisation

Motion serialisation is very common both within Keo and cross-linguistically. Motion SVCs are common in other Austronesian languages in east Nusantara languages, such as

Tetun, spoken in East Timor (van Klinken 1999) and Taba, spoken in the Maluku (Bowden 2001), as well as in languages from other language families, such as Thai (Muansuwan unpublished). In Keo, SVCs in which at least one of the verbs is a verb of motion is probably the most commonly occurring type.

The frequent use of motion SVCs is not surprising given the attention that Keo speakers give to spatial concepts in discourse. Motion serialisation can be viewed as a syntactic tool to explicate spatial concepts, just as prepositions, demonstratives and directionals do (Baird 2002). However, unlike other devices which contribute to the spatial setting of discourse, motion verbs, obviously, encode the notion of Motion. In addition, many Keo motion verbs have a direct correspondence with the surrounding landscape, which is very mountainous. For example, there are six commonly used verbs of falling, which illustrates the salience of the concepts of high and low places within Keo speakers' minds. These six verbs can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Keo 'falling' verbs

Keo 'falling' verb	English
<i>mbédhu</i>	for a person to fall from a great height
<i>mbésu</i>	for an object to fall from a great height
<i>nggoi</i>	to fall (of a person)
<i>ngéso</i>	to fall (of an object)
<i>goi</i>	to fall and roll
<i>mboka</i>	to fall over, to trip (may be on flat ground)

Without wading into the debate concerning Talmy's (1985, 1991, 2000) typological framework for the manner and path semantics of motion verbs, Keo can be broadly categorised as being a language that conflates the concepts of Motion and Path within motion verbs, rather than Manner and Motion, as, for example, English does. This does not mean that Keo does not have verbs that conflate the concepts of Manner and Motion, but merely that Path is more salient. Keo does have verbs which encode manner, such as *daka* 'to crawl', *sola* 'to fly', *palu* 'to run', *nangu* 'to swim'. However, unlike in English there is not a variety of words to indicate more specifically the manner in which, for example, walking is done. In English the manner of 'walking' could be further specified by using one of the following verbs: *lope*, *stride*, *dawdle*, *race*, *tread*, *power-walk*, *stroll*, *promenade*, *pace*, *hike*, *ramble* and so on. Whereas in Keo only the verb *mbana* 'to walk, to go, to travel' is available to express this type of motion. Manner, if expressed, is shown through other grammatical devices such as by using a manner SVC. In such a case, where a motion verb is modified by a manner verb within a serial verb complex, the construction would look like other manner serialisations.

Table 2 contains the six most frequently used motion verbs in Keo, together with a lesser-used motion verb. Five out of the seven verbs in the table conflate the concepts of Motion and Path within them.

**Table 2:** Keo motion verbs

Motion verb	Meaning
<i>nuka</i>	'to go' in an upwards direction
<i>ndua</i>	'to go' in a downwards direction
<i>pade</i>	'to go' along a flat surface
<i>nai</i>	'to climb' (on a more vertical slope than for <i>nuka</i> )
<i>dhodho</i>	'to descend' (on a more vertical slope than for <i>ndua</i> )
<i>kai</i>	'to go' (no implication about terrain)
<i>mbana</i>	'to go, walk, travel'

The verb *pade* 'to go along a flat surface' appears to be rather archaic. These days *nuka* 'to go up' is typically used to replace it. This is indicative of a change in the meaning of *nuka* 'to go up', which appears to be on its way to losing the notion of upwards movement, to simply meaning 'to go'.

#### 4 Motion serialisation types

Three types of motion serialisation can be identified: constructions consisting of only motion verbs, as in the second SVC in (26); constructions containing a motion verb and a non-motion verb, as in (27); and constructions consisting of a motion verb and a directional, as in the first SVC in (26) and in (28).

- (26) *Poro ndua rade, bhodo nai nuka reta langgi wai*  
 jump go.down down but climb go.up up rip with  
*péja ma'u.*  
 pandanus beach

'He dived down, but came up to the surface dragging sea-pandanus leaves.'

- (27) *'Imu-ko'o nde ta pu'u reta diru nde, mai demba moni ...*  
 3pl that REL from up sky that come.here come watch  
 'Those from the sky came to watch ...'

- (28) *'Bapa ndua ridi.*  
 father go.down go.down  
 'Father went down.'

Directionals may only form a part of the verb complex in the third type. In (26) the directional *rade* 'down' occurs in the first SVC. Although the directional *reta* 'up' occurs in the second SVC in (26) it does not form a part of the verb complex. There are no directionals in example (27). In (28) the directional *ridi* 'down' is used.

##### 4.1 SVCs containing only motion verbs

Due to most of Keo's motion verbs conflating the concepts of Motion and Path within them, when two or more motion verbs behave as the verb complex of a motion SVC, and especially if followed by a prepositional phrase headed by a directional, such constructions come to contain very explicit information about the spatial setting in which activity occurs.



Motion SVCs containing only motion verbs are typically intransitive. However, in most clauses containing a motion SVC the destination is expressed in a prepositional phrase headed by a directional. Although this occurs in most instances of this type of SVC in the corpus of data it is not obligatory, as can be seen in (29), which is not followed by a prepositional phrase; and in (30), which is a transitive construction, with *'imu-ko'o* '3pl' being the object of the serial verb complex.

- (29) *Nuka wado dera-kiri.*  
 go.up go.home late.afternoon  
 '(He'll) go home late afternoon.'
- (30) *Jadi nga'o nggo mbana dheko 'imu-ko'o, nuka ridi Raja.*  
 so 1sg then go follow 3pl go down Raja  
 'So I then went following them, going down to Raja.'

In motion SVCs containing only motion verbs it appears most common to have a two constituent verb complex, as in (31). However, it is also not uncommon to find verb complexes with three constituents or even four, as in (32).

- (31) *Déra ke nambu ja'o wado nuka rede Worowatu.*  
 day that when 1sg go.home go.up up Worowatu  
 'That day was when I went home up to Worowatu.'
- (32) *Negha ke kami rua bhade wado nuka rade.*  
 already that 1pl.excl two return go.home go.up go.west  
 After that we two returned, going home, going up, going westward.

There is no set order in which the motion verbs must occur. This can be seen from examples (33) and (34) in which the same two verbs *nuka* 'go up' and *wado* 'go home, return' occur in both possible orders.

- (33) *'Imu nuka wado rede sa'o, nambu déra pétu-ke'e.*  
 3sg go.up return up house when sun very.hot  
 'He returned up to his house when the sun was very hot.'
- (34) *'imu-ko'o wado nuka rede nua Riti.*  
 3pl return go.up up hamlet Riti  
 'They returned up to the hamlet of Riti.'

The ordering of the motion verbs in this type of motion serialisation is primarily based on emphasis, where the first verb is regarded as the most important in the series. Thus the difference between sentences (33) and (34), which contain the same verbs in differing orders, is one of attention. In (33) an addressee's attention directed towards strenuous climbing in heat, therefore *nuka* 'go up' precedes *wado* 'return'. In (34), on the other hand, an addressee's attention is directed to the act of returning to a certain place (the hamlet of Riti), and therefore *wado* 'return' precedes *nuka* 'go up'.

Aside from focusing attention, there are a few general tendencies as far as the ordering of specific motion verbs is concerned. The verbs *mbana* and *kai*, both meaning 'to go' and *demba* 'to come' typically occur as the first verb in the series, as in (35)–(37), while *wado* 'return' predominantly occurs later in the verb complex as in example (38). These are tendencies, and not strict rules.

- (35) *Mbana ndua dau ma'u ne'e 'ana fai ngga'é*  
 walk go.down down beach with child female CL  
*dima ke nde.*  
 five that that  
 '(He) walked down to the beach with those five daughters.'
- (36) *Tei dombo nio nde medu, 'imu simba kai ne'e*  
 see sprout coconut that wither 3sg immediately go with  
*bele ha di'e, ne'e foro dedu pusi ena*  
 tin.can one CL with cotton thread fill LOC  
*bele kai ndua dau tana Goa Jawa.*  
 tin.can go go.down down land Goa Jawa  
 'Seeing the coconut sprout wither he immediately left, taking with him  
 a tin can filled with unprocessed cotton and went down to Goa Jawa.'
- (37) *Mona 'ebho 'oto ta kami nai, demba wado, reke*  
 NEG long.time bus REL 1pl.excl ride come return rest  
*ena nia nga'o.*  
 LOC face 1sg  
 'No long afterwards the bus that we took returned and stopped in front of me.'
- (38) *'Imu ndua wado dau mata ma'u, bhodo ana nde*  
 3sg go.down return down eye beach but child that  
*negha mona tei.*  
 PER.PER NEG see  
 'He went back down to the beach, but the child could not be seen.'

#### 4.2 Constructions containing a motion verb and non-motion verb

In motion serialisation constructions containing one or more non-motion verbs the motion verb(s) always occur first followed by the non-motion verb(s), as in sentences (39) and (40). If there are three or more verbs in the serial complex it is possible for the non-motion verb to be surrounded by motion verbs, but a non-motion verb never occurs as the first constituent in a SVC containing motion verbs.

- (39) *Tahun sembilan puluh enam kami rua nuka dau Jakarta*  
 year nine ten six 1pl.excl two go.up down Jakarta  
*mbana 'ono late ko'o bapa nga'o.*  
 go look grave POSS father 1sg  
 'In ninety six we went to Jakarta to go look at my father's grave.'
- (40) *Ha ndéka 'ata o'o ko'o raja nua reu*  
 one time person slave POSS ruler hamlet far  
*wodo dima rua pu'u nua 'imu rua,*  
 hill five two from hamlet 3sg two

*demba poi 'ata mbu'e ke.*  
 come take person young woman that  
 'One day a slave of the ruler's from a faraway hamlet, seven hills  
 from those two's hamlet, came and took that young woman away.'

As in example (39), the motion verb(s) in most motion SVCs containing both motion and non-motion verbs, are non-specific as far as path is concerned. It is possible, and not uncommon to use motion verbs containing path semantics, as in (40) above and (42) below. However, the most commonly occurring verbs in this type of SVC do not encode Path. The most common verb in motion serialisations containing non-motion verbs is undoubtedly *mbana* 'to go, walk'. The wide variety of combinations it occurs in are partially illustrated by the examples below.

- (41) *Nga'o mbana mbeta sabu.*  
 1sg go buy soap  
 'I'm going to buy soap.'
- (42) *One ha déra 'Ine Nio ndua mbana kima*  
 in one day mother Nio go.down go search.for.molluscs  
*dau Maundai.*  
 down Maundai  
 'One day Mrs Nio went looking for molluscs down at Maundai.'
- (43) *Negha ke 'imu mbana moni ena nua ta 'ata*  
 already that 3sg go watch LOC hamlet REL people  
*ne'e pesta.*  
 have party  
 'He then went to watch at the hamlet where people were holding the party.'
- (44) *Tahun enam puluh dua ja'o mbana mada pada mama te.*  
 year six ten two 1sg go take take mother this  
 'In the year 1962 I went to take this woman (to marry).'

This type of motion serialisation may be either transitive or intransitive, depending on the valence of the non-motion verb. Nominal objects immediately follow the verb complex, with no other constituent able to intervene between the last verb in the series and the object. The transitive non-motion verb does not have to be the last constituent in the serial verb complex, as in (45). Note that if a prepositional phrase headed by a directional occurs in the clause then it must follow the object.

- (45) *'Imu mbana ru wado kamba dau mabha nde ma ha go'o.*  
 3sg go herd return buffalo down plain that PROG one small  
 'He returned to herd his water buffalo on that plain for a short while.'
- (46) *Negha ke 'imu dhatu mbana tito kamba, ndua ridi.*  
 already that 3sg still go tend buffalo go.down down  
 'Then he continued to go and tend his buffalo, going downwards.'
- (47) *Koti so bale-bele, ja'o mbana nggae ka'é.*  
 spinning.top thus spinning 1sg go search older.sibling  
 'Twirling spinning top, I go in search of my sister.'

As with all arguments in Keo the objects of transitive motion SVCs can be ellipsed if the referent is believed to be understood, as in (48).

- (48) *Témbu nio nde negha dewa, Mona nde kai mbana toni.*  
 shoot coconut that PER.PER tall Mona that go go plant  
 ‘(When) the coconut shoot was tall, Mona went and planted (it).’

### 4.3 SVCs containing a motion verb and directional

#### 4.3.1 Background to directionals

A closed class of words indicating spatial relations and directions, such as ‘seawards’, ‘inland’, ‘above’, and ‘below’ are commonly found in both Austronesian and Non-Austronesian<sup>8</sup> languages in east Nusantara and the Pacific. For example such words are found in Adang spoken on the island of Alor (Haan 2001), in Taba (Bowden 2001) and Tidore (van Staden 2000) both spoken in the North Maluku, in Maybrat spoken on the Bird’s Head of West Papua (Dol 2007) and in the Lolovoli dialect of the North-East Ambae language in Vanuatu (Hyslop 2001). (See also Bowden (1992) and Senft (1997).) Keo too has such a small closed class of words, which I term ‘directionals’ (Baird 2002). This small class of words contains seven members, two of which (*reta* and *rade* in Udiworowatu Keo) are polysemous. The directionals that are used in the village of Udiworowatu are presented in Table 3.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 3:** Keo directionals

Directional	Rough meaning
<i>rede</i>	inland, upwards a short distance
<i>ridi</i>	seawards, downwards a short distance
<i>reta</i>	inland, upwards a long distance
<i>dau</i>	seawards, downwards a long distance
<i>ména</i>	eastwards along the beach
<i>rade</i>	westwards along the beach
<i>reta</i>	vertically up
<i>rade</i>	vertically down
<i>ndia</i>	here

Directionals in Keo are syntactically highly versatile. On first glance they may appear to be prepositions, as they can be used as the head of a prepositional phrase, as in (49) and (50).

- (49) *'Ine mbeta sabu rade Maunori.*  
 mother buy soap west Maunori  
 ‘Mother bought soap in Maunori.’
- (50) *Dau Australia datu kangaroo woso.*  
 down Australia exist kangaroo many  
 ‘In Australia there are many kangaroos.’

8 Otherwise known as ‘Papuan’ languages.

9 Aside from having different forms, based on regular phonological differences, it appears that the directionals found in other dialects of Keo may also have a different spatial orientation, dependent on whether the speakers live close to the coast or up in the mountains.

On second glance they may be thought to be nouns because they can be used as referential arguments in prepositional phrases, as in (51), or as objects, as in (52).

(51) *Mbana a'i pu'u ridi.*  
walk leg from down  
'(We) walked from below.'

(52) *'Imu nuka rede ke.*  
3sg go.up up that  
'He went up, up there.'

On third inspection they may appear to be verbs, because they can be used both predicatively and attributively. In (53) the directional *rade* 'west' is used attributively to modify a noun.

(53) *'Ari wiki piri rade ke!*  
younger.sibling fetch plate west that  
'Brother, fetch that plate (there)!'

Directionals can also be used as predicates in the same way in which other A-type ambitransitive verbs are used,<sup>10</sup> as in (54), in which the directional is behaving intransitively, and in (55), in which the directional is behaving transitively, taking the object *diru* 'sky'.<sup>11</sup> Importantly, when used verbally in this way, directionals take on motion as a part of their meaning, and hence can occur as motion verbs in motion SVCs.

(54) *Nambu 'imu negha dau bapa 'imu demba mogha.*  
when 3sg PER.PER go.down father 3sg come also  
'When he was already there his father also came.'

(55) *Sira ta ngga'é dima negha reta ka diru.*  
3pl REL CL five PER.PER go.up PER.INV sky  
'Five people (from amongst them) had already gone up to the sky.'

The fact is that directionals form their own lexical class with highly flexible syntactic distribution. They do not fall into any one of the above lexical word classes, although syntactically they may fulfil the criteria of members of each of these classes. Hence they can be the head of a noun phrase in one utterance, and one of the verbs in a SVC in another. The syntactic versatility of this class allows directionals to thoroughly permeate Keo discourse. It also highlights the importance that Keo speakers place on discourse being spatially oriented, especially towards the surrounding topography.

#### 4.3.2 Motion verb and directional collocations

Allowable motion verb and directional collocations are restricted if the verb encodes Path. This is precisely because of the Path semantics in some motion verbs, and the fact

10 A-type ambitransitive verbs are those for which the subject of an ambitransitive verb used intransitively (S) is treated the same way as the subject of its transitive counterpart (A) and is regarded as having the same semantic role. This contrasts with O-type ambitransitive verbs in which the S of the verb when used intransitively corresponds to the object of its transitive counterpart (O) (Baird 2002:122).

11 The nominals that often follow directionals when used predicatively are objects, because they conform to the three criteria diagnostic of object arguments: post-verbal position, able to be fronted, and able to be demoted (Baird 2002:77).

that directionals refer to specific topographical locations. Example (56), for instance is nonsensical, because it is not possible to go down to an upward location.

- (56) \*'Imu ndua reta uma.  
 3sg go.down up garden  
 'S/he went down up to the garden.'

The most common motion verb and directional collocations that may occur are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Motion verb and directional collocations

Keo	English
<i>nuka reta</i>	'to go up a long way'
<i>nuka rede</i>	'to go up a short way'
<i>nuka ména</i>	'to go along'
<i>nuka rade</i>	'to go along'
<i>nuka dau</i>	'to go a long way'
<i>ndua dau</i>	'to go down a long way'
<i>ndua ridi</i>	'to go down a short way'
<i>pade ména</i>	'to go along (eastwards)'
<i>pade rade</i>	'to go along (westwards)'
<i>nai reta</i>	'to climb up'
<i>dhodho rade</i>	'to climb down'

There are three syntactic environments in which motion verb and directional collocations occur. In the first, the directional behaves as the head of a prepositional phrase, as underlined in (57) and (58). In such instances the prepositional phrase headed by the directional follows the verb complex, which may consist of either a single verb or multiple verbs, as is the case in the examples.

- (57) *Uru bhida ke 'imu simba lita nangi pau, wado*  
 because like that 3sg immediately cry cry EMP go.home  
*nuka rede Wondo.*  
 go.up up Wondo  
 'Because of that, he then mourned returning home up to Wondo.'
- (58) 'Imu nuka wado rede sa'o.  
 3sg go.up go.home up house  
 'She went up, went home up to the house.'

With a written transcript only it is possible to analyse the directional as forming a part of the verb complex in a serial construction, with the clause-final noun being an object. However, three pieces of evidence prove otherwise. Adverbs may not intervene between the verbs within a serial verb complex, but may intervene between a verb and a prepositional phrase. Example (59), containing the time adverbial *numai* 'yesterday' between the verb and directional is perfectly grammatical, indicating that the directional is being used as the head of a prepositional phrase.

- (59) 'Imu nuka wado numai rede sa'o.  
 3sg go up go home yesterday up house  
 'She went up, went home yesterday up to the house.'

If in (58) *sa'o* 'house' was an object, then it should be able to be fronted to precede the subject of the clause, as all other nominal objects may do in Keo (Baird 2002). However, it is ungrammatical to front nouns in such constructions, as in (60), leaving the directional stranded at the end of the clause.

- (60) \**Sa'o* 'imu nuka wado rede.  
 house 3sg go up go home up  
 'Home, she went up, went home, went up to.'

It is possible, however, to front the combination of the directional and noun, as in (61), or even to place it between the subject and verb complex, which is a feature of Keo prepositional phrases (Baird 2002).

- (61) Rede sa'o 'imu nuka wado.  
 up house 3sg go up go home  
 'Up to the house, she went up going home.'

The second and third syntactic contexts in which motion verb and directionals co-occur are very difficult to differentiate, without additional modification of the clause. In these contexts there are no nouns following the directional, as in (62) (taken from example (26) and (63)), and so the directional is unquestionably *not* behaving as the head of a prepositional phrase.

- (62) **Poro ndua rade.**  
 jump go.down down  
 '(He) jumped down.'<sup>12</sup>
- (63) 'Imu negha **nuka ména.**  
 3sg PER.PER go east  
 'He went across eastwards.'

In one text the directional in (63) may be used as the referential object of the motion verb *nuka* 'go up'. In such a case the directional may be fronted, as in (64), in the same way as other nominal objects are. If the location was in visual range the directional could also be modified by a demonstrative, like other nominals, as in (65).

- (64) **Ména** 'imu negha nuka.  
 east 3sg PER.PER go  
 'Eastwards he went.'
- (65) 'Imu negha nuka **ména** ke.  
 3sg PER.PER go east that  
 'He went eastwards there.'

In another text the directional in (63) may actually form a SVC with the preceding motion verb. In such instances the directional cannot be fronted and cannot be modified by a demonstrative. Additional evidence that it forms a serial complex with the motion verb

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12 In the context of the text this example comes from, this SVC was used to describe someone diving down into the sea.

comes from the use of the combination of aspectual markers *negha* and *ka*, which can both indicate perfect aspect with continuing relevance of a past situation (Baird 2002). The aspect particle *negha*, when used as a marker of perfect aspect, precedes the predicate it modifies, while *ka*, when used as to mark perfect aspect follows the predicate it modifies. The two aspect particles may also be used together, surrounding the predicate, as in (66).

- (66) *'Ine 'imu negha mata ka.*  
 mother 3sg PER.PER die PER.INV  
 'His mother is already dead.'

Motion verb and directional collocations may also be modified by the combination of these aspect particles, as in (67). This shows that in this context they are both a part of the verb complex, forming a SVC.

- (67) *'Imu negha nuka ména ka.*  
 3sg PER.PER go go east PER.INV  
 'He has already been east.'

SVCs containing a motion verb and a directional are always intransitive. Such constructions typically contain only two constituents — the motion verb and the directional, but may occur in constructions with additional verbs, as in (68). Regardless of the number of motion verbs the directional is always the last constituent in the verb complex.

- (68) *Ka'e mbana nuka reta ne'e kamba 'eko rua.*  
 older.sibling walk go.up go.up with buffalo CL two  
 'Older sibling walked, going up, with two water buffalo.'

To summarise, the collocation of a motion verb followed by a directional is interpretable in three ways: 1. the directional forms a prepositional phrase with a following noun phrase; 2. the directional is behaving referentially and is the object of the motion verb; 3. the directional is behaving predicatively and together with the verb forms a SVC.

### 4.3.3 Conventionalised interpretation of motion SVCs containing directionals

Many of the serial verb complexes presented in Table 4 have conventionalised interpretations. If one uses one of the motion verb/directional SVCs, and does not explicitly state a destination through the use of a noun phrase referring to a location, the destination can be inferred by the addressee, based on socio-cultural knowledge, as illustrated in examples (69) and (70).

- (69) *'Imu nuka reta.*  
 3sg go.up up  
 'S/he is going up (to the garden).'
- (70) *'Imu ndua dau.*  
 3sg go.down down  
 'S/he is going down (to the sea).'

In some cases these motion verb and directional SVCs may have conventionalised interpretations within a particular subset of the speech community, such as within a household. For instance, I only ever heard the SVCs *nuka rede* 'go up a short distance' and



*ndua ridi* ‘go down a short distance’ with the implications in (71) and (72) used in the house in which I stayed, which had the main part of the house seawards, and the separate kitchen mountain-wards.

- (71) *'Ine nuka rede.*  
 mum go.up up  
 ‘Mum’s gone up (to the kitchen).’
- (72) *Ka'e ndua ridi.*  
 older.sibling go.down down  
 ‘Older sibling has gone down (into the house).’

## 5 Conclusion

Each of the six Keo SVC types have idiosyncratic characteristics and directly or indirectly reflect a small part of Keo speakers’ world view. Motion SVCs in particular reflect the salience of the concepts of place and space in discourse, which is a reflection of the way in which Keo speakers construe the world. The frequency with which this type of serialisation compared to the others is used also highlights the importance of the concepts of place and space, and understanding the spatial setting of discourse.

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# 4 *Verb serialisation in Taba*

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JOHN BOWDEN

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This paper provides a description of serial verb constructions in Taba. Although a discussion of Taba serial verb constructions can be found in Chapter 12 of Bowden (2001), the present description updates that description in some important ways, especially with respect to the discussion of differences between what is known as core and nuclear serialisation in the language.

Serial verb constructions are constructions in which ‘a sequence of two or more verbs ... in various (rather strong) ways together act like a single verb’ (Durie 1997:290). In much cross-linguistic discussion of serial verb constructions, a distinction between ‘core layer’ and ‘nuclear layer’ serialisation is said to play an important role. In core serialisation, the verbs involved in the serial verb construction (SVC) are joined at the level of the core (as that level is defined by Foley and Van Valin (1984). In core serialisation each verb maintains some independence in terms of what arguments each can take. In nuclear serialisation, on the other hand, the individual verbs involved are allowed no real independence, all layers outside the nucleus being shared. Thus, in core serialisation, there may be separate cross-referencing of shared arguments by each of the verbs involved, but in nuclear serialisation, there may be only one occurrence of each shared argument.

In Bowden (2001) I argued that there was no significant distinction between nuclear and core serialisation and I did not discuss the distinction at any length. However, having made a more recent closer inspection of Taba serialisation, I have come to the conclusion that the distinction does have an important role to play in Taba morphosyntax, and in this paper I intend to explore these subtleties in more detail.

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1 I would like to thank all the Taba speakers who made me so welcome during my time living in Ngofakiaha and staying in Ternate. I would also like to thank participants at the Ninth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics who had useful comments at the end of my presentation. Of course, all the faults of this paper are my responsibility alone.

Abbreviations used in the glosses are as follows: 1sg - first person singular; 2sg - second person singular; 3sg - third person singular; 1pl.excl - first person plural exclusive; 1pl.incl - first person plural inclusive; 2pl - second person plural; 3pl - third person plural; ACT - actor-oriented; ALL - allative; APPL - applicative; CAUS - causative; CONT - continuative; DETR - detransitive; EMPH - emphasis; ESS - essive; INCH - inchoative; NEG - negative; PL - plural; POSS - possessive; POT - potential; REAL - realis; RES - resultative.

The next section of the paper provides a brief overview of the Taba language, covering basic sociolinguistic and historical matters as well as providing a short discussion of the major aspects of morphosyntax that will be relevant to later discussion of serialisation. Section three runs through a check list of criteria for determining whether or not a construction should be labelled a serial verb construction (SVC) and section four gives a semantically based typology of Taba serialisation. In the final part of the paper, I turn to the issue of core vs nuclear serialisation and discuss its ramifications for Taba grammar.

## 2 Taba — an overview

Taba is an Austronesian language from the South Halmahera — West New Guinea subgroup, a group which according to Blust (1978, 1993) is a sister to the much better known Oceanic subgroup. It is spoken in the eastern part of Indonesian, on Makian island and some nearby areas of North Maluku province. The major reference on Taba is Bowden (2001).

Taba shows characteristics which suggest that it is typologically a kind of hybrid between the more familiar western Austronesian languages and the also familiar Oceanic ones. Sociolinguistically, this hybrid nature is also apparent. Like many western Austronesian languages such as Javanese and Balinese, Taba has named speech registers (albeit less elaborated than in those western languages). As do many speakers of Oceanic languages, Taba speakers practise name taboo.

At the present point in time, virtually all Taba speakers are also speakers of Indonesian or North Moluccan Malay. This is leading to a situation where the future existence of Taba is threatened, Malay or Indonesian beginning to take over many of the functions that Taba once had for itself. Although Taba usage is still fairly vigorous amongst its speakers, quite a large part of the grammar of the language has become simplified, particularly amongst younger speakers, and a variety of aspects of Malay grammar are steadily being incorporated into Taba. (See Bowden 2002 for discussion of some examples of this.)

Taba is predominantly a head-marking language with basic AVP word order, and it has a number of prepositions as well as one postposition. Most nominal modifiers follow their heads, but the genitive precedes its noun. Taba has a number of typologically unusual word-order correlations which are probably best explained as a result of contact between Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages in the North Maluku *sprachbund*. Taba has a very productive set of valence affecting affixes. There is a causative prefix, two applicative suffixes and also a detransitivising prefix. The valence affecting affixes can have a number of other functions, for example, the causative prefix *ha-* is also used to derive verbs from a variety of different sources.

The language also has an important set of directionals whose use is pervasive in discourse. These are described in detail in Bowden (1997). Although both co-ordinate and subordinate clauses are found in Taba, most natural discourse actually consists of loosely bound paratactic sequences of clauses. Any meaningful connections between the clauses involved in most multiclausal constructions are understood pragmatically rather than through any overt semantic devices such as conjunctions.

Taba has a mixed split-S and accusative system of pronominal cross-referencing for intransitive verbs. An actor is obligatorily cross-referenced on a verb by a proclitic which indexes the Person and Number of the Actor argument; Undergoers are not obligatorily cross-referenced. Note that Actor and Undergoer are used in a slightly different sense from how they are generally used in the literature. Here capitalised Actor and Undergoer refer to

Taba-specific morphosyntactic categories: an Actor is a core argument that is cross-referenced on the verb, while an Undergoer is a core argument that attracts no cross-referencing.

Transitive clauses in Taba have an unmarked word order of AVP. A is cross-referenced on the verb, while P is not. Example (1) illustrates a transitive clause, where the Actor *Oci* is cross-referenced on the verb *wet* ‘hit’ by the proclitic *n=* ‘3sg’, but the Undergoer *Iswan* is only represented by an independent noun with no cross-referencing.

- (1) *Oci nwet Iswan*  
*Oci n=wet Iswan*  
*Oci 3sg=hit Iswan*  
 ‘Oci hit Iswan.’

Examples (2) and (3) illustrate the split-S characteristics of Taba. In (2) the Actor oriented intransitive verb *han* ‘go’ is cross-referenced by the proclitic *n=* ‘3sg’, but in (3), the Undergoer oriented intransitive verb *dumik* ‘be exhausted/used up’ carries no cross-referencing.

- (2) *motor nhan do*  
*motor n=han do*  
*motor 3sg=go REAL*  
 ‘The boat went.’
- (3) *kofi dumik do*  
*coffee be.exhausted REAL*  
 ‘The coffee has been used up.’

The kind of split-S patterning seen in (2) and (3) above occurs when non-human arguments are involved. When the sole argument of an intransitive verb refers to a human participant, an accusative pattern is followed in which the argument always triggers cross-referencing, as in (4) below, where the sole argument Ahmad triggers cross-referencing, even though the participant referred to has the (small ‘u’) macro-role of undergoer.

- (4) *Ahmad namtat*  
*Ahmad n=ha-mtat*  
*Ahmad 3sg=ACT-fall*  
 ‘Ahmad fell over.’

Taba basic word order can be characterised as follows: one full NP argument may precede the verb within the clause, whatever its status as Actor or Undergoer. If two full NP’s occur with a transitive verb, the Actor must precede it and the Undergoer must follow it, as in (1) above, but if only one full NP argument occurs it generally precedes the verb whether it is an Actor or Undergoer.

- (5) *Oci nwet*  
*Oci n=wet*  
*Oci 3sg=hit*  
 ‘Oci hit (someone).’ or: ‘(Someone) hit Oci.’

On the other hand, when pronominal arguments occur, the pronominal Actor always precedes the verb and the pronominal Undergoer always follows it as in (6)–(8) below.

- (6) *yak kwet i*  
 yak k=wet i  
 1sg 1sg=hit 3sg  
 ‘I hit him.’
- (7) *o nalhod hu*  
 i n=alhod hu  
 3sg 3sg=run CONT  
 ‘He is running.’
- (8) *mtat i*  
 mtat i  
 fall 3sg  
 ‘It fell over.’

Animacy effects pervade Taba grammar. We have already seen that human arguments pattern in a nominative-accusative fashion while non-humans follow a split-S alignment of arguments in intransitive clauses. In addition, pronominal reference is only available for animate arguments. Given these two requirements, it is thus clear that example (8) must be referring to an animal: because the intransitive clause is based on an Undergoer oriented intransitive verb we know that the referent of the sole argument cannot be human; given that the argument is manifested by a pronominal we know that the referent must be animate. Thus, the only available candidates are animals.

Taba also has a small set of aberrant verbs referring to processes of excretion which behave somewhat differently from all other verbs. These verbs are obligatorily cross-referenced by both Actor proclitics and Undergoer suffixes at the same time. The proclitics and the suffixes are co-referential, and the structures that result are somewhat reminiscent of reflexive constructions.<sup>2</sup> See (9) to (11) below for a few examples:

- (9) *Buang nciwi.*  
 Buang n=sio-i  
 Buang 3sg=shit-3sg  
 ‘Buang shitted.’
- (10) *shitomeu!*  
 2pl=fart-2pl  
 ‘You farted!’
- (11) *yak kmiok hu*  
 yak k=mio-k hu  
 1sg 1sg=piss-1sg CONT  
 ‘I’m off for a piss.’

Although these verbs are very few in number, and the constructions utilising them bear a very low functional load in the language, the pattern seen above is repeated in some serial verb constructions which will be discussed later in the paper.

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2 The pattern of double cross-referencing found on verbs of excretion resembles rather closely the pattern found in Taba reflexive constructions). Kemmer (1993) notes that reflexive morphosyntax is a common way of marking ‘middle voice’ in many languages, and that verbs of excretion fitted neatly into her category of ‘body middle’ verbs which often attract middle voice.

One further typological feature of interest about Taba is the highly productive nature of serial verb constructions (SVCs). A range of illustrative Taba SVCs in Taba are given in (12)–(18) below.

- (12) *nhan ait tesu*  
 n=han ait te-su  
 3sg=go ascend NEG-POT  
 ‘(S)he hasn’t yet gone up.’
- (13) *ncopang nmul hu*  
 n=sopang n=mul hu  
 3sg=descend 3sg=return CONT  
 ‘(S)he’s still coming back down.’
- (14) *nbabas welik nmot do*  
 n=babas welik n=mot do  
 3sg=bite pig 3sg=die REAL  
 ‘It bit the pig dead.’
- (15) *npun bobay npake sandal*  
 n=pun bobay n=pake sandal  
 3sg=kill mosquito 3sg=use thong  
 ‘He killed the mosquito with a thong.’
- (16) *ncurat nulang*  
 n=surat n=ulang  
 3sg=write 3sg=do.again  
 ‘She wrote it again.’
- (17) *notik si ladoi*  
 n=ot-ik si l=ha-doi  
 3sg=take-APPL[give] 3pl 3pl=ACT-look  
 ‘She showed it to him.’
- (18) *nwosal máddodang*  
 n=wosal máddodang  
 3sg=stand be.straight  
 ‘He’s standing up straight.’
- (19) *sagala bum dumik*  
 stuff be.lost be.exhausted  
 ‘Our stuff was completely lost.’

Although there appear to be some restrictions on which major subcategories of verb types co-occur in SVCs (e.g. no sequences of two ditransitive verbs are encountered in the corpus), there are very few such restrictions. The examples above illustrate a fairly wide variety of types. Examples (12), (13) and (16) illustrate sequences of Actor intransitive verbs. Example (14) shows a transitive verb followed by an Actor intransitive. Example (15) illustrates the co-occurrence of two transitive verbs while (17) shows a ditransitive followed by a transitive. Example (18) shows an Actor oriented intransitive followed by an Undergoer oriented intransitive and finally (19) shows two Undergoer intransitives.

A detailed justification for labelling all of the examples presented above as ‘serial verb constructions’ (henceforth SVCs) is given in §3 below. A functional typology of SVCs in Taba is provided in §4.

### 3 Taba SVCs and cross-linguistic features of SVCs

Durie (1997:291) outlines a range of key cross-linguistic characteristics of SVCs:

- a single serial verb complex describes what is conceptualised as a single event: this is repeatedly reported to be a clear intuition of native speakers, and can be demonstrated through semantic analysis. It follows from this that a serial verb complex can often best be translated into a non-serialising language using a single, mono-valent clause.
- the serial complex has shared tense, aspect, modality and polarity: this is often reflected in a single morphological realisation of these operators ... or in obligatory concord across the verbs ...
- serial verbs ‘share’ at least one and possibly more arguments.
- intonational properties of a clause within serialisation are those of a mono-verbal clause ...
- the complex takes only one subject/external argument.
- when serialisation results in a complex of more than two arguments, the configuration of arguments corresponds closely to the kinds of configurations of arguments + adjuncts found for single clauses in non-serialising languages.
- there is a very strong diachronic tendency to lexicalisation and grammaticisation of the meaning of serial complexes: this involve treating the whole serial complex as a single lexical(ised) item, or ‘demotion’ of the meaning and grammatical status of one of the verbs to that of a modifier or case-marker.

These characteristics will be addressed with respect to the Taba constructions tentatively identified as SVCs below, and insofar as they can be applied to the Taba data they will be shown to apply equally well as they do in other languages.

#### 3.1 SVCs describe single events

It has often been noted by people writing on verb serialisation that SVCs fulfill a function in serialising languages similar to that of individual verbs in languages without serialisation. SVCs thus describe what native speakers are said to conceptualise as single events with the individual verbs referring to subcomponents of those events. (Here, the term ‘event’ is used to refer to both states and what are traditionally called ‘events’.) While the notion of single or multiple event is fraught with difficulty and conclusions to this effect are often arrived at with some circularity (as other papers in this volume point out) there are some ways at least in which the conceptual unity of what is referred to in a SVC can be illustrated reasonably uncontroversially. I will not, however, seek to explicitly defend the notion of ‘single eventhood’, since I am not even sure that it can be defended.



An example such as (14) above, repeated as (20) below, is best translated into English as ‘It bit the pig dead’ or ‘it bit the pig to death’ rather than, say, ‘it bit the pig and the pig died’ or ‘it bit the pig and killed it’.

- (20) *nbabas welik nmot do*  
 n=babas welik n=mot do  
 3sg=bite pig 3sg=die REAL  
 ‘It bit the pig dead.’

The conceptual unity of (20) can be best illustrated by comparing it with (21) where two distinct events (one of biting and the other of killing) are referred to. Here, the pause after *welik* ‘pig’ and the appearance of *i* ‘3sg’ referring to the pig after *namot* indicate that there are two clauses.

- (21) *nbabas welik, namot i*  
 n=babas welik n=ha-mot i  
 3sg=bite pig 3sg=CAUS-die 3sg  
 ‘It bit the pig and killed it.’

The death referred to in (20) must have come about as a direct and immediate consequence of the pig’s being bitten, but this need not have been the case with the death referred to in (21). In (21) there may have been a considerable period of time elapsed between the biting and the pig’s eventual death by bleeding. In fact, the pig need not even have died as a direct consequence of having been bitten (e.g. as by loss of blood). Its death may have occurred as a quite indirect consequence of having been bitten (as would be the case, say, if the bite wound had gone septic and the death had occurred much later as a consequence of the infection), or even as a result of something completely unconnected with the act of biting. The pig may in fact have been killed by some other action of the Actor at some later date.<sup>3</sup>

### 3.2 Shared tense, aspect, modality and polarity

Examples (12) and (13) above (repeated as (22) and (23) below) both show some of these characteristic SVC features.

- (22) *nhan ait tesu*  
 n=han ait te-su  
 3sg=go ascend NEG-POT  
 ‘(S)he hasn’t yet gone up.’
- (23) *ncopang nmul hu*  
 n=sopang n=mul hu  
 3sg=descend 3sg=return CONT  
 ‘(S)he’s still coming back down.’

In (22), *tesu* is a compound marker of both negative polarity and ‘potential’ modality. Although neither ‘going’ nor ‘ascending’ have yet occurred, the speaker expects such an event including both subcomponents to occur soon. Such non-occurrence and expectation

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3 Of course an utterance such as (21) does contain an implicature that the act of biting was what caused the death of the pig. However, in (21) the implicature is defeasible while there is no defeasibility with respect to (20).

is understood as applying to the whole sequence of sub-events referred to by the entire SVC and not just to any part of it. We would thus expect to hear such an utterance in a location where the speaker would *know* that neither component of the event had yet begun, as for example at home before the Actor referred to had left for the gardens. (This particular sequence of verbs has a conventionalised meaning by means of which it refers to an agent heading up the mountain to work in the gardens.)

In (23) the continuous particle *hu* must be understood as qualifying the whole serial verb complex such that both ‘descending’ and ‘returning’ must be in progress at the same time. (Example (23) is the conventionalised counterpart of (24) since it characteristically refers to people returning home after completing work in their gardens.)

### 3.3 Sharing of arguments

All verbs in Taba SVCs share at least one of their arguments. There do not appear to be any categorical restrictions on the particular kinds of arguments that may be shared: a variety of possibilities were illustrated in the initial examples given in (12) to (19).

Example (14), repeated as (24) below shows a sequence of a transitive verb followed by an Actor intransitive in which the Undergoer of the initial transitive verb is coreferential with the Actor argument of the following intransitive verb.

- (24) *nbabas welik nmot do*  
 n=babas welik n=mot do  
 3sg=bite pig 3sg=die REAL  
 ‘It bit the pig dead.’

Example (17) above which is repeated below as (25) illustrates a more complex situation where two arguments are shared by each of the constituent verbs.

- (25) *notik si ladoi*  
 n=ot-ik si l=ha-doi  
 3sg=take-APPL[give] 3pl 3pl=CAUS-look  
 ‘She showed it to him.’

None of the coreferential arguments exemplified in (24) and (25) was simultaneously subcategorised as Actor of each of the verbs in the sequence. In SVCs with non-coreferential Actors, the Actor argument of each verb is obligatorily cross-referenced on both of the verbs in the sequence. In (15) though, repeated as (26), the Actor of the initial transitive verb is coreferential with the Actor of the subsequent transitive verb.

- (26) *npun bobay npake sandal*  
 n=pun bobay n=pake sandal  
 3sg=kill mosquito 3sg=use thong  
 ‘He killed the mosquito with a thong.’

In this example, the person ‘killing the mosquito’ is also the person ‘using the thong’. In such cases, when both verbs in a SVC share the same Actor, cross-referencing of the Actor on the second verb is optional. Example (27) below, then, is also grammatical.

- (27) *npun bobay pake sandal*  
 n=pun bobay pake sandal  
 3sg=kill mosquito use thong  
 ‘He killed the mosquito with a thong.’

Examples (26) and (27) illustrate the difference between ‘core’ and ‘nuclear’ serialisation discussed by Foley and Van Valin. Example (26) where each verb is separately cross-referenced is an example of core serialisation, while (27) where the cross-referencing of *pun* ‘kill’ with *n=* ‘3sg’ serves to cross-reference *pake* ‘use’ as well, is an example of nuclear serialisation. Choice between the two structures seems to be based solely on the carefulness of speech exhibited by whoever uses them. The distinction between core and nuclear serialisation will not be developed further here, but I will return to it in some detail in §5 below.

Before turning our attention away from ‘argument sharing’, it is worth noting that some writers on serialisation have pointed to a significant class of exceptions to Durie’s criterion that at least one argument must be shared in a SVC. This class of exceptions was labeled ‘ambient serialisation’ by Bradshaw (1982). According to Crowley (1987:49) ambient serialisation is ‘a construction in which a verb is serialised to another verb, but in which there is no specific referent associated with the subject of the serialised verb, and the verbs simply describes a general predication’. In *Taba*, there are possible exemplars of ambient serialisation in examples like (19) above, repeated as (28) below, where *dumik* ‘be exhausted’ might be viewed as such a general predication lacking an argument.

- (28) *sagala bum dumik*  
 stuff be.lost be.exhausted  
 ‘Our stuff was completely lost.’

‘Ambient serialisation’, when it exists, does provide a significant exception to Durie’s criterion for argument sharing. However, in *Taba* at least there are grounds for suspecting that no real ambient serialisation takes place. In (28) at least, *sagala* ‘stuff’ can be quite easily viewed as the sole argument of the verb *dumik*.

### 3.4 No embedding or complementation

*Taba* often has little overt marking of either embedding or complementation but it can still be shown quite straightforwardly that SVCs are distinct from complement constructions. In those cases where there is overt marking of embedded clauses, it is quite obvious that they are distinct from SVCs. In example (29), for example, *de* ‘so that’ is a subordinating conjunction that which marks the clause *natotas* as subordinate to the initial clause *nyol calana*.

- (29) *nyol calana de natotas*  
 n=yol calana de n=ha-totas  
 3sg=take trousers RES 3sg=CAUS-wash  
 ‘She took the trousers so she could wash them.’

A similar construction involving a SVC is illustrated in (30) where there is no marking of subordination.

- (30) *nyol calana natotas*  
 n=yol calana n=ha-totas  
 3sg=take trousers 3sg=CAUS-wash  
 ‘She took the trousers and washed them.’

A number of characteristic features of constructions involving embedded clauses which are not overtly marked as such can also be found, which set them apart from those labelled here as SVCs.

One of the most notable features of main verbs taking clausal complements and having no overt marking of their complement status is usually that the verbs which take such clausal complements are strictly subcategorised as complement taking verbs. The individual verbs found in serial constructions are not. A verb such as *halusa* ‘to say’, for example, normally has a clausal complement as illustrated in (31), while the verbs involved in SVCs do not ordinarily require clausal complements.<sup>4</sup>

- (31) *nalusa nhan do*  
 n=ha-lusa n=han do  
 3sg=CAUS-say 3sg=go REAL  
 ‘He said “he’s gone”.’

Another characteristic feature of clausal complements in Taba is that they always follow the verbs of which they are complements. It is hard to see how such a criterion could be applied to putative SVCs in Taba when we regularly encounter pairs such as (12) and (13) above which are repeated here as (32) and (33).

- (32) *nhan ait tesu*  
 n=han ait te-su  
 3sg=go ascend NEG-POT  
 ‘(S)he hasn’t yet gone up.’
- (33) *ncopang nmul hu*  
 n=sopang n=mul hu  
 3sg=descend 3sg=return CONT  
 ‘(S)he’s still coming back down.’

The problem can be stated thus: ‘Is it the generalised motion verb which takes the specific verb as its complement (as one would probably expect from the semantics of the constructions) or vice versa?’. In (32) the general motion verb comes first and is followed by the verb specifying the direction of motion while in (33) it is the other way around. The ordering in each case can be most simply ascribed to iconic principles: the component of the event which occurs first in real life comes first in the SVC while the component of the event which comes last in real life also comes last in the construction and each verb appears to have roughly equivalent ‘syntactic weight’. Durie (1997:330) points out that all serialising languages have such iconic ordering principles.

While there is a requirement for SVCs that the individual verbs contained within them must share at least one core argument, there is no parallel requirement for complement clauses. Taking (31) above as an example again, the complement clause may or may not have as its Actor the Actor of *nalusa*. Out of context, the sentence is thus ambiguous as to whether there is only one person both ‘saying’ and ‘going’ or different people performing each action.

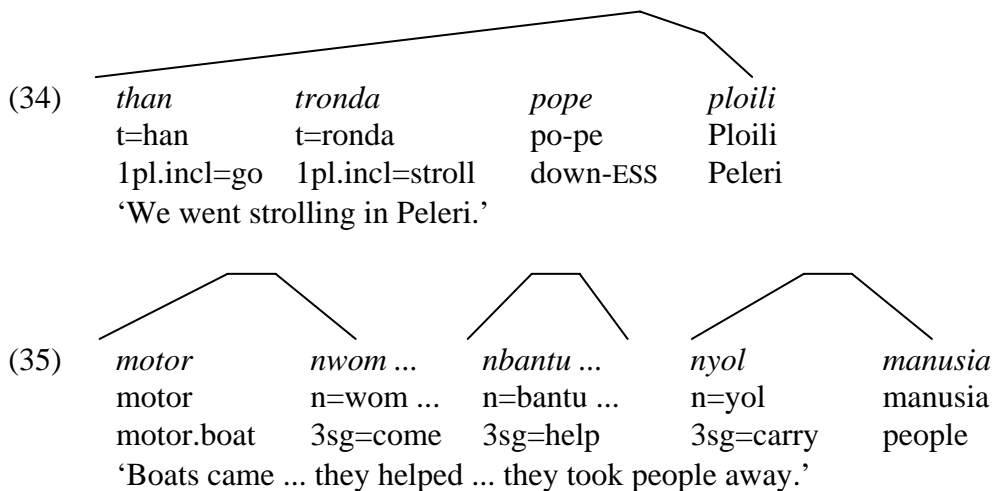
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4 The clausal complement of a verb like *halusa* is actually omissible in certain contexts (i.e. when it can be presumed to be retrievable anaphorically by a hearer) but this is clearly a situation parallel to that of, say, the ‘obligatory’ Undergoer of a transitive verb which can also be omitted under similar circumstances.

Just as the SVC requirement for coreferentiality of at least one argument is not met in the complement clause construction, likewise the requirement for TAM and modality to have scope over the whole SVC is not met in complement clause constructions. Again, (31) is ambiguous in a way that a SVC marked as realis can never be: in (31) the realis marker *do* could have scope over the whole construction (as it would have to if it were a SVC) or it could just have scope over the clause which reports the speech.

### 3.5 Intonation in SVCs

Verbs containing SVCs characteristically have the same intonational properties as do mono-verbal clauses. Taba declarative clauses generally have a falling intonation over the last elements of the clause and speakers frequently pause at their completion. This is characteristic of clauses containing SVCs just as it is of clauses containing monoverbal clauses. Contrast (34), showing the characteristic intonation associated with a serial verb clause with that shown in (35) which is an example of simple clause chaining, showing juxtaposed clauses.



### 3.6 SVCs as a whole have only one subject/‘external argument’

This criterion cannot be applied straightforwardly for Taba, since, as I have argued elsewhere (see Bowden 2001:Ch.6) Taba grammar does not recognise a simple subject category. An argument can be made, though, that Taba SVCs do have one argument that has a privileged position within the complex, that argument being the initial Actor argument. Since the case for this position depends on points to be made later in the paper while addressing the core-nuclear distinction, I will leave a detailed justification of this position until the final section of this paper.

### 3.7 Configuration of SVC arguments resembles configuration of core arguments plus adjuncts in non-serialising languages

Durie’s criterion relating to characteristic alignment of more than two arguments in an SVC might be modified to read that not only do they resemble the configuration of the arguments of verbs plus adjuncts in non-serialising languages, but that they also resemble the configuration of the (more than 2) arguments of applicative verbs in languages which

have them. Such resemblances can all be seen internal to Taba itself where some of the serial verb constructions have rough translation equivalents of both types. Example (15) had three arguments associated with it and it is repeated below as (36).

- (36) *npun bobay npake sandal*  
 n=pun bobay n=pake sandal  
 3sg=kill mosquito 3sg=use thong  
 ‘He killed the mosquito with a thong.’

Contrast (36) with (37) in which the instrument is licensed by an applicative suffix and (38) where it is licensed by an adposition.

- (37) *npunak bobay sandal*  
 n=pun-ak bobay sandal  
 3sg=kill-APPL mosquito thong  
 ‘He killed the mosquito with a thong.’

- (38) *npun bobay ada sandal*  
 n=pun bobay ada sandal  
 3sg=kill mosquito with thong  
 ‘He killed the mosquito with a thong.’

### 3.8 Strong tendency to lexicalisation and grammaticalisation

Durie (1997:322) points out that verb serialisation is universally characterised by heavy lexicalisation of particular verb combinations. He says ‘this is because the typing of events is matched by stereotyping of verb combinations used to represent those events’. The first two sentences illustrating serialisation (12) and (13), and repeated below as (39) and (40) are sentences which generally have highly lexicalised readings.

- (39) *nhan ait tesu*  
 n=han ait te-su  
 3sg=go ascend NEG-POT  
 ‘(S)he hasn’t yet gone up.’  
 [‘S/he hasn’t gone to work in the gardens yet.’]

- (40) *ncopang nmul hu*  
 n=sopang n=mul hu  
 3sg=descend 3sg=return CONT  
 ‘(S)he’s still coming back down.’  
 [‘S/he is still coming back from working in the gardens.’] Every time I heard anyone use one of these combinations, they were always referring to either someone’s going to work in the gardens or their return from the gardens. (Taba villages are all located almost at sea level, close to the beach, while the gardens are all located at higher altitudes, spread up the sides of the mountain behind the villages.)

In an earlier paper, Durie (1988:3) discusses the diachronic instability of many serial verb combinations. These sometimes show a centripetal tendency for one of the verbs to pull in and become bound to another verb, in which case it may come to be reanalysed as a verbal affix. With other combinations, a centrifugal tendency for one of the verbs to pull

away from the other is evidenced: in this case the verb that pulls away may eventually be reanalysed as a case marker or adposition.

There is evidence of both kinds of diachronic instability at work in Taba. The centripetal tendency is apparent with SVCs having the verb *han* 'go' as their first element. With the examples so far cited of SVCs with initial *han* (such as (41) below) the meaning of the independent verb *han* 'go' is still quite clearly apparent when it occurs in the combination.

- (41) *nhan ait*  
 n=han ait  
 3sh=go ascend  
 'He's going upwards.'

Many more such examples where going is entailed in the meaning of the combination could be given. In some combinations, however, the independent meaning 'go' is not so readily apparent. This is the case in (42) which has semantic parallels with the English expression 'go to sleep'.

- (42) *nhan tuli*  
 n=han tuli  
 3sg=go sleep  
 '(S)he's going to sleep.'

Such an utterance could refer to a situation where the person referred to is either going off to his/her room in order to sleep, or in which s/he is already in bed and in the process of falling asleep. Sometimes, however, the following construction is used to refer to the situation where the referent is in the process of falling asleep, or is actually asleep.

- (43) *nantuli*  
 n=han-tuli  
 3sg=INCH-sleep  
 '(S)he's asleep/falling asleep.'

In (43), not only has *han* been bleached of its lexical meaning, it has also become phonologically fused to the other verb from the original sequence: no longer carrying stress, the initial /h/ of *han-* is now subject to the morphophonemic rule of unstressed /h/ deletion and now functions as a prefix with a more general 'inchoative' meaning. The prefix occurs in a number of other formations.

The Taba corpus also contains abundant evidence for the centrifugal tendency of some SVC combinations identified by Durie. This notably affects the verb *pake* 'to use/wear' which is itself a borrowing from North Moluccan Malay. Serialisation is highly productive in North Moluccan Malay, and it is probable that the serial function of *pake* to introduce an instrument was borrowed into Taba at the same time as the form itself was borrowed. The example of *pake* already encountered in (15) above and repeated as (44) below is without doubt a verb: it is cross-referenced by the 3sg proclitic *n=*.

- (44) *npun bobay npake sandal*  
 n=pun bobay n=pake sandal  
 3sg=kill mosquito 3sg=use thong  
 'He killed the mosquito with a thong.'

As already discussed, cross-referencing of the Actor is optional for the second verb in a SVC containing an initial verb with a coreferential Actor. Example (45) then, can also be interpreted as containing a SVC.

- (45) *npun bobay pake sandal*  
 n=pun bobay pake sandal  
 3sg=kill mosquito use thong  
 ‘He killed the mosquito with a thong.’

In example (46), however, *pake* must be considered a preposition. Here the PP *pake sandal* ‘with a thong’ has been fronted to the clausal focus position, a position not available for cross-referenced and unambiguously serial *npake*.

- (46) *pake sandal, npun bobay*  
 pake sandal n=pun bobay  
 with thong 3sg=kill mosquito  
 ‘It was with a thong he killed the mosquito.’

#### 4 A functional typology of Taba SVCs

Durie (1997:330ff.) attempts to provide a universal typology of serial verb construction types. Not all of the construction types identified by Durie are found in Taba. Five of the types listed below derive from Durie’s classification of SVCs. ‘Aspectual’ and ‘modal’ serialisation are my own categories.

- motion serialisation
- cause-effect serialisation
- causative serialisation
- instrumental serialisation
- modal serialisation
- aspectual serialisation
- manner serialisation

Each of these types will be discussed in turn below.

##### 4.1 Motion serialisation

Motion serialisation is very productive in Taba. These constructions may involve an initial verb of directional motion followed by some other verb describing an action of some sort, each of the verbs having the same agent, as in (47).

- (47) *nmul ntono ni dawalat*  
 n=mul n=tono ni dawalat  
 3sg=return 3sg=look.at 3sg.POSS girlfriend  
 ‘He’s come back to see his girlfriend.’

Motion serialisation may also occur with the directional following the verb which describes an action. In these constructions too, the agent of each verb is coreferential, as illustrated in (48).



- (48) *ntua yan nmul*  
 n=tua yan 3sg=mul  
 3sg=buy fish 3sg=return  
 ‘He’s returned from buying fish.’

The Taba verb *han* ‘to go’ is not deictic in the same way as English ‘go’ and might in fact better be glossed as simply ‘move’. Whenever it occurs in a motion serialisation it precedes any other verb that is included. In (48) it precedes an action verb while as we can see in (49) below, it can also precede a verb which encodes a specific direction.

- (49) *nhan ait tesu*  
 n=han ait te-su  
 3sg=go ascend NEG-POT  
 ‘(S)he hasn’t yet gone up.’

Durie’s account of iconic ordering for verbs within motion serialisation constructions predicts that a verb describing motion leading up to a subsequent component of an event will always occur first, while a verb describing motion subsequent to some other sub-component of an event will always occur second. This prediction is borne out by all of the examples from the Taba corpus.

#### 4.2 Cause-effect serialisation

Cause-effect serialisation is illustrated in (50).

- (50) *nbabas welik nmot do*  
 n=babas welik n=mot do  
 3sg=bite pig 3sg=die REAL  
 ‘It bit the pig dead.’

In all of the examples of cause-effect serialisation encountered in the corpus, the first verb encodes a cause and the second verb encodes an effect (just as Durie’s iconic account of ordering principles would predict). Also common to all of the cause-effect combinations is the fact that the first verb is a transitive verb which has as its patient an argument of the second verb. Transitive verbs, Actor intransitives and Undergoer intransitives are all found in second position. An Actor intransitive verb was seen in (50). Example (51) illustrates the occurrence of an Undergoer intransitive verb in second position and (52) shows a transitive verb in second position. Here the patient of the first verb is the agent of the second and the second verb again refers to what happened as a result of the first. In this example, the undergoer of the second verb is the milk that was burped up as a result of the baby’s back being hit.

- (51) *ntotas nik kos bulang*  
 n=totas nik kos bulang  
 3sg=wash 1sg.POSS T-shirt be.white  
 ‘She washed my T-shirt white.’

- (52) *ni mamasi nwet i nggaleitik susu*  
 ni mama=si n=wet i n=galeit-ik susu  
 3sg.POSS mother=PL 3sg=hit 3sg 3sg=burp-APPL milk  
 ‘His mother hit him and he burped up milk/his mother burped milk from him.’



‘use’ verb may not be under such constraints, since use of an instrument occurs at the same time as the action is carried out, and necessarily follows any ‘getting’ of that instrument.

#### 4.5 Modal serialisation

Example (56) illustrates what might be called ‘modal serialisation’. Modal serialisation was not one of the types identified by Durie. In the following example the second verb *kahate* ‘I am unable’ provides an evaluation of the speaker’s belief that he is incapable of constructing a rice container from coconut leaves.

- (56) *kpe kahate*  
 k=pe k=ahate  
 1sg=make 1sg=be.unable  
 ‘I can’t make them.’

All of the verbs which provide a modal evaluation of ability occur after the verb to which the evaluation of ability applies. *Ahan* ‘be able’ can also occur before the verb which describes what the protagonist is able to do. The verbs involved are:

- ahan* ‘to be able’  
 -*ahate(s)* ‘to be unable’

A third form *mampo* ‘to be able’ is also sometimes encountered, but this is a borrowing from North Moluccan Malay that does not seem to have been completely assimilated into the Taba system so it will not be further addressed here. The interested reader can find more detail on this verb in Bowden (2001:318). The indigenous modal evaluators are discussed in turn below.

##### 4.5.1 -*ahan*

This modal evaluative verb means ‘to be able’ and it is the only one of the three which can occur either as the first verb in the sequence, or as the second verb. It is shown as an independent verb in (57).

- (57) *ttukal mai tahan*  
 t=tukal mai t=ahan  
 1pl.incl=change well 1pl.incl=be.able  
 ‘Changing it, well we can.’

In (58), *-ahan* is shown in the second position in a serial verb construction.

- (58) *npe nahan*  
 n=pe n=ahan  
 3sg=do 3sg=be.able  
 ‘He can do it.’

In (59), *ahan* is illustrated in the initial position of a SVC.

- (59) *wwe nahan ncagal*  
 wwe n=ahan n=sagal  
 leg 3sg=be.able 3sg=step  
 ‘My leg would be able to walk.’

4.5.2 *-ahate(s)*

This verb always occurs in the second position of a SVC and provides an evaluation that whatever is described by the first verb is not possible. Such impossibility of action may stem from either a lack of ability or a lack of permission. This form appears to have been derived historically as a result of the negative particle *te* having fused onto *ahan* (see above) from which the final nasal has disappeared. It is attested in a variety of forms. Firstly, it can occur as either an Actor oriented intransitive verb as in (60), or as an agentless Undergoer oriented intransitive with the detransitivising prefix *ta-* as in (61).

- (60) *ada mamatuosi tagil lahate do*  
 ada mamatuo=si tagil l=ahate do  
 and old:people=PL walk 3pl=be.unable REAL  
 ‘... and old people who can't walk any more.’

- (61) *ndadi boa hataosak tahate ...*  
 ndadi boa ha-ta-osa-k ta-ahate  
 so door CAUS-DETR-open-APPL DETR-be.unable  
 ‘So the doors couldn't be opened.’

Both *-ahate* and *tahate* are also encountered with a final ‘s’ segment as *-ahates* and *tahates*. These forms clearly have a connection to the complex ‘negative potential’ particle *tesu*. The forms with a final *-s* indicate (as does *tesu*) that although something might be impossible at the time referred to, there is a belief on the part of the speaker that this will not always be the case, and that either a future potentiality will arise or that there was once a past potentiality for such an event to occur.

- (62) *ahan ahates.*  
 a=han a=ahate-s  
 1pl.excl=go 1pl.excl=be.unable-POT  
 ‘We couldn't go.’ [but one would expect that we might be able to go in the future]

The distinction between potential ability to do something in the future and no potential ability is seen clearly in examples (63) and (64) which each refer to the fact that a child is not permitted to smoke cigarettes. In the first of these, the child referred to is a girl: under the norms of Taba culture, one would expect that she (as a girl) will never be permitted to smoke cigarettes. In the second of these examples, however, referring to a young boy, there is a belief encoded that although he is currently forbidden from smoking, once he reaches a sufficient age he will then be allowed to take up the habit.

- (63) *Irianti nasodas nahate.*  
 Irianti n=ha-sodas n=ahate  
 Irianti 3sg=CAUS-suck[smoke] 3sg=be.unable  
 ‘Irianti is not allowed to smoke.’

- (64) *Iswan nasodas nahates.*  
 Iswan n=ha-sodas n=ahate-s  
 Iswan 3sg=CAUS-suck[smoke] 3sg=be.unable-POT  
 ‘Iswan is not allowed to smoke (now. But he will be allowed to in the future).’

#### 4.6 Aspectual serialisation

The following example illustrates what might be called ‘aspectual serialisation’. Here, the verb *yoa* ‘to search’ has the lexicalised aspectual meaning ‘almost’. This construction is noteworthy in that the lexically secondary verb occurs before the lexically primary verb, in contradistinction to the situation seen above for true ‘manner serialisation’.

- (65) *myoa*                      *mhan*  
 m=yoa                      m=han  
 2sg=search(almost) 2sg=go  
 ‘You’ve almost gone.’

If an independent Actor noun phrase is used in this construction, it precedes the entire SVC, as in (66).

- (66) *au myoa*                      *mhan*  
 au m=yoa                      m=han  
 2sg 2sg=search(almost) 2sg=go  
 ‘You’ve almost gone.’

*Nyoa* is also found as an invariant particle with fossilised 3sg cross-referencing, where it can also be translated into English as ‘almost’. The particle functions as either a modifier of quantifier phrases or as a modifier of whole clauses. These provide yet another example of the strong tendency towards lexicalisation and grammaticalisation that is at play with serial verb constructions.

Another kind of aspectual serialisation is often encountered with the verb *okik* ‘be finished’ as the second verb in a serial construction.

- (67) *kahon*                      *okik*                      *do*  
 k=ha-hon                      okik                      do  
 1sg=CAUS-eat be.finished REAL  
 ‘I have finished eating.’

Serial *okik* is often found in the first clause of a paratactic sequence of clauses where it serves to show that whatever is referred to in the second clause of a sequence has occurred or will occur after whatever is referred to in the second clause has been finished. Taba has no temporal conjunctions meaning either ‘before’ or ‘after’ so example (68) illustrates the normal way that Taba speakers refer to temporal precedence of one event over another.

- (68) *kahon*                      *okik,*                      *khan*                      *akla*  
 k=ha-hon                      okik                      k=han                      ak-la  
 1sg=CAUS-eat be.finished 1sg=go ALL-sea  
 ‘Once I have finished eating, I will go seawards.’

#### 4.7 Manner serialisation

According to Durie (1997:336), manner serialisation involves one serial verb which describes the manner in which an action described by the other verb is performed: so-called manner serialisation was illustrated in (18) and (19) above, which are repeated as (69) and (70) respectively.

(69) *nwosal máddodang*  
 n=wosal máddodang  
 3sg=stand be.straight (straight)  
 ‘He’s standing up straight.’

(70) *sagala bum dumik*  
 stuff be.lost be.exhausted  
 ‘Our stuff was completely lost.’<sup>5</sup>

In Taba manner serialisation, it is always the second verb in the construction that encodes manner, and this manner encoding verb is almost invariably an Undergoer oriented intransitive verb. The initial verb in these constructions can be of a number of different types. In (69) it was an Actor oriented intransitive and in (70) it was an Undergoer oriented intransitive. Example (71) shows an initial transitive verb.

(71) *mpe hia do*  
 m=pe hia do  
 2sg=make be.good(well) REAL  
 ‘You can make them well.’

Only one example of a second Actor intransitive verb describing manner has been encountered in my corpus. It is illustrated in (72) where it describes the resulting state of the (ellipsed) patient of the first verb. (The ellipsed argument in this case was the gas pressure lamp which the author was incapable of bringing to light properly!) Note that although *ncol* is morphosyntactically classified as an Actor intransitive, it has a stative meaning.

(72) *John naladai ncol*  
 John n=ha-ladai n=sol  
 John 3sg=CAUS-fix 3sg=be.different(wrong)  
 ‘You’ve fixed it wrong John.’

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5 Note that the constructions shown in this section with *dumik* are clearly distinct from those with *okik* which were discussed in §4.6. While both *dumik* and *okik* can both sometimes be translated into English as ‘finished’, *dumik* actually refers to the exhaustion of a quantity of things while *okik* refers to the end-point in time of an activity. *Dumik* would thus be translated into Malay as ‘habis’ and *okik* as ‘selesai’. This point can be made clear with respect to serial verb constructions in which both of the forms are used. In the first example below, with *dumik*, there is an entailment that the person eating has eaten until all the available food was exhausted. It may be that the eater in this case will actually continue eating if more food is found, and thus, although he may have eaten everything that is so far available, he may not yet have finished eating.

*nahon dumik do*  
 n=hahon dumik do  
 3sg=eat be.exhausted REAL  
 ‘He’s eaten everything.’

In the second example, there is no entailment that all the available food has been eaten, merely that the eater referred to has ceased eating: there may still be left-over food on his plate for instance.

*nahon okik do*  
 n=hahon okik do  
 3sg=eat be.finished REAL  
 ‘He’s finished eating.’

As was noted in §3.3, manner serialisation in some languages is problematic for Durie's criterion that all the verbs in a serial verb construction should share at least one argument. Ambient serialisation, according to Crowley (1987:49), refers to 'a construction in which a verb is serialised to another verb, but in which there is no specific referent associated with the subject of the serialised verb, and the verbs simply describes a general predication'. At first sight it might appear that the second verbs in the examples just exemplified may fit the bill for 'ambient serialisation'.

In examples such as (73) below, which can be seen as a kind of counterpart to (69) above, it is, however, abundantly clear that the manner encoding verb of *Taba* does indeed have an argument. In this example, the manner encoding verb is actually cross-referenced by a following pronominal. Here, the sole argument of the SVC is cross-referenced twice: first by the Actor cross-referencing proclitic *n=* which is attached to the first (Actor intransitive) verb, and then by the Undergoer referring pronominal *i* which occurs after the second (Undergoer intransitive) verb.

- (73) *nwosal máddodang i*  
*n=wosal máddodang i*  
 3sg=stand be.straight 3sg  
 'He's standing up straight.'

Structures such as that seen in (73) then, look very much like the verbs of excretion discussed in §2 above, where a single argument is realised twice, both as Actor and as Undergoer of the clause. It should be pointed out that double cross-referencing in *Taba* SVCs is rather rare in natural discourse. This is hardly surprising, given that (except for the verbs of excretion) overt reference to any Undergoer is never obligatory as long as the referent is readily retrievable by the hearer. In these examples, ready retrievability is never an issue since the argument must be cross-referenced on the initial Actor intransitive verb in any case. Another similar example is given in (74) below.

- (74) *nopa dumik i*  
*n=opa dumik i*  
 3sg=fly be.exhausted 3sg  
 'They have all flown away.' [referring to a flock of birds]

## 5 *Taba* serialisation and the core — nuclear distinction

The distinction between core and nuclear serialisation has its roots in the layered conception of the clause propounded by Foley and Van Valin (1984). Under Foley and Van Valin's view, the clause is seen as consisting of a series of concentric layers. The innermost region is the nucleus, which consists of the verb itself. The next layer is the core, which consists of the verb, plus its arguments and some adverbial operators. The final, outermost layer is the periphery, which contains other adverbials including other modals, negation, etc. In core serialisation, the verbs involved in the serial verb construction (SVC) are joined at the level of the core, and each verb maintains some independence in terms of what arguments each can take. In nuclear serialisation, on the other hand, the individual verbs involved are allowed no real independence, all layers outside the nucleus being shared. Thus, in core serialisation, there may be separate cross-referencing of shared arguments by each of the verbs involved, but in nuclear serialisation, there may be only one occurrence of each shared argument.

In Bowden (2001) I suggested that the core vs nuclear serialisation distinction did not play a very significant role in Taba morphosyntax. Although the distinction could be observed in examples such as (26) and (27) above (repeated here as (75) and (76) respectively), it did not seem to have any consequences elsewhere in the grammar.

(75) *npun bobay npake sandal*  
 n=pun bobay n=pake sandal  
 3sg=kill mosquito 3sg=use thong  
 ‘He killed the mosquito with a thong.’

(76) *npun bobay pake sandal*  
 n=pun bobay pake sandal  
 3sg=kill mosquito use thong  
 ‘He killed the mosquito with a thong.’

Example (76) is characteristic of fast speech, while (75) is more characteristic of slow, careful speech styles. There do not appear to be any differences in meaning between the two structures, nor are there any intonational differences. The preponderance of examples such as those just illustrated led me to the conclusion that the distinction between core and nuclear serialisation was of little relevance to Taba. The distinction between the two kinds of structures seemingly had no impact on the grammar of SVCs in any other way. The only difference between them seemed to be a matter of stylistic choice. While this may be the case for examples such as those illustrated above, other structures that were not so obvious to me at the time I wrote Bowden (2001) suggest that the distinction between core and nuclear serialisation may reveal itself in more subtle and interesting ways in other parts of the grammar.

We noted in §2 that the sole human argument of an intransitive verb in Taba had to appear with Actor cross-referencing, and that Undergoer oriented intransitives only appeared with non humans as their arguments. In fact, this seems only to be true of such verbs when they occur as simple verbs. In serial verb constructions, Undergoer oriented intransitives with human arguments do occur, as in example (77) which is repeated from (69) above.

(77) *nwosal máddodang*  
 n=wosal máddodang  
 3sg=stand be.straight (straight)  
 ‘He’s standing up straight.’

In a non-serial clause, the verb *máddodang* could not be used underived with a human argument. To occur with a human argument, it would need to undergo derivation to become an Actor-oriented intransitive as in (78).

(78) *Acan namáddodang*  
*Acan n-ha-máddodang*  
 Acan 3s-ACT-be.straight  
 ‘Acan was straight.’

However, with the second verb in a serial structure, the restriction against human arguments of Undergoer intransitives does not apply, as long as the putative argument of the second verb is coreferential with the Actor of the first verb, as illustrated again in (79).



- (79) *Mina nhan tuli de npangin makoai tedo*  
 Mina n=han tuli de n=pangin makoai te-do  
 Mina 3sg=go sleep RES 3sg=wake.up be.hot(feel.sick) NEG-REAL  
 ‘Mina has gone to sleep so that she’ll not wake up sick.’

It seems then, that the requirement for a single human argument of an intransitive predicator to have an Actor may actually be a stipulation that needs to be made about clauses rather than about verbs per se. If we adopt this view, we can see that there is an overtly realised Actor in each of examples (77) and (79), these being the arguments cross-referenced on the initial verb with the proclitic *n=*. More interesting, though, perhaps, we are also able to say that it is only in cases of nuclear serialisation that humans may co-occur with underived Undergoer oriented intransitive verbs. They appear able to do so only because the SVC complex taken as a whole does have an overt Actor.

At this point, we can return briefly to the issue of whether or not a serial verb construction as a whole takes only one subject or external argument that we left hanging in the air at the end of 3.6. In examples such as (77) and (79) this is clearly the case: the initial Actor argument seems to occupy a privileged position, its cross-referencing on the initial verb in the construction being sufficient to license it with respect to any following verbs. The same might be said for examples like (76). The lack of cross-referencing on *pake* is only possible here because its argument is already cross-referenced on the preceding verb *pun*.

The Taba data discussed in this paper show that both nuclear serialisation and core serialisation are alive and well in the language. They further show a potential mechanism for how nuclear serialisation may arise in at least some languages. If the preponderance of examples like (75) and (76) I noticed when writing Bowden (2001) are anything to go by, nuclear serialisation may arise from core serialisation by a simple process of deletion of pronominal cross-referencing in fast or casual speech.

It was once believed that nuclear serialisation might only occur in verb final languages, but Durie (1997) as well as Crowley (2002) and Brill (2004) have all shown it to be common enough in languages with other basic word order patterns. The Taba data confirms yet again that nuclear serialisation is thriving in at least one more verb medial language.

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# 5 *Boundaries of serialisation: non-serialised verb sequences in Tetun Dili*

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CATHARINA WILLIAMS-VAN KLINKEN

## 1 Introduction

This paper addresses the question ‘What characterises serial verb constructions in Austronesian languages?’ by investigating verb sequences in Tetun Dili which lie beyond the boundaries of narrowly-defined verb serialisation. Such sequences are shown to differ from narrowly-defined serial verb constructions both syntactically and semantically. The result is that, for Tetun Dili, serial verb constructions are restricted syntactically to those in which the subject of the second verb corresponds to one of the arguments of the first verb, while semantically the second verb phrase always represents ‘in some sense a further development, result, or goal of the first’ (as stated by Lord (1974) for Yoruba). That is, Tetun Dili provides no support for syntactically extending the concept of serial verb to ‘ambient serialisation’, in which the subject of the second verb does not correspond to an argument of the first. In tandem with this, it does not support a serial verb analysis for multi-verb expressions of concepts such as tense-aspect, modality and manner.

Tetun Dili is spoken in and around Dili, the capital of East Timor. It is an Austronesian language with strong Portuguese influence, particularly in its vocabulary and phonology. While Tetun Dili has its roots in a vernacular known as Tetun Terik, which is spoken on parts of the south coast and along much of the border with West Timor, the two have diverged to such an extent that they are virtually mutually incomprehensible. Differences between Tetun Dili and Tetun Terik include some differences in serial verb and other multi-verb constructions. However, while few if any of the Tetun Dili examples in this paper would be acceptable in Tetun Terik, most of the arguments which are presented hold for both varieties. That is, the boundaries of verb serialisation are not significantly affected by the widespread differences between the two.<sup>1</sup>

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1 For descriptions of Tetun Dili, see Hull and Eccles (2001) and Williams-van Klinken et al. (2002). The Fehan dialect of Tetun Terik is described by the present author as van Klinken (1999).

Abbreviations used are as follows: 1PE - first person plural exclusive; 1PI - first person plural inclusive; 1S - first person singular; 2P - second person plural; 2S - second person singular; 3P - third person plural; 3S - third person singular; CONT - continuous aspect; INTR - intransitiviser; IRR - irrealis, about to, want to; LOC - general locative (in, at, on ...); PL - plural; POS - possessive; PRF - perfective aspect; REL - relative clause marker.

## 2 Tetun Dili verbs and adjectives

Tetun Dili clauses have a default subject-verb-object order. Objects may be fronted to before the subject, or (under certain conditions) incorporated immediately preceding the verb. Subjects are restricted to pre-verbal position, except with existential *iha* ‘EXIST’, and — as a calque on Portuguese — with a few presentational verbs such as *mosu* ‘appear’ and *akontese* ‘happen’.

Unlike Tetun Terik, Tetun Dili has no subject marking on verbs. Marking of tense-aspect-mood is syntactically optional, and is done by separate phonological words rather than by affixes or clitics on the verb.

Adjectives share a number of features with verbs, to the extent that they could be considered either as a subclass of intransitive verbs, or as a subclass, along with transitive and intransitive verbs, of a superclass of ‘verbals’. In this article, the latter terminology will be used, so that the term ‘verb’ excludes adjectives. The following features are shared by verbs and adjectives.

1. Both verbs and adjectives can be negated by *la* (e.g. *la mai* ‘not come’, *la diak* ‘not good’). In contrast, nouns can be negated only by *laós* (e.g. *laós mestri* ‘not (a) teacher’).
2. Some verbs and adjectives can be nominalised without change of form (e.g. *hanoin* ‘think; opinion’, *diak* ‘good; well-being’).
3. Some intransitive verbs and adjectives can function as the root of a causative derivation using the prefix *ha-* (e.g. *hasai* ‘remove’ from *sai* ‘exit’, *hamanas* ‘heat’ from *manas* ‘hot’).
4. Both intransitive verbs and adjectives can function as the second element in switch-subject nuclear serialisation, in which the first verb is *halo* ‘make, do’, and the second element identifies what the object of *halo* is made to do or to be (e.g. *halo mosu* (make appear) ‘cause to appear’, *halo badak* (make short) ‘shorten’).<sup>2</sup>

The differences between verbs and adjectives are as follows:

1. Verbs usually function predicatively. Adjectives often do (e.g. *João moras* ‘John (is) sick’), but also often function attributively (e.g. *ema moras* (person sick) ‘sick person’).
2. When modifying nouns, verbs are usually introduced by a relative clause marker, while adjectives seldom are (e.g. *ema nebé halai* (person REL run) ‘person who ran away’, *uma bót* (house big) ‘big house’).
3. Verbs cannot be reduplicated to derive adverbs, as a few adjectives can (e.g. *lai-lais* ‘quickly’ from *lais* ‘quick’).

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2 For some verbs and adjectives, causative predicates are formed by prefixation with *ha-*, others are serialised with *halo*, while for yet others, either strategy can be used. There is considerable inter-speaker variation as to which construction is preferred for which root, presumably in large part because *ha-* is far more productive in Tetun Terik than in Tetun Dili, and speakers differ in the degree to which they have been influenced by Tetun Terik.

4. Verbs cannot function as manner modifiers, as some adjectives can (e.g. *diak* ‘good; well’; *makás* ‘strong ...; strongly ...’).<sup>3</sup>

### 3 Serial verbs in Tetun Dili

Prototypical serial verb constructions in Tetun Dili have the following characteristics:

1. They include two verbs within a single predicate. (Sequences of three verbs in Tetun Dili can be analysed as one serial verb construction functioning as a term within another.)
2. There are no lexical, morphological or phonological markers of coordination or subordination between them.
3. The verbs share tense, aspect, mood, and illocutionary force.
4. The verbs cannot be independently negated.
5. The verbs share a complex of arguments. In particular, the subject of the second verb cannot be expressed, but is notionally identical to the subject, object or recipient of the initial verb.

Characteristics 1 to 4 above appear to be accepted by all writers on serial verbs. Characteristic 5 is a modification of a common restriction that the subject of the second verb correspond to either the subject or object of the initial verb (e.g. Durie 1988; Foley and Olson 1985:26). Recipient has been added to this list to allow for core-layer examples in 2b below. Reasons for requiring a shared argument are presented in detail below.

Serial verb constructions in Tetun Dili can be analysed along several intersecting planes. Firstly, there is a distinction between same-subject and switch-subject serialisation. Secondly, most serialisation patterns have one slot which is highly restricted lexically; for the remainder too it is suspected that one slot is restricted. Thirdly, serialisation can be either at the ‘nuclear’ or the ‘core’ layer (Foley and Olson 1985). In the former, the two verbs are necessarily contiguous, and together form a single clause nucleus, with the transitivity of the whole being determined by the initial verb. In core layer serialisation,

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3 Note that a number of the features which are used by linguists working in various Oceanic languages to determine constituent boundaries and the syntactic analysis of verb sequences (e.g. Early 1993; Crowley 2002) are not available in Tetun Dili. In particular:

- a. Tetun Dili lacks participant marking and compulsory or cliticised tense-aspect-mood marking on verbs.
- b. Discontinuous negatives are used in some languages to distinguish between nuclear serialisation, in which the two verbs together occur between the two terms that express the negation, and core layer serialisation, in which only one of the verbs occur in this position (e.g. Early 1993:72). Tetun Dili does have discontinuous negation in informal speech, expressed as *la...ida* (literally ‘not ... one’). However *la...ida* is almost always used to negate only a single verb or adjective, such as *Hau la baa ida* (1S not go one) ‘I didn’t/won’t go.’ The sizeable corpus on which this study is based contains no naturally occurring examples of discontinuous negation with verb sequences. Elicitation suggests that *la...ida* can bracket entire core-layer serialisation sequences (e.g. *Nia la baa pasiar ida* (3S not go stroll one) ‘She didn’t go strolling’), just as it can bracket verb-object pairs (e.g. *Nia la baa Timór ida* (3S not go Timor one) ‘He didn’t go to Timor’). So, even based on elicited data only, discontinuous negation provides no clues for distinguishing between nuclear and core layer serialisation.
- c. Nominalisation of verbs and adjectives is done without any change in form, that is, without any affixation being applied (e.g. *hau nia hanoin* (1S POS think/opinion) = ‘my opinion’). There is no nominalisation of verb phrases or clauses.

each verb can potentially introduce its own object or oblique arguments, and modifiers can occur between the two verbs.

The most common types of serialisation are presented briefly here. For further variants and examples, and for discussion of instrumental serialisation (which is somewhat prepositional), see Williams-van Klinken et al. (2002:92–100).

1. In same-subject serialisation, both verbs share a subject.
  - a. Motion-action serialisation consists of *baa* ‘go’ or *mai* ‘come’ followed by a verb. The usual interpretation is that the going or coming was done in order to do the activity of the second verb (e.g. *baa toba* ‘go and sleep’).<sup>4</sup> This serialisation pattern occurs at the core layer only.
  - b. Motion-direction serialisation consists of a verb (typically of motion) followed by a direction verb, which shares its subject.
    - In nuclear-layer serialisation, the second verb is one of a set of four direction terms: *tuun* ‘descend’, *sae* ‘ascend’, *tama* ‘enter’ or *sai* ‘exit’ (e.g. *halai sai* (run exit) ‘run outside’).
    - In core-layer serialisation, the second verb is *baa* ‘go’, *mai* ‘come’ (e.g. *lao mai* (walk come) ‘walk hither’), or one of a further set of transitive and intransitive verbs which in some way further specify the direction, path or position for a preceding verb of posture or motion (e.g. *halai hakat estrada* (run cross road) ‘run across the road’).
2. In switch-subject or causative serialisation, the notional subject of the second verb corresponds to the object or (if the initial verb is *fó* ‘give’) the recipient of the initial verb.
  - a. In halo serialisation, the initial verb is *halo* ‘make, do’.
    - This occurs in nuclear serialisation only, with the second element being either a verb (e.g. *halo monu governu* (make fall government) ‘bring down the government’ or — more commonly — an adjective (e.g. *halo foer rai* (make dirty ground) ‘dirty the floor’).<sup>5</sup>
    - In place of core layer serialisation, there is a periphrastic construction (e.g. *halo sira mate* (make 3P die) ‘make them die’); in this construction the two verbs can be independently negated, and the second predicate can be any verbal or adjectival predicate.

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4 Crowley (2002) does not consider superficially similar constructions in Paamese to be serialisation, but rather conjoined verbs. In Tetun Dili, however, these are like other serial verbs both syntactically and semantically (in that the second verb is a further development or goal of the first). It is also possible to front the object of the second verb to before the first verb, suggesting a relatively tight bond between the two. In Tetun Terik, both verbs take subject marking, reinforcing their verbal status, at least in that variety of Tetun. Non-conclusive counter-evidence to a serialisation analysis comes from Tetun Terik, whose speakers (unlike Tetun Dili ones) make frequent use of tail-head constructions. In these, only the second verb of these motion-action sequences is repeated, whereas both verbs are repeated for those other serial verb constructions for which data is available.

5 Note that this construction is far more common in Tetun Dili than Tetun Terik, where the concept is usually expressed with the prefix *ha-*. This prefix is lexically much more restricted in Tetun Dili.

b. In foo serialisation, the initial verb is *foo* ‘give’. There are a limited number of verbs which occur in second position.

- In nuclear-layer serialisation, the verb sequences are compound-like in that they are standardised and lexically restricted; however they do not have the stress patterns of single words, and are considered to be two words by native speakers (e.g. *foo haan imi* (give eat 2S) ‘feed you’).
- In core-layer serialisation, the subject of the second verb corresponds to the recipient of *foo* ‘give’, as in (1). The recipient is introduced by either *ba* ‘to (not towards speaker)’ or *mai* ‘to (towards speaker)’, which appear to be prepositions synchronically, but are clearly historically derived from the deictic verbs *baa* ‘go’ and *mai* ‘come’ respectively.

(1) *Hau foo paun ba nia haan.*  
 1S give bread to 3S eat  
 ‘I gave her bread to eat (and she ate it).’

c. In result or direction serialisation, the first verb is not *halo* or *foo*; it appears that in this case it is the second verb that comes from a closed set. This set includes the various sub-sets of directional verbs noted in 1b above, as well as *mate* ‘die’.

- Nuclear-layer serialisation is exemplified by directional *duni sai nia* (chase exit 3S) ‘chase him out’ and result *sona mate nia* (stab die 3S) ‘stab him to death’).
- Core-layer serialisation is illustrated by directional *duni hau sai* (chase 1S exit) ‘chase me out’.

In each of these constructions, the second verb (or adjective) typically represents a result or achieved purpose of the initial verb. The verbs do not simply represent two unrelated consecutive actions. So, for instance, *Maria baa haan* (Maria go eat) strongly implies both that Maria went in order to eat, and that she did indeed get to eat.

Note that there are also some words which I analyse as verbs in serialisation for the Fehan dialect of Tetun Terik (van Klinken 1999), but which are grammaticalised into prepositions in Tetun Dili.<sup>6</sup> These include *ho* ‘accompany’ to introduce co-actors (the predicative function of *ho* having been taken over by the Portuguese loan *akompanya* in Dili), and *hosi* ‘from’. Instrument is fully serialised in Tetun Terik, but somewhat prepositional in Tetun Dili.

#### 4 ‘Ambient serialisation’

Crowley (1987:40, 49) proposes an extension of the concept of verb serialisation to include what he terms ‘ambient serialisation’. In this construction, the notional subject of the second verb does not correspond to any of the arguments of the first verb; instead, the verb describes the sub-event expressed by the first predicate.

When serial verb constructions are freed from the once-common requirement that the subject of the second verb correspond to an argument of the first, a far wider range of

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6 Such grammaticalisation is of course well recognised in the literature (e.g. Durie 1988).

constructions can be labelled as ‘verb serialisation’. In descriptions of various Austronesian languages, constructions analysed as serialisation include those used to express the following semantic relationships:<sup>7</sup>

1. tense-aspect (Early 1993:67; Crowley 2002)
2. manner (Crowley 1987:49); note that this is in the context of Oceanic languages, which tend to have very few underived adjectives.
3. comparatives (Bradshaw 1993:148)
4. epistemic marking (Donohue 1999:189)
5. quotes (Bradshaw 1993:148)
6. accompanitive and similative relations (Crowley 2002)
7. time and location (Bradshaw 1993:154–156)
8. numeral (Crowley 2002)

In Tetun Dili, too, multi-verb constructions are used for some meanings from the initial five categories in this list. However, I wish to show below that these constructions differ so much from the serial verbs illustrated above, that it is not helpful to consider them exponents of the same basic construction. Apart from the lack of a shared argument, each of these constructions in Tetun Dili has one or more of the following characteristics which exclude analysis as serial verbs.

1. There is the possibility of a phonological clause boundary before the second verb (for quotes).
2. The verbs can be independently marked for tense-aspect-mood (optional for aspectual *hotu*, inherent in the intensifier *atu-mate* ‘IRR-die’).
3. The verbs can be independently negated (optional for manner, *bele* ‘can’, inherent in the intensifier *la-halimar* ‘no-play’).
4. The open-class lexical item in the construction is not restricted to verbs or even adjectives (for aspectual *hela*, *bele* ‘can’). Where this word is an adjective, the adjective is not restricted to predicative function, but can be attributive or function as manner modifier (for the intensifier *liu*).
5. The second verb can either precede or follow the object of the initial verb, with no apparent difference in the degree of semantic binding between the two (for manner). Such behaviour is typical of modifiers. Within a serialisation analysis, such variability could be accounted for by saying that the pre-object position indicated nuclear-layer serialisation, while the post-object position indicated core-layer serialisation; in this case, however, one would expect some semantic correlate with the difference in construction.

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7 On a theoretical plane, Foley and Van Valin (1984:208ff.) consider that some of these are ‘operators’ at specified levels of the clause, rather than verbs in serialisation. These operators include aspect (nuclear), modality (core), tense (peripheral) and status (i.e. realis/irrealis) (peripheral). They make the same claim for intrinsic direction, by the way.



6. In some instances it is not clear whether one of the terms is synchronically a full verb, although it clearly has verbal origins (aspectual *hela* and *hotu*) or verb-like properties (*bele* ‘can’).

The following sections will present various non-serialised multi-verb constructions found in Tetun Dili, along with reasons for rejecting a serial verb analysis.

## 5 Aspect

### 5.1 Introduction

There are two verbs in Tetun Dili which are, in addition to functioning as sole verb in a clause, also used in combination with a preceding verb to specify aspect. These are *hela* ‘stay’ for continuous aspect, and *hotu* ‘be finished’ for completive aspect.

### 5.2 *hela* ‘CONTINUOUS’

As a sole verb, *hela* means ‘reside, stay (in a place), remain’.

- (2) *Hau hela iha Dare.*  
 1S stay LOC Dare  
 ‘I live in Dare.’

This notion of continuation is retained when it functions as a continuous aspect marker.<sup>8</sup> Like verbs in nuclear serialisation, aspectual *hela* normally immediately follows the initial verb, preceding any object noun phrase, as illustrated by (3).

- (3) *Kuandu hau too mai, nia halo hela kafé.*  
 when 1S arrive come 3S make CONT coffee  
 ‘When I arrived here, she was making coffee.’

However, unlike the second element in serial verb constructions, aspectual *hela* can occur following prepositions as in (4), prepositional phrases as in (5), and reciprocals as in (6), as well as adjectives, and multi-word ‘body-good’ expressions such as *oin diak* in (7).

- (4) *Asu nee iha hela meja okos.*  
 dog this LOC CONT table under  
 ‘The dog is under the table.’
- (5) ..., *tanba hau iha kotuk hela.*  
 because 1S LOC back CONT  
 ‘[When people came to the house, I didn’t see them], because I was out the back.’
- (6) *Sira diak malu hela.*  
 3P good RECIPROCAL CONT  
 ‘They get on well.’
- (7) ..., *sira oin diak hela dei.*  
 3P face good CONT JUST  
 ‘[No matter what happens], they stay good-looking.’

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8 This term is used following Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994), to include continuousness for both dynamic and stative predicates.

An additional problem for a serial verb analysis is that there is no clear evidence that *hela* is still a verb in this construction, although its diachronic roots as a verb are clear. Note that *hela* is not used aspectually in Tetun Terik (where subject-marking possibilities could otherwise help determine the verbal status of *hela*).

### 5.3 *hotu* ‘COMPLETIVE’

As a sole verb, *hotu* means ‘be finished’, as in (8). It is also a quantifier meaning ‘all’, and an adverb meaning ‘also’.

- (8) *Kongresu nee hotu.*  
 congress this finished  
 ‘The congress has finished.’

It is also used following a (usually intransitive) durative verb to signify completive aspect, as shown in (9).<sup>9</sup> Aspectual *hotu* is clearly a verb, in that it often takes its own aspectual marking, including auxiliary *seidauk* ‘not yet’ as in (10), perfective *tiha* as in (11), perfect *tiha ona*, and *lai* ‘FIRST’. (Note that *seidauk* can alternatively precede the first verb, as in (12)). In this ability to take aspectual marking, *hotu* is unlike serial verb constructions.

- (9) *Ita koalial hotu mak ida fali koalial.*  
 1PI speak finish FOCUS one in.turn speak  
 ‘It is only after we have finished speaking, that another in turn speaks.’
- (10) *Sira koalial seidauk hotu.*  
 3P speak not.yet finish  
 ‘They haven’t yet finished speaking.’
- (11) *Hau eskola hotu tiha.*  
 1S attend.school finish PRF  
 ‘I have finished my schooling.’
- (12) *Bainhira oan fatin ibun seidauk nak-loke hotu, ...*  
 when child place mouth not.yet open finish  
 ‘When the mouth of the womb has not yet finished opening  
 (or: ‘is not yet opened completely’), (don’t force the baby out).’

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9 Such development from a verb meaning ‘finish’ to a completive marker is common cross-linguistically (e.g. Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994:74, Lord 1993:229ff.).

In Tetun Terik, which has subject marking on verbs, *hotu* is similarly used aspectually. There it displays inconsistent behaviour in terms of subject marking, suggesting that in Tetun Terik, *hotu* (both predicative and aspectual) is in the process of grammaticalisation from verb to non-verb. Probable evidence for this process comes from the fact that, both as sole verb and as aspectual term, *hotu* takes regular subject marking in Mathijssen’s (1967) Bible stories, written in the dialect of northern Belu (West Timor) early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is however rarely inflected in the present-day Fehan dialect of southern Belu, where consultants accept it both with and without inflection.

Note that ‘start’ is indicated by the complement-taking verbs *hahuu* (from Tetun Terik) or *komesa* (from Portuguese), both meaning ‘start, begin’ (e.g. *komesa ona halo servisu* ‘start ANT do work’ = ‘have started working’).

## 6 Manner

Manner can be specified by a manner adverb (derived by reduplicating an adjective), or by one of a subset of adjectives.

As noted above, adjectives (which are a subclass of the superclass of verbals in Tetun Dili) do occur in one serial verb construction, namely in nuclear serialisation with *halo* ‘do make’ (e.g. *halo aat* ‘make bad’). Nevertheless there are several facts which make it clear that manner adjectives are modifiers, rather than verbs in serialisation.

Firstly, the manner modifier has the freedom of position typical of modifiers. It may either precede an object noun phrase as in (13), or follow it as in (14). It can also follow a prepositional phrase as in (15). Note that an adjectival modifier may be modified by an intensifier, such as *lós* ‘very’ in (14). In this case it must follow any object NP.

(13) *Nia defende Portugés makaas.*  
3S defend Portuguese strong  
‘He strongly defends Portuguese (language).’

(14) \**Nia defende makaas loos Portugés.*  
3S slap strong very Portuguese  
‘He defends Portuguese very strongly.’

(15) *Sira koalia ba hau aat liu.*  
3P speak to 3S bad more  
‘They spoke very badly to me.’

Secondly, the manner modifier may be negated by *la* ‘not’. The only common example of such negation is *la diak* (not good), which indicates inability rather than its literal translation of ‘not good/well’.

(16) ..., *dada iis la diak.*  
pull breath not good  
‘[Because he fell into the water], he could not breathe in.’

The manner adverb *di-diak* ‘carefully, thoroughly’ (reduplicated from *diak* ‘good, well’) can alternatively be introduced by the transitive verb *halo* ‘do, make’, as in (17), with no apparent difference in meaning. It follows any object NP. Data is insufficient to determine whether this construction can or should be analysed as serialisation.

(17) *Nia falun di-diak mate nee.*  
3S wrap RDP-good corpse this  
‘He wrapped the corpse carefully.’

## 7 Intensifiers and comparatives

Tetun Dili has a number of intensifiers which are based on verbs. One is the relatively informal *atu-mate* (literally ‘IRR die’), as in *matan dukur atu-mate* (eye close IRR die) ‘very sleepy’.<sup>10</sup> The fact that *atu-mate* carries (formally at least) its own irrealis mood marker prevents a serialisation analysis of this construction. A second verbal intensifier is the

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<sup>10</sup> Although this is usually written ‘*atu mate*’, the /u/ is not normally pronounced, leading to a pronunciation distinction between the intensifier in *tauk at-mate* ‘terrified’, and the complement in *tauk atu mate* ‘afraid to die’.

informal *la-halimar* (literally ‘not play/joke’), as in *laran moras la-halimar* (inside sick no-play) ‘very upset’. This is barred from a serialisation analysis since it is negated. Both these intensifiers more commonly modify adjectives and the partially-lexicalised ‘body-good’ expressions than verbs.<sup>11</sup>

A third intensifier which is based on a verb is *liu*, which as a transitive verb means ‘pass’. It is used as an intensifier, such as in (18), as well as in comparatives. In the latter case, the object of comparison can directly follow *liu* as in (19), or be introduced by *duké* (from Portuguese *do que*), as in (20). A superlative interpretation can be forced by emphasising that the description is uniquely applicable, such as by focusing the subject with *mak*, as illustrated in (21).

- (18) *Nia kiik liu.*  
3S small more  
‘He is very small.’ or: ‘He is smaller.’
- (19) *Ita nia ain tenki aas liu ita nia isin.*  
1PI POS leg must high more 1PI POS body  
‘(When resting during pregnancy:) One’s legs should be higher than one’s body.’
- (20) *Sira mak hatene liu duké foin-sae sira.*  
3P FOCUS know more than just-ascend PL  
‘They (elderly rural people) know (proverbs) more than the youth do.’
- (21) *Nia mak kík liu.*  
3S FOCUS small more  
‘He is the smallest.’

One reason for not analysing *liu* as a verb in serialisation is that it primarily occurs with adjectives as in (21). Furthermore, it can modify adjectives in non-predicative functions, including attributive modifiers within noun phrases as in (22), and adjectives functioning as manner modifiers as in (23). (Note that when *liu* does occur with verbs, it is more common in negative clauses (e.g. *la hatene liu* (not know more) ‘not know at all’) than in positive ones.)

- (22) ... *partidu nebee maka hetan persentajen boot liu* ...  
party REL FOCUS receive percentage big more  
‘... the (political) party that won the highest percentage (of votes) ...’
- (23) ... *bele konyese sira diak liu.*  
can know 3P good more  
‘... can know them better.’

## 8 Deontic modality

Tetun Dili has a number of auxiliaries of permission and obligation which precede the verb (or other predicate head). These are *bele* ‘can, may’, *lalika(n)* ‘must not, need not’, *keta* ‘PROHIBITIVE’, and *tenki* ‘must’. With the exception of the Portuguese loan *tenki*

<sup>11</sup> Neither of these expressions appear to occur in Tetun Terik, at least in the Fehan dialect of it. It is possible that they are calques on Malay *mau mati* ‘about to/want to die’ and *bukan main* ‘not play’.

‘must’, all can also occur without a verb if the context is understood (e.g. *Lalikan!* ‘Don’t (do that)!’).

Of these, *bele* is the most verb-like, in that it is the only auxiliary with the verbal characteristic of being negated by *la*. As with complement-taking verbs, and unlike verb serialisation, it is possible to negate either *bele* or the following verb independently, as illustrated by the two examples in (24).

- (24) *O la bele baa.*  
 2s not can go  
 ‘You cannot go.’ or: ‘You may not go.’
- O bele baa, bele la baa.*  
 2S can go, can not go  
 ‘You may go, or not go.’

A characteristic which *bele* shares with the complement-taking verb *hatene* ‘know, know how to’ is that, in informal speech, it is possible for negated *bele* to follow its ‘complement’ when the latter is short (usually a single verb). There is a difference in interpretation between the two orders, which is illustrated in (25).

- (25) *Hau la bele lao.*  
 1s not can walk  
 ‘I am not allowed to walk.’ or: ‘I am unable to walk.’
- Hau lao la bele.*  
 1s walk not can  
 ‘I cannot walk well.’

Nevertheless, there is evidence that *bele* is not fully verbal, in that it can (though rarely does) occur clause-initially, a position in which only existential *iha* and a very few other verbs are found.

- (26) *Bele ema mak book, bele nia mesak nak-duir.*  
 can person FOCUS move can 3S alone INTR-roll  
 ‘It could be that someone moved (the pencil); (or) it could be that it rolled by itself.’

Final evidence that *bele* is not serialised is that it can occur with non-verbal predicates, including adjectives and ‘body-good’ expressions. Furthermore, it can — like adverbs — either precede the ‘body-good’ expression as in (27), or occur within it, as per *isin manas* (body hot) ‘fevered’ in the elicited example (28). (For further details on body-good expressions, see Williams-van Klinken et al. (2002:56–58).

- (27) *Halo.nusaa mak inan bele isin diak nafatin?*  
 how FOCUS mother can body good continue  
 ‘How can mothers stay healthy?’
- (28) *Nia isin bele manas liu tan.*  
 3S body can hot more on.top  
 ‘She can (get) even more fevered.’

## 9 Quotes

The verb *dehan* ‘say’ may occur as the sole speaking verb in a clause, optionally followed by the common complementiser *katak* ‘that’.

- (29) *Barak moos dehan katak partidu nee radikál liu.*  
 many also say that party this radical very  
 ‘Many are also saying that this (political) party is very radical.’

Alternatively, *dehan* is one means of introducing direct quotes, as illustrated by (30). As in same-subject serial verb constructions, the notional subject of *dehan* is the same as that of the preceding verb. Polarity, time reference and aspect are also shared, being specified (if at all) for the initial verb. This is a natural consequence of the fact that *dehan* repeats part of the semantic content of the preceding verb (namely the ‘saying’ component). This is unlike serial verb constructions, in which the second verb presents a different aspect of the situation to the first verb.

- (30) *Hatete ba nia dehan ‘Hein lai!’*  
 tell to 3S say wait FIRST  
 (Advice to a child who called her mother to the telephone:)  
 ‘Tell him, “Wait a sec!”’

A further difference from serial verb constructions is that pause prior to *dehan* is readily possible, and the initial verb of speaking can be followed by its own manner and addressee phrases.

- (31) *Maibee Jesus koalia makaas ba espíritu aat nee, dehan, ‘Nonók!’*  
 but Jesus speak strong to spirit bad this say quiet  
 ‘But Jesus spoke sternly to the evil spirit, saying, “Be quiet!”’

The two verbs are thus best analysed as belonging to separate clauses, which are related neither by subordination of the second clause, nor by coordination of equal clauses (since the second cannot specify subject, tense-aspect-mood, or negation). This relationship between the clauses is termed ‘cosubordination’ by Van Valin (1993:106).

## 10 Conclusion

This article questions the usefulness for Tetun Dili of extending the concept of verb serialisation to include constructions in which the two verbs do not share an argument. It shows that, when two verbs within a clause do not share an argument, the construction additionally differs from prototypical serial verb constructions both in the semantic relationship between the verbs and in the syntactic constraints on the construction.

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# 6 *Verb serialisation in Tolaki*

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DAVID MEAD and SCOTT YOUNGMAN

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Tolaki, a Western Malayo-Polynesian language spoken in south-eastern Sulawesi, has two distinct constructions in which verbs can be serialised. Following van Staden and Reesink (this volume), these can be characterised as dependent serialisation, illustrated in example (1), and complex verb serialisation, illustrated in example (2).

- (1) *Lako-ro-to leu me-reurehu i hori-no o hada ...*  
go-3PL.GEN-PERF come <M>:INTR-sit at side-3SG.GEN CN monkey  
'Then they came and sat at the monkey's side ...'
- (2) ... *a-i sosongga me'ambo-'i.*  
and-2PL.NOM measure good-3SG.ABS  
'... and you measure it well.'

This paper aims to give a full description of these two constructions in Tolaki, particularly as detailed descriptions of verb serialisation are largely lacking for Sulawesi languages.<sup>2</sup> As described in §3, in Tolaki the verbs in a dependent serial construction must all have the same subject. This subject is indexed pronominally only once, on the first verb. The main content verb appears last in the serial construction, and verbs preceding it may be drawn from four different subclasses of intransitives. As with verb serialisation in general, Tolaki dependent serial constructions provide a rich context for verbs to grammaticalise into other parts of speech. Consequently a number of these preceding verbs have developed grammaticalised functions which are now distinct from their meanings when used as independent verbs.

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1 Abbreviations used are: 1, 2, 3 - first, second, third person; ABS - absolutive; APASS - antipassive; CERT - certainty; CN - common nun marker; COLL - collective; DAT - dative; DIM diminutive; EMPH -emphasis; FUT - future; GEN - genitive; IMPERF - imperfective; IMPV - imperative; INTR - intransitive; k.o. - kind of; LG - nasal ligature; <M> - *-um-* or its nasal replacement allomorph; NEG - negative; NOM - nominative; OBJ - object; PASS - passitve; PERF - perfective; PL - plural; PLN - plural inclusive; PLX - plural exclusive.

2 Many Sulawesi languages are known to have serialised verb constructions. At present, however, adequate descriptions are limited to *Tukang Besi* (Donohue 1999:181ff.) and *Pendau* (Quick 2003).

In complex verb serialisation, described in §4, two verbs occur immediately adjacent to each other and share a set of clausal arguments, with the overall transitivity of the construction determined by the head (initial) verb. Here ambient serialisation, rather than same subject serialisation, is the rule. The analysis of complex verb serialisation in Tolaki is complicated by the fact that the second verb can be negated. Indeed once it is negated, it can even appear with its own clausal argument.

Tolaki serial verb constructions are monoclausal, and are clearly distinct from juxtaposed clauses, which are biclausal. Nonetheless, between these two levels in Tolaki we find yet another construction. Following a suggestion by Quick (2003), we call this other construction ‘compressed clauses’. As argued in §5, compressed clauses occupy a grammatical position midway between clause juxtaposition and dependent serialisation: while distinct from either, nonetheless they share similarities with both. Together these four construction types — clause juxtaposition, clause compression, dependent serialisation and complex verb serialisation — form a cline from least to tightest integration of events:

EVENTS LEAST INTEGRATED	Clause juxtaposition (§5)
	Clause compression (§5)
	Dependent serialisation (§3)
EVENTS MOST INTEGRATED	Complex verb serialisation (§4)

Before proceeding to the main topics of this paper, in §2 we present a brief description of the Tolaki agreement marking system.

## 2 Grammatical preliminaries: the Tolaki fluid S-system

In Tolaki independent clauses, subjects and objects are usually indexed pronominally within the clause. Transitive subjects are indexed with one pronoun set, and transitive objects with another set. By contrast, an intransitive subject can be indexed using either set, or even indexed using a genitive pronoun.

When a clause contains a single transitive verb, the transitive subject (A) is indexed with a nominative pronoun preceding the verb, while the transitive object (O) is indexed with an absolutive pronoun following the verb, whether or not the subject or object is also expressed overtly as a noun phrase elsewhere in the clause.

- (3) *U-wutiwuti-'aku!*  
2SG.NOM-deceive-1SG.ABS  
‘You deceived me!’
- (4) *O wula no-kaa-'iro ana-'ako-no.*  
CN moon 3SG.NOM-eat-3PL.ABS child-PL-3SG.GEN  
‘The moon ate her children.’

Usually nominative pronouns act as proclitics, attaching to the verb, but are attracted forward as enclitics to certain clause initial, single syllable relators, such as the subsequent marker *a* ‘and, so that’ as in example (5) and the concessive marker *ke* ‘if’ as in example (6).

- (5) ... *a-no wohiki-'i ana-ndo.*  
and-3SG.NOM wash-3SG.ABS child-1PLN.GEN  
‘... and he washed our child.’

- (6) *Ke-u podea-'i ...*  
 if-2SG.NOM hear-3SG.ABS  
 'If you hear it ...'

Apart from transitive verbs, all other basic verb types — passive, antipassive, and the various intransitive derivations<sup>3</sup> — allow only one core argument to be indexed on the verb. This single argument (S) can be indexed with either pronoun set. Examples (7) and (8) illustrate the intransitive subject indexed with a nominative pronoun; example (9) illustrates the intransitive subject indexed with an absolutive pronoun. The morpheme gloss <M> as seen in example (9), is discussed below in §3.

- (7) *I-pe-wiso-to ona i une baki landaka!*  
 2PL.NOM-INTR-enter-COMP EMPH at inside basket treading.platform  
 'You get in the sago filter basket!'
- (8) ... *a-ro lako.*  
 and-3PL.NOM go  
 '... and they left.'
- (9) *Me-rapu-'aku-to.*  
 <M>:INTR-marry-1SG.ABS-PERF  
 'I am already married.'

There is one additional wrinkle to the Tolaki fluid-S system. In nominalised clauses, S arguments are indexed with genitive pronouns. Example (10) illustrates such a nominalised clause, with its subject indexed with the first person singular genitive pronoun *-nggu*. The verb of this example could more literally be translated as a gerund: 'My ascending to second grade ...'.

- (10) *Pe-eka-nggu ine kalasi o ruo ...*  
 INTR-ascend-1SG.GEN in class CN two  
 'When I had entered second grade ...'

Through a process which has been discussed elsewhere (Mead 2002), genitive indexing of intransitive subjects has also made its way into main clauses — particularly clauses which express important events on the narrative mainline. In such cases the genitive pronoun is followed by the perfective aspect marker *-to*. Example (11) illustrates such a mainline clause with genitive indexing of its subject (*lakoroto medandi ...*), as well as a non-mainline, nominalised clause in temporal function (*mokotuno sambepero*).<sup>4</sup>

- (11) *Mokotu-no sambepo-ro, lako-ro-to me-dandi*  
 broken-3SG.GEN discussion-3PL.GEN go-3SG.GEN-PERF <M>:INTR-promise

3 Among non-transitive verbs, we distinguish in the gloss line antipassive verbs (marked by *poN-*, glossed as APASS), passive verbs (marked by the infix *-in-*, glossed as PASS), and active intransitive verbs marked by *pe-* (glossed as INTR, though often expressing middle semantics). The most common prefixes for deriving non-active intransitive verbs in Tolaki are the stative prefixes *mo-* and *me-*, *pe-* for some verbs of motion and production, and the non-agentive prefix *te-*. In this paper we have chosen to treat non-active intransitive derivations as units, giving a single gloss to the derived stem as a whole.

4 While nominative and genitive pronouns are homophonous in the third person — singular *no*, plural *ro* — they are distinguished in that nominative pronouns always precede the verb, while genitive pronouns invariably follow.

*nggo oleo-no pe-binda-ro.*  
 FUT day-3SG.GEN INTR-departure-3PL.GEN  
 ‘Their discussion having ended, then they promised each other the future day  
 of their departure.’

From this brief overview of subject indexing, the reader need only note that a non-transitive verb can have its subject indexed in three different ways: with a nominative, an absolutive, or a genitive pronoun. While the conditions which determine the choice of pronoun in the Tolaki fluid-S system are interesting (Mead 1998:280ff., 2001), these details are mostly irrelevant to the present discussion concerning verb serialisation.

Finally, it is possible for an independent clause to have no indexing of its subject, but such omission is never required. The most common case of zero indexing is when ‘you’ is left implicit in an imperative clause, as in example (12).

(12) *O'olu-'aku-to-kaa!*  
 wait-1SG.ABS-PERF-just  
 ‘Just wait for me!’

It is also possible for subject indexing to be omitted from independent clauses in which the subject appears overtly as a noun phrase or independent pronoun, but such omission is relatively infrequent.

(13) *Kare i bunggu-no me'ita-'asi te'esi.*  
 leg at back-3SG.GEN tall-DIM a.bit  
 ‘Its back legs are a little bit tall.’ (description of the *anoa* dwarf buffalo)

For the most part, lack of subject indexing usually indicates a clause’s dependent, non-finite status, such as with the complement clause indicated by bracketing in example (14).

(14) *Maa ehe-'i-to oleo*  
 but desire-3SG.ABS-PERF sun  
 [ *nggo k[um]aa-'iro ana-'ako-no* ].  
 FUT <M>:eat-3PL.ABS child-PL-3SG.GEN  
 ‘But the sun wanted to eat her children.’

### 3 Dependent serialisation

Examples (15) through (18) illustrate dependent serialisation in Tolaki, with serialised verbs appearing in bold. Whilst examples here are drawn from narrative texts, dependent serialisation is ubiquitous in all genres of Tolaki discourse.

(15) *Saa ari-no-ikaa ona oleo k[um]aa-'iro ana-'ako-no ...*  
 when finish-3SG.GEN-only EMPH sun <M>:eat-3PL.ABS child-PL-3SG.GEN  
 ‘When the sun had finished eating her children ...’

(16) *Lako-no-to lumaa lako um-ale-'iro banggona-no.*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF fly go <M>-take-3PL.ABS companion-3SG.GEN  
 ‘Then he flew off and fetched his companions.’

(17) *A-no amba Anawaingguluri ina'u me-titiro*  
 and-3SG.NOM then Anawaingguluri descend <M>:INTR-look.down

*i pu'u nohu ...*

at base mortar

‘At that point Anawaingguluri went down and peered down at the base of the mortar ...’

- (18) *Taa ku-onggo-ki leu me-paramesi.*  
 NEG 1SG.NOM-FUT-CERT come <M>:INTR-ask.permission  
 ‘I will certainly not come and ask permission.’

The clauses in (15) through (18) exemplify important features of dependent serialisation in Tolaki. Stated generally:

- (a) The verbs in a dependent serialisation construction are related by coreference, namely all the verbs have (or are construed as having) the same subject.
- (b) This subject is indexed only once per dependent serial construction. The locus of subject indexing is the first verb of the series.
- (c) The head verb appears last in the serial construction. For transitive constructions, the head verb will be the transitive verb and therefore also the locus of object indexing.
- (d) All non-initial verbs are non-finite. In Tolaki, a non-finite verb can be defined as a verb without subject indexing. In many cases, the non-finite status of a subsequent verb is additionally<sup>5</sup> marked by the infix *-um-*, which has a nasal replacement allomorph when the stem begins with a *p*-initial prefix (in either case, glossed abstractly as <M>). From examples (15) through (18) above, note the following:

primary form	form with <M>	
<i>kaa'iro</i>	<i>kumaa'iro</i>	‘eat them’
<i>ale'iro</i>	<i>umale'iro</i>	‘take them’
<i>petitiro</i>	<i>metitiro</i>	‘look downward’
<i>peparamesi</i>	<i>meparamesi</i>	‘ask permission’

While the reader will note many subsequent verbs marked with *-um-* or its nasal replacement allomorph, there are a number of circumstances which prohibit its occurrence. These range from the phonological (it does not occur with underived stems beginning with a bilabial consonant), to the morphological (it never co-occurs with a collective subject prefix), to the syntactic (it does not occur with stative stems, nor with many intransitive verbs of motion)<sup>6</sup> to the pragmatic (it is omitted from verbs used imperatively).<sup>7</sup>

5 The marker *-um-* (<M>) also occurs with finite verbs, provided they are marked for their subject with an absolutive pronoun; see example (9) in the main text. Therefore it would be incorrect to regard *-um-* in and of itself to be a non-finite marker. It is simply the case that many non-finite verbs also occur with *-um-*.

6 In this paper, *petuha* ‘descend’, *pe'eka* ‘ascend’, *pewiso* ‘enter’, *pe'ula* ‘get on, ride’ and *pewangu* ‘get up’ are examples of intransitive verbs of motion which never occur with <M> in any context.

7 Additionally, an homophonous *-um-* morpheme appears in certain intransitive verbs which inherently involve repetitive activity, such as *lumaa* ‘fly’ and *lumelepa* ‘creep’. For purposes of glossing in this paper, we treat stems like *lumaa* and *lumelepa* as monomorphemic.

- (e) No conjunctions occur within the span of a dependent serial construction.<sup>8</sup>
- (f) The verbs of a dependent serial construction, however, may be interrupted by a noun, noun phrase, or independent pronoun.
- (g) The verbs of a dependent serial construction cannot be separately negated. Negation is marked at the beginning of the clause, and has scope over all the verbs in the serial construction. Tolaki has five clausal negators: the standard negator *taa*, the emphatic negator *ki'oki*, the prohibitive marker *iamo*, and two markers which combine negation with aspect, *to'oto* 'not any more' and *po'opo* 'not yet'.
- (h) The aspectual markers *-to* 'perfective' and *-po* 'incompletive', and the clitics *-ki* 'certainly', *-kaa* 'just', and *-ikaa* 'only' occur at most only once per dependent serial construction, and have scope over the entire serial construction. These markers almost invariably follow the first verb (or in certain cases precede it).<sup>9</sup>
- (i) The verbs of a dependent serial construction occur within the span of a single intonation contour; there is no pause between the verbs of a serial construction. (The issue of intonational pause with respect to dependent serialisation is discussed further in §5.)

In addition to the formal criteria listed in (a) through (i), there is another feature which indicates that dependent serial constructions are a coherent unit. In Tolaki, the constituent verbs occur in a characteristic relative order. As noted above, the head verb occurs last in the construction. Verbs which precede the head verb may be divided into four classes of intransitive verbs, which occur in the following relative order:

± temporal relator verb ± aspectual verb ± motion verb ± *alee, tekono* + head verb

These four classes of preceding verbs are the subject of §3.1 through §3.4. We begin with a brief overview of motion verbs. In light of cross-linguistic research on verb serialisation, the appearance of motion verbs in Tolaki dependent serial constructions is unsurprising. The other classes of verbs are discussed in turn, beginning with verbs which indicate a temporal relationship, then aspectual verbs, and finally the two verbs *tekono* and *alee*, literally 'hit' and 'take it'.

8 Conjunctions in fact initiate new clauses which require the subject to be indexed again, as in the following example of two dependent serialisation constructions joined by the conjunction *a*. Subject indexing is highlighted.

*Lako-no-to*        *hae*    *i*    *Oheo* *pe-tuha*,        *a-no*        *ene*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF    again    PN    Oheo    INTR-descend    and-3SG.NOM    go.over

*momone*        *i*    *laa*    *inea*.  
 <M>:INTR-climb    at    trunk    areca.palm.

'Then Oheo again descended, and he went over and climbed on the trunk of an areca palm.'

9 *-to*, *-po*, *-ki*, and *-ikaa* precede the verb when cliticised to the combination of subsequent marker *a* plus nominative pronoun.

*a-ku-to lako*        /and-1SG.NOM-PERF go/'I will go now; I'm on the verge of going'  
*a-ku-po lako*        /and-1SG.NOM-IMPERF go/'I will go later'  
*a-ku-ki lako*        /and-1SG.NOM-CERT go/'I will certainly go'  
*a-ku-ikaa lako*        /and-1SG.NOM-only go/'I will indeed go; I'm still going'

*-to*, *-po* and *-ki* may also be said to precede the verb in their reduplicated forms as the negative markers *to'oto*, *po'opo*, and *ki'oki*, as in examples (37) and (38).

### 3.1 Motion verbs

Motion verbs are very common in dependent serial constructions in Tolaki narrative texts. The discourse function of a motion verb within the construction is to *transition* the subject from a previous location or position to a new location or position where the event of the head verb occurs. Compare examples (19) through (22), in which motion verbs have been highlighted. As far as we know, there are no verbs which are restricted to the motion verb slot; all motion verbs that can precede a content verb in a serialisation construction can also be used independently as the sole verb of a clause.

- (19) *Ene-i-to*                      *terumba*.  
go.over-3SG.ABS-PERF fall  
'He went right over and collapsed.'
- (20) *Ku-onggo-to*              *ona*    ***lako***    *mo-nahu*              *dowo*.  
1SG.NOM-FUT-PERF EMPH go <M>:APASS-cook by.oneself  
'I'm going to go cook by myself.'
- (21) *Iamo-kaa*              ***to-leu***                      *me-kondo*              *mbena*.  
NEG.IMPV-just 3PL.NOM-come <M>:INTR-look simply  
'We must just not come and only watch.'
- (22) *Laulau-no-to-kaa*                                      *harimau*    ***lulaa***    *k[um]opu-'i*.  
immediately-3SG.GEN-PERF-just tiger fly <M>:embrace-3SG.ABS  
'Immediately the tiger flew out and embraced him.'

For Tolaki speakers, certain change-of-posture verbs can also serve as motion verbs.

- (23) *Lako-no-to*              ***me-rumbahako***              *Alasolo*    *motuuturu ...*  
go-3SG.GEN-PERF <M>:INTR-cast.down Alasolo <M>:lie.about  
'Then Alasolo threw himself down and rested ...'
- (24) ... *a-no*                      ***pewangu***    *me-rehu'ako*.  
and-3SG.NOM wake.up <M>:INTR-sit.up  
'... then he awoke and sat up.'

In example (24) *pewangu* is a verb with middle semantics, derived from the transitive base *wangu* 'raise, build'. It thus literally means 'raise oneself', but here the transition is primarily metaphorical: from a state of sleep to a state of being awake (whence the subject can then sit up). Compare also example (25). Here the act of 'being released' need not involve any physical motion on the subjects' part, but nevertheless it serves to metaphorically transition them from a state of imprisonment to a state of freedom.

- (25) ... *a-ro*                      *p[in]e-binda*              *mbe-lako*.  
and-3PL.NOM PASS:COLL-release COLL-go  
'... then together they were released (from prison) and left.'

The verb *lako* deserves special consideration. It occurs commonly as a content or motion verb in the meaning 'go', as in examples (8) and (25). However, in the specific context where *lako* is followed by a genitive subject pronoun and the perfective aspect marker *-to*, it is in the process of becoming grammaticalised as a conjunction, roughly

translatable as English ‘then’.<sup>10</sup> The bleaching of its original meaning is particularly evident when it is followed by a second occurrence of the verb *lako* as in examples (26) and (27).

(26) ... *lako-no-to*      *lako mo-salei*.  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF go <M>:APASS-cut  
 ‘... then he went and cleared brush.’

(27) *Lako-nggu-to*      *lako pe'eka*.  
 go-1SG.GEN-PERF go ascend  
 ‘Then I went and ascended (into the house).’

Despite its changed semantics, even in this context *lako* nevertheless retains its heritage as a motion verb. It still attracts subject indexing for the dependent serial construction. Furthermore the distribution of *lako*+GEN.PRN+*to* matches that of other motion verbs in that it is never followed by any of the aspectual verbs (§3.3).

### 3.2 Temporal relator verbs

Only five verbs are known to precede aspectual verbs in dependent serial constructions. Four of these indicate a certain elapse of time, whether brief or long. These are: *sabutu* ‘exactly’, *menggau* ‘long (time)’, *tekoni* ‘suddenly’ and *laulau* ‘immediately’. A fifth verb, *amba* ‘at that point, then, only then’ retains some sense of a temporal relator, but is better described as a logical connector.<sup>11</sup> In addition, *amba* occurs only in the collocation *a*+NOM.PRN *amba* ..., which further distinguishes it from the other four verbs. While all five are atypical verbs according to their meanings, nonetheless they can be considered verbs from a morphosyntactic perspective in that they are the locus of subject indexing in their respective clauses.

Whenever one of these verbs occurs, it is necessarily the first verb in the dependent serial construction and thus is indexed pronominally for subject (which, formally, is always the subject of the final verb). The initial position of these verbs is to be explained by the fact that they serve to link the clause in which they occur to the surrounding discourse. That is to say, the elapse of time (or the logical relationship in the case of *amba*) is relative to two events. One of the events is that which is expressed in the clause containing the temporal relator verb. The other event may be left implicit, but is usually an event expressed in some other clause, typically the clause which immediately follows (in the case of *sabutu*) or which immediately precedes (in the case of the other four verbs). For example:

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10 As with other verbs that are followed by both a genitive pronoun and the perfective marker *to*, *lako*+GEN.PRN+*to* has a discourse function of highlighting the events expressed in its clause. Some Tolaki story tellers use *lako*+GEN.PRN+*to* parsimoniously with great effect. Others use *lako*+GEN.PRN+*to* rather freely, in which case its ability to highlight events is correspondingly diminished. Nevertheless, events in clauses introduced by *lako*+GEN+*to* are to be placed on the narrative mainline.

11 As the English gloss ‘only then’ somewhat captures, *amba* indicates that a preceding event is the condition, requirement or instigation for the event which follows. Since temporal connectors are known to develop diachronically into logical connectors (Traugott and König 1991, *inter alia*), the appearance of a logical connector such as *amba* in this group is not unexpected.



- (28) *Maa imbee sabutu-no-ki terabu puda no,*  
 but but exactly-3SG.GEN-CERT extracted tail 3SG.NOM  
*a-no pe-tamuarako i ana ndumungge me-taatada ...*  
 and-3SG.NOM INTR-jump at child LG:prop <M>:INTR-perch  
 ‘But no sooner had her tail feather been pulled out, than she jumped up to the ceiling joist and perched ...’
- (29) *Ku-pehawa-'iro-to wali-nggu meo'ana-ro,*  
 1SG.NOM-think-3PL.ABS-PERF spouse-1SG.GEN <M>:in.parent.child.relation-3PL.GEN  
*a-ku amba me-totoa i laika laa'a-ro mo'ia ...*  
 and-1SG.NOM then <M>:INTR-look at house place-3PL.GEN <M>:live  
 ‘I remembered my wife and children, and at that point I looked at the house where they were staying ...’ (recounting events during a wind storm)
- (30) *Saa no-tetoari-'i no-Tauke Thai,*  
 when 3SG.NOM-happen.to.see-3SG.ABS 3SG.NOM-Tauke Thai  
*laulau-no-kaa me-uku'uku patabe-'i.*  
 immediately-3SG.GEN-just <M>:INTR-bow honour-3SG.ABS  
 ‘When he saw that it was Tauke Thai, immediately he bowed and honoured him.’

In some cases we can trace these verbs back to their lexical roots. Tolaki *tekoni* as a main verb means ‘startled’. Tolaki *sabutu* as a main verb means ‘exact’ (e.g. describing the way clothing fits a person’s body). Tolaki *laulau* no longer occurs as a main verb, but comparison with related languages suggests it originally meant ‘continue on, go without stopping’.<sup>12</sup> For that matter, Tolaki *laulau* can also occur following the motion verb in a dependent serial construction. Here it has no essential difference in function, except that the events which *laulau* relates in time are local to the serial verb construction itself rather than relating externally to events in another clause. Example (31) predicates that no intervening activity took place between the subject’s arrival and his beginning to plait.

- (31) ... *a-no leu laulau mo-ana baki landaka.*  
 and-3SG.NOM come immediately <M>:APASS-plait basket treading.platform  
 ‘... and he came and immediately plaited a sago filter basket.’

In example (31) *laulau* might in fact still be considered a verb of motion ‘go directly’ (to the place of plaiting). But the heavy basket in example (32) presumably does not move (at this point in the story there are four people inside); here any sense of motion through space has certainly been bleached away, leaving only the notion of immediate sequencing in time.

12 Compare Kulisusu *lausako* ‘go and do something directly, without any intervening activity’, and Wolio (Anceaux 1987:s.v.) *laulusaka* ‘straight on, directly, immediately’, *laulau* ‘go on, continue, incessant’. The sense of ‘without stopping, continuously’ is also found back in Tolaki *laulau* when it occurs as an adjunct (see §3), compare:

*A-u pe-pambai laulau-ki sambe dunggu i sikola.*  
 and-2SG.NOM INTR-traverse.edge continuously-CERT until arrive at school  
 ‘Continue along the edge (of the road) until you arrive at the school.’

- (32) *Saa tepewiso-no-ikaa, laulau-no-to-kaa*  
 when entered-3SG.GEN-only immediately-3SG.GEN-PERF-just  
*k[in]aputi baki landaka nggiro'o.*  
 PASS:tie basket treading.platform that  
 ‘When she had gotten in, immediately the sago filter basket was tied.’  
 (\*‘When she had gotten in, the sago filter basket went directly and got tied’)

Despite their change in function (from lexical verb to discourse marker), the five morphemes in this category are still treated morphosyntactically as verbs — that is, they remain the locus of subject indexing in their clause.

To see where this process of grammaticalisation may end up, compare the following data from Mori Bawah, a language closely related to Tolaki. In (33a), the verb *inso*, probably historically meaning ‘moved, displaced’, functions as a temporal conjunction but nevertheless is the locus of subject indexing for its clause. In (33b), however, *insono* (from *inso* plus frozen third person singular genitive suffix *no*) has developed into a full conjunction, with *kodekodei* now treated as the initial verb, attracting subject indexing.

- (33) a. *Inso-mu kodekodei ...*                      b. *Insono u-kodekodei ...*  
 since-2SG.GEN small                                      since 2SG.NOM-small  
 ‘Since the time you were small ...’                      ‘Since the time you were small ...’

According to Esser (1927:102), both expressions were equally acceptable to Mori Bawah speakers of his day. In Tolaki, however, the connector is treated conservatively and remains, as far as the morphosyntax is concerned, squarely a verb. Expressions corresponding to (33b) are not (yet) possible in Tolaki.

### 3.3 Aspectual verbs

The label ‘aspectual verb’ is used as a cover term for five Tolaki verbs which can occur in a dependent serial construction and which are used to express notions of tense and aspect. As with the temporal relator verbs just described, they are treated morphosyntactically as verbs, and thus, when occurring initially in the series, become the locus of pronominal subject indexing for the clause. While these verbs have auxiliary-like meanings, we have avoided the label ‘auxiliary verb’ (and likewise ‘verb phrase’) since there is no indication that aspectual verbs are grammatically subordinate. They are of equal status to the other classes of verbs which occur in Tolaki dependent serial constructions.

These five verbs are: *laa* ‘be’, often expressing a progressive action, *onggo* ‘intend, future’ (allomorph *nggo* when not indexed for subject), *hori* ‘be near, beside’ (always in negative contexts to express ‘not near, not yet, never before’), *ari* ‘finish, over, after’, and *ndee* ‘habitually’ (or after a negative, ‘ever’). Any of these verbs may occur initially in the construction, and thus be indexed for subject.

- (34) *Laa-'i-to lako tekura, ...*  
 be-3SG.ABS-PERF go distressed  
 ‘While he was going around distressed ...’
- (35) *Ku-onggo-ki ndee k[um]abusa-'i-keito*  
 1SG.NOM-FUT-CERT habitually <M>:wash.anus-3SG.ABS-1PLN.DAT

*ana-ndo ...*

child-1PLN.GEN

‘I will certainly habitually wash our child’s bottom for us ...’

- (36) *Taa hori-ro si'eusa ...*  
 NEG near-3PL.GEN exchange  
 ‘Before they exchanged with each other ...’
- (37) *Tonga oleo-'i-to, po'opo ki-hori mo-sua*  
 middle day-3SG.ABS-PERF not.yet 1PLN.NOM-near <M>:APASS-get  
*o ue.*  
 CN rattan  
 ‘It was already the middle of the day, and we hadn’t yet found any rattan.’
- (38) *Ari-'aku-to mong-gaa.*  
 finish-1SG.ABS-PERF <M>:APASS-eat  
 ‘I’ve already eaten.’
- (39) ... *a-no ndee modea-'iro mbe-maroa i aahua-no.*  
 and-3SG.NOM habitually <M>:hear-3PL.ABS COLL-be.noisy at well-3SG.GEN  
 ‘... and he usually heard them all being noisy at his well.’

The verb *ari* is very much at home in head-tail linkages, where the preposed temporal clause containing *ari* has a back-referencing function.

- (40) ... *a-no leu laulau mo-'ana baki*  
 and-3SG.NOM come immediately <M>:APASS-plait basket  
*landaka. Saa ari-no mo-'ana baki*  
 treading.platform when finish-3SG.GEN <M>:APASS-plait basket  
*landaka, lako-no-to ...*  
 treading.platform go-3SG.GEN-PERF  
 ‘... and he came and right away plaited a sago filter basket. When he had finished plaiting the sago filter basket, then he ...’

Two aspectual verbs may occur in succession. One common pairing is *ndee* following any other aspectual verb, as in example (35). Another common pairing is *laa* plus *nggo*, used to express ‘be in the process of going to’, that is, an immediate future.

- (41) ... *a-no laa nggo mate.*  
 and-3SG.NOM be FUT die  
 ‘... and it (the goat) was very close to dying.’

### 3.4 *tekeno* and *alee*

There are at least two verbs which can intervene between a verb of motion and the head verb in a Tolaki dependent serial construction.<sup>13</sup> These verbs and their literal meanings are

13 We exclude verbs such as *metarambu'u* ‘begin’, *sadia* ‘be ready, prepare’, *moburu* ‘gather one’s strength’ and *umara'ara'i* ‘attempt it, try it’ from this class of verbs, on the provisional analysis that these verbs take same-subject complement clauses. Nonetheless, their distribution resembles that of *tekeno* and *alee*. Compare:

*tekono* ‘hit’ and *alee* ‘take it’, but in this position in a serial verb construction both have become grammaticalised.

As a main verb *tekono* means ‘hit, make contact’ (intransitive), particularly of inanimate actants such as water, wind, or an earthquake. The location where the hitting takes place may be understood from context, or (as in example (42)) expressed as a prepositional phrase complement.

- (42) *No-leu tekono i huu-no sikola.*  
 3SG.NOM-come hit at corner-3SG.GEN school  
 ‘It (the wind) came and hit upon the corner of the school.’

Within Tolaki dependent serialisation constructions, *tekono* can also occur immediately preceding the head verb. In this position it does not take a prepositional phrase complement, and has a grammaticalised meaning of ‘rush into, set about doing (the activity described by the head verb)’, similar to the English idiom ‘he dove into action’. Using *tekono* can enliven a story at peak moments, implying that the subject went into action with full effort in a very short amount of time.

- (43) *A-no amba hae i Oheo ene tekono momone ...*  
 and-3SG.NOM then again PN Oheo go.over rush <M>:climb  
 ‘Then again Oheo went over and set about climbing ...’
- (44) *Laulau-no-ikaa tekono me-kopuri-'i ama-no.*  
 immediately-3SG.GEN-only rush <M>-embrace-3SG.ABS father-3SG.GEN  
 ‘Immediately he rushed and embraced his father.’
- (45) *Lako-no-to i Oheo mbule laulau tekono sumopu ...*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF PN Oheo return immediately rush forge  
 ‘Then Oheo returned and immediately dove into forging (iron rings) ...’

The Tolaki root *alo* ‘get, take’ has the following transitive derivations with third singular objects (*ale* is an allomorph of the transitive base *alo*, and *-i* and *-e* are variants of the third singular absolutive pronoun clitic).

<u>primary form</u>	<u>form with &lt;M&gt;</u>	
<i>ale'i ~ alee</i>	<i>umale'i ~ umalee</i>	‘take it’

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*Ina'u-ndo petarambu'u me-ruru.*  
 descend-PERF begin <M>:INTR-collect  
 ‘Go down and start collecting!’

*Ni-lako-no-to itoo-no Alasolo moburu*  
 ??-go-3SG.GEN-PERF also-3SG.GEN Alasolo <M>:gather.strength

*lumoloia t[um]eteorahi-'i Konawe'eha.*  
 run PART:chase-3SG.ABS Konawe  
 ‘Then Lasolo himself gathered his strength to run and chase after Konawe.’

*Lako-no-to um-ara'ara-'i mo-wiso-kee*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF <M>-attempt-3SG.ABS <M>:APASS-enter-3s.DAT

*ringgi wulaa ine woroko-no.*  
 coin gold at throat-3SG.GEN  
 ‘Then he tried to put a gold coin into its throat.’

By contrast, Donohue (1999:191) considers the *Tukang Besi* verbs *hematuu* ‘begin’, *paraluu* ‘start’, *po'oli* ‘finish’ and *soba* ‘try’ and the verbs which follow them to constitute serial verb constructions.

As discussed above in §3, the *-um-* forms are used when the verb occurs non-initially in a dependent serialisation construction, as in example (46).

- (46) *Lako-no-to um-ale-'i nggiro'o o piso.*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF <M>-take-3SG.ABS that CN knife  
 ‘Then he took that knife.’

Against this background, compare now the use of *alee* in examples (47) and (48), where it has a grammaticalised meaning of ‘finally’.

- (47) ... *lako-no-to alee t[um]ema-'i ana-no.*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF finally <M>:carry-3SG.ABS child-3SG.GEN  
 ‘... then (finally) he picked up his child.’

- (48) *Lako-no-to itoo-no nggiro'o uewai alee*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF also-3SG.GEN that k.o.rattan finally  
*mokono-'iro nggiro'o sisi lawu, kuukuu tawa-no.*  
 <M>:hang-3PL.ABS that ring iron each.every leaf-3SG.GEN  
 ‘Then (finally) that rattan also put on the iron rings, one on each and every leaf.’

There are at least four reasons to analyse *alee* in this position as a fixed unit rather than as *ale* ‘take’ plus third person singular absolutive *-e*. First, even though it is non-initial in the serial verb constructions of both (47) and (48), it does not occur with the expected *-um-* morpheme. Second, the *-e* (and never the *-i*) allomorph of the third person singular absolutive enclitic has become obligatory with *alee* in this context, and occurs even when the object is plural (as in example (48)). Third, this frozen *-e* cannot now be the actual absolutive pronoun clitic because it is never on the final verb of the series — the required locus for object indexing in Tolaki dependent serialisation. Fourth, in this context *alee* has developed a particular, grammaticalised meaning. The loss of original meaning is especially evident when *alee* is directly followed by the verb *alo* ~ *ale* ‘take’ as in example (49).

- (49) *Lako-no-to alee um-ale-'i ...*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF finally <M>-take-3SG.ABS  
 ‘Then finally she took it (her bird costume) ...’

The meaning which *alee* adds to the clause in which it occurs is not always to be represented in the free translation, but is something akin to English ‘finally’, implying that this is the final action of a series of actions, and/or that other avenues for action have been exhausted or are not available. Compare the use of *alee* in example (51). The context preceding it has been abbreviated in (50) by giving only an English free translation.

- (50) Right after that, he went and cleared underbrush. After he had cleared the underbrush, he went and clearcut it. After he had clearcut it, he burned it. After he had burned it, he cleaned it (the field). After he had cleaned it up, he fenced it. After he had fenced it, he planted it with sugar cane.

- (51) *Saa ari-no mom-bopaho-kee o towu,*  
 when finish-3SG.GEN <M>:APASS-plant-3SG.DAT CN sugar.cane  
*lako-no-to alee s[um]aira-'i pombahora-no.*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF finally <M>:sickle-3SG.ABS garden-3SG.GEN  
 ‘When he had finished planting it with sugar cane, finally he weeded his garden.’

It is instructive to note that *alee* does not occur in any of the preceding sentences represented in (50), even though the actions of clearing underbrush, felling and burning trees, etc., all involve ‘taking up’ some kind of instrument with which these actions are performed. *Alee* is used in (51) because this sentence concludes the paragraph describing the steps of swidden agriculture. The sentence immediately following (51) in fact initiates a new paragraph, describing parrots that come and eat the sugar cane, and the main character’s response to their intrusion.

#### 4 Complex verb serialisation

Verbs in Tolaki can be followed by a close-knit modifier, or what we call here simply an adjunct. Adjuncts to verb heads are not restricted to a single word class; an adjunct can be a noun or noun phrase,<sup>14</sup> a derived numeral,<sup>15</sup> a verb or even a prepositional phrase. And as we discuss below in §4.2, even certain kinds of short clauses can fill the adjunct position. In cases where both the head and the following adjunct are verbs, the resulting head-plus-adjunct complex could be described in terms of complex verb serialisation.

In Tolaki complex verb serialisation, it is possible for the second verb (adjunct) to be a verb of motion as in the next example (complex verb serialisation in bold).

- (52) ... *a-no*                    ***ruru mbule-'i-to***.  
 and-3SG.NOM collect return-3SG.ABS-PERF  
 ‘... and he (must) collect it back’ (corn into the basket from which it came)

However, among basic Tolaki motion verbs neither *lako* ‘go’ nor *leu* ‘come’ occur as adjuncts.

The more usual case is for the second verb to be a stative, as in examples (53) and (54).

- (53) *U-angga*                    ***mohewu-'i-kona***.  
 2SG.NOM-value small-3SG.ABS-1SG.DAT  
 ‘You consider it (my things) to be unimportant (lit. small).’

- (54) ... *a-u*                    ***pe-pikiri mendaa-ki***.  
 and-2SG.NOM INTR-think long-CERT  
 ‘... and be sure you think long and hard.’

Example (55) illustrates the rare case of a transitive verb base as the second verb, compare *lalo* used as an independent verb in example (56).

- (55) *Mbe-lako lalo-komami-to*.  
 COLL-go pass.by-1PLX.ABS-PERF  
 ‘We went on (past a reference point).’

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14 Noun adjuncts to verb heads serve as incorporated nouns; see example (58) in the main text. Compare also: *mate nggae* /dead LG:hand/ ‘dead (paralysed) in the hand’ (incorporated location); *me-kai-kai nggae* /<M>:INTR-REDP-hook LG:hand/ ‘holding hands’ (incorporated object) and *ni-owai nggae-no manusia* /PASS-make LG:hand-3SG.GEN humankind/ ‘made by human hands’ (incorporated instrument).

15 Included here are numeral derivations in the *teo-* and *monggo-* series (*teo'aso* ‘in groups of one’, *teoruo* ‘in groups of two’, etc.; *monggo'aso* ‘once’, *monggoruo* ‘two times’, etc.), compare:

*I-basa*                    *ndeo'aso-i*.  
 2PL.NOM-read LG:in.groups.of.one-3SG.ABS  
 ‘You read them one at a time.’

- (56) *Iamo i-lalo-'i-kona po'iaha-nggu.*  
 NEG.IMP 2PL.NOM-pass.by-3SG.ABS-1SG.DAT residence-1SG.GEN  
 'Don't pass my house by.'

As we can discern from these examples, it is the main verb, not the second verb, which determines the transitivity of the overall construction. In examples (52) and (53) the main verb is transitive, as is the serialised construction as a whole. In example (54) both the main and second verbs are intransitive, and (unsurprisingly) so is the construction. In example (55), while *lalo* itself is transitive, the verb *lako* is intransitive, and accordingly the combination *lako lalo* is treated as intransitive.

In fact the two verbs in complex verb serialisation cannot be indexed independently for their arguments. They are treated as a unit, and any pronominal indexing or aspectual marking must come either before the main verb or after the second verb, i.e. outside of the unit. If (55) were an example of dependent serialisation, we would expect the first verb *lako* 'go' to be the locus of subject indexing, and thus the third person absolutive enclitic should follow it (*\*lako-komami-to*). Instead, subject indexing follows the second verb *lalo* 'pass by'. In examples (52) and (53) the absolutive pronoun (in this case indexing the object) does not follow the transitive main verb (*\*ruru-'i-to* and *\*angga-'i-kona*), rather it follows the second verb, which is intransitive.

In general, nothing can intervene between a head verb and its adjunct, the only exception being nasal ligature (and, as discussed below, negation). Nasal ligature in fact is specific to this construction, in Tolaki occurring *only* between heads and their adjuncts. However, nasal ligature has an overt realisation only with adjuncts that begin with *p*, *t* or *k*, resulting in a voiced prenasalised stop. Since by the nature of things many verbs in the second position begin with some other consonant (often they begin with the stative prefix *me-* or *mo-*), it is easier to illustrate nasal ligature with a noun adjunct. In example (57) *kaenggu* 'my hand' is a regular clause level constituent. In example (58), however, *kae* occupies the verb adjunct position and, with nasal ligature, is realised as *nggae*.

- (57) *Lako-nggu-to wu'ohiki-'i kae-nggu.*  
 go-1SG.GEN-PERF wash-3SG.ABS hand-1SG.GEN  
 'Then I washed my hands.'
- (58) *Lako-nggu-to me-wu'ohiki nggae.*  
 go-1SG.GEN-PERF <M>:INTR-wash LG:hand  
 'Then I washed hands/hand-washed.'

There are also five stems which occur *only* in the adjunct position (that is, they are not known to distribute outside of this construction), and all five begin with a prenasalised consonant. For the first three stems in this list, we can attribute the prenasalisation, at least historically, to nasal ligature.

<i>nggakora</i> 'forcefully, with force'	<reduplication of <i>kora</i> 'strength, force' <sup>16</sup>
<i>mbu'upu'u</i> 'truly, really'	< reduplication of <i>pu'u</i> 'base, basis, reason'
<i>mbendua</i> 'again'	< Proto Bungku-Tolaki <i>*pendua</i> 'twice'
<i>mbena</i> 'only, exclusively, needlessly'	< Proto Bungku-Tolaki <i>*mpena</i> 'merely'
<i>mbiha</i> 'entirely, absolutely'	< Proto Bungku-Tolaki <i>*(m)pihaN</i> 'all together, all at once' <sup>17</sup>

16 Tolaki *Co* is reduplicated as *Ca*.

In dependent serialisation described above in §3, all the verbs must have the same subject. By contrast, some complex verb serialisation constructions would seem to exemplify switch-subject serialisation. In example (59), if we consider the stative verb *wu'ohu* ‘clean’ to have a subject, it must be the shirt (the object of the first verb *tatapi* ‘laundry’), not the one who washes it.

- (59) ... *t[um]atapi wu'ohu-i*.  
 <M>:laundry clean-3SG.ABS  
 ‘... wash it (his shirt) clean’

In example (60), on the other hand, the second verb has only an ambient relationship to the main verb. That is to say, neither the person measuring nor the thing which is measured becomes *me'ambo* ‘good’; rather, *me'ambo* describes how the process of measuring is to be carried out.

- (60) ... *a-i sosongga me'ambo-i laika-miu*.  
 and-2PL.NOM measure good-3SG.ABS house-2PL.GEN  
 ‘... so that you measure your house well.’

Indeed, it may be possible to consider *all* stative adjuncts to exemplify ambient serialisation. For example, even though in example (59) the shirt ends up being clean, the intent of *wu'ohu* is to describe how (the manner in which) the process of washing is to be carried out, i.e. ‘wash it *cleanly*’.

#### 4.1 Complex verb serial constructions as verb compounds?

Is it possible that complex verb serial constructions could simply be analysed as verb compounds? There are at least three reasons to favour a compound analysis. First, the two verbs cannot be separated by any clause level constituent, not even by second position clitics which normally occur after the first verb of dependent serial strings (e.g. *-to* ‘perfective’, see §3). Second, the verbs are not independent in regard to their argument structure; argument structure is determined by the head verb in the complex verb serial construction. Third, nasal ligature could potentially be viewed as a ‘compound-specific morpheme’. It is probably also true that stress patterns associated with head-adjunct pairs more resemble word intonation contours than phrase intonation contours, but this has yet to be verified quantitatively.

Other evidence, however, favours a non-compound analysis. From a semantic perspective, the meanings of verb-adjunct complexes are very transparent. While not denying that verbs in Tolaki complex verb serial constructions have lexicalised to a certain degree — Tolaki speakers probably have a sense that some combinations are ‘standard’, and might be surprised or amused at ‘novel’ combinations — nevertheless we are hard pressed to come up with examples where lexicalisation has led to semantic bleaching, or to the development of meanings which are not transparently and straightforwardly the sum of their parts.<sup>18</sup> Lexicalisation in complex verb serialisation thus remains at a fairly superficial level in Tolaki.

17 Ultimately from the Proto Malayo-Polynesian stem *\*pisan* ‘together, united’.

18 There is even evidence from noun + noun pairs that nasal ligature in fact coerces a semantically compositional interpretation. In Tolaki the word for ‘eye glasses, spectacles’ is a compound, *mata tonde*, composed of the stems *mata* ‘eye’ and *tonde* ‘drinking glass’. One can also combine these two stems with intervening nasal ligature. The result, *mata ndonde*, is interpretable to Tolaki speakers, but only in the meaning ‘eyes made of drinking glasses’.



Orthographically, untrained Tolaki writers are inconsistent, writing even the same adjunct sometimes joined, sometimes separated from its head. Once introduced to the convention of writing adjuncts separated by a space, however, most Tolaki writers readily adopt this pattern and experience little difficulty implementing it. There is thus no strong indication from the practice of writing that Tolaki speakers view head-adjuncts as single words. This is different from the situation in Lewo, where writers prefer to write adjuncts joined, thus providing psycholinguistic evidence in favour of a compound analysis (Early 1993:81).

Finally, from a grammatical perspective adjuncts need not be ‘words’ themselves, but can be phrases or even clauses. Clause adjuncts are taken up in the following section.

#### 4.2 Negation in complex verb serialisation

Closely related to the above examples of complex verb serial constructions are the following examples. In (61) the head verb is an antipassive form of *tulura* ‘speak’, while the adjunct consists of the stative verb *meena* ‘true’ preceded by the standard clausal negator *taa*. The nasal ligature which causes *taa* to become *ndaa* clearly marks *taa meena* as an adjunct. The same pattern is also illustrated in example (62); here the adjunct consists of the negator *taa* plus the stative verb *mendeetee* ‘careful’.

(61) *mon-dulura ndaa meena*  
 <M>:APASS-speak LG:NEG true  
 ‘speak falsely’

(62) *mokula ndaa mendeetee*  
 hot LG:NEG careful  
 ‘heedlessly (i.e. extremely) hot’

From an areal perspective, this Tolaki construction is unusual. As far as we know, a parallel construction does not occur in other languages of south-eastern Sulawesi, neither in the better described languages such as Mori Bawah (Esser 1927–1933), Muna (van den Berg 1989), or *Tukang Besi* (Donohue 1999), nor in lesser described languages about which we have some personal knowledge. Curiously, though, Tolaki speakers have taken this construction a step further. When the adjunct contains the negator *taa*, we find that the second verb is now no longer a stative stem as in typical of simple verb adjuncts, but can be drawn from a much wider pool of verbs. In example (63) the second verb is an intransitive active stem; in example (64) the second verb is a passive form. Such verb cum negator adjuncts indicate a non-accompanying circumstance. They are most naturally translated into English using ‘without’ followed by a non-finite clause.

(63) *A-ku pe-tootoono-'ako lako ndaa me-paramesi ...*  
 and-1SG.NOM INTR-silent-RESULT go LG:NEG <M>:INTR-ask.permission  
 ‘And I was silent, leaving without asking permission, because ...’

(64) *... a-no po-inu ndaa ni-wada.*  
 and-3SG.NOM APASS-drink LG:NEG PASS-pay  
 ‘... so that he drinks for free.’ (lit. ‘drinks without it being paid for’)

Once negated, the second verb can even appear with its own argument, so long as this argument is realised as a noun or noun phrase and not as a pronoun.<sup>19</sup> For this reason we consider the adjuncts in examples (61) through (66) to be short clauses. In this context we can define a Tolaki ‘short clause’ specifically as a clause having the structure *taa* + verb ± NP.

- (65) *toono nggo mate ndaa mo-naa o ana.*  
 person FUT die LG:NEG <M>:APASS-have CN child  
 ‘a person who is going to die childless’ (lit. ‘die without having a child’)
- (66) *Laa-'i-to-kaa me-tulura ndaa nio mokotu'a-no...*  
 be-3SG.ABS-PERF-just <M>:INTR-speak LG:NEG exist breaking.point-3SG.GEN  
 ‘While he was speaking endlessly ...’ (lit. ‘speaking without existing its breaking off point’)

Examples (65) and (66) violate the maxim that in complex verb serialisation, the serialised verbs should not exhibit independence in regard to the expression of nominal arguments (van Staden and Reesink in this volume; see also Foley and Olson 1985:37).

Some of the English free translations above, such as ‘falsely’ in example (61), ‘heedlessly’ in example (62), ‘for free’ in example (64), ‘childless’ in example (65) and ‘endlessly’ in example (66), suggest that perhaps *ndaa* could be analysed as a lexical (derivational) negator. However, there are two reasons why this analysis is inappropriate for the Tolaki data. First, *taa* is a clausal negator in Tolaki, occurring in ordinary, independent clauses (as in examples (18) and (36)). Second, <M> is an inflectional affix, so that where it occurs we have a reliable indication of the left boundary of the verb word. Because *meparamesi* in example (63) contains this morpheme, we can conclude there is a word boundary between *ndaa* and *meparamesi*. This in turn makes *ndaa* a less likely candidate to be a derivational negator. Without going into detail, the Tolaki common noun (CN) marker *o* is also a reliable indicator of the syntactic independence of the (always two-syllable) noun which follows it. Based on these criteria we may conclude that in example (65), there is not only a word boundary preceding *monaa* but also a second word boundary preceding *o ana*.

Finally, it was stated above that in complex verb serialisation, any pronominal indexing must come either before the head verb or after the second verb. To test whether this holds true in the case of short clause adjuncts, we took some of the above, naturally occurring examples and elicited corresponding forms in which the subject was indexed with an absolutive pronominal clitic. The results confirm that proximal indexing and aspectual marking must still follow the second verb, i.e. outside the unit formed by head verb plus adjunct.

- (67) *Lako ndaa me-paramesi-'i-to.*  
 go LG:NEG <M>:INTR-ask.permission-3SG.ABS-PERF  
 ‘He went without asking permission.’  
 (\**Lako-'i-to ndaa me-paramesi*)

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19 The underlying reason for this restriction is that a pronoun would imply referentiality, but nouns in this context are non-referential, and do not become subsequent topics.

- (68) *Mo-'inu ndaa ni-wada-'i-to (ona).*  
 <M>:APASS-drink LG:NEG PASS-pay-3SG.ABS-PERF EMPH  
 'He drank for free.'  
 (\**Mo-inu-'i-to ndaa ni-wada*)

Additionally, when the short clause adjunct contains a noun argument, the nominal occurs outside of verbal pronominal indexing.

- (69) *Mate ndaa mo-naa-'i-to (ona) o ana.*  
 die LG:NEG <M>:APASS-have-3SG.ABS-PERF EMPH CN child  
 'He died without having children.'  
 (\**Mate-'i-to ndaa mo-naa o ana*)
- (70) *Me-tulura ndaa nio-'i-to mokotu'a-no.*  
 <M>:INTR-speak LG:NEG exist-3SG.ABS-PERF breaking.point-3SG.GEN  
 'He spoke on endlessly.'  
 (\**Me-tulura-'i-to ndaa nio mokotu'a-no*)

### 4.3 A diachronic scenario

We have arranged the above examples in such a way as to suggest a plausible historical development for short clause adjuncts, which can be represented schematically in four stages. Illustrative example numbers are given to the right.

- |      |  |                       |
|------|--|-----------------------|
| I.   | VERB + VERB <sub>stative</sub>                             | (53), (54) (59), (60) |
| II.  | VERB + <i>ndaa</i> + VERB <sub>stative</sub>               | (61) (62)             |
| III. | VERB + <i>ndaa</i> + VERB <sub>non-stative</sub>           | (63) (64)             |
| IV.  | VERB + <i>ndaa</i> + VERB <sub>non-stative</sub> + NOUN/NP | (65) (66)             |

That is to say, short clauses first appeared in adjunct position (stage II) with stative verbs. As noted above, statives are the most common class of verbs to appear in adjunct position when not negated (stage I). Second, many statives are typically associated with scales. As Croft (1991:136) has noted, 'most core adjectives are not only one dimensional, they indicate just positive or negative direction on the scale they denote (length, height, age, speed): *tall/short, big/little, fast/slow, new/old*'. A negated stative verb in ambient serialisation will therefore have essentially the same function as its non-negated counterpart: to indicate a positive or negative range on a scale. Tolaki, which lacks any derivational negator for this purpose, simply pressed into service its unmarked clause negator within complex verb serialisation.

On the other hand, while a negated stative verb can indicate a simple reversed range on a scale, it could also be viewed as indicating the absence of that particular property. This ambiguity allowed the construction, once established, to be analogically extended to allow the expression of other kinds of collateral information, specifically non-events (stage III) as opposed to simple non-states. That stage IV is a further development of stage III is shown by the fact that a nominal argument can appear only when *ndaa* is also present; compare the unacceptability of (71).

- (71) \**me-tulura nio mokotu'a-no*  
 <M>:INTR-speak exist breaking.point-3SG.GEN  
 (intended meaning: 'speak with an ending point')

#### 4.4 Implications for synchronic analysis

While these developments may make Tolaki appear typologically odd in regard to verb serialisation, Williams-van Klinken (this volume) describes a similar situation in Tetun Dili. Here she has found that manner adjectives (putatively in ambient serialisation) as well as verbs functioning as intensifiers can be separately negated. For example:

(72) ... *dada is la diak*  
 pull breath not good  
 ‘[because he fell into the water], he could not breathe in’

(73) *Nia laran moras la-halimar.*  
 3S inside sick no-play  
 ‘She is very upset.’

Williams-van Klinken takes such examples as evidence that these constructions must therefore not be serial verb constructions. On the other hand, the diachronic scenario outlined above suggests that this is *precisely* where we are likely to find second-verb negation within verb serialisation: when the second verb indicates a range on a scale.

The difficulty which such data presents for synchronic analysis can be grasped from a simple thought experiment. Consider the following clause from *Tukang Besi* (Donohue 1999:183), given in example (74). This clause is entirely parallel to the Tolaki complex verb serialisation examples presented at the beginning of §4.

(74) *No-tutu-molobu-'e na kabali te La Mbagi.*  
 3REALIS-pound-straight-3OBJ NOM machete CORE La Mbagi  
 ‘La Mbagi beat the machete blade straight.’

Now suppose for a moment that *Tukang Besi* were to develop in a direction similar to Tolaki, whereby it became possible to negate the second verb: La Mbagi beat-not-straight the machete. Or even suppose we found out that this were possible in the present language (Donohue gives no indication that it is). What would then be the status of example (74)? Would it thereby cease to exemplify complex verb serialisation?

For our part, we clearly prefer an analysis which treats [ *nda* + verb ± NP ] modifiers as adjuncts, in line with all the examples of verbal adjuncts given above. In other words, they all instantiate a single emic Tolaki construction which is uniquely identified by the nasal ligature between head verbs and adjunct. *Some* instantiations of this emic Tolaki construction — namely instances where the head and the adjunct are simple verbs — parallel very well what have been termed complex verb serialisation constructions in other languages. *Other* instantiations of this construction, however, fail to meet the established criteria for complex verb serialisation. How one chooses to deal with this situation from a cross-linguistic perspective will depend on one’s theoretical presuppositions, but the choices amount to the following:

- (a) The Tolaki construction as a whole can be excluded; it is simply not an example of complex verb serialisation.
- (b) Only ‘qualifying instances’ can be accepted, i.e. those instances which fulfill the established criteria for verb serialisation. (In part we have already followed this tact in that we have excluded instances where the adjunct is not a verb.)

- (c) The definition of ‘complex verb serialisation’ can be enlarged (one or more criteria can be relaxed) so as to include a fuller range of the Tolaki data.

At the very least, we suggest that second-verb negation is an appropriate phenomenon to study within the general field of verb serialisation, and we have proposed a plausible pathway whereby second-verb negation may develop within (or out of) complex verb serialisation.

## 5 Between clause juxtaposition and verb serialisation: compressed clauses

Examples (75) and (76) illustrate juxtaposed clauses in Tolaki. Even though no conjunction intervenes between the parts, each half is readily identifiable as a separate independent clause because each has its own pronominal indexing for subject. This is true whether the two juxtaposed clauses have different subjects as in example (75), or the same subject as in example (76). As expected, an intonational pause is readily inserted at the boundary between the two clauses (indicated by comma).

- (75) *Oheo, pe'eka kabusa-'i-keito ana-ndo,*  
 Oheo ascend wash.anus-3SG.ABS-1PLN.DAT child-1PLN.GEN  
*tewuta-'i-to.*  
 defecate-3SG.ABS-PERF  
 ‘Oheo, come up and clean our child, (because) he’s already defecated.’

- (76) *Tebua-'i-to-kaa ona oleo, no-kii-'iro-to ona*  
 appear-3SG.ABS-PERF-just EMPH sun 3SG.NOM-see-3PL.ABS-PERF EMPH  
*ana-'ako-no o wula.*  
 child-all-3SG.GEN CN moon  
 ‘Right when the sun appeared, she (the sun) saw the moon’s children.’

While clause juxtaposition (parataxis) is not to be confused with the serialised verb constructions described above in §3, nonetheless Tolaki speakers produce constructions such as (77) and (78) which seem to fall between parataxis and verb serialisation.

- (77) *Lako-no-to me-mbule'ako mbendua, tebua mohongohongo.*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF <M>:INTR-return again appear <M>:cough  
 ‘Then he returned again, appearing coughing.’
- (78) ... *a-no ina'u pe'ula i pu'u n-dawa-no uewai,*  
 and-3SG.NOM go.over get.on at base LG-leaf-3SG.GEN k.o.rattan  
*me-kopu mopemopee.*  
 <M>:INTR-grasp very.tight  
 ‘... and he went over and got on at the base of the rattan’s leaves, holding on very tightly.’

These intermediate structures are similar to dependent serial constructions in that the subject is indexed only once on the first verb, but resemble juxtaposed clauses in that an intonational break occurs between the parts (as again indicated by comma). In order to reach for a neutral term, we follow a suggestion by Quick (2003) and call these structures compressed clauses. They could also be identified with what have been called clause

chains in other languages. However, in Tolaki subsequent clauses have no marking to indicate same or different subject.

It is possible to present data in such a way to suggest that compressed clauses are simply a kind of ‘expanded’ verb serialisation. That is to say, a Tolaki speaker says something about a particular referent, and so long as that referent remains subject, the speaker can continue to elaborate on simultaneous or subsequent events performed by that referent. The subject is not reindexed in the clauses so added, but dependent on the indexing in the first clause. Compare the possible sentences of example (79), where subject marking is highlighted in bold.

- (79) a. ... ***a-no***            *ina'u*    *petuha*.  
           and-3SG.NOM go.over descend  
           ‘... and he went over and descended (out of the house).’
- b. ... ***a-no***            *ina'u*    *petuha*,    *butu*        *sala*    *i*    *aahua*.  
           and-3SG.NOM go.over descend go.toward path at well  
           ‘... and he went over and descended, going toward the path to the well.’
- c. ... ***a-no***            *ina'u*    *petuha*,    *butu*        *sala*    *i*    *aahua*,  
           and-3SG.NOM go.over descend go.toward path at well  
           *meoponono*            *s[um]ombo-'iro*.  
           <M>:do.secretly    <M>:peer-3PL.ABS  
           ‘He went over and descended, going toward the path to the well,  
           secretly spying on them.’

### 5.1 Compressed clauses versus dependent serialisation: more differences

Besides the issue of intonational pause, however, compressed clauses differ in other ways from dependent serialisation, and in each point of difference they more resemble juxtaposed clauses. First is their overall complexity. Dependent serialisations, as may be recalled from §3, have a fairly tight structure. They are strings of primarily intransitive verbs, with the transitive verb (if any) appearing as the final verb in the string. With intonational pause, however, it is possible in compressed clauses to link several transitive verbs, each with its own object.

- (80) *Lako-ro-to*            *leu*    *r[um]ongo-'i*                    *woha-no*,  
       go-3PL.NOM-PERF come <M>:tump.line-3SG.ABS rice-3SG.GEN  
       *wawe-'i*            *manu-no*,            *moturu*    *opio*    *o*    *wingi*,  
       bring-3SG.ABS chicken-3SG.GEN <M>:sleep several CN night  
       *nggo*    *paka-'i*            *bokeo*    *sorume*    *nggiro'o*.  
       FUT feed-3SG.ABS crocodile orchid that  
       ‘Then they come carrying rice, bringing chickens, sleeping several nights  
       in order to feed that orchid(-coloured) crocodile.’

Second, while the verbs in a dependent serial construction have the same tense and aspect, this is not necessary for compressed clauses. The future particle *nggo* in fact is quite at home introducing subsequent compressed clauses. In example (81) *nggo* is used to present the catching as future with respect to the subject’s going over, which is marked by *laa* as progressive aspect. Note also the similar use of *nggo* in example (80) above.

- (81) *Sabutu-no hae laa ene, nggo r[um]ako-'i ...*  
 exactly-3SG.GEN again be go.over FUT <M>:catch-3SG.ABS  
 ‘Just as he was going over, about to catch her ...’

Third, even though in clause compression all the verbs usually have the same subject, this is not a strict requirement. Example (82) illustrates the object of one verb, *luarako* ‘expel’, becoming the subject of the following verb *tewali* ‘become’. Such switching of the subject — a possibility in compressed clauses — does not occur in dependent serialisation.

- (82) *Opitu o osu ni-lomba-no, a-no*  
 seven CN mountain PASS-hole-3SG.GEN and-3SG.NOM  
*luarao-kee i tahi, tewali opio o pulo ...*  
 expel-3SG.DAT at sea become several CN island  
 ‘Seven mountains were punched through by him, and he expelled it  
 (the excavations) in the sea, becoming several islands ...’

Fourth, in dependent serialisation, an initial negative has scope over the entire SVC. But in example (83), which is an example of two compressed clauses, the negative has scope only over the verb *pebabu* ‘wear a shirt’.

- (83) *Ki'oki no-pe-babu, me-saluario oputu me'eto.*  
 NEG 3SG.NOM-INTR-shirt <M>:INTR-pants short black  
 ‘He was not wearing a shirt, (and he was) wearing short black pants.’  
 (does not mean: \*‘He was not wearing a shirt nor short black pants.’)

Because of these differences, we analyse compressed clauses as biclausal (or multi-clausal, as the case may be), as opposed to the monoclausal state of dependent serial constructions.

## 5.2 Compressed versus juxtaposed clauses

On the other hand, compressed clauses distinguish themselves in at least three ways from juxtaposed clauses. First, the semantic relationship between predicates in compressed clauses still very much rests in the temporal domain. Events described by a series of compressed clauses have either a simultaneous or subsequent temporal relationship to each other. In parataxis, however, the relationship between the two clauses is more variable, and one must infer from context whether the relationship is temporal or whether the relationship is logical, including contrast, reason, purpose or contraexpectation.

The one exception to the claim that compressed clauses involve only temporal relationships is when *nggo* ‘future, intend’ functions as a purpose marker. In example (84), *nggo* has a strictly temporal function: the picking up is not intended or purposed by the wind, but is simply future with respect to its going around.

- (84) *Pe-wiso-'i-to opua popali, nggo t[um]ene-'aku...*  
 enter-3SG.ABS-PERF wind go.around FUT <M>:pick.up-1SG.ABS  
 ‘The wind came in and went around, and was going to pick me up ...’

With volitional subjects, however, *nggo* is more likely to be given a purposive interpretation. In example (85), the clause introduced by *nggo* explains the purpose of the

gathering, to wit to practice reciting the Koran. Compare also the examples of *nggo* presented above in examples (80) and (81).<sup>20</sup>

- (85) *Ni-lako-mami-to mben-deporombu ine laika-no*  
 ??-go-1PLX.GEN-PERF COLL-gathered in house-3SG.GEN  
*guru mangadi, nggo mepokonda'u ngumadi.*  
 teacher study.Koran FUT <M>:study recite.Koran  
 ‘Then we all gathered at the Koran teacher’s house, in order to study  
 reciting the Koran.’

Third, not only is subject indexing absent in clause compression (apart from the first verb, of course), but even verbs which follow pause assume a non-finite form (the addition of <M> wherever it is allowed. Compare *me-baho* ‘bathe’ (not \**pe-baho*) and *l[um]olaha-i* ‘search for it’ (not \**lolaha-i*) in example (86).

- (86) *Ieto ona anai'uhu taa-taa laa sarungga-no,*  
 it.was EMPH youngest.child REL-NEG be sheath-3SG.GEN  
*laa-ikaa lumelepa i wawo una, me-baho*  
 be-only creep at above sword.grass <M>:INTR-bathe  
*i wuu-no, l[um]olaha-i sarungga-no.*  
 in hair-3SG.GEN <M>:search-3SG.ABS sheath-3SG.GEN  
 ‘So it was the youngest who didn’t have her outfit, who was still creeping  
 on the grass, bathing (viz. covering) herself in her hair, looking for her outfit.’

Said another way, in Tolaki the form of verbs in clause compression is no different than the form which verbs take in dependent serialisation.

### 5.3 At the boundary between dependent serialisation and clause compression

This identity of form between dependent serialisation and compressed clauses can lead to ambiguity in particular cases. For example, are the strings of verbs in examples (87) and (88) all part of one long dependent serial construction, or can we ascertain some point at which to draw a clause boundary?

- (87) *Ni-lako-ro-to me-binda me-ronga lako.*  
 ??-go-3PL.GEN-PERF <M>:INTR-depart <M>:INTR-together go  
 ‘Then they departed going together.’
- (88) *...a-no ene me-reurehu r[um]a'ira'i-i o randa.*  
 and-3SG.NOM go.over <M>:INTR-sit <M>:face-3SG.ABS CN tray  
 ‘... and he went over and sat facing the tray.’

20 It is also possible for purpose to be expressed through clause juxtaposition. Compare the following example where the subject is reindexed on *onggo*.

*Lako-no-to pili-i, no-onggo d[um]uu-i*  
 go-3SG.GEN-PERF chase-3SG.ABS 3SG.NOM-FUT <M>:swallow-3SG.PERF  
*nggiro'o-no o wula.*  
 that-3SG.GEN CN moon  
 ‘Then she (the sun) chased her (the moon), she was going to swallow those (children) of the moon.’



The situation is complicated by the fact that in written texts, Tolaki writers are hardly consistent in their use of commas. For that matter in the spoken language, pauses are often omitted in fast speech, only to (re)appear when a Tolaki speaker slows down his or her rate of speaking. A conclusion one might draw from this is that Tolaki speakers simply don't feel encumbered (as do linguists) to distinguish whether a particular structure comprises one or more clauses.

In our own work, we have found that a useful heuristic in such cases is to appeal to a notion of 'potential pause'. While they might not make a careful distinction in practice, Tolaki speakers *do* have an intuitive sense that some verb sequences can be interrupted by pause, whilst other sequences cannot. The latter correspond to what we have termed above dependent serialisation constructions.

In applying this heuristic to example (87), we find that *nilakoroto mebinda* 'then they departed' and *meronga lako* 'going together' are each dependent serialisations, and that pause may occur only after *mebinda*. Similarly in (88), *ano ene mereurehu* 'and he went over and sat' is a dependent serialisation and *ruma'ira'i o randa* 'facing the tray' is a clause, with pause possible only after *mereurehu*. Here 'going over' and 'sitting' are not presented as two discrete events, but as one integrated movement in which the going blends seamlessly into the sitting. Intonational pause then distinguishes 'facing the tray' as a new, conceptually separate event.

Appealing to Tolaki native speaker intuitions is not foolproof (speakers may express different opinions), neither do we arrive thereby at an explanation of the phenomenon (it still begs the question: Why do Tolaki speakers have such intuitions?). But at some point a level of complexity is reached, at which Tolaki speakers see a string of verbs and their accompanying arguments as 'divisible'. How and when this point is reached is an intriguing question. Whilst we have an understanding of the factors involved — number of verbs, semantic relationships between the verbs, generic motion verb versus more specific motion verb, and presence of any intervening prepositional or noun phrase arguments — nonetheless there is a subtle interplay between these factors which resists easy quantification. Ultimately, the answer is not to be found at the level of syntax, but at a conceptual level. Multiple verbs which represent one integrated event cannot be separated by pause. Conversely, verbs representing conceptually distinct events may be separated by pause.

## 6 Conclusions

In this paper we have discussed the formal characteristics of four emic Tolaki constructions. Conceptually these can be arranged on a scale from least to tightest integration of events: juxtaposed clauses, compressed clauses, dependent serialisation, and complex verb serialisation. This integration occurs on both a semantic and a formal level.

At the one end of the spectrum (juxtaposed clauses) we find clauses which are separated by pause, and each with separate indexing of its subject. On a semantic level the events are clearly distinct; there is no requirement that they even share any arguments.

In clause compression events are presented as more integrated. From a semantic perspective, compressed clauses are likely to present successive elaborations on a scene, or a series of events in a kind of stream of action (and almost always performed by the same actant). The formal mark of clause compression is that subsequent clauses lack any pronominal indexing of their subjects, and verbs appear in their non-finite form. Nonetheless, the compressed clauses can be separated intonationally.

At the level of dependent serialisation, verbs cannot be separated by intonational pause, signifying that two semantic actions have been blended into one integrated event. Preceding the main verb are verbs from four different subclasses of intransitives. It is interesting to note that verbs from three of these classes — temporal relator verbs and aspectual verbs, as well as the verbs *alee* ‘at last, finally’ and *tekono* ‘rush into’ — are always ‘blended’ in the same intonational contour with a following verb. If we could recognise a common thread in these three verb classes, it is that they all have to do with the ‘temporal contouring’ of the main event (see Talmy 1991).<sup>21</sup>

At the boundary between clause compression and verb serialisation, motion verbs play a special role, because these verbs can potentially be treated in two different ways. On the one hand a motion verb can be serialised with a following main verb. Its purpose in such cases, we could say, is to specify the ‘path contour’ of the main event (Talmy 1991). Alternatively, a motion verb can itself be the head of its own intonational unit, in which case it is presented, as it were, as a main event itself. Generic motion verbs such as *lako* ‘go’ and *leu* ‘come’ are more likely to be serialised. Conversely, a motion verb which is presented with its own prepositional argument is likely to be ‘allotted’ its own intonation unit.

At the end of tightest verbal integration is complex verb serialisation, where no morpheme may intervene between the two constituent verbs except the characteristic nasal ligature and, optionally, the negator *taa*. The two verbs represent but one semantic event, with the second verb merely indicating the manner in which the action of the first verb is carried out.

From one perspective it is informative to place complex verb serialisation on the same cline of verbal integration with the other three constructions discussed in this paper. On the other hand, in terms of word order, argument coreference, clitic placement and nasal ligature, complex verb serialisation distinguishes itself formally from the other three constructions. That is to say, the Tolaki data presents no evidence that complex verb serialisation developed simply out of some kind of further, formal compaction of dependent serialisation. Rather, one might well suspect that Tolaki complex verb serialisation has a separate diachronic source.

In this paper we have suggested how second-verb negation may have developed within complex verb serialisation. However, to suggest how complex verb serialisation itself developed would be another matter. While we could guess as to its origins — for example, an extension of noun incorporation, or a further compaction of adverbial modification — these conjectures are highly speculative. What is needed is a deeper investigation of verb serialisation in languages closely related to Tolaki, but the required data is not yet in hand.

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21 And also the restatement of his ideas in Talmy (2000:213–288).

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# 7 *Verb serialisation in Eipo and Yale (especially in children's narratives)*

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VOLKER HEESCHEN

## 1 Introduction: primary verbs in compounds and chaining

Soon after the initial steps into the Eipo language<sup>1</sup> I became aware of collocations or pairings such as:

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1 Eipo and Yale, members of the (Papuan) Mek language family, are spoken in the eastern, central mountains of Papua Barat (formerly West New Guinea and Irian Jaya), Indonesia. See Heeschen (1992b) for information on the composition of that family and its relationship to the Trans New Guinea Phylum. Between 1974 and 2002, I spent more than five years in the Mek language area. Research was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft. In 1974 and 1976 I worked among the Eipo in the centre of the Mek area as a member of the Interdisciplinary German Research project 'Man, culture, and environment in the Central Mountains of West New Guinea, Indonesia', and from 1978 to 1981, I worked for the Vereinigte Evangelische Mission, Wuppertal, among the Yale people, the westernmost Mek people. Between 1983 and 2002 I revisited the Yale as well as the Eipo eleven times for periods of up to two months. Ethnographical background information is given in Heeschen (1990, 1992a:7–8, 1998:21–36).

Abbreviations used are:

1. In Eipo and Yale texts the hyphen indicates the break between bound morphemes (not the boundary between two syllables!). This hyphen is repeated in the glosses;

2. In Eipo and Yale texts the hyphen connects postpositions and connectives as well as nominalising particles with the preceding word;

. - The full stop in the glosses indicates different kinds of grammatical information concerning one morpheme or one unanalysed word in the text;

( ) - Round brackets in the free translations contain additional information concerning either constituents missing in the texts or add comments or explanations related to the culture the Eipo or Yale people;

1, 2, 3 - first, second, third person; ATT - attenuative manner of action; AUX - auxiliary verb; D - dual; DER - derivational suffix; DET - determiner, only in the Yale language; DS - different subject (in the next clause); DUR - durative, repetitive; FUT I, II, III - immediate, near, and far future; HAB - habitative (for -*lam*-suffix of the Eipo verb); HORT - hortative-deliberative, optative; IMPER - imperative mode; INC - inchoative (manner of action); INCOMP - incomplete (manner of action); INF - infinite (verbal form); MED - sentence medial verb; N - noun, nominalising; OPT - optative; PA I, II, III - today's past, near past, remote past; PERF - perfective; PL - plural; POSS - possessive; PRES - present tense; Q - quotative particle; REFL - reflexive; S - subject; SC - scene, background; SG - singular; SIM - simultaneous; SS - same subject (in next clause); SUC - successive; T - theme; V - verb(al); VN - verbal noun; V.ROOT - verbal root; V.STEM - verbal stem

- (1) (Eipo)  
*Bongob-uke sak-ma-l.*  
 lie.on-INF.SUC fall-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘It falls from a resting or lying position.’
- (2) (Eipo)  
*Tek-uke sak-ma-l.*  
 stand-INF.SUC fall-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘It falls from a vertical position.’
- (3) (Eipo)  
*Dib-re tek-ma-l.*  
 see-INF.SIM stand-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He or she is standing and looking.’ (or: ‘He or she is watching.’).

First of all and superficially, while still in the phase of discovering strange structures, these instances could be attributed to the

concreteness and explicitness of verbal descriptions in Papuan in comparison to English and other European languages. This is most apparent in the serial verb constructions, in which, for example, ‘bring’ is rendered by *take come*, ‘feel’ by *hold perceive*, or ‘tumble’ by *come descend hit*. (Foley 1986:129, see also Havers 1931)

Second, such pairings also could fit into the framework of semantic decomposition or, depending on the grammarian’s point of view or predilections, the composition of complex notions from generic verbs or semantic primitives.

- (4) (Eipo)  
*E-do Ba-lam-la.*  
 look-INF.SIM go-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is going and looking.’ (or: ‘He is searching.’).
- (5) (Yale)  
*Boo-sale-lam-la.*  
 press-touch-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is pressing and touching.’ (or: ‘He is examining, [e.g. a fruit].’).

Third and finally, all these pairings could also be presented as instances of verb serialisation. The pairings consisting of ‘come’ and ‘take’ or ‘go’ and ‘take’ are found in a good number of languages, especially in West African and Austronesian languages, as well as in Papuan languages the Mek languages are part of. That ubiquitous pairing apparently represents the prototype for serial verb constructions (see Foley above). In Eipo and Yale the instances are as follows:

- (6) (Eipo)  
*Dol-bin-ma-l.*  
 take-go-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is fetching.’
- (7) (Yale)  
*Dol-ba-lam-la.*  
 take-go-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is fetching.’

- (8) (Eipo)  
*Dol-yan-ma-l.*  
 take-come-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is bringing.’
- (9) (Yale)  
*Dol-[y]a-lam-la.*  
 take-come-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is bringing.’

Most features which are important for defining the phenomenon of verb serialisation can be found in the Eipo and Yale examples: a complex verb construction refers to a single event, it shares tense, aspect, mode, and polarity as well as arguments; there is no subordination or embeddedness.<sup>2</sup> However, with respect to a cross-linguistically valid definition some problems show up in the Mek languages; furthermore, even within the closely related Mek languages differences are found. First, there are two types of construction, one showing the pairing of infinite and finite verb forms (examples (1)–(4)), the other one consisting of the juxtaposition or composition of verb roots (examples (5)–(9)). Second, the feature ‘shared tense’ is not valid for sequences of forms which indicate successivity instead of simultaneity. The successivity type as illustrated by Eipo examples (1) and (2) would insert a connective in the Yale language so that serialisation fades into chaining of clauses. Successivity together with transitivity favours chaining, while simultaneity yields serial constructions. Compare examples (1), (2), and (6)–(9) with the following constructions:

- (10) (Eipo)  
*Dob-uke bin-ma-l.*  
 take-INF.SUC go-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘Having taken, he is going.’
- (11) (Yale)  
*Dob-i aka ba-lam-la.*  
 take-INF.SUCC then go-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘Having taken, he is going.’

Third, one verb may show suffixes for tense, number, person, and mode, the other one being reduced to an infinite form so that one could think of it as a converb. While clause-chaining is still compatible with serial structures, subordination excludes verb serialisation. The term clause-chaining refers to Longacre (1985:264–265, see also Foley 1986:175–198, and Heeschen 1998:319–326). Clause-chaining in contrast to subordination is characterised by (a) sequences of clauses only the last one showing finite verbs and carrying information on tense, mode, person, number etc., (b) by subject-tracking especially by means of switch-reference structures, and (c) by ‘considerable attention to temporal relations such as chronological overlap (‘while’, at the same time) versus chronological succession’ (Longacre 1985:264). Fourth, the degree of semantic fusion, that is the presentation of one event by two verb forms, is never certain. Whether ‘one looks and goes or searches’ or whether ‘one presses and touches or examines’ depends on the object, alternative

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2 For further references, theoretical discussion and refined definitions see Crowley (2002:8–23), Déchaine (1993), Durie (1997), Foley (1986:113–128), Lynch (1998:147–148, 175–177), Senft (2004).

constructions, the frequency, the construction used, the art of translation by the linguist, that is the availability of a natural or logically defined descriptive or meta-language. Fifth, while some prototypes may be ubiquitous, variability and even instability may characterise the less common types of pairing; thus, equivalents of Yale *edo balamla* ‘he is searching’ can be found in Eipo, while Yale *boosalelamla* ‘he is examining’ is language specific.

Variation and instability can be positively termed alternation or stylistically conditioned variability. A small child may say:

- (12) (Yale)  
*E-lam-ok, ba-lam-ok.*  
 look-DUR-3SG.PAIII go-DUR-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘He looked around, he went.’

He or she may learn to say

- (13) (Yale)  
*E-lam-ok-di ba-lam-ok.*  
 look-DUR-3SG.PAIII-then.SS go-DUR-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘He looked around, and then he went.’

- (14) (Yale)  
*E-do ba-lam-ok.*  
 look-INF.SIM go-DUR-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘He went, looking around.’ (or: ‘He was searching.’).

Finally, another alternation may show up:

- (15) (Yale)  
*Ebe-ba-lam-ok.*  
 look-go-DUR-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘He was searching.’

Alternations or stylistically conditioned variations like this one are the theme of this contribution. It will illustrate a few alternations between discourse, grammar and the lexicon. No cross-linguistically valid definition of verb serialisation is given; instead, within a single language and within two closely related languages, the interplay between grammatical structures, semantic clarifications and elaborations should be described. Loosely successive pieces of information aligned in clause-chaining structures develop into cohesive serialised structures or into systematically interdependent grammatical units, and serialised structures develop into fixed formulas for routines or into compounds (see Bisang 1994:178, Bradshaw 1993, Hale 1991:30); besides probably being a structure of its own, verb serialisation seems to be a transfer and trading centre for other structures. Chains of ‘go-take-come-take-give’ events show up in the description of everyday routines and events, especially in children’s narratives. The same chains make their appearance in verb serialisation and compounding. A relation between preferred ways of speaking and ways of enriching the grammar and the vocabulary is maintained.<sup>3</sup> Not

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3 The work is based on published and unpublished texts: Heeschen 1990, about 300 pages of new Eipo texts, about 1000 pages of Yale texts, and about 150 hours recorded time of children’s narratives. There is an imbalance in the data: the grammar of Eipo is extensive, the one of Yale is only a sketch, there are ample and large collections of children’s tales in the Yale language, while there only a dozen fairy tales told by Eipo children.



structures, but the likelihood of movements from one domain into the other, from discourse to clauses and from clauses to word formation are described. Section 2 will offer some remarks on the morphology and syntax of verb serialisation and related structures, §3 will try to present an inventory of serial constructions, §4 has to cope with the difficulty that children's words and worlds do not display the riches of adult's speech. Ironically, restricted structures — that is what is not yet existing — and their ways of being elaborated may shed some light on why and where verb serialisation comes into being.

## 2 Remarks on the morphology and syntax of verb serialisation in Eipo and Yale

Most Eipo and Yale verb stems end in *-b-* or *-k-* (see *bongob-* and *tek-* in (1) and (2)). An infinite verb indicating simultaneity with the finite verb is formed by suffixing {*de, re*} (see (3)) or {*nin*}<sup>4</sup> in Eipo, by {*do*} in Yale (see (4)); the stem final consonants are either kept or dropped (see (3) and (4)). The non-final stems in compounds are either dropped or changed into *-l-* (see *boo-* in (5) from *boob-* 'to press' and *dol-* in (6-9) from *dob-* 'to take'). The infinite verb indicating successivity suffixes {*uka, uke*} in Eipo (see (1)–(2)); the Yale language suffixes either {*i*} or {*om*}.<sup>5</sup> A third suffix is developing from the contraction of the suffix {*ok*} for 'third singular remote past' (see (12)–(14)) and the connective *aka* 'after, then, with' (see (11)). In (16) the final finite verbs show the suffixes for '3 dual remote past' and do not agree with the preceding *-oka-* forms, though no switch reference occurs, which presents evidence for a reduced, generalised function of the *-oka-* forms. The example also shows that the Yale language (as well as Eipo) develops generic or even auxiliary verbs as carriers of the tense-person-number-suffixes after long chains of serial constructions; *leb-*, originally 'to speak', is here simple 'to do'. Conversely, such auxiliary verbs favour the development of chains of infinite verbs and serial constructions (see also (18)).

(16) (Yale)<sup>6</sup>

*Pam* *o-do*,            *yob-oka*,            *kaelb-oka*,  
 pig   kill-INF.SIM   cook-INF.SUC   cut-INF.SUC  
  
*de-do*            *aka*   *leb-dek-di*,            *mab-dek*.  
 eat-INF.SIM   then   do-3D.PAIII-then.SS   sleep-3D.PAIII  
 'The two of them killed a pig, and having cooked and cut it,  
 the two of them ate it, and then the two of them slept.'

In the light of what has to be said on how to differentiate clause-chaining from verb serialisation, the two following complex examples only seem to be serialised structures. Nevertheless, they show that the frame and routine 'one subject acting upon one object' together with a diminishing importance of the successivity of the events is the very place at which syntactic and semantic fusion occurs (see especially (17)). New events and the appearance of new actors are set apart from serialised structures (see especially (18)). On the other hand, everyday events which are part of firmly established sequences, but which cannot be fused because of syntactical impediments (e.g. switch reference) and semantic incompatibilities are, at least and, so to say, tentatively, united in one intonational strain (see (19)).

4 (3) could also be *dibnin tekmal* (see also (76)–(77)).

5 (11) could also be *dobom aka balamla*. For more details see Heeschen (1998:259–260, 1992a:28).

6 Henceforth serial constructions are underlined in larger bits of texts.

(17) (Yale)

*Ane ua u-lam-ek anekona,*  
 here be.V.ROOT be-DUR-3PL.PAIII here.N

*pam o-do yo-do de-do aka*  
 pig kill-INF.SIM cook-INF.SIM eat-INF.SIM then

*danena, me anekona pam o-do yo-lam-ok*  
 and boy here.N pig kill-INF.SIM cook-DUR-3SG.PAIII

*danena, pam o-do kalelob-i aka*  
 and pig kill-INF.SIM cut-INF.SUC then

*danena, li-do boa ba-lam-ok*  
 and put-INF.SIM carry.V.ROOT go-DUR-3SG.PAIII

*danena, Yakoli kou-do bi-ok.*  
 and Yakoli cross-INF.SIM go-3SG.PAIII

‘While they lived and lived here, they killed a pig, cooked it, ate it, and then, this boy, he killed the pig and was cooking it, he killed the pig and having cut it, he put it into the netbag, carried it and walked, and he crossed the Yakoli river.’

(18) (Eipo)<sup>7</sup>

*Larye asik kil ton, sal ton u-lam-dudak.*  
 Larye hamlet woman one man one be-DUR-3D.HORT

*U-lam-dik-irye, wa web-uka, koub-uka,*  
 be-DUR-3D.MED-and garden make-INF.SUC plant-INF.SUC

*deb-uka u-lam-dik-irye, el kil winiryuk*  
 eat-INF.SUC be-DUR-3D.MED-and he woman new

*kaib-mak-e-buk, kwadam-lul.*<sup>8</sup>  
 marry-DUR.3PL.PRES-and-though.DS be.shy-3SG.HORT

‘In the Larye hamlet, a woman and a man may be living. While they may have lived, and while they may have made gardens and may have planted and consumed (the harvest), they had married the woman to him, but she still may have been shy.’

(19) (Yale)

(spoken in one breath or intonational strain:)

*Yob-ek-di, de-ek-di, mab-ek-di,*  
 cook-3PL.PAIII eat-3PL.PAIII sleep-3PL.PAIII

*ma-lam-ek-ba, kwelek-lam-ok-ba, ba-lam-ek.*  
 sleep-DUR-3PL.PAIII-when.DS dawn-DUR-3SG.PAIII-when.DS go-DUR-3PL.PAIII

‘They cooked, then they ate, then they slept, and they were sleeping, and when it was dawning, they were leaving.’

The above described and illustrated morphological means (unfortunately) are the same in chaining and serialised structures. Yet chaining and serialisation can be kept distinct by

7 This is the beginning of a fairy tale. In Eipo they are told in the hortative-deliberative mode, see Heeschen (1998:258).

8 For *kwadab-*.

paying attention to the whole of features and not so much to logical definitions: features overlap, definitions ‘delimit’ or exclude each other.

First, the serialised unit can be a mere verbal stem (see (4)); the chained unit is always morphologically marked (by means of the morphemes described in the beginning of this section).

Second, the serialised unit neither takes an aspect suffix nor is it itself a lexicalised or grammaticised compound. For example, verbs taking the verb *dongob-* ‘to lie on top, to put into’ as a second member in compounds denote the inchoative manner of action or the incipient stage of an enduring action,<sup>9</sup> thus, having stood, one sits down:

- (20) (Eipo)  
*Buk-dongob-ma-l*  
 sit-INC-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is sitting down.’

Consequently, a chained unit is likely to occur in (21), while (22) is certainly a serial construction.

- (21) (Eipo)  
*Buk-dongob-uka ban-ma-l.*  
 sit-INC-INF.SUC. go-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘Having sat down, he is (already) leaving (again).’

- (22) (Eipo)  
*Buk-de ban-ma-l*  
 sit-INF.SIM go-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘(The small child) is moving on his or her seats.’

Third, temporal overlap, i.e. simultaneity, lends itself to serialisation, while temporal sequencing of events, i.e. successivity of events, suggests clause-chaining (see again the different structures in (17)–(18) and the preceding examples (21)–(22)). However, in background information and in descriptions sequencing is less emphasised in favour of expressing a ‘Gesamtvorstellung’ (Wundt) (see the changes from *-do-* forms to *-oka-* forms in (16) and (17) and the Eipo *-uka-* forms in (18)). Temporal sequencing can be stressed again, sequences like Yale *odo, yodo, dedo mabek* ‘killing, cooking, eating, they slept’ vary with *odo aka, yodo aka, dedo aka mabek* ‘after killing, after cooking, after eating, they slept’. The single event character is stressed by Eipo speaker by non-obligatorily inserting sentence-medial forms of *ab-* ‘to make’, thus the *-uka* series as found in (18) turns into the following structure:

- (23) (Eipo)  
*Wa web-uka ab-dik-irye, koub-uka*  
 garden make-INFF.SUC make-3D.MED-and plant-INF.SUC  
*ab-dik-irye, deb-uka ab-dik-irye u-lam-dudak.*  
 make-3D.MED-and eat-INF.SUC make-3D.MED-and be-DUR-3D.HORT  
 ‘The two of them may have been making garden, and after that they may have been planting, and after that they may have been eating up the harvested things.’

9 For further details and other grammaticised compounds see Heeschen (1992a:25–26, 1998:238–246). The forms and semantics of compounding in Eipo and Yale are almost identical.

Fourth, same subject and same object are prerequisites for serialisation (see schange of subject in (18)). All kinds of sequencing, whether overlap or succession, turn into instances of chaining, when different objects are presented. Heightened transitivity entails chaining, while detransitivisation may override chaining features. The series consisting of Yale *odo*, *yodo*, *dedo mabek* ‘killing, cooking, eating, they slept’ turns into a chained structure with one agent acting upon different things:

- (24) (Yale)  
*Pam o-do, mana o-do, yo-do,*  
 pig kill-INF.SIM cuscus kill-INF.SIM cook-INF.SIM  
*kwaneng de-do u-lamek.*  
 sweet.potato eat-INF.SIM be-DUR3PL.PAIII  
 ‘They killed pigs, they hunted cuscus, they cooked (the pigs and the cuscus for the guests), and they (themselves) ate sweet potatoes.’

Fifth, no other constituents, especially no connectives, may separate the serialised unit from its finite verb base (see the possible role of *aka* in (17) and (18) and of *-iryē* ‘and’ in (23)). Though Yale *madikdo ya-* ‘to come blocking, to ward off (spirits)’ is a good pairing, serialisation is excluded by the intervening adverbial phrase in the following instance:

- (25) (Yale)  
*Pia aniko madik-do, ae-ak ya-lam-ek.*  
 spirit up.there block-INF.SIM hut-at come-DUR-3PLPAIII  
 ‘They blocked the spirits up there, and they came back to the hut (the men’s house).’

The step from chaining to serialisation is that from multiple events to paired or fused events, and it goes together with reducing the possibilities of subject-tracking, the number of objects handled by one or by different agents, and with limiting the range of temporal sequences. Within such chains some collocations are more likely to occur than others, and such sequences and pairings may become serial verbs and, eventually, compounds or, at least, clause chaining varies with verb serialisation. I found seven criteria for distinguishing between verb serialisation and compounding in Eipo and Yale (Heeschen 1998:231–232). The most important are as follows:

First, the morphology of compounding and that of infinite verbs used in serialisation is distinct (see changes of verb stem in (4)–(6) and the morphemes listed in the beginning of this section). Second, in contrast to serial units compounds juxtapose verb stems or are formed by means of derivational suffixes (see {al} in (29)). Third, no indication of *consecutio temporum* occurs. Compare:

- (26) (Eipo)  
*Yongob-uke sek-lam-ak.*  
 dig-INF.SUC cut-HAB-3PL.PRES  
 ‘Having dug, they cut.’
- (27) (Eipo)  
*Yongob-sek-lam-ak.*  
 dig-cut-HAB-3PL.PRES  
 ‘They dig and cut.’ (or: ‘They cut and dig.’)

Fourth, new meanings and syntactic functions develop (see (21) and (22), see also Bisang (1994), Crowley (1987), Heeschen (1998:231–246), Sperlich (1993)). Fifth,

[c]ompound verbs [or juxtaposed stems qua root serialisation, see next section] are either semantic clarifications of preceding primary verbs or they summarize a sequence of actions referred to in the preceding utterance by successively described events. Verb serialisation and clause-chaining are bound to sequencing, compounds to summarizing what is already known from the preceding discourse. (Heeschen 1998:232)

Alternations between chaining and serialisation and serialisation and compounding are well attested. For *carry – come* the following alternations are found:<sup>10</sup>

(28) (Yale)

*Bo-do aka ya-ok.*  
 carry-INF.SIM THEN come-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘After having carried, he came.’

*Bo-do ya-ok.*  
 carry-INF.SIM come-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘He came carrying.’

*Boa<sup>11</sup> ya-ok*  
 carry.V.ROOT come-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘He came carrying.’ (or: ‘He brought.’)

*Ba-ya-ok.*  
 carry.V.ROOT-come-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘He brought.’ (or: ‘He carried and brought.’)

I have found the following complete series of alternations in the Eipo language:<sup>12</sup>

(29) (Eipo)

*Dak-de<sup>13</sup> ba-lam-le*  
 break-INF.SIM go-HAB-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is going breaking (twigs, which is a kind of fertility ceremony).’

*Dake ba-lam-le.*  
 break.VSTEM go-HAB-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is going breaking (twigs).’ (or: ‘He goes and breaks twigs.’)

*Dak-ba-lam-le.*  
 break.VSTEM-go-HAB-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is going breaking (twigs).’ (or: ‘He goes and breaks twigs.’)

*Dak-al-ba-lam-le.*  
 break.VSTEM-DER-go-HAB-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is going and breaking (twigs).’ (or: ‘He goes in order to break twigs.’)

10 Taken from Heeschen (2001).

11 *Boa* may be shortened *bodo aka*.

12 Taken from Heeschen (1998:232) and Heeschen (2001).

13 Also with reduplication of the stem: *dakdak-de*.

The series begins with a form which clearly indicates verb serialisation (*dakde*) and which could be used in chaining, then proceeds to a structure in which euphonic *-e* (in *dake*) still reveals the independence of the stem from the following finite verb. This distinctiveness, that is, the status as a free morpheme, is lost in the third variation, and, finally, formal signs of compounding (the derivational suffix *-al-*) appear in the fourth variation. Other compounds may result from similar processes of fusion, that is from verb serialisation turning into a compound verb.

Since 2001 I have discovered a good number of series of alternations in addition to the two already published. Interestingly, such series do not only result from presenting data drawn from different sources and texts, but also from variations within pieces of information or narratives of just one speaker. This amounts to saying that alternations going from temporal sequencing to unmarked juxtaposition, from the independent meaning of the constituent parts to interdependence and establishing a new meaning are identical with summarising previous information, backgrounding, and describing instead of focussing on new events.

In the following example the narrator introduces step by step the component parts, finally summarising the single constituents and assembling them in one root serialising compound:<sup>14</sup>

- (30) (Eipo)
- Bongto dob-uk, lukunde do-be-(y)uk.*  
 Bongto take-3SG.PAIII night take-go-3SG.PAIII
- Kalik-le be-(y)uk, lukenyan*  
 sneak-INF.SIM go-33SG.PAIII night
- kalik-il-bin-m-uk. Berek-uk ora,*  
 sneak-DER-go-DUR-3SG.PAIII dawn-3SG.PAIII then
- dib-re bin-m-uk ora,*  
 see-INF.SIM go-DUR-3SG.PAIII then
- dil-kalik-il-be-(y)uk.*  
 see-sneak-DER-go-3SG.PAIII
- ‘He took (abducted) Bongto, he abducted and fetched her at night.  
 He walked and sneaked up, at night he went sneaking up. In the  
 morning he looked and walked, he looked around and sneaked up.’

Two times we find here an ideal progression from serialisation to summarising compounds or root serialisation: (a) from the primary verb *dob-* ‘take’ to the compound verb *dobe-* ‘to fetch’, from *dob-* ‘take’ and *bin-* ‘go’, (b) from the constituent parts via serialisation to the compound or serialised root *dilkalikbe-* consisting of *dib(ren)-* ‘look’, *kalik-* ‘bend, creep up’, and *bin-* ‘go’.

Yale speakers summarise chained or serialised sequences of ‘live, eat, sleep’ as follows (see (16) and (19)):

- (31) (Yale)
- Ua dea ma u-lam-ek.*  
 be.V.ROOT eat.V.ROOT sleep.V.STEM be-DUR-3PL.PAIII
- ‘They lived, ate, slept.’

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14 Also in Heeschen (2001).

Finally, root serialisation results:

- (32) (Eipo and Yale)  
*de-mab-*  
 eat-sleep  
 ‘to eat and sleep’

Only two other examples shall illustrate this kind of variation and summarising; it quite often occurs in tail-head-linkage.

- (33) (Eipo)  
*Nabyalnang fanab-ik. Fanab-re*  
 Nabyal.clan depart-3PL.PAIII depart-INF.SIM  
  
*yan-am-ik-ine, fanal-ya-(y)ik ora [...]*  
 come-PERF-3PL.PAIII-SC depart-come-3PL.PAIII then  
 ‘The people of the Nabyal clan departed. When they had started (from their mountain of origin) and had been coming, they departed and came [...].’

- (34) (Eipo)  
*Tamub-uke bin-ma-l. Tamul-bi-lye-ora [...]*  
 return-INF.SUC go-DUR-3SGPREs return-go-3SG.MED-then [...]  
 ‘He returns and goes. Turning back [...].’

The processes of summarising and fusion can be reversed. All speakers, whether children or grown up people, may fall back to series of finite verbs for the sake of unequivocal sequencing, variation, and vivid narration and due to the restrictions put on non-final infinite verbs. One should never forget the means competing with verb serialisation. Instead of saying *salebdangdo kwalildalamdek* ‘touching each other, they had sexual intercourse’ Yale speakers prefer:

- (35) (Yale)  
*Saleb-da-dek-di, kwalil-da-lam-dek.*  
 touch-REFL-3D.PAIII-then.SS fuck-REFL-DUR-3D.PAIII  
 ‘They touched each other and then they were having sexual intercourse (with each other).’

### 3 Inventory of serial constructions in Eipo and Yale: functions and semantics

When examining the dictionaries (Heeschen 1992a and Heeschen and Schiefenhövel 1983) and reading the Yale and Eipo texts (see note 3) one may come to the conclusion that there is a bewildering unclassifiable diversity of functions and semantic possibilities which could only be handled by dictionary compilers eager to add new collocations, wordings, and lexicalised items into their lists. Indeed, as to its mere size, a complete list of verb serialisations could be compared to a dictionary containing all verbs and verb phrases. However, some common pairings like

*take or do something – carry* and  
*act upon something – move*

have emerged. The following remarks are an attempt at finding and describing some more patterns. Movements from clause-chaining to verb serialisation result in the semantic

patterns described below. The non-final infinite and morphologically marked verbs depend on the clause or sentence final verb; the cohesiveness of the constituent members of a series can be evaluated by alternations which show whether the infinite components can be (re)transformed into finite verbs. Thus (3) *dibre tekmal* ‘he is standing, looking’ can be transformed into *dibrenmal ora tekmal* ‘he is looking, and then he is standing’. The first version can be thought of as a ‘Gesamtvorstellung’ (Wundt) or as a macro-event (see van Staden and Reesink this volume; Senft this volume) consisting of two components their temporal sequence having been temporarily abandoned. The second version re-introduces the temporal sequencing of two events. In my terminology the second version could be a clarification of the first one, while the first version is a condensed structure compared to the second one. In Eipo and Yale serialisation depends on the main finite verb (dependent verb serialisation, see van Staden and Reesink this volume) and shifts between referring to one macro-event and sequences of events. The first pattern consists of a

serialised (intransitive) verb	+	finite verb
referring to manner of		referring to movement
movement or bodily activities		or position in space

For example:

- (36) (Yale)  
*Keme-do sek-lam-la.*  
 look-INF.SIM stand-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is standing, looking.’
- (37) (Yale)  
*Bolo-do ya-lulom!*  
 come.together-INF.SIM come-2PL.HORT  
 ‘You may come together.’
- (38) (Eipo)  
*Ngaluk-de ban-m-ik.*  
 astonish-INF.SIM go-DUR-3PL.PAIII  
 ‘They walked, being astonished.’

The second pattern consists of a

serialised (transitive) verb	+	finite verb
referring to human		referring to movement
activities		or position in space

For example:

- (39) (Eipo)  
*Tokwe falib-nin ba-lam-uk.*  
 soil dig-INF.SIM go-HAB-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘He was digging (in) the soil.’
- (40) (Yale)  
*Asak anu so-do ya-ok.*  
 hamlet down.there build-INF.SIM come-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘He came, building the men’s house down there.’



The third pattern consists of a

serialised (transitive) verb referring to human activities	+	finite transitive verb referring to human activities, e.g. carry, put, give, take, etc. (activities of transfer)
--	---	--

For example:

(41) (Eipo)

*Aik menek-uka ob-ma-si lam.*

hut prepare-INF.SUC take-DUR-2SG.PRES

‘You are building the hut (having prepared the necessary parts).’

(42) (Yale)

*Pam aneko-di nimi manga-do beib-ok.*

pig here.N-S man give.birth-INF.SIM put-3SG.PAIII

‘This pig gave birth to man and put him down (created him).’

Sequences of serialised ‘take’ + finite transitive verb result in a special pattern. The clause containing ‘take’ is the equivalent of an instrument noun phrase, for example, Eipo *yin dobuka pam obuk* ‘having taken a bow, he killed the pig’, that is ‘he killed the pig by means of bow and arrow’. From the three patterns two other features of the chaining-serialising difference emerge. Intransitivity goes together with simultaneity and semantic fusion (see especially (37)), while transitivity goes together with succession and chaining. But this does not exclude the possibility that the sequence *mangado beibok* (42) is one macro-event. It is an event-formula sometimes coming close to meaning ‘found’. Such formulas or pairings are abundant in the Eipo and Yale language. While the members in the preceding patterns are ‘dependent coordinated’ and usually do not change their meaning — at least the original meaning being still recoverable or transparent —, the serialised members of other sequences are quite often habitually aligned to the following finite verb, other serialised verbs developing into equivalents of directional adverbs or modal/manner adverbs. This yields two other patterns. The fourth pattern is defined by the restriction that the human activity referred to by the pattern only relates to one object.

The fourth pattern consists of:

one object or class of objects	+	serialised transitive verb referring to that object and to human activity	+	a finite transitive verb referring to that object and to human activity
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For example.

(43) (Eipo)

*Kwaning bok-uke di-lam-ak.*

sweet.potato distribute-INF.SUC eat-HAB-3PL.PRES

‘Having distributed sweet potatoes they eat.’ (or: ‘They share sweet potatoes.’)

- (44) (Yale)  
*Lela aksu-do lab-lam-ang.*  
 leave bend-INF.SIM spread-DUR-3PL.PRES  
 ‘They bend the leaves (of the *kabye*-tree) and push them (in between the braces of the roof.)’ (or: ‘They construct a roof.’)
- (45) (Yale)  
*Sae dom bek-do nonok-lam-ang*  
 hand index fix-INF.SIM point.out-DUR-3PL.PRES  
 ‘They are pointing their finger to someone.’ (or: ‘They are accusing someone of something.’)

The fifth pattern consist of fixed pairs, of tandems, the first member being the equivalent of directional adverbs or modal/manner adverbs.

object	+	serialised	+	finite verb
related to		verb		
the finite				
verb				

As to the serialised verb, verbs referring to complex activities like showing, thinking, pointing, making something straight, doing something well or wrong are to be found in this position. There seems to be no formal and semantic restriction on the finite verb. For example:

- (46) (Eipo)  
*Saboka kidik-uke areb-se.*  
 tobacco get/lost-INF.SUC give-1SG.PAIII  
 ‘I mistakenly gave the tobacco.’
- (47) (Eipo)  
*Me merek-uke ob-ma-l*  
 boy correct-INF.SUC beat-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is rightly beating the boy.’
- (48) (Yale)  
*Yubu pa-do le-lam-la.*  
 speech make.straight-INF.SIM speak-DUR-3SG.PRES  
 ‘He is speaking correctly (or possibly: He is criticising someone or something).’

In conjoined, juxtaposed, or compounded verbs the patterns of verb serialisation originating from chaining are found again. The last order stem may indicate movement or position, transferring or handling of objects, or any transitive verb, while the first order stems refer to movement, manner, vertical direction, or human activities denoted by transitive verbs. More than two stems can be conjoined. Some last order stems are grammaticised and indicate manner of action (see Heeschen 1992a:25–26, 1998:231–246). The patterns do not go beyond what is known from other languages. Thus examples like Yale *diwalengk-* ‘to look up’ from *dib-* ‘to see’ and *walengk-* ‘to come up’ or Eipo *boereb-* ‘to carry upward’ from *bob-* ‘to carry’ and *ereb-* ‘to lift’ form part of what is described for other languages. Here I will restrict myself to describe just one emerging pattern of grammaticalisation and four unusual or, maybe, culture-specific ways of conjoining stems.

First, the last order stem can be Eipo *areb-* ‘to give’ or Yale *-ad-* from *dad-* ‘to give’. The compounds non-obligatorily stress the fact that there is a noun phrase designating the beneficiary. The use of these compounds is a polite way of speaking, thus (50) could be said by a young woman to her husband who leaves for the hunting grounds. When he returns, she will cook for him sweet potatoes somewhere in the middle of his way back, in remote garden areas or even in the lower forest. The forms are variations determined by style.

(49) (Eipo)  
*Nukna ton nuk-areb-ma-ki-n.*  
 fairy tale one tell-give-DUR-you-1SG.PRES  
 ‘I am telling you (for you) another fairy tale.’

(50) (Yale)  
*Kwaneng yob-ad-ke-nun*  
 sweet.potato cook-give-you-FUT.1SG  
 ‘I will cook sweet potatoes for you.’

Second, one would not hesitate to correlate an environment, in which high mountains, steep slopes, and deep valleys exclude plains and even paths, with verbal structures which abundantly refer to ups and downs and to vertical movements and directions. Why not correlate the life of social groups who sit around a fire or an earth oven or who sit around in their huts, constantly facing each other, talking, sharing, and giving to each other, with the following conjoined verbal stems:

(51) (Yale)  
*bu-wadek-*  
 sit-put.around or go-around  
 ‘to sit in a round or circle’

(52) (Yale)  
*de-wadek-*  
 eat-put.around or go.around  
 ‘to eat being seated in a round’

(53) (Yale)  
*dad-el-wadek-*  
 give-DER-put.around or go-around  
 ‘to give around, to give from one to the other’

In the light of these compounds, which depict social life, one should evaluate forms which refer to ‘being apart’, ‘staying around’ and one may feel the disappointment of someone who is not included in the ‘circles’ of sitting and eating:

(54) (Yale)  
*de-sek-*  
 eat-stand  
 ‘to eat and stand (to have finished eating when another person comes for whom nothing is left)’

Third, in a world without sophisticated tools and where fingers, toes and teeth are valuable instruments, touching and grasping may be the only way of exploring and

manipulating objects. In both languages, in Eipo as well as in Yale, there are numerous verbal structures whose last order stem is Eipo *taleb-*, Yale *saelb-* ‘to grasp, touch’:<sup>15</sup>

- (55) (Eipo)  
*fanab-taleb-*  
 make.visible-grasp  
 ‘to grasp s.th. so that it is made visible, to reveal s.th.’
- (56) (Eipo)  
*ib-taleb-*  
 veil-grasp  
 ‘to hold s.th. hidden (in the hollow of the hand)’
- (57) (Yale)  
*kadeb-saelb-*  
 cut-seize  
 ‘to seize and cut, to scrape together (food)’
- (58) (Yale)  
*somo-saelb-*  
 embrace-seize  
 ‘to seize by, or while embracing, to to keep s.th. in s.o.’s arms’

Fourth, the ancestors tried out a lot of things, numerous enterprises were in vain; Eipo and Yale speakers delight in describing how something is missed or erroneously or carelessly done. The last order stem Yale *lob-* ‘to leave, to omit’ is grammaticalised, the compounds designate that sth. is carelessly, incompletely done or disconnected from presupposed routines,<sup>16</sup> for example, Eipo *eib-lob-* ‘to cast a cursory glance’ from *eib-* ‘to look’ and the morpheme {lob}. The last order stem can also be a primary, not yet grammaticalised verb, Eipo *menteb-*, Yale *mekneb-* ‘to miss’. The resulting compounds or conjoined structures designate vain or false trials.

- (59) (Eipo)  
*buk-menteb-*  
 sit-miss  
 ‘to sit trying out seats, to sit incorrectly’
- (60) (Eipo)  
*yob-menteb-*  
 fuck-miss  
 ‘to fuck and miss’ (to have sexual intercourse with s.th. unsuitable: in the beginning the women had no vagina and the ancestor tried out rocks and trees and so on)
- (61) (Yale)  
*kib-menteb-*  
 greet-miss  
 ‘to salute each other (after building the men’s house by playfully striking together the stone-adzes)’

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15 See also (5)

16 The same last order morpheme {lob} is found in Eipo, the formations and the meanings are identical, however, no primary verb *lob-* can be found.

Fifth, a lot of conjoined structures cannot be classified according to semantic criteria. The juxtapositions are idiosyncratic and sometimes very culture-specific. The structures summarise previous bits of information. The characteristics of temporal sequencing are suspended and only the semantic features are summarised, and run together, in one word. Having spoken about the rules of begging in times of famine, having paraphrased several times the rule *if you are hungry, you may beg*, in which the verbs *fatab-* ‘to lack, to be hungry, to desire, to long for’ and *morob-* ‘to beg’ show up, the speaker coins the compound

- (62) (Eipo)  
*Fatab-morob-*  
 lack-beg  
 ‘to lack and beg’

Acts of helping occur during movements through one’s world and while carrying things, heavy pieces of wood or heavy netbags. To look after someone, to carry another person’s burden (though you never watch it and talking about is never heard), to collect firewood, and to go together are acknowledged acts of helping and sociability. In a fairy tale a man and a woman may ironically argue about what should be carried by whom. Incidentally, a summarising structure makes its appearance:

- (63) (Eipo)  
*Bob-melib-nam-ki-n.*  
 carry-help-FUTIII-you-1SG  
 ‘I will carry it for you and help you.’

Thus some serialised roots and compounds, which seem to be strange and which one would not expect to find in all languages, depict the ‘colours’, the sphere and essence of sociability and some peculiar features of a culture in the mountains of West Papua.

In the reality of speech and narration we find all patterns of serialisation and conjoining stems mixed, combined or woven into each other. Here the first pattern consists of two compounds, the first unusual and depicting an everyday routine, the second grammaticised.

- (64) (Eipo)  
*Buk-falab-uka      ba-lo-lam-ne.*  
 sit-appear-INF.SUC go-INC-HAB-1SG.PRES  
 ‘Waking up suddenly I dizzily walk around.’

The next instance combines the second and third pattern:

- (65) (Yale)  
*Kui      lek-do      boa      ya-lam-ok.*  
 sugar.cane break-INF.SIM carry.V.ROOT come-DUR-3SG.PAIII  
 ‘I have broken a sugarcane and I came and carried it (or: and I brought it).’

And the last example gives a complex event spoken in one intonational strain. In primordial times brothers belonging to a *basam mem yala*, ‘a clan who is not allowed to eat pork’ have slaughtered a pig for guests. One of them cannot refrain from trying out pork. The series consist of a transitive infinite compound indicating succession, a grammaticised infinite compound indicating overlap, an infinite primary verb indicating overlap, and the final finite verb. The series is an expanded instance of the second pattern:

(66) (Eipo)

*Basam mek betekbetek an-m-uk-ak,*  
pig water drip make-DUR-3SG.PAIII-at

*am toub-taleb-uka deib-donge*  
taro cut-seize-INF.SUC put-INC.V.STEM

*mutub-re buk-ab-uk.*  
lick-INF.SIM sit-PERF-3SG.PAIII

‘Where the juice of the pork dripped down, he had cut and seized a piece of taro, put it down (into the juice) and sat there licking (the juice).’

#### 4 Children’s worlds and words

Children give accounts of everyday walks and doings. The accounts refer to routines. The following instance is a sequence of pure routines. ‘To come together with the young pigs’ is a routine, too, though we may be inclined to think of it as an extraordinary event. However, the direct speech acts usually announce dramas: going somewhere, parting, staying somewhere alone will always arise a conflict between the children and the parents, and for a good number of fairy tales this will be the initial conflict. In Yane’s account another important event is mentioned: the construction of a suspension bridge. Bridges unite, are meeting places, their destruction is an interruption of everyday routines and walks. Evidence for verb serialisation is almost negative. We find only the compound *boabe-* or *bolbe-* ‘to carry and go, to fetch’. The only series which could be suspected to be verb serialisation resumes previously introduced references. Instead of chaining and serialisation temporal sequences of finite verbs and deictics are found. This is the scene on which mature narrators will stage events, it is an almost meaningless sequence into which adventures will be inserted.

(67) (Yale, Yane Yalak, aged 7 to 8)

*Mab-obo aneko ambohum aneko dane*  
sleep-1PL.PAII here.N yesterday here.N<sup>17</sup> here.PL

*u-lam-nomo-di, na “sumene dau*  
be-DUR-1D.PAII-when.SS I today down.there

*bukab,”<sup>18</sup> se-no danena,*  
go.1PL.FUTIII say-1SG.PAII and

*dau bi-bo danena, kwaneng olok eb-a-bo*  
down.there go-1PL.PAII then sweet.potato few look-DER-1PL.PAII

*danena, Deklouke bi-bo danena, yob-a-bo danena,*  
then Deklouke go-1PL.PAII then cook-DER-1PL.PAII then

*de-bo danena, ya-bo danena, mab-obo-a*  
eat-1PL.PAII then come-1PL.PAII then sleep-1PL.PAII-after

*kwelek-a-o danena, pam me kwaneng*  
dawn-DER-3SG.PAII then pig young sweet.potato

17 Hence glossed DET ‘determiner’.

18 From the verbal stem + suffix *-ukab*.

*moob-a-hi-o*                    *danena u-lam-obo*                    [...].  
 rear-DER-us-3SG.PAII then      be-DUR-1PL.PAII      [...]  
  
*Danena u-lam-obo*                    *danena, mab-obo*                    *danena,*  
 then      be-DUR-1PL.PAII then      sleep-1PL.PAI then  
  
*kwelek-a-o*                    *danena, “nun-na asak u-lam-nu-nam,”*  
 dawn-DER-3SG:PAII then      we-Q      hamlet be-DUR-FUT-1D  
  
*se-nomo danena, “u-lam-dudom!”*      *se-o*                    *danena,*  
 say-1D.PAII then      be-DUR-2D.HORT      say-3SG.PAII then  
  
*“ambohum bu-nu-am-ab-di-na,*                    *doke*      *bol-bi-lam-nu-n*  
 tomorrow      go-FUT-PERF-1PL-when.SS-Q      doke<sup>19</sup>      carry-go-DUR-FUT-1SG  
  
*dano,”*      *se-o*                    *danena bol-bi-lam-obo.*                    [...]  
 across.there      say-3SG.PAII then      carry-go-DUR-1PL.PAII [...]  
  
*Del-a-nomo-ak kain-ong*<sup>20</sup>      *ka*<sup>21</sup>      *ya-o*                    *danena,*  
 eat-DER-1D.PAII-at      mother-ADD      woman come-3SG.PAII then  
  
*doke bo-do*                    *beia*                    *ya-o*                    *danena, de-bo.*  
 doke      carry-INF.SIM      put.V.ROOT      come-3SG.PAII then      eat-3SG.PAII  
  
*Danena ya-bo.*                    *Ya-lam-obo-a.*                    *In dalak ya-bo*  
 then      come-1PL.PAII      come-DUR-1PL.PAII-after      In banks come-1PL.PAII  
  
*danena, mak wao sob-ong*                    *danena, pam me*                    *ab*  
 then      river bridge build-3PL.PAII then      pig young and  
  
*ya-bo*                    *danena, asak ane ya-bo.*  
 come-1PL.PAII then      hamlet here come-1PL.PAII

‘We slept, and while the two of us were around here yesterday, I said: “We will go down there!” And we went down there, and we looked for some small sweet potatoes, and we went to Deklouke (across up there), and we cooked and ate, and we came back again and slept, and afterwards it dawned, and she (her friend or sister) cared for our young pigs (and gave) sweet potatoes,<sup>22</sup> and we lived [...] After that we slept, it dawned, and the two of us said: “We will stay in the hamlet,” and she (mother) said: “You two may stay! Tomorrow we all will have been going, I will go and carry *doke*-vegetables across there,” and we went carrying [...] Where the two of us ate, mother came, and she came and carried *doke*-vegetables and put them down, and we ate. And we came back. We were carrying (the young pigs), we came to the banks of the In river, (to the place where) they were building the bridge, and we came together with the young pigs, we came back to the hamlet here.’

Such accounts can be semantically or structurally more and more elaborated. Oni’s narrative, already called a *nebna* ‘tale’ ending with the closing formula of fairy tales refers to one of the most important events, namely the exchange of pig. In his account only

19 *Setaria palmifolia*, kind of vegetable.

20 Suffixed to kinship terms expressing tenderness, mainly in terms of address.

21 Generic after proper names and kinship terms.

22 Taking care of young pigs is one of the main duties of young girls.

*boabe-* ‘to fetch’ and two grammaticalised compounds make their appearance, one with *-ad-* ‘to give’ a last order stem (see (49)–(50)), the other one with *dob-* ‘to take’ which, as a last order stem, indicates that the action is done alone or in one’s own interest. Though the compound *boabe-* ‘to fetch’ is firmly established in the Yale language, it is an act of summarising even in this small text and is found in the tail-head-linkage joining the first and the second utterance. In the first utterance the component parts are single finite verbs. Final *yodo abu* ‘we cooked’ is formally really serialising, but *ab-* ‘to make, say’ has semantically bleached being only the carrier of the tense-person-number suffixes.

(68) (Yale, Oni Dibul, aged 7–8)

*Yale dau bi-numu danena, mumin kadeb*  
 east down.there go-1D.PAIII then aunt woman.and

*Siolo badeb<sup>23</sup> bi-bu danena, pam nu-di bob-ubu*  
 Siolo man.and go-1PL.PAIII then pig we-POSS carry-1PL.PAIII

*danena, bi-bu danena auwang badeb-di, paham*  
 then go-1PL.PAIII then mother’s.brother man.and-POSS pig

*aneko ob-ad-si-ek. Nu-di boa-bi-bu pam aneko*  
 DET kill-give-us-3PL.PAIII we-POSS carry-go-1PL.PAIII pig DET

*sin da-ek-di, sin-di pam aneko nun*  
 they become-3PL.PAIII-when.SS they-POSS pig DET we

*ob-ad-si-ek. Danena pam aneko nun yol-do-lam-ubu*  
 kill-give-us-3PL.PAIII then pig DET we cook-take-DUR-1PL.PAIII

*danena, nu-di boa-bi-bu pam aneko sin*  
 then we-POSS carry-go-1PL.PAIII pig DET they

*yol-do-lam-ek. Yo-do a-bu danena,*  
 cook-take-DUR-3PL.PAIII cook-INF.SIM make-1PL.PAIII then

*nu-na ya-lam-ubu-nge, wene nohon neb-na, kom, kom.*  
 we-Q come-DUR-1PL.PAIII now one tell-1SG.PAI not not

‘The two of us went far down there to the east, and we went together with mother’s sister and Siolo, and we carried our pig, and we went, and they killed (slaughtered) for us mother’s brother’s pig. The pig we carried, they took possession of it, but as to their pig, they slaughtered it for us. We only cooked the pig (for us and not for mother’s brother relatives), but the pig we carried, they cooked for themselves. After cooking, we came back, and I have told of this coming back, may it be nothing (which offends or annoys someone).’

In Yulianse’s *nebna* one serialising structure appears, the directional verb *yingk-* ‘to go down’ plus a verb of motion. The long sentence is still an instance of chaining, not yet of serialisation, each infinitive verb going together with an object of its own. After this chaining sequence of single events which in other accounts is run into one event, namely the ‘macro-event’ of activity around an earth oven the squeezing of the *Pandanus brosimus* is

23 Generic *ba* ‘man, male’ after proper names and kinship terms, see note 21, + *deb* ‘and’ used only after generic *ka* and *ba*.



excluded. It is done by some experts sitting at the periphery. Maybe, this has prevented the narrator from conjoining ‘heating, cooking, and opening’.

- (69) (Yale, Yulianse Pusob, aged 6)  
*Kwelek-a-o*            *aneko*, “*dausib*            *ken*<sup>24</sup> *yob-a-ukab*,”  
 dawn-DER-3SG.PAII DET down.there.side *ken* cook-DER-1PL.FUT  
*se-bo-di*,    *yingk-i-bu*                    *danena*, *yingkina*    *bi-bu*  
 say-1PL.PAII go.down-DER-1PL.PAIII then go.down.VN go-1PL.PAIII  
*danena*, *bad bo-do*,            *am mehe-do* *kwaneng* *yongo-do*,  
 then fern carry-INF.SIM taro cut-INF.SIM sweet.potato dig-INF.SIM  
*kal wede-do*    *ua-bo*            *danena*, *alneb-a-bo*            *danena*,  
 tree cut-INF.SIM be-1PL.PAII then heat-DER-1PL.PAII then  
*yob-a-bo*            *danena*, *dengk-a-bo*            *danena*, *ken*  
 cook-DER-1PL.PAII then open-DER-1PL.PAII then *ken*  
*wemb-a-ong*            *danena*, *de-bo*.  
 squeeze-DER-3PL.PAII then eat-1PL.PAII  
 ‘While it dawned, we said: “Down there we will cook the *ken*-palm,” and we went down, and climbing down we went, and we carried fern leaves (for the earth oven), we cut taro, we digged for sweet potatoes, we cut trees (for firewood), that is what we did, and we heated (the stones), we cooked, and we opened (he earth oven), and they squeezed the *ken*-palm, and then we ate.’

The narrators of the preceding examples were aged from 6 to 8. Up to the age of 15 all the structures we know from the previous sections are displayed, especially formulas consisting of two components (tandem patterns) referring to usually realised actions and routines as well as to combinations of the first three patterns (see (36)–(48)). I have collected all formulas found in children’s narratives being tempted to compile a thesaurus of everyday actions and routines. The list would be too long. I will only characterise some routines, some culture-specific formulas, incidentally illustrating ways of expanding the patterns of serialisation (see (36)–(48)), and finally ask questions which unfold from the data: what are important events according to the children’s wordings and why and where do they refrain from serialisations?

The young narrators insert formulas described above (67)–(69) into the chains and temporal sequences: (a) words and phrases related to carrying, bringing, and fetching, (b) serialised structures consisting of directional verbs and more or less generic verbs of movement. Children are always hungry. Being together, encountering trustworthy relatives, and sharing food are either necessary or highly esteemed. Whatever is hunted or harvested must be carried, prepared, kept, and distributed. The general background to all activities is time reckoning, eating and sleeping, that is the counting of days and night.

- (70) (Yale)  
*Ua*            *dea*            *ma*            *u-lam-ek*.  
 be.V.ROOT eat.V.ROOT sleep.V.ROOT be-DUR-3PL.PAIII  
 ‘They were living, eating, sleeping.’

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24 *Pandanus conoideus*, a palm species.

When the parents have left, smaller children are called to collect insects, roast them in hot ashes, tie them together and keep them in bamboo tubes.

- (71) (Yale)  
*Ma'i wanga-do u-lam-ubu.*  
 bamboo tie-INF.SIM be-DUR-1PL.PAIII  
 'We were living tying together (the insects) in the bamboo tubes.'  
*Wanga-do bob-si-ok.*  
 tie-INF.SIM carry-us-3SG.PAIII  
 'She carried for us (the insects) tied together.'

One eats and cooks together:

- (72) (Yale)  
*Maa-do yob-a-ek.*  
 unite-INF.SIM cook-DER-3PL.PAIII  
 'They cooked together.'

One shares:

- (73) (Yale)  
*Kale-do bok-si-ok.*  
 cut-INF.SIM share-us-3SG.PAIII  
 'He cut and shared it with us.'  
*Bok-do yaomb-a-ok.*  
 share-INF.SIM scatter-DER-3SG.PAIII  
 'He threw down his things and distributed them.'

One keeps food and other valuables:

- (74) (Yale)  
*Ak li-do silb-a-ok*  
 netbag fill-INF.SIM hang-DER-3SG.PAIII  
 'She filled the netbag and hang it up or away.'  
 (75) (Eipo)  
*Aleng lib-uka dirib-dongob-lul.*  
 netbag fill-INF.SUC hang-INC-3SG.HORT  
 'She may have filled the netbag and may have hanged it up.'

All these activities are self-evident so that narrators like to think about them as done by themselves or by unnamed agents, the events being woven into reflexivity and magic ease. In (77) *-ba* indicates switch reference, though no agent is available.

- (76) (Eipo)  
*Dare bob-da-nin ba-lam-uk-a, misa*  
 T carry-REFL-INF.SIM go-HAB-3SG.PAIII-and sago  
*luk-da-nin bob-da-nin*  
 hollow.out-REFL-INF.SIM carry-REFL-INF.SIM

*ba-lam-uk-a, bol-tak-al-be-ak.*  
go-HAB-3SG.PAIII-and carry-put-DER-3PL.PAI

‘As to what went carrying itself, it went carrying itself and hollowing out the sago (stem) by itself, and that is what they have carried and put down at another place.’

Six years old Yulianse says: in a fairy tale:

(77) (Yale, Yulianse Pusob, 6 years old)

*Asak bol-ingkina leb-ok-di,*  
hamlet carry-go.down.VN AUX-3SG.PAIII-when-SS

“*kaleb-da-e!*” *alok-ok-ba,*  
hew.off-REFL-2SG.IMPER say-3SG.PAIII-when.DS

*kaleb-da-ok, “kidik alneb-da-e!”*  
hew.off-REFL-3SG.PAIII stone heat-REFL-2SG.IMPER

*alok-ok-ba, kidik alneb-da-ok [...]*  
heat-REFL-2SG.IMPER stone heat-REFL-3SG.PAIII [...]

‘She carried it down to the hamlet and said (to the *yaluk*-nuts):  
“Hew off yourself!” And they hew off themselves, and she said  
(to the stones): “Heat yourself!” and they heated themselves [...].’

Contrary to what has been said on sociability, sharing, and being together, one must also and at times be prepared to ward off false claims and be able to hide and be invisible for undesired visitors. The concept of warding off is highly valued in the Yale language community.

(78) (Yale)

*Pam idik-do beib-si-ok.*  
pig block-INF.SIM put-us-3SG.PAIII

‘He put our pig (somewhere) blocking it (warded off the claims of relatives or trading-partners).’

One is always avoiding dangerous encounters and fleeing from spirits. Safe areas are important. Eipo children like to invent hiding-places:

(79) (Eipo)

*Kwelim yo fotok-lob-uk-lye-ak<sup>25</sup> arye,*  
kwelim tree perforate-INCOMP-ATT-3SG.MED-at from

*fotok-uka weleb-uke bun-ma-lul.*  
split-INF.SUC climb-INF.SUC sit-DUR-3SG.HORT

‘By having perforated the *kwelim*-tree, just a little bit and nicely,  
having split it and having climbed up he may be sitting (on top of the tree).’

For children encounters with ‘those who give’ are important and separations are catastrophes in the classical sense of the word: one is exposed to unnamed powers and spirits. The relatives’ speech and what the children’s kin give are always events, which are singled out and hardly put into backgrounding serialisation. In a series of routines the

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25 Putting verbs in the incomplete and attenuative manner of action is typical in fairy tales.

distant smoke of a hut announces encounters and adventures. Children are integrated in the realm of social life or secluded, beaten, and transformed into tiny animals. All this is expressed by sequences of events, which do not semantically merge. Formulas and compounds are lexicalised and serve the function of precision. Yoken's account illustrates temporal sequencing of events by means of coordination and finite primary verbs, while the two Eipo fragments show clause-chaining in order to capture the significance of dangerous encounters. The relative clause structures which develop in the first Eipo instance well agree with the backgrounding serialisation found in these clauses, while the formula of the final verb is almost lexicalised. In (81) sequencing is interrupted by another structure, by a clause which denotes no longer sequencing, but a causal relation. 'Temporal relations appear to be central in these [Papuan] languages and are extended metaphorically in other direction.' (Longacre 1985:265). In Eipo and Yale these extensions denote the limits of serialisation at the same time favouring the logical relations between events.

(80) (Yale, Yoken Yalak, aged about 8)

*Imas daed bi-bo danena, nei ba-di "asak wam-lulam!"*  
 Imas across.there go-1PL.PAII then father man-S hamlet stay-2SG.HORT

*se-o danena, enge-do neleb-si-no danena, mana*  
 say-3SG.PAII then weep-INF.SIM follow-us-1SG.PAII then cuscus

*solek nohon yob-a-bo danena, na-na yan aneko dad-ne-o,*  
 solek one cook-DER-PL.PAII then I-Q leg DET give-me-3SG.PAII

*auwang ba-di, winang mem winang usok aneko*  
 mother's.brother man-S bird taboo bird head DET

*dad-ne-ong-ba, Eneneas ba do-do a-o*  
 give-me-3PL.PAII-when.DS Eneneas man take-SINF.SIM make-3SG.PAII

*danena na-na mem winang sae aneko dad-ne-o.*  
 then I-Q taboo bird wing DET give-me-3SG.PAII

'We went across there to the Imas area, and my father said: "You shall stay at home!" But I wept and followed them, and then we cooked a *solek*-cuscus, and my mother's brother, he gave me a leg, and they gave me the head of the taboo pigeon, and Eneneas, he took it, and he gave me a wing of the taboo pigeon.'

(81) (Eipo)

*Isa arye yalsaue dipe dol-ob-uk-am-lye*  
 Spirit S fire.tongs soot take.out-INCOMP-ATT-PERF-3SG.MED

*dei-am-lye dob-uka kisoke fake donok-lul.*  
 put-PERF-3SG.MED take-INF.SIM forehead split.V.STEM throw-3SG.HORT

'The spirit, having taken out the fire-tongs out of the soot, (which) one has put there, he split the forehead by one blow.'

(82) (Eipo)

*Boblan terek-dongob-uka, el yuk boblan*  
 door shut-INCOMP-INF.SUC he alone door

*kukune gum, tubto aleng fum bisik mab-lul.*  
 open.V.STEM not again netbag in way sleep-3SG.HORT  
 ‘(The spirit) had closed the door, (the small boy) was not yet able to open it  
 by himself, and he may again sleep in the netbag.’

## 5 Conclusion: categories or alternations

The previous sections have suggested a relationship between narrative routines, clause-chaining, verb serialisation and verbal compounds (qua root serialisation). Evidence comes from variations and alternations as well as from characteristics of style which depend (a) on the age of the speaker, (b) the narrative genre, and (c) the place of the structures within one piece of information or narration, that is on whether the structures occur in the beginning where events unfold or at the end where events are retrospectively summarised.

Compared to the adult’s speech children show a restricted number of serial constructions: the prototypes

*take-come, go-take, carry-go*

and longer serialising constructions consisting of

*hunt* (birds or marsupials), *slaughter* (pigs), or *dig* (sweet potatoes) + *cook* or  
*prepare* (the earth oven) + *eat* + *sleep*.

Events which are singled out and rarely expressed through serial structure are encounters, direct speech, being hungry and alone, and activities of giving, taking, and sharing. All this seems to be trivial. Languages structures are supposed to be related to real life, its routines and adventures.<sup>26</sup> However, here a more or less weak correlation between specific structures and a specific culture and society are maintained, and looking back at the largely speculative ideas concerning language structure and world view, even a trivial and minor correlation can be gratifying. An unbridgeable discrepancy exists between the restricted number of serial constructions and the speakers’ livelyhood and fluency I remember from the times of recording. When small children tell stories everything assumes importance and event character. Children’s worlds and wordings show the starting-point for verb serialisation. Maybe, that some developmental steps in acquiring serial-construction competency can be described. What children narrate in apparently not yet stylistically varied wordings and communicative genres, is later differentiated into backgrounding recapitulations and accounts of event sequences. Background information, then, the constructions in the head of tail-head-linkages and piecing together previous information in summarising acts call into being serialised structures. They are promoted by (a) the activity of one agent on one object, (b) real or imagined simultaneity, (c) a conventionalised sequence of two activities in order to prepare or create one object, (d) the use of third person singular or plural of verb forms of the final finite verbs to which the serial structures are aligned, (e) the omission of aspect and manner of action, that is no use of grammaticised compounds, and (f) the reference to conventionalised, but nevertheless culture-specific activities which express doing something. for someone, being together in a circle, grasping and seizing and miss something.

Conversely, serialisation is not likely to occur in foregrounding presentation of events, in dialogues and shouting matches, where aspect, manner of action, use of first and second

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26 Here ‘adventure’ in the etymological sense of ‘encounter’.

singular and plural forms, that is reference to speaker and addressee, rapid changes of subjects and references to multiple and ever changing scenes and different times abound. This is also true for short, lively narrations, in which sequences of finite verbs occur (see (35)). One could think of a new kind of Menzerath's law: the shorter the tale, the more frequent the references to single events, the less frequent serial structures (see Köhler and Altmann 1986:259, Heeschen 1998:68).

Speakers make creative use of what seems to be style, rule or convention in Eipo and Yale grammar. In long fairy tales and in long autobiographical accounts an endless sequence of backgrounding informations seems to prevail. Single events are hidden in allusions, veiled speech, and metaphors: what is a single event, a peculiarity, or one individual's history, is represented as a general and all-bountiful event. In songs serial structures prevail, the sentence final verbs (pattern one verbs, see above §3) being stripped off their suffixes referring to person, number, tense, and mode. Nevertheless, the song only pretends to depict unimportant impressions and appeasing background information; the dramatic events — love, sharing, unsocial behaviour — must be reconstructed from clues given only by the semantics of single words and the ordering of the verses. Everyday events are foregrounded by, and singled out, by means of reflexification (see (76)–(77)).

Maybe, a look at structures and uses in only two language communities has enabled me to establish continua. Style mediates between chaining, serialisation, and compounding. The abilities of different age groups as well as the requirements of communicative genres direct the forming and use of structures. Some structures were correlated with the peculiarities of small communities living in the mountains of West Papua; correlating structures with the speakers' life moments assign psychological reality to terms used in typology. Seen from the point of view of methodology, translating, evaluating, and favouring floating terms was a philological proceeding, which tried to understand speech acts, that is, Hermann Paul's *usus*. It is suited for the taxonomy of ample collections and even almost complete ranges of examples including aberrant uses and individual idiosyncracies. It is not suited for writing grammars relying on clear and prototypical examples. Variation is attested, and narrative routines and otherwise clearly distinct narration or discourse types effect different uses and cause categories to shade into each other.

The philology of serial structures in Eipo and Yale should lead to contributing to rethinking the linguistic features of verb serialisation as well as to defining the enigmatic term 'event'. As to verb serialisation, drawing a distinction between clause-chaining and verb serialisation, on the one hand, and root serialisation and compounding, on the other, did not go beyond the tentative findings described in the Eipo grammar. Distinguishing between serial verbs and converbs would introduce a new question, namely that of subordination (see Bisang 1994, Haspelmath 1991, Lehmann 1988, Longacre 1985). This is neglected in this contribution.

As to a definition of 'event', one could be tempted to propose that a finite clause final or sentence final verb, which is not a compound and not preceded by serial structures, represents an event: going, coming, taking, giving, carrying and so on. This proceeding would lead to postulating about 400 possible events in Eipo. I have found about 2200 compound or otherwise formed non-primary verbs, in Yale there are about 1600 compounds or otherwise formed non-primary verbs. The 400 primary verbs would not correspond to the semantic primitives postulated by Wierzbicka (1995), no number for identified events, whether cohesive serial or loosely successive (see Hale 1991:30) or for overall events (Bradshaw 1993) could be given. Besides primary verbs and verbal

compounds there are probably an equal amount of conventionalised pairings and tandem patterns. In other language communities there are either a substantial amount of primary verbs or only about 100 (see Early 1993, Pawley 1987). In order to define an event one cannot, as I believe, start from the linguistic findings concerning the number of verbs and their underlying concepts. Verb serialisation is a matter of surface grammar, it does not give hints at what constitutes an event. The number of possible events could be reduced by looking for what can be backgrounded, for what can be summarised and for what is always important information and, accordingly, never backgrounded. The types and patterns listed in §3 and §4 would be a good tentative list.<sup>27</sup> Yet, this argument presents a hermeneutic circle: I have found some structures which could refer to events, in order to find what an event is I refer to the structures. This circle can only be avoided, if one ties structures and correlating events to basic human needs, rules of social life, and persistent cultural peculiarities. Thus moving around, giving, adventures, warding off, missing etc. represent events. Speakers refer to them making creative use of the grammatical forms, thus ‘events’ emerge, oscillate, disappear and flash up following the strain of words and forms which evoke, excite or lull into sleep or inattentiveness. Language is an excellent means of intentionally focussing on what is made or imagined to be important. In ‘phatic communion’, small exchanges and pure phonetic mumbling it is, unfortunately, a means of referring to non-events. ‘After cooking, eating, sleeping’ during the dark night, one looks forward to the next ‘dawning’, in order to ‘move’ and ‘start’, ‘encounter’ and ‘give’.

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27 Intentionally I do not discuss Senft (this volume) and van Staden and Reesink (this volume). The lines of disagreement and agreement shall be assessed by future work. Above all, this contribution is meant to present some new data of not well known languages.

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# 8 *Compact versus narrative serial verb constructions in Kalam*

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ANDREW PAWLEY

## 1 Introduction

Kalam is a language of Papua New Guinea which makes extensive use of serial verb constructions (SVCs), some of which are semantically quite elaborate, as in (1) and clause b of (2).<sup>1</sup> (In these and later examples from recorded discourse, **verb roots** appear in **bold face** in the Kalam text as do their English interlinear glosses.<sup>2</sup> Some of the cited verb series include verbal adjuncts or other modifiers; these non-verbal elements are underlined.)

- (1) *Basd skop **am** kmn **pak d ap ad** ñb-elgp-al, ...*  
g'father distant **go** animal **kill get come cook eat**-PAST.HAB.3PL  
'Our distant ancestors ... used to go, kill, bring back, cook and eat game mammals, ...' (*kmn* are the larger marsupials and arboreal rodents, which men hunt)
- (2) a. *Wel **d-l**,*  
oil **get**-SS.PRIOR  
'Having got oil,
- b. *yp **wik d ap tan d ap yap** g-s<a>p*  
me rub **get come ascend get come descend** do-PRES.PROG-SG  
'He is massaging me, using oil.' (or: 'He is giving me a rubdown, using oil.')

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1 For funding my linguistic and ethnographic research among the Kalam people (including some 16 months fieldwork between 1963 and 1993, together with work with Kalam speakers in Auckland and Canberra), I am indebted to the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the New Zealand University Grants Research Committee and the Papua New Guinea Biological Foundation.

2 Abbreviations are used in morpheme glosses of examples and in other contexts. The following abbreviations are used in morpheme glosses of examples and in other contexts: ART - article marking specific nouns; DL - dual; DRV - derivational suffix; DS - different subject as next verb; HAB - habitual; KHT - Kalam Hunting Traditions (see note 7); ITER - iterative; NEG - negative; PL - plural; PERF - perfect aspect; PAST - past tense; HAB - habitual aspect; Obj - direct object; PRES - present; PROG - progressive; PRIOR - prior action by same actor; SG - singular; SS - same subject as next verb.

Typically, the lexical nucleus of a SVC predicate consists of a series of bare verb roots, all occurring under a single intonation contour, with only the final verb carrying inflectional morphology (suffixes marking subject and tense, aspect or mood). There is no grammatical limit to the number of verb roots that can occur in sequence in a SVC. In practice — if we exclude iteration of verb roots to show repetition or continuity — the limit seems to be about nine or ten.

This paper will describe some syntactic and functional types of Kalam SVCs.<sup>3</sup> I will be particularly concerned with the questions: (a) when can a speaker use a SVC to encode a sequence or combination of conceptual events, i.e. what semantic, grammatical and discourse conditions must be met for this option to be available? and (b) when must a speaker use a SVC, i.e. what conditions require it?

I will also address critically some claims that have been made about Kalam, and indeed about SVCs across languages in general, namely that:

- (i) SVCs always describe a single conceptual event.
- (ii) The main function of SVC in Kalam (and many other languages) is to augment a limited stock of verb roots. Evidence for this is said to consist of (iii) and (iv).
- (iii) The semantic structure of SVCs typically corresponds to that of simple lexical units in non-serialising languages.
- (iv) Serial verbs are co-lexicalised or co-grammaticised.

There are a good many SVCs in Kalam for which, I think, claims (i)–(iv) are dubious. What can be said with confidence is that Kalam SVCs provide an elegant and streamlined mechanism for depicting certain kinds of event sequences or clusters using the argument structure and intonation contour of a single clause, and that they are constructed using well defined semantic formulae, some of which are fairly complex.

SVCs may be classified in various ways according to the weight given to particular semantic and grammatical criteria. It is useful, initially, to distinguish two broad types which I will refer to as compact and narrative SVCs.<sup>4</sup> A **compact SVC** expresses a sequence of conceptual events that are tightly integrated, grammatically and semantically.<sup>5</sup> Compact SVCs are strictly V-serialising, i.e. no other morphemic material can occur between the verb roots. The verbs in the SVC share a single argument structure and the scope of negation and modifiers is always over the whole SVC. Some, perhaps most

3 Kalam SVCs have been the subject of a number of descriptive studies, including Lane (1991), Pawley (1987, 1991, in press), Pawley and Lane (1998), as well as comparative typological studies, e.g. Durie (1997), Foley (1986), Givón (1990, 1991). By far the most detailed study is Lane (1991) and parts of the analysis presented in this paper draws on that work. The main generalisations to be made here about Kalam also apply to its sister and immediate neighbour, Kobon (Davies 1981).

4 Some SVCs have claims to belong to both major types, e.g. *am d ap-* (go get come), ‘fetch’ and *tk ay pk ay-* (give.birth finish strike finish) ‘commit infanticide’.

5 ‘Compact’ SVCs correspond approximately to those which Bohnermeyer (1999) and van Staden and Reesink (this volume) say express a ‘macro-event’ by means of ‘component serialisation’. A macro-event consists of a number of sub-events which together express a tightly-bound complex event. The term ‘macro-event’ is due to Len Talmy, who proposes a typology of predicates denoting macro-events based on the assumption that one sub-event plays the role of ‘framing event’ and another plays the role of ‘co-event’ (Talmy 1985, 2000). The element that expresses the framing event determines (to a large extent) determines the morphosyntactic structure of the predicate and its argument structure and the co-event carries more specific lexical content. This typology does not comfortably accommodate some types of SVCs.

compact SVCs cannot be readily paraphrased by a multi-clause construction. Many, though by no means all are translatable by a simple or phrasal verb in English.

While most compact SVCs contain two or three verb roots, they are not limited to this range. Further examples of verb series that occur as the predicate nucleus of compact SVCs are given in (3) (A hyphen follows the final verb root in a citation form verb series, indicating that this verb carries inflectional suffixes.)

(3) Some compact SVC verb series

*d am-* (get go) ‘take’, *d ap-* (get come) ‘bring’, *d ap tan d ap yap-* (hold come ascend hold come descend) ‘move back and forth’, *ptk am-* (fear go) ‘flee’, *kn am-* (sleep go) ‘drift off to sleep’, *ag ñ-* (say transfer) ‘tell’, *ag ask-* (say avoid) ‘refuse’, *ag nŋ-* (say perceive) ‘ask’, *ag slok-* (say slip.off) ‘reneg’, *ag g-* (say do) ‘insist, command’, *ag ay-* (say stabilise) ‘make an appointment, ask s.o. to stay’, *d nŋ-* (touch perceive) ‘feel’, *ñb nŋ-* (consume perceive) ‘taste’, *pk cg-* (strike adhere) ‘attach, stick on’, *puŋi ju yok* (insert withdraw move.away) ‘prise out’, *taw puŋi tb tk-* (step press cut intercept) ‘apply the (foot)brake, step on the brake’, *tk ay pk ay-* (give.birth finish strike finish) ‘commit infanticide’.

**Narrative SVCs**, by contrast, express a sequence of more loosely integrated events which together make up an episodic event sequence.<sup>6</sup> Examples of narrative SVCs appear in (1) above, and in (4) and clauses (5b) and (5c) below.

- (4) ...*mj bep tk d ap nb okyaŋ yok-l*, ...  
 leaf plant **pick get come** place below **throw-SS:PRIOR**  
 ‘having picked, brought back and tipped *bep* leaves down (in an oven pit)’  
 (KHT Ch.1, para.72)

Example (5), from a text about dogs hunting wallabies, contains in clauses (b) and (c) two parallel series of nine verb roots.

- (5) a. ... *kayn ak ney awsek am-ub*,  
 dog the he alone **go-3SG.ITER**  
 ... the (hunting) dog goes out alone,
- b. *ñn ak ognap wt-sek d ap tan*  
 day the some pursuing (adv.) **get come ascend**  
*d ap yap g g suw-p*,  
**get come descend** d do bite-ITER.3SG  
 some days he goes about chasing all over the place and makes kills,
- c. *ñn ak ognap wt-sek d ap tan d*  
 day the some pursuing **get come ascend get**  
*ap yap g g met nŋ-l*,  
**come descend do do** not **see-SS.PRIOR**  
 some days after chasing (animals) back and forth and not having caught any,

6 My use of ‘narrative SVC’ for this type of construction follows the lead of Heeschen (2001) and van Staden and Reesink (this volume). The essential features of narrative SVCs in Kalam were described in Pawley (1987), Lane (1991) and Pawley and Lane (1998), where we referred to them as ‘episodic event sequences’ and ‘multi-scene event sequences’.



poultry and supplement these with hunting and gathering. The first government patrols into Kalam and Kobon territory did not take place until the mid 1950s.

Kalam and Kobon belong to the Trans New Guinea (TNG) family, which has upwards of 400 member languages. Except for a branch in the Timor area of Indonesia, TNG languages are confined to New Guinea and offshore islands. In terms of its grammar, lexical semantics and discourse structure Kalam and Kobon are fairly typical TNG languages, although they are fairly unusual in the small size of their verb root stock and in having extremely elaborate narrative serial verb constructions.

Kalam has a number of well-differentiated regional dialects, the main division being between the Etp dialect, spoken mainly in the Simbai and Upper Kaironk Valleys, and the Ti dialect, spoken in parts of the Upper Kaironk, in the Asai Valley and other valleys on the northern slopes of the Schraders to the west of the Asai. Unless otherwise noted, examples cited in this paper are from the Ti dialect as spoken at Gobnem and Womuk in the Upper Kaironk Valley.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2 Word classes

The principal parts of speech in Kalam are verbs, verb adjuncts, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. The first two categories are of particular importance for the discussion of SVCs.

**Verb roots** are a closed class with about 130 members. Verb stems cannot be derived from other parts of speech. The morphological and syntactical properties of verbs are highly distinctive. Verbs are the only part of speech to carry inflectional suffixes marking tense, aspect or mood, subject person-and-number, and switch reference. Coordinate-dependent verbs (also known in the TNG literature as ‘medial verbs’) are marked for switch reference, i.e. same or different subject or topic relative to the following verb in the sentence.

With such a small stock of verb roots available how do Kalam speakers manage to talk about a wide range of verbal concepts? Part of the answer, though only a small part, lies in polysemy. The Kalam dictionary distinguishes an average of about three senses per verb root. Speakers may have only 130 verb roots but they can draw on at least 400 verb root senses.

The small verb inventory goes along with some noteworthy limitations on verb root semantics. There are only two verb roots denoting sound-making including speech: one very specific, *wok-* ‘bark, howl (of dog)’, the other very general, *ag-* ‘make a sound, say’. There is only one verb of consumption, *ñb-* ‘ingest, eat, drink, smoke’. There is only one verb of perception and cognition, *ny-*, although this has many different senses. There are several verbs of motion along a path but no verbs denoting concomitant movement of an object along a path, e.g. no verb roots meaning ‘bring’, ‘take (to a place)’, ‘fetch’, ‘push’, ‘pull’, and none denoting manner of movement of a rooted object, such as ‘swing’, ‘sway’, ‘vibrate’, ‘tremble’, ‘duck’ and ‘nod’.

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7 Most of my fieldwork was done in an Etp dialect area and ‘citation form’ examples, as in (3), (6), (14)–(17), are in the Etp dialect. However, example (1) and most other Kalam text fragments cited here are taken from *Kalam Hunting Traditions* (Majnep and Bulmer 1990, n.d.), where Majnep’s Kalam text is in Ti Mnm. The chapters are edited transcripts of original spoken texts recorded on tape; the chapter number is followed by the paragraph number.

Transitive verbs include a few three-place verb roots and a larger number of three-place complex predicates. Intransitive verbs divide into active and stative classes (in terms of macro-roles, those taking an actor subject and those taking a patient subject).

About 15 verb roots account for nearly 90 percent of verb root tokens in text and about 35 verbs account for 98 percent of all verb tokens. The following are 25 common verb roots, all of which recur in example sentences cited in this paper. Glosses are necessarily approximate.

(6) Some common Kalam verb roots

<i>ad-</i>	‘cook in an oven made with layers of hot stones’
<i>ag-</i>	‘say, speak, make a sound’,
<i>agl-</i>	‘heat, cook on an open fire’
<i>am-</i>	‘go, proceed, move away, pass into a certain state, go out, exit’
<i>ap-</i>	‘come, appear’
<i>ask-</i>	‘free from or avoid constraint’
<i>d-</i>	‘control, constrain, touch, manipulate, get, take, have, hold, stop, restrict’
<i>g-</i>	v.i. ‘occur, happen, function, work’ v.tr. ‘do, make, operate’
<i>jak-</i>	‘stand, reach, attain’
<i>kn-</i>	‘lie down, sleep’
<i>l-</i>	v.i. ‘become, stabilise, change into’ v.tr. ‘put, place, set down, form on, settle, put aside for s.o.’
<i>md-</i>	‘be, exist, stay, live’,
<i>nŋ-</i>	‘perceive, be conscious, aware, awake, see, hear, smell, feel, know, understand, think, learn, believe, etc.’
<i>ñ-</i>	‘transfer, give, connect, attach, fit, apply to a surface’
<i>ñŋ-</i>	‘consume, eat, drink, inhale, chew, suck up, nip, spike’
<i>pag-</i>	v.i. ‘break, be changed in shape, bend, fold, chip, etc.’
<i>pak-</i>	‘contact firmly, hit, kill, daub, nudge’
<i>puŋi-</i>	‘press, poke, pierce’
<i>su-</i>	‘bite, sting, peck, kill by biting’
<i>tag-</i>	‘go on an excursion, go about, walk about, travel, be on one’s way to a place’
<i>tan-</i>	‘ascend, go up, climb, grow, swell up’
<i>tb-</i>	‘cut, chop’
<i>tk-</i>	‘sever, separate, make a gap, break off (certain plants) with the fingers, intercept, interrupt’
<i>yap-</i>	‘descend, fall’
<i>yok-</i>	v.i. ‘move, move away, go away’ v.tr. ‘move s.th., remove or displace s.th, discard, dispose of, get rid of, throw away’

The small stock of verb roots is augmented by a large body of complex predicates, to be discussed below. Complex predicates have two or more heads. There are two main kinds of complex predicate: serial verb constructions and verb adjunct phrases (see below).

**Adverbs.** Adverbs freely modify verbs or verb phrases. Adverbs may be roots, e.g. *monmon* ‘freely’, *kasek* ‘quickly’, *kapkap* ‘slowly, carefully’, *kamget* ‘silently, stealthily’, *si* ‘illegally’, or may be derived from verbs, e.g. *adk-d* (turn.back-DRV) ‘turning back, reversing’, *bin-tek* ‘woman-like’.



**Verb adjuncts.** Verb adjuncts are uninflectable roots which occur in complex predicates referred to here as verb adjunct phrases (VAPs). The verb adjunct phrase may fill a verb root slot in a serial verb construction. A particular verb adjunct occurs only, or primarily, as the predicate partner of a small number of verb roots and carry more specific meaning than the verb root. In the following examples (both in Etp dialect) the verb adjuncts are underlined, the verb roots are in bold, and the whole verb adjunct phrase is bounded by square brackets.

- (7) Kalam  
*Sawan* [guglum **ag-ig**] *k-j-a-p*.  
 Sawan snore **say**-SS.SIM sleep-PRES.PROG-3SG  
 ‘Sawan is asleep, snoring.’ (Pawley and Bulmer 2003:135)
- (8) *Pa-skoy* [si *etp-nen* **ag-a-k**]?  
 girl-small crying what-for **say**-SG-PAST  
 ‘Why did the girl cry?’

Semantically, many verb adjuncts resemble prototypical verbs, others nouns or adverbs/adjectives. In their syntactic behaviour verb adjuncts differ sharply from canonical verbs, nouns and adjectives but to some extent resemble defective nouns and adverbs. Verb adjuncts are like adverbs in being modifiers of verbs. However, they differ from typical adverbs in several respects: (a) adding a verb adjunct in some cases creates a complex predicate with a different argument structure from the verb root alone, whereas adverbs do not affect the valency of the predicate phrase, (b) an adverb can combine with many different verb roots whereas a verb adjunct can combine only with a very restricted set, (c) adjuncts can take at least some adjectival modifiers but adverbs cannot, (d) adverbs modify the verb qualitatively and in a general sense, e.g. for speed, intensity or purposefulness, whereas verb adjuncts modify the verb in a different way, typically specifying a particular kind of action, process or state that can be considered a subtype of the broader category of event specified by the verb, and (e) the scope of verb adjuncts is restricted to the verb, whereas adverbs may modify the whole VP.

**Nouns.** Nouns can occur as arguments of a verb. Common nouns have a number of subclasses, some of them open. Personal and place names are each open classes. Except for certain locative nouns (denoting spatial relations) nouns typically are morphologically simple.

**Personal pronouns.** There are two main sets of free-form personal pronouns: the Subject (or nominative) and Object (or accusative) sets. Both refer, except in special circumstances, only to animate beings. The most basic forms in each pronoun set are given below (Etp dialect).

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1DL	2DL	3DL	1PL	2PL	3PL
Subject	<i>yad</i>	<i>nad</i>	<i>nuk</i>	<i>ct</i>	<i>nt</i>	<i>kikmay</i>	<i>cn</i>	<i>nb</i>	<i>kik</i>
Object	<i>yp</i>	<i>np</i>	<i>nup</i>	<i>ctp</i>	<i>ntp</i>	<i>kuypmay</i>	<i>cnp</i>	<i>nbp</i>	<i>kuypp</i>

Object pronouns are used both for canonical direct objects and for indirect and dative objects. Possessive pronouns are drawn from one or the other of these sets, according to whether the possessive phrase is the grammatical Subject or Object.

### 2.3 The structure of verbal clauses

A verbal clause consists minimally of a verb inflected for TAM and subject (where TAM and subject may be relative, not absolute).

In canonical transitive clauses the distinction between NPs representing the core grammatical relations, Subject, Direct Object, Indirect Object, is usually well-marked by morphological and/or syntactic means. Because zero anaphora is normal for established topics, transitive clauses often occur without overt objects. Nouns representing Subject and Object often occur without a determiner. Locatives and Goals may either precede or follow the verb. In transitive clauses the canonical word order is SOV, as in (9) and (10).

(9) *Bin kaj-nup piow-la-k.*  
 woman pig-it.Obj search-3PL-PAST  
 ‘The women searched for the pig.’

(10) *An np ñ-a-k?*  
 who you.Obj give-3SG-PAST  
 ‘Who gave (it) to you?’

Departures from SOV word order are common. For example, a focused Object (animate or inanimate) can precede an animate Subject. Direct Objects occasionally follow the verb. When the Object is animate and the Subject is inanimate the Object usually comes first. Indirect Objects usually precede Direct Objects.

For Locative phrases both SLV and SVL orders are common. For semantically transitive verbs of locomotion and posture, which conceptually require a Goal or Location, there is a case for treating Locatives (including Goal) NPs as Direct Objects. Clear cases of peripheral arguments include Time and Instrument, as well as Locatives of certain classes of verbs. Peripheral phrases other than Time usually follow Objects. Seldom does a simple verbal clause contain a peripheral Instrumental NP. Usually the Instrument role is coded as a Direct Object in a separate ‘instrumental’ clause. For known Subject and Object NPs zero anaphora is the norm, though this is more strongly marked in narratives than in thematic discourse. There is evidence for recognising an extended Verb Phrase constituent, consisting of verb plus arguments other than subject.

### 2.4 Forming complex sentences by clause chaining, with switch-reference marking

Because there are parallels between the structure of narrative SVCs and the formation of certain kinds of complex sentences, it is necessary to say something about the latter here.

Like speakers of many TNG languages, the Kalam like to describe event sequences in long, paragraph-sized sentences, by chaining a series of dependent clauses followed by a final independent clause. (Such dependent clauses were labelled ‘coordinate-dependent’ by Foley and Van Valin (1984) because they do not occupy a slot in a matrix clause.) Each of the non-final clauses ends in what Papuanists often call a ‘medial’ verb. This is a coordinate-dependent verb that carries a suffix or suffixes marking switch reference i.e. marking the subject of the verb as having the same referent (SS) as, or a different referent (DS) from that of the next verb in the sentence. In Kalam the subject-markers also mark the time of the medial verb as being prior to, simultaneous with or after that of the final verb. All verbs marked for different subject also carry separate suffixes marking absolute person-number of their subject. Only a few types of of same subject verbs do so.

In (11) the first clause is marked for different subject, as its subject (*tap* ‘sickness’) is different from that of the second clause (the speaker).

- (11) *Ned yp tap g-e-k, kum md-elgp-in.*  
 first 1SG.Obj sick do-DS-PRIOR incapacitated stay-PAST.HAB-1SG  
 ‘After getting sick I convalesced for a time.’ (lit. ‘first sickness affected me and then I remained incapacitated’)

Like (5) above, example (12) shows a sequence of coordinate-dependent clauses, (b–h), marked for same subject followed by an independent clause, (i).

- (12) a. ... *aps-basd yad md-elgp-al won ok*  
 grandparents my live-PAST.HAB-3PL time that  
 at the time my grandparents were alive,
- b. *kmn nen gos ny-l,*  
 kapul after thought perceive-SS.PRIOR
- c. *am-l,*  
 go-SS.PRIOR  
 having planned to go after game mammals, having gone out,
- d. *km tap nb ogok ti ti d-l,*  
 kapul food like those what what obtain-SS.PRIOR  
 having gathered various plants for (cooking with) game mammals,
- e. *ad ñb-l,*  
 oven.cook eat-SS.PRIOR
- f. *kn-l,*  
 sleep-SS.PRIOR  
 having cooked them in an earth-oven, having camped overnight,
- g. *am-l,*  
 go-SS.PRIOR
- h. *ap-l,*  
 come-SS.PRIOR
- i. *g-elgp-al ak,*  
 do-PAST.HAB-3PL that  
 having gone out and come back they used to do (those things:  
 cooking and eating the food)
- j. *mñi ag-ngab-in.*  
 now say-FUT-1SG  
 I am going to describe.

‘I’m now going to describe how, in the time of my grandparents, when people planned to hunt kapuls, they went out and gathered certain plants and cooked and ate them, after having slept overnight (in the forest), they would go out and come back (to base) and do these things.’ (KHT Intro, para.1)

### 3 Mainly a grammatical typology: canonical SVCs and other types

Certain grammatical, semantic and phonological characteristics are common to some kinds of compact SVCs and some kinds of narrative SVCs. Constructions that exhibit these characteristics will be referred to as ‘canonical’ SVCs. This will allow us to define other classes according to how they differ from the canonical type.

#### 3.1 Characteristics of canonical SVCs

Canonical SVCs have the following grammatical, semantic and phonological characteristics.

##### Grammar

1. SVCs contain two or more verb roots but only the last is inflected. All other verbs consist of a bare root or a unit made up of a verb adjunct and a bare root.
2. No subordinating or coordinating morphemes occur within the construction.
3. There is only one overt subject, coded on the inflected verb and (in some cases) also by an NP.
4. All transitive verb roots share the same direct object.
5. The argument structure of the SVC is no more complex than that of the most complex of its constituent verb roots.
6. The same verb root or sequence of roots cannot occur successively.
7. There can be only one negative morpheme per verb series and this has scope over the whole SVC (see below).
8. Non-verbal clitics and particles which can be postposed to inflected verb stems (such as *tek* ‘like, positive question marker’, *akan* ‘or, alternative question marker’), can only follow the final (inflected) verb in a series.

##### Semantics

1. The verbs (with their arguments) denote a series of acts or events that, taken together, form a single coherent semantic unit.
2. All the acts of roughly equal semantic importance, i.e. no act is singled out for highlighting or elaboration.
3. All the acts are performed by the same actor.
4. The acts are either all asserted or all denied.
5. The order of the verb roots matches the temporal order of the events which they denote.
6. Each verb root retains its lexical sense (or one of its lexical senses), as opposed to a bleached or grammaticalised sense.

##### Phonology

The verb series is normally spoken under a single intonational contour, without internal pause.

Note: In a compact SVC the negator is placed before the whole verb series and can even precede the direct object. In a narrative SVC the negator most often precedes the final verb but can precede the whole verb series, as in clause b in the following example (Etp dialect).

- (13) a. *Mon gogeb-mageb g-p,*  
tree twisted **do**-PERF.3SG
- b. *tap ognap kotp ma-tb dad ap g-p-ay.*  
things some house NEG-cut carrying come **do**-PERF-3PL  
'Trees that are twisted, they don't cut (these) down for house timbers.'  
(lit. 'Trees that are twisted, house materials not cut carry come they make.')

Let us now consider SVCs that differ from the canonical type.

### 3.2 Cause-effect SVCs with V1 and V2 having different logical subjects

This SVC type departs from the canonical type in one important respect. There are two primary constituents, V1 and V2 and V1 has a different logical subject from V2. The logical subject of V2 is the object of V1, but that logical subject is never expressed. Instead the two share the same surface subject and object. This sort of mismatch is cross-linguistically familiar: the SVC adopts the argument structure of the initial, transitive verb, while that of the second, intransitive verb, is ignored. In this respect the two verbs behave like a single compound transitive verb.

The V1 slot may be filled by a single verb root or a series of verb roots. The final verb in V1 is semantically transitive, representing an action on an affected object. The V2 slot may be filled by an intransitive verb or a series of intransitive verbs which specifies the state or position of the affected object. The cause-effect relation between V1 and V2 belongs to the construction as a whole not to any one constituent. It is a conventional implicature, based on the temporal ordering of the verb roots and the events they represent.

There is a simple way of testing whether or not V1 and V2 in a SVC have the same logical subject: paraphrase the SVC by a two clause switch-reference construction, in which V1 and V2 each carries its own inflections. The verb in the first clause will then be marked for same subject or change of subject.

There are at least two partly distinct subtypes of cause-effect SVCs, exemplified by (14) and (15).

- (14) **Change of state.** A transitive verb of contact precedes an intransitive verb with patient subject.

<i>pk cg-</i>	(strike adhere)	'stick s.th. on, cause s.th. to adhere'
<i>pk ju-</i>	(strike withdraw)	'knock s.th. out of position'
<i>pk sak-</i>	(strike break off)	'knock (piece) off'
<i>pk sug-</i>	(strike extinguished)	'put out (a fire)'
<i>pk wk-</i>	(strike be shattered)	'knock s.th. to bits, shatter s.th.'
<i>pug sug-</i>	(blow extinguished)	'blow out (flame)'
<i>puji ask-</i>	(pierce open)	'prise s.th. open'
<i>puji lak-</i>	(pierce split)	'split s.th. by wedging or levering'
<i>su pag yk-</i>	(bite broken open)	'bite s.th. and break it open'
<i>su wk-</i>	(bite shatter)	'crush s.th. with the teeth, bite to pieces'
<i>tb pag-</i>	(cut broken.off)	'cut and break s.th. (as a chipped blade)'

- (15) **Displacement.** In the second type, the agent of V1 does something which changes the position of the affected entity, physically or figuratively. It is followed by a verb of movement along a path, which the construction requires be interpreted as displacement of the affected object.

<i>ag yok-</i>	(say displace)	‘send s.o. away, dismiss s.o.’
<i>d yok-</i>	(get displace)	‘throw s.th.’
<i>d am yok-</i>	(get go displace)	‘get rid of s.th., take s.th. away’
<i>lug dad am-</i>	(slide <u>carrying</u> go)	‘slide s.th. along’
<i>pk lug yok-</i>	(strike slide displace)	‘brush or sweep s.th. away’
<i>puji md-</i>	(press stay)	‘stick s.th. in position’
<i>tb yok-</i>	(cut displace)	‘cut s.th. away or out’
<i>ag ask yok-</i>	(say avoid displace)	‘avoid talking about (a topic)’
<i>sak yap-</i>	(detach fall)	‘break off and fall, fall to bits’
<i>sog ask-</i>	(pour free)	‘pour s.th. out, empty s.th. by pouring its contents’
<i>su ju-</i>	(bite withdraw)	‘extract s.th. by biting’
<i>su tk-</i>	(bite sever)	‘bite s.th. off’
<i>taw lug-</i>	(step.on slide)	‘push away with the feet’
<i>taw pag yok-</i>	(step.on broken displace)	‘break off by pushing with the foot’
<i>tb kluk yok-</i>	(cut gouge displace)	‘gouge out (the centre of s.th.)’
<i>wsk ask-</i>	(untie free)	‘set s.th. free, release, untie, take off (e.g. tight clothing)’

### 3.3 Do-support SVCs

This type, in which the final verb is *g-* ‘do, make’, departs from canonical transitives in that the final verb forms a constituent by itself, semantically coordinate with a constituent made up of the rest of the SVC nucleus. The final verb is not the final event in a sequence. Instead it indicates that the subject performs all the act(s) denoted by the preceding verb root(s).

There are two main types of do-support construction. In one type it is not possible to omit *g-*. In this type, represented in (16) the final verb is a compound, consisting of an adverb, usually *tep* ‘good, well’ or *tmey* ‘bad, badly’, or a verb adjunct, plus *g-*.

- (16) do-support SVCs with adverb or verb adjunct + *g-*

<i>ag tep g-</i>	(say <u>well</u> do)	‘say properly, speak clearly’
<i>ay tep g-</i>	(put <u>well</u> do)	‘organise or tidy things, put in order’
<i>da tag tep g-</i>	( <u>carrying</u> go.about <u>well</u> do)	‘look after s.o. well’
<i>g tep g-</i>	(do <u>well</u> do)	‘do s.th. well’
<i>md tep g-</i>	(exist <u>well</u> do)	‘live well, live in peace, etc.’
<i>nj tep g-</i>	(think <u>well</u> do)	‘know s.th. well, think s.th.’
<i>d puji kuskus g-</i>	(hold poke <u>revolving</u> do)	‘screw s.th., press on s.th. and make it revolve’

In the other type, exemplified in (17) and also in clauses b and c of (5), the final verb *g-* can be omitted with little change in meaning.

## (17) Other do-support SVCs

<i>ññloŋ ay g-</i>	( <u>playfully</u> put do)	‘tease (s.o.), pretend to do s.th.’
<i>pug dad ap tan</i>	(sniff <u>carrying</u> come	‘pick up a scent and follow it around
<i>ap yap g-</i>	ascend do)	(as a dog does)’
<i>puŋl ap tan ap</i>	(pierce come ascend	‘lose one’s way, get lost and wander
<i>yap g-</i>	come descend do)	about’
<i>tb lak d ap g-</i>	(cut split get come do)	‘cut and bring (timber)’
<i>wik d ap tan d</i>	(rub touch come ascend	‘massage s.o., give s.o. a rubdown’
<i>ap yap g-</i>	touch come descend do)	
<i>pug ju ap tan</i>	(dislocate exit come ascend	‘break out of confinement, come out
<i>ap yap g-</i>	come descend do)	and wander around’

## 3.4 Negative marker negates final verb only

There is a type of SVC where the negative clitic *ma-*, or, more commonly, its emphatic variant *met*, negates only the final verb (or verb phrase) in a series and thus allows this verb to be singled out or foregrounded for special attention. This use of negation can only occur in a narrative (multi-phrasal) SVC, typically one in which the actor does something repeatedly but in the end fails to achieve his goal. It is exemplified in example (5), clause (c), and in the following (Ti dialect):

- (18) a. *am jak-l, ...*  
 go reach-SS.PRIOR  
 ‘having arrived (at the hunting area)
- b. *g tag tag met ny-l, ...*  
 do go.about go.about not find-SS.PRIOR  
 and repeatedly traversed it and not found (any game), ... ’

## 3.5 Aspectual SVCs

Several different verb roots can directly follow another verb root, marking the completion or continuation of an activity. The most common completive verb is *d-* ‘hold, control, get, touch, stop’, others are *ju-* ‘withdraw’, *ktg-* ‘leave, refrain’, *l-* (*ay-* in Etp dialect) ‘put, become stable’ and *tk-* ‘sever, cut off, cross’. *md-*, whose lexical senses are ‘exist, stay, persist’, is used to mark continuation. (See also discussion of iteration in §3.6.) Aspectual verbs are on their way to becoming inflectional suffixes. However the change from verb to aspectual suffix is not complete. Aspectual verbs cannot occur as the sole aspect marker. They must be followed by a tense- or aspect-marking suffix, as in (19a)–(19c) (Etp dialect).

- (19) a. *Mnm ag d-p-in.*  
 talk (n.) say hold-PERF-1SG  
 ‘I have finished talking.’/‘That’s all I have to say.’
- b. *Mnm ag d-sp-in.*  
 talk (n.) say hold-PRES.PROG-1SG  
 ‘I have just finished talking.’

- c. *Mnm ag d-ng g-sp-in.*  
 talk (n.) **say hold-SS.FUT do-PRES.PROG.1SG**  
 ‘I am about to finish talking.’

It appears that aspectual SVCs depart from canonical SCVs in two respects. First, the final verb, which carries the inflection, is used not in any of its full lexical senses but as an aspectual or quasi aspectual marker. Second, the aspectual verb does not denote the final event in a sequence of events. It has scope over the whole series of verb roots that precede it. Evidence consistent with this interpretation is that a final, aspectual verb in a verb series cannot host the negative clitic. The clitic must precede the whole verb series. Thus (20a) is grammatical but (20b) is not.

- (20) a. *Mnm ma-ag nŋ d-p-in.*  
 talk (n.) **NEG-say perceive hold-PERF-1SG**  
 ‘I have not yet finished asking.’
- b. \**Mnm ag nŋ ma-d-p-in.*  
 talk (n.) **say perceive NEG-hold-PERF-1SG**  
 ‘I have not yet finished asking.’

In some verb series there are clear semantic differences between the completive markers. For example, there is a contrast between *ay-*, which often indicates that the patient is affected permanently or completely by the action, and the other completive verb roots, *d-*, *ask-*, *ju-*, *kbi-* and *tk-*, which indicate that the action itself has finished, e.g. *pk d-* (hit hold) ‘finish hitting, stop hitting’, *pk ay-* (hit put) ‘hit and kill, beat to death’. There are, in some contexts, clear differences between the kinds of completion marked by different members of this latter set of five verb roots. Some aspectual SVCs may be viewed as part of a larger class of SVCs in which the verb roots denoting successive phases of a single activity (see §3.7). Compare the following, in which *ag-* ‘say, etc.’ is the initial verb:

- (21) Some verb series with final verb of completion or continuation

<i>ag d-</i>	(say hold)	‘finish talking, complete what one has to say’
<i>ag ju-</i>	(say withdraw)	‘1. stop talking, stop making a noise. 2. make a noise then depart’
<i>ag ay-</i>	(say put)	‘tell s.o. to remain, make an appointment, i.e. tell s.o. to be at a place’
<i>ag tk-</i>	(say sever)	‘1. abruptly stop talking, 2. interrupt s.o.’s talk’
<i>ag tk d-</i>	(say sever. hold)	‘(of sound) cease, die away’
<i>ag ask-</i>	(say avoid)	‘1. avoid a subject, 2. reject an offer (of food)’
<i>ag ask ay-</i>	(say avoid put)	‘stop talking about a topic, leave or avoid a topic’
<i>ag md-</i>	(say stay)	‘continue talking’

### 3.6 Iteration of verb roots to denote continuity, etc.

The same verb root or series of two or three roots may be repeated two or more times to indicate a continuous or repeated activity, or, if the verb is *md-* ‘stay’, the passing of time. Iterative use of *g-* ‘do, make’ following a verb series can be seen in (5), clauses b and c. Example (22) shows quite a complex pattern of iteration in clause c, with the first verb series partly repeated to indicate repetition, with *md md* following to indicate time elapsing.



- (22) a. “... *ped okday pi ok-don*” *ag-e-k*,  
 across-there opposite down.there opposite say-DS.PRIOR-PAST  
 ... after he (the Owllet-Nightjar) said, “Over there and down there (you’ll get some)”
- b. *am pak dad ap-l*,  
**go kill** carrying **come-SS-PRIOR**  
 (the hunter) went and killed and brought back (lots of animals), and then
- c. *ad ñb g ñb g md md*, ...  
**cook eat do eat do stay stay**  
 cooked and ate (them) and kept on eating and time passed, ...  
 (KHT XII, Ch.19, para.56)

### 3.7 Simultaneous or overlapping sub-events

In this type the verbs denote acts by the same actor that are more or less simultaneous or overlapping in time or else denote components or phases of a single act or event.

(23) <i>ag ask-</i>	(say avoid)	‘reject, refuse’
<i>ag jak-</i>	(say rise)	‘1. explode, e.g. of heated bamboo. 2. (of wood) crackle and spark. 3. (of people) rise up noisily, as in an ambush’
<i>ag ñ-</i>	(say transfer)	‘tell s.th. to s.o., pass information to s.o.’
<i>ag ay-</i>	(say put)	‘ask s.o. to remain, make an appointment’
<i>ag pk-</i>	(say strike)	‘moan, groan, express regret’
<i>ag slok-</i>	(say slip off)	‘reneg, go back on one’s word’
<i>ag gos ny-</i>	(say <u>thought</u> perceive)	‘believe something (to be the case), hold an opinion’
<i>ask am-</i>	(avoid go)	‘avoid s.th., bypass s.th.’
<i>ask yap-</i>	(avoid fall)	‘fall free’
<i>blok ñ-</i>	(distribute transfer)	‘deal out, distribute’
<i>ñag ag-</i>	(shoot say)	‘(of timbers) creak under pressure, move and creak’
<i>pag ag-</i>	(break say)	‘1. make a sound when breaking or collapsing. 2. talk in turn, as at a formal discussion’
<i>ñb tag-</i>	(eat go.about)	‘graze, eat while going about’
<i>ptk am-</i>	(frightened go)	‘run off in fear’
<i>tan am-</i>	(ascend go)	‘climb’
<i>tb kluk-</i>	(cut gouge)	‘scrape or gouge s.th. out’

Except for a modest number of cases where they use a lexicalised SVC, Kalam speakers prefer to use multi-clause constructions to express temporal overlap between events. The inflected verb in a non-final clause carries a suffix indicating simultaneity or overlap with the event denoted by the following clause.

### 3.8 Multi-phrasal SVCs with internal intonation juncture

As well as occurring by themselves as complex predicates compact SVCs are also the main building blocks of narrative SVCs (Pawley 1987:346, Lane 1991:179–184), acting as VPs within a VP. One kind of narrative SVC differs from canonical SVCs in allowing an internal intonation juncture (pause). In this type there are two or more distinct groups of verb roots separated by a locative phrase. One group of verbs typically describes the actor's movement to, or transport of an object to the site of the next activity. A following group of verbs tells what is done with the object at the site. When the first group is followed by a locative phrase an intonation juncture generally follows that locative.

Example (24) contains a five verb series. All the transitive verbs share the same direct object, *alɥaw* 'mountain pandanus', which precedes the verb series. A peripheral locative phrase (*sblam mɣan nb okok* 'in cordyline enclosures around there') and a pause occur between the first group of three verbs and the second group of two. The locative phrase appears in square brackets. (What superficially looks like a second locative (*kab* 'stone oven') precedes *ad-* 'cook' but this is better analysed as the direct object of *ad-*, for reasons that need not detain us here.)

- (24) a. ... *alɥaw tk d ap* [*sblam -mɣan nb okok*],  
 mt.pandanus sever get come cordyline-enclosure such around
- b. *kab ad ñ-b-un*.  
 stone.oven bake eat-PERF-1PL  
 '... we gather mountain pandanus (nuts), cook (them) in stone ovens in  
 cordyline closures and eat them.'

Example (25) shows two discontinuous SVCs, each containing one or two locative phrases that occur inside an SVC. In the first SVC (lines a and b) the verb *am* 'go' is followed by a single locative phrase which separates it from the next five verbs. In the second SVC (line d) the verb *am* is followed by a locative denoting the site of the next activity (the animal's nest), then comes a two verb group denoting transport of unnamed material (foliage) to the nest, then a second locative saying where the nest is.

- (25) a. *Oɣnap am wɣi-tek ak* [*abn mɣan okud*],  
 sometimes go bandicoot-like the [undercroft hole there]  
 'Sometimes they go into holes of the undercroft (i.e. underground spaces)  
 like *wɣi* bandicoots,
- b. "*d ap tb tk dad am-ob-un*, ...  
 get come cut sever carrying go-PROG.1PL  
 "we are going back and forth fetching (twigs and leaves), ...
- c. *smjen ak ñ-l*,  
 nest.entrance the close-SS.PRIOR  
 and having closed the entrance,
- d. *am [katp ak] d ap* [*abn mɣan okud*] *g-ob-un* ..."  
 go nest the get come undercroft hole there do-PROG-1PL  
 we are fetching (foliage) [to the nest] [in a hole in the undercroft] ..."  
 (KHT 8, Ch.15, para.5)

This kind of construction presents certain problems for analysis as a single SVC. One possible solution, when the first bare verb or verb series in a discontinuous SCV *precedes* a locative phrase, is to treat the first verb or verb series as the head of a separate clause from what follows. In this case, *am* (in (24a), (25a) and (25d)) would be regarded as a sort of morphologically defective medial verb marking prior action by same subject. Davies (1981) suggests this analysis for the analogous construction in Kobon. One objection to this analysis is the lack of inflection on the verb. Another difficulty with this treatment, noted by Lane (1991:124–126), is the fact that the first bare verb (or verb series) can also *follow* the object or locative phrase (i.e. be part of a continuous verb series) without pause and without change of meaning. An alternative is to regard the construction type as reflecting performance rather than correct grammar, where the speaker, instead of restarting the construction improvises a continuation and uses pause as part of the repair strategy.

It may be that the variable placement of the locative phrase defines two distinct types of serial verb construction with overlapping ranges of meaning and different degrees of binding (Andrews and Manning 2000), in this case a distinction between VP-serialisation and V-serialisation).

#### 4 Some semantic types of compact SVCs

This section describes a number of semantic types of compact SVC, although it is far from being an exhaustive typology. Most compact SVC represent a productive construction type, in which two or more verbs of particular semantic classes stand in a systematic relation. However, the meanings are in some cases idiomatic. In some cases a verb series belongs to more than one type, according to different criteria. The glosses given for individual verb roots and for whole verb series are approximations which generally do not capture the exact meaning (or range of senses) of the verb root or series. Most common verb roots are polysemous.

##### 4.1 Cause-effect SVCs

See §3.2 for an account of this type.

##### 4.2 SVCs of testing or discovering

More than 20 verb series denote ‘testing’ or ‘discovering’ event sequences, in which one or more verbs denoting an exploratory act precedes the generic verb of perception and cognition, *nŋ-* ‘perceive, be conscious, aware, see, hear, feel, smell, know’.

(26) Some verb series denoting testing events, with *nŋ-* ‘perceive’

<i>ag nŋ-</i>	(say perceive)	‘ask, enquire, ask for, request’
<i>ap nŋ-</i>	(come perceive)	‘visit s.o., come and see s.o.’
<i>ay nŋ-</i>	(put perceive)	‘try to fit s.th., try s.th. on (e.g. clothing)’
<i>ñn ay nŋ-</i>	(hand put perceive)	‘feel inside s.th., grope’
<i>d nŋ-</i>	(touch perceive)	‘feel s.th. by touching (deliberately)’
<i>ñb nŋ-</i>	(consume perceive)	‘taste s.th.’
<i>pk nŋ-</i>	(hit perceive)	‘feel s.th. by touching, nudge’
<i>puŋi nŋ-</i>	(pierce perceive)	‘probe, test by poking’
<i>piow nŋ-</i>	(search perceive)	‘search and find, find what one is looking for’

<i>tag nj-</i>	(travel perceive)	‘go sightseeing, travel and see’
<i>taw tag nj-</i>	(tread walk.about perceive)	‘test (ground, branch etc.) by treading’
<i>tb nj-</i>	(cut perceive)	‘make a trial cut’
<i>wk nj-</i>	(break.open perceive)	‘test by cracking open, break open and inspect’

### 4.3 SVCs of actor’s movement along a path

Two or more active intransitive verbs denote an actor’s movement along a path. In some cases the first verb denotes the direction of movement relative to a departure point (emerging, leaving, coming) and the second denotes the direction relative to the speaker’s viewpoint (coming, going), and the second leaving of movement ending in arrival at a destination.

It can be seen that the verbs most often represented in these SVCs denote events of (i) directional movement, i.e. movement in relation to a deictic centre (*towards, away, upwards, downwards, out of, through, beyond*), (ii) movement along a path (usually marked by *am-* ‘go’, in one of its senses), (iii) attainment (*reach, contact*). Some of the SVCs in (27) can be translated into English by a monomorphemic verb but most require a phrasal verb, in which one of the Kalam directionals is translated by a verb root (e.g. *come, fall, withdraw*) and the other(s) by a particle (*up, down, out, etc.*) or an adverbial phrase (*into pieces, back and forth, etc.*).

(27) <i>am jak-</i>	(go reach)	‘arrive (thither)’
<i>am pk-</i>	(go hit)	‘lose consciousness and fall down, faint’
<i>ap jak am-</i>	(come reach go)	‘come up, emerge’
<i>ap jak-</i>	(come reach)	‘arrive (hither)’
<i>ap jak am-</i>	(come reach go)	‘come and go’
<i>ap tan-</i>	(come ascend)	‘rise’
<i>ap tan jak-</i>	(come ascend reach)	‘reach the top’
<i>ap tan ap yap-</i>	(come ascend come descend)	‘move up and down (or back and forth)’
<i>ap yap pk-</i>	(come descend hit)	‘fall down’
<i>ju am-</i>	(withdraw go)	‘emerge and depart, retreat, withdraw (as from battle)’
<i>ju ap-</i>	(withdraw come)	‘emerge hither, come out’
<i>ju sand-</i>	(withdraw disappear)	‘withdraw out of sight’
<i>ju yap-</i>	(withdraw descend)	‘drop out of position, withdraw downwards’
<i>kbi am-</i>	(leave go)	‘abandon, leave s.o. or s.th.’
<i>lug am-</i>	(slide go)	‘slide oneself along’
<i>ptk am-</i>	(frightened go)	‘flee, run away’
<i>pug ju pk-</i>	(break withdraw hit)	‘come out and fall, as a tree in a storm’
<i>sak am-</i>	(break.through go)	‘break through and escape (as water from a dam)’
<i>sand am-</i>	(go out of sight go)	‘go out of sight beyond a distant point’
<i>tan am-</i>	(ascend go)	‘climb up’
<i>tan ap tan ap yap-</i>	(ascend come descend ascend descend)	‘climb up and down’

Kalam has very few verb roots denoting manner of movement: two are *taw-* ‘step, tread on something.’ and *talak-* ‘jump up, jump or step over (a barrier)’. There are no clear cases of Kalam SVCs matching English verbs denoting manner of movement along a path, e.g. *run, jump, crawl, slither*, or manner of internal movement (where the actor may be rooted to the spot), e.g. *shake, tremble, vibrate, lean, stretch*. Instead, such concepts are typically expressed in Kalam by verb adjunct phrases. This is consistent with the fact that movement + manner of movement events do not objectively consist of (and are not readily perceived as consisting of) a sequence of discrete events.

#### 4.4 SVCs of transport

In the typical ‘transport’ type a transitive verb denoting manual control or other instrumental action by the agent is followed by one or more verbs of motion along a path. The most common instrumental verb is *d-* ‘control, hold, get, have, touch, stop’. However, manual control can also be represented by a complex verb consisting of the verb adjunct *dad* ‘carrying’ and a verb of motion.

(28) <i>d ap-</i>	(get come)	‘bring’
<i>d am-</i>	(get go)	‘take’
<i>am d ap-</i>	(go get come)	‘fetch’
<i>d ap tan-</i>	(get come ascend)	‘bring up, fill s.th.’
<i>d ap tan jak-</i>	(get come rise reach)	‘bring s.th. to the top’
<i>d ap tan d ap yap-</i>	(hold come ascend hold)	‘move s.th. up and down come descend) (or back and forth)’
<i>dad tag-</i>	( <u>carrying</u> go.about)	‘carry s.th. about, drive (a car)’
<i>lug dad am-</i>	(slide <u>carrying</u> go)	‘slide s.th. along’

#### 4.5 Manipulative-positioning SVCs

In this type, a verb of manipulation is followed by a verb of, e.g. positioning, disposal, release, withdrawal.

(29) <i>d ay-</i>	(get put)	‘pick up and put away, put in order’
<i>d ap ay-</i>	(get come put)	‘bring and put away’
<i>d am ay-</i>	(get go place)	‘take and put away’
<i>d jak ñ-</i>	(get stand connect)	‘stand s.th. against a place’
<i>d ñ-</i>	(get transfer)	‘give personally, hand over’
<i>d tbk-</i>	(hold clamp)	‘grip tightly’
<i>pk tbk-</i>	(strike clamp)	‘clamp firmly’
<i>puŋi ju-</i>	(pierce withdraw)	‘extract s.th with a probe’
<i>puŋi tbk-</i>	(pierce clamp)	‘pin in position’
<i>taw d puŋi tb tk-</i>	(step press cut sever)	‘apply the footbrake, brake (a car)’
<i>tb blok-</i>	(cut distribute)	‘cut and distribute’
<i>wsk ask-</i>	(untie free)	‘set free, release, untie, take off (e.g. tight clothing)’

#### 4.6 SVCs of transfer and connection

In this type the agent does something in the first verb which enables him to transfer something, e.g. information or goods, to the patient, or to connect the patient to something else. The final verb is usually *ñ-* ‘transfer, give, connect’.

(30)	<i>ag ñ-</i>	(say transfer)	‘confide or tell s.th. to s.o.’
	<i>d jak ñ-</i>	(get stand connect)	‘stand s.th. against a place’
	<i>d ñ-</i>	(get transfer)	‘give personally, hand over’
	<i>g ñ-</i>	(do transfer)	‘fit s.th. in position, connect to s.th.’
	<i>ju ñ-</i>	(withdraw transfer)	‘return s.th. to its owner, give back’
	<i>ñag ñ-</i>	(shoot transfer)	‘fasten s.th., pass s.th. through and connect it (in sewing, buttoning)’
	<i>puñi ñ-</i>	(piece transfer)	‘pierce and fit/connect’
	<i>ñg pk ñ-</i>	( <u>water</u> strike transfer)	‘wash s.o.’
	<i>tk ñ-</i>	(write transfer)	‘write s.o. (a letter)’

#### 4.7 SVCs of process

This is a loosely defined category consisting of two or more intransitive verbs which specify stages in or components of a processual event, either an uncontrolled process that happens to an animate subject or a process undergone by an object.

(31)	<i>aññ pug pug kum-</i>	( <u>breath</u> blow blow malfunction)	‘gasp for breath, puff heavily’
	<i>kum md-</i>	(malfunction stay)	‘convalesce, remain unwell or incapacitated’
	<i>kum tkd am-</i>	(malfunction <u>turning</u> go)	‘lose consciousness, pass out’
	<i>wlek yap-</i>	(slip.down fall)	‘slip off, come off (of loose-fitting things)’
	<i>yn ag-</i>	(burn say)	‘make a noise while burning’
	<i>yn kld ap-</i>	(burn <u>redhot.coals</u> come)	‘turn to redhot coals’
	<i>yn kn-</i>	(burn sleep)	‘burn or cook overnight’
	<i>yn kum-</i>	(burn die)	‘be burnt to death’
	<i>yn sbk am-</i>	(burn scorch pass)	‘become scorched’

#### 4.8 SVCs of food-getting

In this type a verb of planting, gathering or killing is followed by the verb of consumption, *ññ-* ‘eat’. Each of these verb series literally denotes a sequence of acts (‘plant eat’, etc.) but each in context has a conventional interpretation ‘V1 for the purpose of V2’, where it is understood the first activity is performed in order that the second be achievable. This purposive meaning belongs to the construction not to the lexical verbs.

(32)	<i>ad ññ-</i>	(cook eat)	‘cook in earth oven and eat’
	<i>ju ññ-</i>	(withdraw eat)	‘pull out (plants) for eating’
	<i>pk ññ-</i>	(kill eat)	‘kill game for eating’
	<i>ym ññ-</i>	(plant eat)	‘plant crops for eating (i.e. for own consumption)’

#### 4.9 On the lexical status of compact SVCs

A strong case can be made for saying that most compact SVCs are lexicalised. Even though many of these SVCs conform to productive principles in their formation individual verb series show other features typical of lexical units. Indications that contiguous verb roots have co-lexicalised are that they showing phonological fusion, do not allow pause or other lexical material to intervene, having a meaning that is idiomatic, are subject to derivational processes, and are the standard way of expressing a particular meaning (27 such criteria are listed in Pawley (1986)). Few criteria are decisive on their own — lexicalisation is a matter of degree. However, some compact SVCs appear to be less fully lexicalised than others. These are verb series where a V1-V2 sequence not only conforms to productive rules of composition but can also be paraphrased by a construction in which V1 and V1 are in separate clauses, with V1 carrying medial verb morphology. This is a domain of variation that needs further study.

### 5 Narrative SVCs

#### 5.1 Kalam narrative SVCs as schemas for constructing well-formed narratives

The key to understanding the structure of narrative SVCs is the realisation (a) that they are compressed, single clause versions of multi-clause narratives and (b) that similar discourse structure conventions shape both kinds of constructions, defining the selection of information to be mentioned in a well-formed report of an episode.<sup>8</sup> Compact SVCs lack these characteristics, or at least do not have them in such a transparent form.

Labov (1972:363) identifies the following major constituents of fully-formed narratives in English spontaneous speech.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Abstract.            | Summarises the story.  |
| 2. Orientation.         | Identifies the context, e.g. time, place, participants and activity. |
| 3. Complicating action. | Answers the question: What happened?                                 |
| 4. Resolution.          | Reveals the outcome of the complicating action.                      |
| 5. Coda.                | Summary remark signalling that the narrative is finished.            |

In addition ‘evaluative’ elements can be added within clauses to dramatise the basic narrative report in order to answer the question: Why are you telling us this? or to ward off the response: So what?

The core of such narratives consists of the complicating action and resolution components. The other elements are optional, as far as satisfying minimal requirements of informativeness are concerned. Labov observes that the narrative segments — the complicating action and resolution — typically use different syntax from the other parts. In these core segments simple narrative clauses in iconic order predominate. The abstract and orientation parts deal with situations and relationships rather than events and require more complex syntax.

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8 Although narrative SVCs are a conspicuous part of many Trans New Guinea languages they have received surprisingly little attention from descriptive grammarians. Among the few works that draw attention to them are Bruce (1984, 1986), for Alamlak, Farr (1999) for Korafe, Heeschen (1998, 2001) for Eipo and Yale, Pawley (1987, 1991, in press), Lane (1991), Pawley and Lane (1998) for Kalam and, in a more general way, van Staden and Reesink (this volume).

Kalam spoken narratives (and also procedural texts) show very similar parts and organisation to the English narratives described by Labov. Here I will consider, not extended narratives such as folk tales, but shorter narratives, accounts of single episodes in which a person or animal performs a deliberate or purposeful act (e.g. gathering vegetables, giving someone something, digging in the garden, hunting game).

A well-formed report should mention not just the central action but a sequence of associated happenings. You don't just get things, or just dig in the garden, you do it for a purpose. There must be a resolution, an outcome. And in many cases the actor has to perform some preparatory activity, even if this is only going from home to the scene of the main action. Thus, the report normally consists of an orientation, a complicating action and a resolution. The orientation is often minimal because the participants and setting have already been established earlier in the discourse or by the external situation. However, the complicating action may be quite elaborate.

For this class of activities a well-formed report should at least answer the questions:

1. Did the actor move to the scene of the pivotal action or was s/he already there?
2. What was the pivotal action? If there was a targeted object, was this obtained?
3. Did the actor then move on to another place and if so, did s/he take along the targeted object with her/him?
4. What was the outcome, e.g. was the search abandoned, what was done with the transported object?

In contrast to Kalam speakers, English speakers make extensive use of a metonymic strategy when reporting episodic events, in which one or two salient components are made to stand for the whole sequence. For example, a complex activity is often represented simply by referring to the actor going to or being in the place where the activity occurred. Thus, an English speaker meeting another family member may ask 'What did you do this morning/afternoon?' and get the answer 'I went to the movies' or 'I went to the supermarket' or 'I went gathering mushrooms'. In Kalam however, one should be more precise. To begin with, the questioner should ask 'What did you do and what have you brought?' and a minimal answer should be along the lines of 'I went and gathered mushrooms and brought them and cooked and ate them'.<sup>9</sup>

The major conceptual parts of a minimal well-formed report of an episodic event sequence are summarised in (33):

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9 Broadly similar observations have been made on other Papuan languages. Volker Heeschen has written in much the same vein about Eipo and Yale, two Trans New Guinea languages spoken several hundred miles west of Kalam territory (Heeschen 1998, 2001). He refers to Eipo and Yale sentences as following 'event-formulas' for constructing 'condensed narratives'.

Each reference to named agents and their doings is embedded in everyday routines and forms part of the known concatenations of events. The first stories Eipo and Yale children learn to tell are mere attempts at putting into words these routines and these concatenations. ... One cannot say: "my father collected pandanus nuts." One has to say: "My father lived in the hamlet, he went to the mountain forests, he cut pandanus nuts, he carried them, came home, cooked them, distributed them and ate them" ... Guests first have to come, then you take a pig and give it to them, and the enemies have to have come and have to go somewhere and to be spotted, then they may wound someone. Once the Western hearer has learnt to appreciate the event formulas, he will discover them everywhere. (Heeschen 2001:159)



(33) Formula for minimal well-formed reports of a deliberate action event

1	2	3	4
MOVE TO	PIVOTAL	TRANSPORT OF	RESOLUTION
SCENE/STAY	ACTION	AFFECTED OBJECT	

Such a report may be distributed over many clauses or a few clauses. For instance, extract (5) consists of a short, four-clause description of how a dog goes hunting on its own. In clause (5a) the dog sets off to hunt, in (5b) it persistently chases game and makes kills, in (5c) it tries again another day without success and in (5d) it returns home.

If certain conditions are met the report may be compressed into a single SVC, with some or all of the four major conceptual elements or stages of the narrative represented by a verb root or a verb series. Let us call the material representing a separate stage a phrase. For a sequence to qualify as a narrative SVC there must be at least two phrases present, e.g. 1 + 2, 2 + 4, 2 + 3, 3 + 4. If all four conceptual elements are not present in the SVC it does not mean the missing elements have been left out of the event report as a whole. It merely means that these elements appear in separate clauses.

To exemplify in some detail, let us look at how Kalam report a particular class of event sequences: gathering episodes.

## 5.2 Reports of gathering events

Minimal reports of gathering episodes are a subtype of (33) above, having the structure:

(34) Major constituents of well-formed reports of gathering events

1	2	3	4
MOVEMENT TO	GATHERING	TRANSPORT	DISPOSAL
SCENE OF	ACTIVITY	OF GOODS	OF GOODS
GATHERING			

The first constituent reports the actor's movement (if any) to the scene of pivotal action. Next comes the pivotal or nuclear component in the sequence: the gathering activities. In this second constituent the narrator often describes a preparatory activity, such as searching, climbing, digging, followed by an account of the getting of the targeted item(s). The resolution resides in how the gathered goods are disposed of, for example by cooking and eating them, cutting them up and distributing them, burning them for firewood, storing them for future use, making an artefact from them, and so on. Often the processing or disposal of the gathered items is done at home or at the forest camp, so there needs to be a linking verb or verb series denoting transport of the items back to base. And if the search fails, and there is nothing to bring home, still the actor's return to base is signalled, as an essential part of the resolution.

The formula in (34) subsumes a number of more specific formulas applying to particular kinds of gathering. Several have to do with hunting. When referring to hunting game mammals in general (as opposed to hunting a particular kind of animal) the Kalam use a discourse formula with the following conceptual elements:

(35) Formula for generic reports of hunting game mammals

1	2	3	4
MOVEMENT	GAME: (SEARCH) KILL	CARRY COME	COOK EAT
TO SCENE	MAMMAL		

Constituent 2 may be quite elaborate, specifying any of various methods of capturing game. Constituent 3 refers to bringing the game back home or to base (often a ritual cooking and camping place in the forest, where important kinds of game are baked in an earth oven with appropriate protocols including magic, and eaten (constituent 4). Although the notation in (35) distinguishes between optional and obligatory constituents, a more complex notation is needed to specify contextual conditions on the form of event reports (what kind of game is hunted, how it is cooked, etc.) and co-occurrence restrictions on constituents (for example, if the speaker mentions constituent 3 (bringing the game back to the cooking site) he will also mention constituent 4 (baking it in an earth oven and/or eating it).

In an extensive corpus of narratives about hunting we find varying accounts of basically the same sequence of gathering events, some extending over many clauses and elaborating various details (a not-so complex example appears in (12) above), others squeezed into a single serial verb construction, and various treatments of intermediate complexity. In example (36) the hunting sequence is spread over the four clauses (c)–(f). The account is fairly matter of fact, except for the mention of the customary rituals (performing magic) associated with cooking the game in (d). But only stages 2 and 3 (killing and bringing) are packed into one serial verb construction (clause c), with stage 4 (cooking and eating) being broken up into two clauses, (d) and (e). The boundaries between clauses are clearly marked by final verbs that carry suffixes marking relative tense and subject reference.

- (36) a. *mñab ak l g-l*  
and that **establish make-SS.PRIOR**  
'After that land had been created
- b. *md-e-k,*  
**exist-DS.PRIOR-3SG**  
and came into existence,
- c. *kmn ak pak dad ap-l,*  
game:mammal that **kill** carrying **come-SS.PRIOR**  
(the first hunter) killed and brought game mammals,
- d. *ti ti g-l*  
what what **do-SS.PRIOR**  
then after performing the customary rituals,
- e. *ad-l*  
**bake-SS.PRIOR**  
he cooked
- f. *ñb-e-k,...*  
**eat-DS.PRIOR-3SG**  
and ate (the game) ...' (KHT Intro, para.35)

In (37) the hunting sequence is syntactically more compressed, in each case being spread over just two clauses. Going, killing and bringing the game are combined in one SCV in clause (b), while cooking and eating are combined in (c).

- (37) a. *bin -b ak ned md-l, sblam mey ognl,*  
man-woman that first **stay-SS:PRIOR** cordyline aforem'd those  
'... those cordyline enclosures where the first people had their house sites,

b. *kmn am pak dad ap-l*  
 game:mammal **go kill** carrying **come-SS.PRIOR**  
 and having gone and killed and brought game mammals

c. *ad ñb-l katp seŋ oŋl, ...*  
**bake eat-SS.PRIOR** house old:site those  
 they cooked and ate them at the old house sites, ...' (KHT Intro, para.8)

(38) shows further compression. Although the hunting sequence extends over four clauses the major part of it (killing bringing cooking and eating) is compacted into a single clause-like constituent, (c), which contains five bare verb stems in series. This particular five-verb sequence occurs again and again in the texts.

(38) a. *Mey basd skop yes ogok am tag-l,*  
 aforem'd ancestor group distant the:PL **go go.about-SS.PRIOR**  
 'When our forefathers went to (the forest) and walked about (catching game mammals)

b. *sblam mgan nb ak kn-l,*  
 cordyline enclosure thus that **sleep-SS.PRIOR**  
 they used to sleep in these same cordyline enclosures

c. *kmn pak d ap ad ñb-l*  
 game **hit get come bake eat-SS.PRIOR**  
 and having killed game and brought (it there) and cooked and eaten (it)

d. *ap-elgp-al.*  
**come-PAST.HAB-3PL**  
 they used to return (home).' (KHT Intro, para.22)

When the report is about hunting a specific kind of game mammal, variants of formula (35) apply, distinguished mainly by their respective methods of search and capture. For game taken by digging, for example, a frequent formula is that shown in (39) and realised, in highly compressed, single-clause form in (40):

(39)           1                           2                           3                           4  
 MOVEMENT ANIMAL.DIG KILL CARRY COME COOK EAT  
 TO SCENE                   NAME

(40) *As nb-ak yg pak d ap ñb-l, ...*  
 rodent like-this **dig kill get come eat-SS.PRIOR**  
 'Having dug out and killed and eaten this rodent, ...' (KHT Ch.13, para.75)

For game taken in trees a frequent discourse formula is:

(41)           1                           2                           3                           4  
 GO TREE CLIMB ANIMAL.(FIND) KILL CARRY COME COOK EAT  
 NAME

For game taken by ground search a formula is:

(42)	1	2	3	4
	GO SEARCH	ANIMAL.NAME	CARRY COME	COOK EAT
	GO:ABOUT	(FIND) KILL		

There are other formulae for other kinds of event sequences, all conforming to the schema in (33) but space does not allow us to discuss these here.

### 5.3 Levels of structure in narrative SVCs

As the previous discussion has indicated (see also 1 and 3.8), narrative SVCs have at least three levels of constituent structure, represented respectively by the whole SVC, its first order constituents and the individual verbs within these. Each primary constituent may itself consist of a verb series. Usually such a verb series is a compact SVC although it may consist of more than one compact SVC.

In most cases the boundaries between first order constituents are clear. There are several indicators. (a) Shift of location. The event(s) associated with each stage in the episode generally take place at a different place, or involve the actor moving from one place to another. (b) The variable degree of bonding between contiguous verb roots, i.e. compact SVCs are tight-knit, verbs belonging to different phrases are not. Thus, in multi-clause paraphrases of narrative SVCs, clause boundaries typically occur at semantic junctures which would correspond to boundaries between major components in a SVC. (c) Some phrases have arguments or adjuncts that are not shared with other constituents.

Having said this much, there is room for debate about whether certain verb series are better treated as part of the same stage or different stages in the episode. This particularly applies to certain verb series that we have assigned to stage 4, such as *ad ñb* (cook eat) ‘cook (in earth oven) and eat’, or *kab agl ñb-* (stones heat eat) ‘make a stone oven and eat’. The verbs in such series are less closely bound than some other verb series. This is reflected in the frequency with which such verbs are placed in separate clauses linked by medial verb morphology.

Another such case concerns the verb *kn-* ‘sleep, camp overnight’, which sometimes occurs as the final, inflected verb in a SVC. For example *kn-* may follow a ‘cook and eat’ verb series, or a ‘return home empty-handed’ sequence or a ‘fetch firewood’ sequence. It is hard to argue that *kn-* is part of the disposal of goods stage, except when the meaning is ‘they ate and ate until they slept’ or ‘they made a fire for the night’. On the other hand, it does mark closure of the episode, forming a kind of coda.

## 6 Conclusions

### 6.1 Some questionable proposals about the nature of Kalam SVCs

In the introduction I mentioned several generalisations that others have made about the nature of SVCs in Kalam, or about SVCs in general, which I regard as questionable, namely that:

- (i) SVCs always describe a single conceptual event.
- (ii) The main function of SVC in Kalam (and many other languages) is to augment a limited stock of verb roots. Evidence for this consists of (iii) and (iv).

- (iii) The semantic structure of SVCs typically correspond to that of simple lexical units in non-serialising languages.
- (iv) Serial verbs are co-lexicalised or co-grammaticised.

Let us now consider these proposals critically.

## 6.2 Do SVCs encode single events?

Remarks to this effect abound in the SVC literature, as Durie (1997) reports. Aikhenvald (2006) cites an early and influential statement by Lord (1974:96ff.) who, speaking of Yoruba SVCs, writes that ‘the verbs in the construction all refer to sub-parts or aspects of a single overall event’. In what sense are they a single event? Lord refers to a kind of developmental chain: ‘the action or state denoted by the second verb phrase is, in terms of the real world, an outgrowth of the action denoted by the first verb; the second verb phrase represents a further development, a consequence, result, goal, or culmination’.

There is no question that each SVC denotes *a semantically coherent unit of some sort*. But SVCs vary enormously in the complexity of their internal event structure. The kinds of event sequences coded by narrative serial verb constructions in Kalam (and other languages) extend well beyond the cause-effect chains, actions with ‘necessary effects’, that have largely held the attention of linguists studying event structure. Narrative SVCs are more loosely linked, consisting of non-causally related events that the speaker chooses to treat as parts of a single episode. Such sequences, where each event has no necessary consequence but allows a choice of options to follow, are sometimes called ‘branching chains’.

What is gained by saying all these diverse kinds of units represent a single event, rather than, say a single episode? One can paraphrase narrative SVCs by a chain of clauses or a chain of separate sentences. If narrative SVCs form a single event might one not say that the corresponding multi-clause constructions also describe a single event?

The standard answer to this objection is to refer to the grammatical status of SVCs, as belonging to a single clause. Clauses with a single verb are taken to be the prototype of single event constructions. Typically, the different verbs in an SVC are integrated, grammatically, to the point where they form a single complex predicate and have the same kinds of argument structures as single verbs do. It should follow that there is also semantic integration. The separate (sub)events denoted by each verb in a SVC must be integrated conceptually into a single complex event.

Givón (1990, 1991) has objected to this line of reasoning on other grounds. He says that it is unsatisfactory to define ‘(conceptual) event’ in grammatical terms, because this is to assume that grammatical units are isomorphic with semantic units. He stresses that the ‘event’ is a cognitive construct and we should be wary of using grammatical testing to determine whether speakers conceptually bind a sequence of events into a single complex event. Cognitive constructs are not always isomorphic with grammatical structures.

Givón proposes, as a test of eventhood, a different kind of binding, one that has to do with speech processing, namely pause placement. He carried out a brilliantly conceived psycholinguistic experiment with speakers of three languages of Papua New Guinea, Kalam and Tairora (both SOV languages of the Trans New Guinea family) and Tok Pisin (an SVO language), comparing the frequency of pause placements across a range of syntactic constructions which show different degrees of binding, most conspicuously degrees of verb finiteness (Givón 1990, 1991). Speakers were first asked to describe events

in a film while viewing it ('on-line') and then afterwards ('post-viewing'). The two Trans New Guinea languages are particularly well suited to such an experiment, with their sharp contrast between highly inflected independent verbs (fully finite), dependent verbs marked by switch reference morphology (medium finite) and by same subject verbs (least finite), along with the further contrast with serial verbs (bare verb stems).

Givón found that, in Kalam 'on-line' accounts, pauses hardly ever occur between verbs within a SVC (pause occurred in only 4 to 6 percent of cases, the percentage varying slightly according to sub-type of SVC). This frequency was no higher than that of hesitations within single words. By contrast, pauses occur after 23 per cent of verbs carrying same subject inflections, after about 32 percent of clauses carrying different subject and after about 80 per cent of the independent verbs. In the postviewing descriptions the results varied slightly, the chief difference being that dependent different-subject verbs scored higher (60%) as did same-subject clauses (49%). Serial verbs remained at about 6 percent. Givón concludes that verb series are processed as single chunks and that this indicates that they are (a) memorised and (b) lexicalised, and as such are (c) just as much a single cognitive unit as a simple verb. Thus, if simple verbs represent single events so do Kalam SVCs. Studies with Tairora and Tok Pisin yielded similar results insofar as the categories were comparable. There are some limitations in Givón's sample of Kalam SVCs which I will touch on to in §6.3.

Impressive as the findings in Givón's study are I have some difficulty with his uncritical equation of multi-word strings that are free of internal pause with (a) units that are memorised, and so retrieved automatically as a single chunk, (b) with single lexical units, and (c) single events. A reliance on the single criterion of pause placement locks us in to a very loose definition of what it means to be memorised, lexicalised and a single event. Is any sequence that is typically spoken without internal pause memorised and lexicalised? How about 'When I was cleaning I found that fifty dollar bill that you lost yesterday'?

In the meantime, I would like to suggest that rather than argue about when a series of verbs might be considered to denote a single event linguists studying verb serialisation would do better to deal with a more fundamental task: defining the grammatical and semantic conditions that must be met in order for a sequence of events (each event represented by a verb) to be eligible for serialisation, or to require serialisation.<sup>10</sup> It seems that these conditions vary considerably across serialising languages.

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10 An analogous question has been central to much recent research on event structure. To give the flavour of this work, here is a passage from a work by two of the leading contributors. Writing about resultative constructions and possible event structures, Rappaport-Hovav and Levin comment as follows on causal connection as a limiting factor in the formation of complex predicates expressing single events:

... the basic constraint on a lexically-derived accomplishment is that it denotes a unitary core event, i.e. one of direct causation. Croft ... describes the idealized cognitive model of a simple event — an event that can be lexicalised as a verb; one of the defining properties of such events is that they involve non-branching causal chains. We propose that it is this property that is at the root of the observed constraint against two telicising phrases. In most instances the two results that two telicising phrases represent instantiate a branching causal chain since there is no necessary connection between them. ... Thus the nonbranching causal chain property...can be seen as a constraint on event structure which limits the complexity of a unitary event of direct causation. ... On the other hand, syntactically-derived accomplishments are subject to true syntactic constraints. Whether these accomplishments involve small clauses or complex predicate formation, two result phases cannot be accommodated either because of the constraint against two small clauses or because of constraints on the number of arguments associated with a complex predicate. (Rappaport-Hovav and Levin 1996:12).

In previous sections we have examined, at a fairly general level, the conditions that apply to the formation of narrative SVCs in Kalam. Some conditions are syntactic. Kalam has two main syntactic mechanisms for integrating a series of conceptual events into a single sentence: clause-chaining using switch-reference morphology, and serialisation. To some extent these two systems do similar work, yet each have aspects of event reporting that they are more suited to. The chief advantages of serialisation over a multi-clause paraphrase are (a) its economy and (b) its routineness and blandness. A SVC encodes the same essential information more briefly than the multi-clause paraphrase. And by using SVCs speakers background each of the component events in the report, thus satisfying requirements of informativeness in a routine manner. Clause chaining has the advantage of allowing the narrator to give a more elaborate account, should the occasion warrant this.

Some conditions are semantic. To be eligible to be coded as a SVC, the actions must be (among other things): (a) associated, linked as normal outcomes or follow-ons, (b) be all performed by the same actor, in cases where the verbs have agents (cause-effect sequences are the exception), (c) be of roughly equal importance, (d) for most types of SVC, be either all asserted or all denied. Modifiers such as *kasek* 'quickly' or *kapkap* 'carefully' are highly restricted in their ability to intervene between verb stems in a SVC. That is to say, individual predicates within SVCs generally cannot be highlighted in these cases.

If any of these conditions do not hold then interclausal syntax must be used. In addition to these general conditions, there are more specific constraints on the semantic structure of SVCs. Although the general nature of these was outlined in §4 (compact SVCs) and §5 (narrative SVCs), there are many details that remain to be worked out.

Some writers on serial verb constructions have argued that conditions on their form are to some extent culturally based. Bruce (1984, 1986), Durie (1997), and Jarkey (1991) cite cases where native speakers reject certain serial verb sequences as impossible because the component events are not conventionally associated. Bruce (1984:152) writes of serial verb constructions in Alamlak (a language of the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea):

Co-occurrence restrictions on component verb roots are defined culturally by the general rule that only commonly associated events can be consolidated into a single clause by the serial verb construction ... The type of events which can be combined as 'commonly-associated events' include events which are related in terms of event-purpose, event-result, and cause-effect. Even these notions can only be defined specifically for a given culture according to the world view of the culture. Specifically, events like coming and going are commonly associated with just about any situation. With other events it is often impossible to predict allowable combinations.

The terms 'co-occurrence restriction' and 'allowable combination' as used by Bruce do not refer to grammatical well-formedness but to acceptability. I accept that grammar emerges largely out of discourse practices but I am an old-fashioned enough linguist to think that grammatical conventions take on a life of its own. The question arises, is it the business of the descriptive linguist to try to find reasons why some grammatical strings are unacceptable to native speakers? Acceptability is notoriously tricky notion because native speakers' judgments may reflect a variety of different factors, including what makes sense, what is familiar, what is prestigious, and so on. Tricky it may be but I do not think we can shirk the challenge if we are interested in a fine-grained understanding of what it takes to speak a language idiomatically.

### 6.3 Is the main function of SVCs to augment the verbal lexicon?

Givón has suggested that the chief function of SVCs in Kalam (and some other languages with small verb classes) is to build up the verbal lexicon (Givón 1990, 1991). Leaving aside cases where the final verb has grammaticised into an aspectual marker, it seems that all in other cases the verb roots in a SCVs are regarded as having co-lexicalised, fused into a single complex lexical item. The implication is that the semantic content of Kalam SVCs largely corresponds to that of simple verbs in open verb class languages.

There is no doubt that these assertions hold true for many, perhaps most, verb series in the class of compact SVCs. A limitation in Givón's experimental study is that the SVCs in his sample of narratives consisted mainly of compact SVCs. At any rate, the examples he cites seem to be confined to this type.

However, it is clear that the semantic content of narrative SVCs is quite different from that of simple verbs in open class languages. It is also clear that narrative SVCs are grammaticised discourse structures rather than word-like units. That is, they allow the several major semantic elements of a narrative, an episodic event report, to be preserved in SVCs in a very compressed form.

But one can accept this and still ask whether narrative verb series, like *go search bandicoot kill carry come cook eat*, are special kinds of lexical items. That depends on how you choose to define lexical unit. Narrative verb series are far removed from the lexical units that grammarians write about in theoretical papers but they are exactly the kinds of phrasal units that conventional dictionary-makers admit into their dictionaries of phrasal expressions (Pawley 1986, 1996). The grammarian's ideal lexicon includes only those form-meaning pairings that are not predictable from their parts — those that are non-compositional or idiomatic. Pairings whose structure and meaning are predictable from general rules belong in the grammar. Lexicographers, on the other hand, run a much broader church. They are interested in what sorts of things people say, how they customarily say them and what their social significance is. Their focus is on common usage and so they put into dictionaries many well-formed compounds and phrasal expressions (e.g. *be too good to be true, do more harm than good, miss the point, if you value your life, a little learning is a dangerous thing*) simply because they are standard ways of expressing standard ideas.

In this broad sense of 'lexicalised expression' most verb series (excluding iterated elements) attested in Kalam can be considered to be lexicalised. But this is very different from saying that they are like words. Between simple lexical items and fully productive constructions we find, in any language, a category of productive and semi-productive phrase- and clause-sized constructions or formulae whose lexical content is partly fixed and partly variable. Such constructions are a much more complex bundle of elements than typical lexical units. Narrative SVCs fall into this category

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# 9 *Event conceptualisation and event report in serial verb constructions in Kilivila: towards a new approach to research an old phenomenon*

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GUNTER SENFT

The tandem verbs are like paired muscles braced against each other to turn the meaning of the phrase this way or that by the slightest change in tension as it were. (Baldwin n.d.:73)

## 1 Introduction

One of my greatest worries with respect to my skills in speaking Kilivila, the language of the Trobriand Islanders in Papua New Guinea, has always been that I will never make it to produce serial verb constructions properly. A few years ago I was somewhat relieved when I read the following in Andy Pawley's paper on 'A language which defies description by ordinary means':

I noticed that bystanders, who were fond of repeating to others nearby what I said (even if the others could hear perfectly well), often added details to my utterances. For instance, if someone asked, 'Where's Kiyas?' (the young man who was my chief informant) and I answered, 'He's in the garden', a bystander might say, 'He said 'Kiyas has gone to Matpay to work in the garden. He'll be back later', he said'. ... People were editing my utterances, supplying information that I should have given in the first place in order to make my utterance complete or well formed. (Pawley 1993:109ff.)

I have been having exactly the same experience. After more than 20 years the Trobriand Islanders keep their promise to edit my speech, if necessary (and I am grateful for this, of course). However, I could observe (not without some pride) that they do this mostly when I try to produce what I assume to be idiomatic serial verb constructions — my avowed weak point in speaking Kilivila. Usually I produce a verb or two less than native speakers would do, and the order in which I produce the verbs sometimes also departs from the order in which a Trobriand Islander would situation-adequately serialise the respective verbal expressions. Why is this so?

This paper attempts among other things to answer this question. However, before I do this I will first present various types of serial verb constructions (from here onwards abbreviated as SVCs) in Kilivila. Some of these constructions are documented in my overall corpus of Kilivila speech data; however, most constructions presented in the second part of the paper were especially elicited during my field trip in 2001. After the presentation of a new approach towards a typology of SVCs proposed by Miriam van Staden in cooperation with Ger Reesink and after a brief discussion of the methodology used to elicit such constructions and to get an idea of what Trobriand Islanders conceptualise as an ‘event’, I will first try to re-define the concept of ‘SVCs’ for Kilivila. I will distinguish between SVCs and ‘contiguous serial verb constructions’ (CSVCs), because it seems that Trobriand Islanders differentiate SVCs in which verbs are contiguous from other SVCs. This classification is not only based on morphosyntactic criteria but also on semantic and pragmatic considerations that are important for both the conceptualisation and the report of ‘events’ in and for this speech community. The paper ends with a critical evaluation of the approach to research such complex constructions presented and illustrated with data from Kilivila.

## 2 Types of serial verb constructions in Kilivila — the traditional approach

Before I present the types of serial verb constructions I want to define very briefly the notion of ‘verb’ in Kilivila. The Kilivila verbal expression consists of a subject prefix with a marker for tense/aspect/mood (TAM marker),<sup>1</sup> the verb stem proper, and a suffix marking number. The verb stem is invariable.

There are five different subject prefixes: **a-**, **ku-**, **i-/e-**, **ta-** and **ka-**. Besides the first, second and third person, Kilivila distinguishes between a dual inclusive and a dual exclusive; moreover, with the first person plural it also distinguishes between inclusive and exclusive. These affixes are prefixed to the verb stem, thus forming one unit.

There is no morpheme indicating singular; plural is marked by the plural morpheme **-si** suffixed to the verb stem with the prefixed subject affix, thus forming one unit.

Tense/Aspect/Mood is either unmarked (subject prefix series 1) or indicated by a threefold series of affixes, namely: **b-/bu-/ba-** (subject prefix series 2), **l-/lu-/la-** (subject prefix series 3), and **m-/mu-/ma-** (subject prefix series 4) that are prefixed to the subject prefixes. The vowels **u** and **a** follow the consonants **b**, **l**, and **m** to avoid consonant clusters that would not agree with the Kilivila syllable patterns.

The first series of subject prefixes is unmarked with respect to TAM.

The second series expresses the concept of an incomplete action that may happen in the future or may have happened in the past, it may have been expected to happen in the past — though it did not happen, or it may be part of a hypothetical event. Thus, a part of the semantics of this series also covers the concept of expressing a statement as irrealis.

The third series expresses the concept of a completed action. It has quite clear references to past time, it is affirmative or emphatic.

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1 Abbreviations used are: A - subject of transitive verb; COM - comitative; CONT - continuative; CP - Classificatory Particle (see Senft 1996); CSVC - Contiguous serial verb construction; Dir - Directional; excl. - exclusive; f - feminine; Fut - Future/Irrealis; Hab - habitual; MVC - Multi-verb constructions; NP - Nominal phrase; O - Object of transitive verb; OBJ - Object; PC - Paucal; Perf - Perfective; Pl/PL - Plural; R/real - Realis; RM - Remote; RED - Reduplication; S - Subject; SS - Same subject; SVC - Serial verb construction; Seq - Sequential; SG - Singular; SUBJ - Subject; TAM - Tense/Aspect/Mood; V - Verb.

The fourth series expresses the concept of a habitual action; however, it can also indicate optative or irrealis. This series is hardly ever used in ordinary everyday language production; if used it can be interpreted as an indicator of either poetic or humorous style.

The verb stem without these affixes is never used as a verb; however, some nouns can fit into the slot for the verb stem and together with the respective affixes then become verbs, for example:

NOUN	VERB
<b>paisewa</b>	<b>e-paisewa-si</b>
	3.-work-Pl
<i>work</i>	<i>they work</i>

Thus, contrary to many other Austronesian languages (see for example Cablitz 2001:54ff., Mosel 2000, 2001 and the literature quoted there), the distinction of word classes in Kilivila is not a problem at all (for detailed descriptions see Senft 1986:29ff., 1993:88ff.).

In Kilivila verb serialisation takes place at the core layer only (see Foley and van Valin 1984:198ff., Foley and Olson 1985:33ff., Crowley 1987:40, Senft 2001).<sup>2</sup> We find the following three types of what are usually referred to in the literature as SVCs:

### 2.1 Same subject serialisation — type (NP) V (NP) V (NP) V... same TAM marking

The following examples illustrate this type of SVCs:

- (1) *I-masisi-si-go i-vai-si i-simwe-si.*  
 3.-sleep-Pl-Emph 3.-marry-Pl 3.-stay-Pl  
 ‘They sleep (together) indeed they marry they stay (together).’
- (2) *Ma-na-na vivila e-kau hama*  
 Dem-CP.female-Dem girl 3.-take hammer  
*e-katuvi paledi o tebeli e-kanukwenu.*  
 3.-smash plate Loc table 3.-lie  
 ‘This girl takes a hammer she smashes a plate which lies on a table.’  
 (elicited example).

My corpus of Kilivila data documents an utterance consisting of two SVCs with 11 independent verbs in series (however, note the clause boundary after the verb ‘bivinakusi’ indicated with a semicolon): The following utterance was produced by Tosulala when he described how a sail for a big ‘**mwasawa**’-canoe is made out of pandanus leaves:

- (3) *Bi-meye-si bi-dededa-si bi-tata’isi*  
 3.Fut-bring-Pl 3.Fut-take.off.thorns-Pl 3.Fut-cut-Pl  
*bi-meye-si bi-seli-si bi-tola-si bi-deda-si*  
 3.Fut-bring-Pl 3.Fut-put-Pl 3.Fut-stand-Pl 3.Fut-take.off.thorns-Pl  
*bi-deda-si bi-vinaku-si bi-le’i-si bi-la*  
 3.Fut-take.off.thorns-Pl 3.Fut-finish-Pl 3.Fut-throw-Pl 3.Fut-go

2 In Kilivila we find verbal expressions like ‘-biyagila-’ (to draw, to move) which consists of the verbs ‘-bia-’ (to pull out) and ‘-gila-’ (to pluck). However, verbs like ‘-biyagila-’ are compound verbs (see Senft 1986:29ff.)!

*bi-kali ilu.*

3.Fut-dry sun

‘They will bring (it — the pandanus material) they will take off the thorns they will cut (it) they will bring (it) they will put (it) they will stand they will take off the thorns they will take off the thorns they will finish (it) —; they will throw (it) it will go it will dry (in) the sun.’

Finally, the following example illustrates the frequency in which SVCs are produced even in relatively simple genres of Kilivila. Kadawayā describes how grass-skirts are made:

- (4) *Baka-lo-sa baka-guli-sa doba. Ba-la*  
 1.Fut excl-go-Pl 1.Fut.excl-cut-Pl doba-banana.leaves 1.Fut-go  
*ba-guli doba baka-tupisi-si bi-vokwa Ba-meya*  
 1.Fut-cut doba-banana.leaves 1.Fut.excl-tear-Pl 3.Fut-finish 1.Fut-bring  
*ba-duduni ba-gini bi-vokwa. Ba-tateya ba-vakali*  
 1.Fut-defoliate 1.Fut-mark 3.Fut-finish 1.Fut-scrape 1.Fut-dry  
*bi-mnabu e ba-kudu ba-semwa va*  
 3.Fut-be.dry and 1.Fut-tie.together 1.Fut-put.away Dir  
*pweya bi-kanukwenu.*  
 big.basket 3.Fut-lie.down  
 ‘We will go we will cut grass-skirt material. I will go I will cut grass-skirt material, we will tear (it) it will be finished. I will bring (it) I will defoliate (it) I will mark (it) it will be finished. I will scrape (it) I will dry (it) it will be dry and I will tie (it) together I will put (it) away to the big basket it will lie down (there).’<sup>3</sup>

## 2.2 Same subject serialisation — type (NP) V (NP) V (NP) V ... different TAM marking

The following sentence produced by Tokunupei illustrates this type of SVCs. He is referring to the spirit woman Namsasela who is believed to live in the bush close to the village of Tauwema. In order to keep this spirit woman peaceful the villagers offer her food — which she may take at night:

- (5) *Ebogi e-meki bi-lupwali e-kapwagega bi-koma.*  
 at.night 3.-come.to 3.Fut-swallow 3.-open.mouth 3.Fut-eat  
 ‘At night she came to (this place) she would swallow (it) she opened her mouth she would eat (it).’

This example presents counter-evidence to one of the key-characteristics postulated for SVCs, namely ‘the serial complex has shared tense, aspect, modality, and polarity’ (Durie 1997:291). This key characteristic feature only holds for Kilivila with respect to polarity. In Kilivila speakers may use different TAM markers for serialised verbs to express their intentions more specifically. Thus, if speakers want to emphasise one component of intention by a SVC they produce one verb with subject prefixes that are neutral, i.e.

3 I will discuss the role of the verbs ‘-vinaku-’ (see example (3)) and ‘-okwa-’ (see example (4)) with respect to how events are reported in SVCs below.

unmarked with respect to tense, aspect and mood (subject prefix series 1) and the other verb with subject prefixes that express the concept of incomplete action that may happen in the future or may have happened in the past or may have been expected to happen in the past or that may be part of a hypothetical event (subject series 2).

If speakers want to express a past intention — that may remain unfulfilled — they produce the first verb in a SVC with a subject prefix of series 1 and the second verb with a subject prefix of series 2. Thus, in example (5) Tokunupei emphasises that Namsasela had the intention to swallow and eat the food, but that she did not necessarily do that every time she came to the village Tauwema.

The following sentence

- (6) *Ba-la a-bani yena.*  
 1.Fut-go 1.-fish (with a hook) fish  
 ‘I will go angling.’

is a statement of intention with the emphasis on ‘angling’ as the action that is in the speaker’s focus of attention. Here the first verb in the SVC is produced with a subject prefix of series 2 and the second verb is produced with a subject prefix of series 1.

We also find SVCs in which the first verb is produced with a subject prefix that expresses the concept of a completed action (subject prefix series 3) and the second verb is produced with a subject prefix of series 2 as in the following example:

- (7) *Laka-me-si baka-nukwali-si mokwita.*  
 1.Past.excl-come-Pl 3.Fut-know-Pl right  
 ‘We came to know (it) correctly.’

Here the emphasis is on the intention and on the processes necessary to know something correctly (see also Senft 1986:36ff.).

### 2.3 Switch subject serialisation — serial causative verbs

In this type ‘there is identity not between the two subjects, but between the object of the first verb and the subject of the following verb’ (Crowley 1987). The last two verbs in the following example produced by Bwema’utila illustrate this type (see Senft 1991:90):

- (8) *E bogwa igau-ga bi-guguya tomwaya*  
 and already later-Emph. 3.Fut-educate old.man  
*avaka bi-lukwe-mi buku-lagisi.*  
 what 3.Fut-tell-you 2.Fut-hear.  
 ‘And already soon the chief will educate you, he will tell you you will hear.’

This type of SVCs was also produced in the sentences (3) and (4) above:

- (3) ... *bi-le’i-si bi-la bi-kali lili.*  
 3.Fut-throw-Pl 3.Fut-go 3.Fut-dry sun  
 ‘... they will throw (it) it will go it will dry (in) the sun.’
- (4) ... *Ba-tateya ba-vakali bi-mnabu ...*  
 1.Fut-scrape 1.Fut-dry 3.Fut-be.dry  
 ‘... I will scrape (it) I will dry (it) it will be dry ...’

If we follow the terminology presented in the literature on SVCs in Austronesian languages so far, then we can classify the Kilivila SVCs as encompassing these three types mentioned above. However, ever since I have started researching SVCs in Kilivila and informing myself on these constructions in other — mainly in Austronesian and Papuan — languages, I have difficulties in looking at a number of at least to me different phenomena under one and the same heading: ‘SVCs’. I have come to the conclusion — like many other researchers interested in the phenomenon — that Carol Lord is right with her summary of the state of the art with respect to SVCs: ‘Defining serial verb constructions is a sticky business’ (Lord 1993:1). But what can we do to overcome this situation? Together with Miriam van Staden and Alex Dukers I started in January 2000 a research project on ‘Serial Verb Constructions, Event conceptualisation and Event Report in Austronesian and Papuan Languages’.<sup>4</sup> In the framework of this project we first collected data on the topic with a general questionnaire distributed via the internet<sup>5</sup> and with a specific questionnaire on East Nusantara languages developed by Miriam van Staden (for the third East Nusantara Conference, Leiden, 18–20 June 2001; see also van Staden and Reesink this volume). Together with our colleagues at the MPI and in cooperation with the Dutch Spinoza Programme ‘Lexicon and Syntax’ directed by Pieter Muysken we also developed a specific elicitation tool (called ‘Staged Events’), and finally we have been doing two corpus studies on Tidore (a Papuan language spoken on Tidore Island in the North Moluccas) and on Kilivila. In the following two subsections I will first briefly describe what consequences the two questionnaires had for our classification of various types of SVCs in Papuan and Austronesian languages. Then I will briefly present how and for what means and ends we developed the elicitation tool ‘staged events’.

### **3 Types of serial verb constructions in Papuan and Austronesian languages: towards a new typology**

In her paper ‘Serial verb constructions in the languages of East Nusantara’ presented at the Third East Nusantara Conference (van Staden 2001) and in our poster on ‘Event report and serial verb constructions in Austronesian and Papuan languages’ (van Staden and Senft 2001) presented at the evaluation of the MPI by its scientific council in the same year, Miriam van Staden summarised her analyses of the above mentioned questionnaires and her first results on what types of SVCs we find in the languages in focus. In what follows I heavily draw on these two presentations (see also van Staden and Resink this volume).

However, before I briefly summarise van Staden’s arguments, I have to make a few remarks on the concept of ‘eventhood’. As I have pointed out elsewhere (Senft 2004), one of the few characteristics of SVCs that seem to be accepted by all linguists researching the phenomenon is that ‘a single serial verb complex describes what is conceptualised as a single event’ (Durie 1997:291 — but see below!). The notion ‘event’ was in the focus of a project on ‘event representation’ at our MPI for Psycholinguistics. Jürgen Bohnemeyer (1999; see also Senft and Smits 2000:102ff.) has been working intensively on the clarification of this topic. He differentiates linguistic representations of events, mental representations of events, and events in the ‘real world’. He writes (Bohnemeyer 1999:5):

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4 This project — i.e., Miriam van Staden’s post-doc research position and Alex Duker’s student assistant position — was supported by the German Research Society (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft SE 473/3–1) and by the Max-Planck-Institute for Psycholinguistics.

5 See: <http://www.mpi.nl/world/serial-verb/quest/1st-quest.html>



Real world events only matter [in this approach — G.S.] as an *intensional correlate* of linguistic and cognitive representations of events. That is to say, it is assumed here that linguistic event representations and cognitive event representations are both *representations* of events in the ‘real world’. This assumption does not entail a commitment to the *existence* of events in the physical world, nor does it entail a commitment to a particular understanding of what the properties of such events are, and neither does it entail a commitment to a particular view of what the relationship between properties of real-world events and properties of their mental or linguistic representations are like. It merely means to suppose that linguistic and cognitive representations of events behave *as if* such events existed in the ‘real world’, and *as if* they *had* certain properties, and it is this *behaviour* of cognitive and linguistic event representations that the project sets out to study.

In this view an event or the construal of an event ‘is seen as the treatment of a portion out of the continuum of experience and perception as if it were an entity’ — as van Staden and Reesink (this volume) point out, too. Bohnemeyer now summarises his point of departure to research the linguistic encoding of event complexity as follows (Bohnemeyer and Caelen 2001:168):

The guiding assumptions are that an event expression is complex to the extent that it entails multiple *subevents* (provided these can be coded in the language in question), and that the subevents entailed by an event expression constitute a *macro-event* to the extent that they together behave like one primitive event representation in the language at stake. The degree to which the subevents of a semantically complex event expression are *integrated* as parts of an overall macro-event is hypothesised to depend on the semantic relations entailed or implicated by the complex event expression to obtain among the subevents.

Thus, Bohnemeyer’s concept of a macro-event is a purely semantic concept that cannot be linked to a specific linguistic predicate. It is a portion out of the continuum of experience and perception that can be encoded by a language-particular event expression which semantically behaves like a simple event expression in certain respects: for example, it combines with time adverbials that locate all parts of the event in time together. The macro-event is uniquely bounded in time. The parts of a macro-event are called ‘subevents’. Macro-event expressions may entail multiple subevents of particular kinds. For instance, ‘X killed Y’ entails that ‘Y died’ and that ‘X did something that caused Y’s death’ (Bohnemeyer pers. comm., see also Bohnemeyer and Caelen 2001).

Van Staden’s research towards a typology of SVCs takes up these notions of ‘subevent’ and ‘macro-event’. She distinguishes two basic functions of SVCs and four basic morphosyntactic types. The two basic functions are based on cognitive semantic concepts. On the poster on ‘Event Report and Serial Verb Constructions in Austronesian and Papuan Languages’ (van Staden and Senft 2001), van Staden defines the functions and the morphosyntactic types as follows (for a more detailed description see van Staden 2001, van Staden and Reesink this volume):

- The *narrative function* of SVCs consists in the linkage of *macro-events* to compose larger event complexes. Narrative serialisation presents a series of events in a fixed or semi-fixed script. Time and place are not necessarily the same for all verbs, and it may be found that verbs can be modified independently.
- The *component function* of SVCs consists in the linkage of subevents to compose macro-events. That is to say, all verbs express a component of

a single macro-event. Typically verbs expressing ‘path’, ‘manner’, and ‘direction’ are found in this type of serialisation.

Van Staden distinguishes the following four basic morphosyntactic types:

- *Complex verb serialisation*. This type is closest to compounding. Two or more verbs behave like a single word: typically, all prefixes attach to the first verb, suffixes to the second.
- *Independent serialisation*. This type is closest to co-ordination; all verbs are fully inflected.
- *Co-dependent (shared argument) serialisation*. In this type two verbs share one or more arguments.<sup>6</sup>
- *Dependent serialisation*. In this type only one of the verbs carries all the inflections, the others are given in their ‘bare’ form or in a stripped-down form. This type is close to subordination or adverbial constructions.

Van Staden combines the two basic functions of SVCs with these four morphosyntactic types. This combination results in the following eight logical possibilities:

1. *Narrative complex verb serialisation*, as in the Papuan language Yimas (Foley 1991: 337). For example:

- (9) *pu-kay-yakal caŋ-tantaw-malakmalak-kia-ntuk-ŋkt*  
 3PL O-1PL A-CONT-COM-sit(RED: *taw-*)-talk(RED: *malak-*)  
 -NIGHT-RM PAST-PC  
 ‘We few were sitting down conversing with them.’

2. *Component complex verb serialisation*, as in the Austronesian language Kokota (Palmer, MPI questionnaire). For example:

- (10) *Manei n-e fufunu toka kave-i ia gazu.*  
 he RL-3SUBJ begin chop descend-3SGOBJ theSG wood  
 ‘He started chopping down the tree.’

3. *Narrative independent serialisation*, as in the Austronesian language Kilivila (Senft 2004:50). For example:

- (11) *Bala bakakaya baka'ita basisu bapaisewa batai waga kevau.*  
*ba-la ba-kakaya ba-ka'ita ba-sisu ba-paisewa*  
 1.Fut-go 1.Fut-bath 1.Fut-return 1.Fut-be 1.Fut-work  
 ‘I will go I will have a bath I will come back I will stay (in the village) I will work.’

4. *Component independent serialisation*, as in the Papuan language Tidore (van Staden, MPI questionnaire). For example:

- (12) *mina mo-sari mo-reke*  
 3f 3f.a-look.for 3f.a-cry  
 ‘She is about to start crying.’

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6 As Jürgen Bohnemeyer (pers. comm.) pointed out, this type requires a partially merged argument structure, i.e., at least one argument to which participants of multiple verbs are linked can be overtly realised only once.

5. *Narrative co-dependent serialisation*: so far we have not found SVCs of this logically possible type!

6. *Component co-dependent serialisation*, as in the Austronesian language Pileni (Naess, MPI questionnaire). For example:

- (13) *Ko ko teia nohine-aku ko mate.*  
 2du TA kill wife-1sposs TA die  
 ‘You killed my wife and she died.’

7. *Narrative dependent serialisation*, as in the Papuan language Kalam (Pawley 1993: 114). For example:

- (14) ... *sblam mgan kn-l kmn pak d*  
 cordyline enclosure sleep-SS PRIOR game kill carry  
*ap ad ñb-l ap-elgp-al.*  
 come bake eat-SS PRIOR come-PAST HABITUAL-3PL  
 ‘Having slept in the cordyline enclosures, they used to bring the game they killed to cook and eat there.’

8. *Component dependent serialisation*, as in the Papuan language Amele (Roberts, MPI questionnaire). For example:

- (15) *Ija dana eu l-i guluc-ad-ig-en.*  
 1SG man that go-PRED meet-3PL.U-1SG.A-FUT  
 ‘I will go and meet those men.’

Van Staden (see also van Staden and Reesink this volume) summarises the gist of this differentiation as follows:

Component serialisation may be described as ‘a number of subevents expressing a single macro-event’, while narrative serialisation is ‘a fixed scenario in which all subparts which are in themselves macro-events, receive expression.

We will use these types of serialisation as the basis for our language specific analyses. However, our project on SVCs is comparatively oriented as well; thus we will use these types for this research, too. As far as I know there are no data available so far on how different languages with (or without) SVCs report one and the same event. Therefore it was impossible to describe the differences between these event reports from a comparative linguistic point of view. To overcome this situation, we designed an elicitation tool ‘to collect descriptions of complex events in order to examine how these are segmented into macro-events, what kind of information is expressed, and how the information is ordered in the descriptions’ (van Staden et al. 2001:115). In the next section I will briefly describe this elicitation tool.

#### **4 Staged events — a tool for the elicitation of event reports**

To collect these just mentioned ‘descriptions of complex events’ we devised a method for data elicitation that combines interests in SVCs, in event typicality, and in event complexity. The tool consists of two tasks (see van Staden et al. 2001):

1. a description and recollection task, designed to elicit elaborate descriptions of complex events for the description task and concise equivalents for the recollection task;
2. a re-enactment task of some of the scenes on the basis of descriptions given in task 1.

Task 1 consists of two sets of video-clips and stills (on DV tape and digitised on a CD). Set 1, a subset of Set 2, consists of 53 clips and 53 stills. Set 2 consists of 86 clips and 86 stills. The video clips depict various scenes with human actors and recognisable objects (for example, an actor fetches an axe and chops wood, an actor bumps into another actor who drops a plate which breaks, an actor plays guitar over his head, scenes from a football (soccer) game, etc.). The clips are arranged in a specific order. Every seven or eight video-clips for the description task are followed by seven or eight corresponding stills for the recollection task. These stills were carefully selected by Alex Dukers from the video-clips. Every still depicts a crucial moment in the event staged in the clip from which it was chosen.

The researcher elicits these data with two consultants, one acts as the addressee who has not seen the clips and stills before, and one acts as the describer who first describes the clips and then the stills. The researcher makes the addressee ask ‘what happened?’ (using a language/culture appropriate phrasing that focuses on the action) and the describer knows that her or his description must be such that the addressee knows what happened. After seven or eight video-clips the researcher presents the stills to the describer and asks him or her to describe from memory which scene the picture belongs to, using the appropriate equivalent of the question ‘which clip was this?’.

The task is run on a laptop or on a DV-camera. A minimum of 6 pairs of consultants is recommended. It takes about 40 minutes per consultant to run set 1 and at least 60 minutes per consultant to run set 2. The elicitation session should be video-recorded.

The re-enactment task aims to test whether the information contained in the descriptions yielded by the first task is sufficient for a hearer to re-enact the scene correctly, but it is also designed to check which parts of a complex scenario are left to inferences based on ‘stereotypicality’ of events (for instance, if a scene is described as ‘a man throws an apple to a woman’ does this imply that the apple is caught by the woman?). This second task requires that the researcher selects one representative description from the data collected during the first task for 14 scenes depicted in the video-clips there. Moreover, the researcher needs some objects (a shawl or cloth, a fruit, a guitar, a chair, a table, a ball) that are necessary to act out the described scenes. The researcher either plays the tape recorded description or reads it out himself to a pair of consultants that are asked to re-enact what they have just heard in this description. Not all scenes require two actors. Then the actors themselves may decide who is the actor. When two actors are required, they may decide for themselves who acts which part.

For this task a minimum of 6 pairs of consultants is recommended, and it takes about 30 minutes plus optional discussion time. Again, the elicitation session should be video-recorded.

This elicitation tool should provide data for answering the following research questions on SVCs:

- How are events encoded in the respective languages of our language sample?

- How are the formal structures of SVCs related to the types of events and situations they encode?
- Which kinds of verbs constitute the SVCs, how freely are these components combinable and how productive are the SVCs?
- Can one and the same event be described by SVCs that show different ordering of the verbal components? And if so, what are the pragmatic and semantic consequences?
- How does the semantics of the SVCs as a whole influence the order of the construction components and can lexicalisation processes be observed here?
- Are there any language- and/or culture-specific rules for the combination of the verbs in such constructions?

However, in our project we also look at natural data from text corpora which encompass a broad variety of text genres in addition to the data elicited through the staged events tasks. As a basis for exploring the role of fixed scenarios for the description of complex events in these natural data we have selected two longer scenes (the ‘waking up scene’ and the ‘rice cooking scene’) from the staged events clips for closer analysis. Moreover, some of the shorter scenes that were acted out in a controlled setting (like the event typicality clips) in which there may or may not be a change in agency, should enable us to take a closer look at this variable that is often relevant the analysis of SVCs.

Finally, assuming that most people will be familiar with football (soccer) in reality, we want to use the clips depicting scenes selected from a football match (that are hopefully ‘natural’ events for our consultants to describe) to research the role of different cause-effect (ball being caught vs. not being caught by goal keeper), increasing path complexity, different manners of motion, and different kinds of transfer for SVCs.

For detailed information on this elicitation tool I refer the interested reader to van Staden et al. (2001). We hope that our approach will be of interest for other researchers as well. We will try to build up a data base on SVCs and event reports at the MPI with data collected with the elicitation tool described above. We hope that many colleagues will contribute to this data base to enable further comparative research on the phenomena.<sup>7</sup> I am convinced that only such kind of research will enable us to show that researching SVCs need not be the ‘sticky business’ as Lord (1993:1) has referred to it. In what follows I will present first analyses of my Kilivila data collected with this elicitation tool and their consequences for my classification of SVCs in this language.

## **5 Serial verb constructions in Kilivila**

On the basis of first analyses of data on SVCs in my text corpora, on the basis of the data collected with the ‘staged events’ elicitation tool, and on the basis of the types of SVCs defined by van Staden (2001; see also van Staden and Reesink this volume) I can classify these constructions for Kilivila as follows:

We find the following three types of verb serialisation in Kilivila:

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<sup>7</sup> Interested colleagues should contact me to get copies of the research tool and its description (van Staden et al. 2001) in our 2001 field manual.

- Narrative independent serialisation.

In this type of serialisation a series of macro-events are linked and presented in a (semi-) fixed script, time and place are not necessarily the same for all verbs, verbs can be modified independently, and all verbs are fully inflected.

In the data elicited with the ‘staged events’ Namnabai describes still No.28 with the following two verbal expressions (Baldwin’s ‘tandem verbs’) in narrative independent serialisation:

- (16) *E m-to-si-na tauwau e-tota-si e-bigatona-si.*  
 and Dem-CP.man-Pl-Dem men 3.-stand-Pl 3.-talk-Pl  
 ‘And these men they stand they talk.’

- Component independent serialisation.

In this type of serialisation subevents are linked, all verbs express components of a single macro-event, and all verbs are fully inflected.

In the data elicited with the ‘staged events’ Moyadi describes still No.8 with the following *five verbs in component independent serialisation*:

- (17) *Ma-ke-na turaki e-sakaula e-la e-katukwevivila*  
 Dem-CP.wood-Dem truck 3.-run 3.-go 3.-turn.round  
*e-ma i-kota beya.*  
 3.-come 3.-arrive here  
 ‘This truck it runs it goes it turns it comes it arrives here.’

- Component co-dependent serialisation.

In this type sub-events are linked, the verbs express a component of a single macro-event and the object of the first verb is the subject of the second.

This type represents that kind of serialisation (that is also called ‘serial causative verbs’ or ‘switch subject serialisation’) is rather rare. I could not elicit it with the ‘staged events’; however, in my overall corpus of Kilivila speech data I have a few examples like the one presented in example (8) above (the essential part of which I repeat here as (8’)):

- (8’) ... *avaka bi-lukwe-mi buku-lagisi.*  
 what 3.Fut-tell-you 2.Fut-hear.  
 ‘... what he will tell you you will hear.’

To describe the ‘staged events’ Kilivila speakers usually produce descriptions that contain both narrative and component independent serialisation — as illustrated by the following example produced by Pulia in his description of video-clip 130 (please note that commata indicate clause boundaries):

- (18) *M-to-na tomwota e-masisi e-okwa, e-mamata*  
 Dem-CP.male-Dem person 3-sleep 3.-finish 3.-wake.up  
*e-mtumtu mata-la e-okwa, e-weyola e-okwa,*  
 3.-rub eye-3.Poss.Pro.IV 3.-finish 3.-stretch 3.-finish  
*e-tokeva e-lola e-la e-loki ma-kwela-na*  
 3.-stand.up 3.-walk 3.-go 3.-go.and arrive Dem-CP.potlike-Dem

*baketi, e-kau e-kemali e-meya e-ta'ili e-la*  
 bucket 3.-take 3.-take.along 3.-bring 3.-fill.in 3.-go

*va disi, e-kivisi e-okwa, e-tokeva e-tauwela e-okwa,*  
 Dir dish 3.-wash.face 3.-finish 3.-stand up 3.-towel 3.-finish

*e-kau-vau ma-ke-na disi, e-la e-katusau sopi.*  
 3.-take-again Dem-CP.wooden-Dem dish 3.-go 3.-pour.out water

‘This person sleeps it is over, he wakes up and he rubs his eyes it is over, he stretches it is over, he stands up he walks he goes he arrives at this bucket, he takes it he takes it along he brings it he fills it in he goes to the dish, he washes his face it is over, he stands up and he towels (himself) it is over, he takes again this dish, he goes and he pours out the water.’

In this description of the ‘staged events’ episode we find the following types of serialisation (verbs that occur once in a series of narrative and component independent serialisation or in the combination of SVCs are underlined):

<b>emasisi eokwa</b> he sleeps it is over	component independent serialisation
<b>emamata <u>emtumtu</u></b> he wakes up he rubs	narrative independent serialisation (combined with)
<b><u>emtutmtu</u> matala eokwa</b> he rubs his eyes it is over	component independent serialisation
<b>eweyola eokwa</b> he stretches it is over	component independent serialisation
<b>etokeva <u>elola</u></b> he stands up he walks	narrative independent serialisation (combined with)
<b><u>elola</u> ela eloki</b> he walks he goes he goes and arrives	component independent serialisation
<b>ekau <u>ekemali</u></b> he takes he takes along he brings	component independent serialisation (combined with)
<b><u>ekemali</u> emeya</b> (he takes along) he brings he fills in	narrative independent serialisation (combined with)
<b><u>emeya</u> eta'ili</b> (he brings) he fills in	narrative independent serialisation (combined with)
<b><u>eta'ili</u> ela</b> (he fills in) he goes	component independent serialisation
<b>ekivisi eokwa</b> he washes his face it is over	component independent serialisation
<b>etokeva <u>etauwela</u></b> he stands up he towels himself	narrative independent serialisation (combined with)
<b><u>etauwela</u> eokwa</b> he towels himself it is over	component independent serialisation
<b>ela ekatusau</b> he goes he pours out	narrative independent serialisation

This example nicely illustrates how speakers of Kilivila mark and segment complex episodes and events: they either produce the verb ‘-**okwa-**’ (to be finished, to be over) — like Pulia does here — or the verb ‘-**vinaku-**’ (to finish) — as illustrated in example (3) in §2 above.<sup>8</sup> These verbs function as indicators which show that the events before such a respective verb are conceptualised as being separate from the event or the events following them. They make explicit that the speaker does not want to link these events directly.

After the production of such verbs speakers emphasise their segmenting function with a very short pause. This explains why the following verbs in series ‘**eokwa eweyola eokwa**’ and ‘**ekivisi eokwa etokeva etauwela eokwa ekauvau**’ cannot be analysed as SVCs consisting of three and six verbs. The first utterance consists of the verb ‘**eokwa**’ and an SVC consisting of the verbs ‘**eweyola eokwa**’. The second utterance consists of two SVCs and the additional verb ‘**ekauvau**’; the first of the two SVCs consists of the verbs ‘**ekivisi eokwa**’ and the second one consists of the verbs ‘**etokeva etauwela eokwa**’

The verb series that include the verb ‘-**okwa-**’ in the ‘staged event’ description above also reveals another interesting fact that can be observed with respect to verb serialisation in Kilivila. The attentive reader will have noticed that despite the same person (and — in this case — also the same TAM) marker the subject of the verb ‘**eokwa**’ is neutral — as indicated by translating the third person marker with ‘it’ — and thus differs from the subject of the preceding verb (or from the subjects of the preceding serialised verbs respectively). Nevertheless, I take this verb as being part of, and being incorporated in, an SVC, because it marks the end of the event or the events reported in the verb or in the SVC preceding it.

However, this is not the only case in Kilivila where we observe SVCs consisting of verbs with different subjects in series, as the following examples illustrate:

- (19) *Vivila e-yosi paledi e tau e-sunapula e-va e-bumpi,*  
 girl 3.-hold plate and man 3.-appear 3.-go.to 3.-bump.into  
*e-kapusi e-la, gala e-katuvi.*  
 3.-fall 3.-go not 3.-break  
 ‘A girl holds a plate and a man appears goes (to and) bumps (into her),  
 it falls it goes (down), it does not break.’

In this example (produced by Pulia to describe still No.42) the third person markers of the verbs ‘**esunapula eva ebumpi**’ refer to ‘**tau**’ (the man) but the third person markers of the verbs ‘**ekapusi ela**’ refer to ‘**paledi**’ (the plate). However, this utterance consists of three clauses. The first clause consists of the SVC ‘**esunapula eva ebumpi**’, the second clause consists of the SVC ‘**ekapusi ela**’ and the third clause consists of ‘**gala ekatuvi**’. Thus, here the different person markers in the two SVCs are differentiated by a clause boundary. The same holds for the following example (produced by Namnabai in her description of video-clip 47):

- (20) *M-to-na tau e-kau ma-ke-na regisa,*  
 Dem-CP.male-Dem man 3.-take Dem-CP.wooden-Dem axe  
*e-kau bwa-ta kai e-sela e-tatai,*  
 3.-take CP.wooden-one wood 3.put.down 3.-cut

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8 See also example (4) and footnote 3 above.



*e-debwali-si e-mwemwe-si o tinava.*

3.-fall-Pl 3.-go.to-Pl Loc ground

‘This man he takes this axe, he takes one piece of wood he puts it down he cuts it, they fall down they go to the ground.’

Here the third person markers of the verbs ‘**esela etatai**’ refer to ‘**tau**’ (the man) and the third person markers of the verbs ‘**edebwalisi emwemwesi**’ refer to ‘**kai**’ (the (cut off pieces of) wood). Again, there is a clause boundary (indicated by a very brief pause) that differentiates the first SVC from the second SVC (the verbs of which also differ with respect to number from the verbs in the first SVC).

Another interesting result of my elicitation of SVCs with the ‘staged events’ emerged in my discussions of these constructions with my consultants on the Trobriands. It turned out that they explicitly differentiate verb serialisations with facultative NPs realised between verbs from SVCs in which the verbs are produced in contiguous succession. They had no difficulties to accept that constructions like the utterance presented as example (2) in §2 above (repeated here as (2’)) consist of more than one verb:

(2’) *Ma-na-na vivila e-kau hama*  
Dem-CP.female-Dem girl 3.-take hammer

*e-katuvi paledi o tebeli e-kanukwenu.*  
3.-smash plate Loc table 3.-lie

‘This girl takes a hammer she smashes a plate which lies on a table.’

However, they emphasised that such a construction is absolutely different (‘**sena ituali mokwita**’ — ‘very different really’) from constructions like the one presented as example (1) in §2 above (repeated here as (1’)):

(1’) *I-masisi-si-go i-vai-si i-simwe-si.*  
3.-sleep-Pl-Emph 3.-marry-Pl 3.-stay-Pl

‘They sleep (together) indeed they marry they stay (together).’

This is also true for the following two constructions which we find in example (18) above (repeated here as (18’) and (18’’)):

(18’) ... *e-masisi e-okwa* ...  
3.-sleep 3.-finish

(18’’) ... *e-mtuntu mata-la e-okwa*  
3.-rub eye-3.Poss.Pro.IV 3.-finish

(18’) is a SVC consisting of two contiguous verbs. (18’’) consists of the verb ‘**emtuntu**’, the noun-phrase ‘**matala**’ as the object of this verb, and the verb ‘**eokwa**’. Therefore, I will only refer to constructions like those illustrated with example (2’) and (18’’) as SVCs and differentiate them from constructions like those illustrated with example (1’) and (18’). I refer to these constructions as ‘contiguous serial verb constructions’ (CSVCs).

These analyses and observations have their consequences for my understanding of SVCs in Kilivila. On the way towards a comprehensive definition of SVCs in Kilivila I would like to propose the following preliminary definition of this interesting linguistic phenomenon:

Kilivila is a language with multi-verb constructions (MVCs). These MVCs are differentiated into SVCs and CSVCs. Verbs constituting CSVCs have to be contiguous.

We find three types of verb serialisation: narrative independent serialisation, component independent serialisation and, though rather rarely, component co-dependent (or: switch subject) serialisation. Verbs constituting MVCs have shared polarity, but they need not have shared tense, aspect and modality, and they need not all refer to the same subject, either. MVCs are produced under a single intonation contour without internal pauses.<sup>9</sup> MVCs are used not only to describe what is conceptualised as a single event but also what is conceptualised as a complex event which may consist of both macro- and subevents.

I am aware of the fact that this preliminary definition deviates from other attempts towards a definition of these fascinating constructions. However, further research is needed to falsify or verify this approach to MVCs in Kilivila.<sup>10</sup>

The final point of the (preliminary) definition presented above refers to the conceptualisation of events. This is probably one of the most fascinating aspects in researching these constructions from a cognitive linguistic point of view; however, it is also probably the most problematic feature of this research. In what follows I will briefly sketch how I would like to deal with this extremely interesting and difficult issue.

## **6 Event report and event conceptualisation in Kilivila — towards a new approach to research an old phenomenon**

Research on MVCs started when German and English speaking linguists realised that contrary to their own language which (generally) encodes a single (action or) event with just one verb, other languages encode such events with two or more verbs (see Senft 2001:4ff.). I assume that linguists today still agree with the observation that ‘events are segmented with finer granularity in serialising languages than they are in non-serialising languages’ (Ameka and Essegbey in press:11). The ‘staged events’ provide us with an elicitation tool that makes it possible to really compare the descriptions of the very same

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9 This important aspect for this definition is so far only impressionistic. It asks for sound and thorough phonetic analyses. I have not done any such analyses — though I am aware that this is an important shortcoming in the linguistic research of MVCs in general.

10 An anonymous referee made the following very interesting comment here:

[G]iven the difficulty to analyse narrative (so-called) ‘serialisation’ along the lines of other more canonical types of serialisation and given that they have properties that often contradict the criteria usually accepted for serialisation ..., wouldn’t it be better to find another name than serialisation for this narrative type? All the more so as, (as Pawley points out) it is not so much verbs as complex verb phrases which are ‘serialised’. This also goes for some of the other papers in the volume ...

...[I]nstead of remaining at the level of the form (serialised, contiguous or not), several types of linkages (coordination or possibly something else) might be compared in narrative sequences: at the nuclear level (possibly right asyndetic coordinate nuclei – CSVCs) or at VP level (looser asyndetic coordinate VPs – SVCs) for instance.

And then some of the properties of these narrative sequence of VPs (different times and places, independent modification and so on ...) would not contradict some of the traditional criteria of ‘serial verbs’, because they do not seem to be ‘serial verbs’, but something else.

This of course has to be debated, but the danger of putting so many different types of constructions (such as what is described here as ‘component’ or ‘narrative’ serialisation) under the same catch-word ‘serialisation’ creates a situation where none of the criteria which normally help define the ‘standard’ construction hold any longer, but possibly because they are something else and should be given a different label. Why not analyse these data by the relevant type and level of syntactic linkage for instance?

I will definitely take up this very constructive proposal in my further research.

scenarios produced by speakers of various languages with and without MVCs. Thus we can empirically test this observation and see whether languages with MVCs really segment events with finer granularity than languages without these constructions, and if so, how and where they do this.

In September 2001 René Schiering, a student from the University of Cologne stayed with us at the MPI for a month as a trainee. He collected for us data with the ‘staged events’ tool that were produced by three German and three English native speakers (see Schiering 2001). In what follows I will use these data to compare Kilivila event descriptions with English event descriptions.

Let us first have a look at how an English native speaker describes the complex video clip No.130 and compare it with the Kilivila description given in example (18) above. One of the three English speakers produced the following event report for this 1 minute and 43 seconds long clip:<sup>11</sup>

- (21) You had a young man lying on a mat, in the woods, eh ehm sleeping on a mat, he eh wakes up, stretches, stands up, carries a plastic basin over to a bucket that is filled with hot water, as we see later, he pours the water into the basin, ehm carries it back to a block, he puts the basin on top of the block, eh washes his face, dries his face with a towel and then empties the basin onto the lawn.

Table 1 lists the events that are reported in the English (21) description, and Table 2 lists the events reported in the Kilivila (18) description presented in §5 above.

**Table 1:** Events reported in English with respect to ‘staged events’ clip 130

MACRO-EVENT	Subevent(s)	V / CSV / SVC (+)
(1) S.O. LYING ON S.TH.		V (present participle)
(2) SLEEPING		V (present participle)
(3) WAKE UP		V + satellite
(4) STRETCHES		V
(5) STAND UP		V + satellite
(6) CARRY S.TH. OVER		V + satellite
(7) STH. IS FILLED WITH STH.		V
(8) POUR WATER IN S.TH.		V + satellite
(9) CARRY S.TH. BACK TO S.TH.		V + satellite + Loc.
(10) PUT S.TH. ON TOP OF STH.		V + satellite + Loc
(11) WASHES S.TH.		V
(12) DRIES S.TH. WITH STH.		V + Instr.
(13) EMPTIES S.TH.		V

<sup>11</sup> This is not the most elaborate description. Compare the following one (video clip No.130): ‘Well, ... there is a fellow eh lying down outside on a a mat of some kind, looks like he was sleeping at the start, there are also in the frame, there is a concrete block with a plastic wash basin on top of it, and then hanging in the tree nearby is also a towel, eh he wakes up, it looks like, and sits up, stretches, scratches his head, and then eh walks over, gets up and walks over and picks up the wash basin, walks offscreen to ehm a bucket, hm we follow him to the bucket, and pours the bucket of water into the wash basin, that looks like it is warm or hot, because there is steam rising from it, walks back to the concrete block, puts the wash basin down, then eh washes his hands and his face, eh takes the towel from the tree behind him, dries his face, then he picks up the wash basin and ... throws the water away and then walks offscreen’.

**Table 2:** Events reported in Kilivila with respect to ‘staged events’ clip 130

MACRO-EVENT	Subevent(s)	V / CSVC / SVC (+)
(1) S.O. SLEEPING	sleeping sleeping finish	CSVC
(2) WAKE UP		V (linked with)
(3) RUB S.TH.	rub s.th. rub s.th. finish	SVC
(4) STRETCH	Stretch stretch finish	CSVC
(5) STAND UP		V (linked with)
(6) MOTION FROM A TO B	walk go go and arrive	CSVC
(7) TAKE	take take along	CSVC (linked with)
(8) BRING		V (linked with)
(9) FILL IN		V..... (linked with)
(10) MOTION TO A	go	V
(11) WASHING S.TH.	wash wash finish	CSVC
(12) STAND UP		V (linked with)
(13) TOWEL	towel towel finish	CSVC
(14) TAKE S.TH.		V
(15) MOTION		V (linked with)
(16) POUR S.TH. OUT		V

Please note that these tables represent a very first approach to the problem of classifying events — therefore I am absolutely aware of the fact that they may grossly oversimplify the phenomena.<sup>12</sup> Further research may (and certainly will) lead to finer analyses — however, at the moment I just want to sketch the directions it should take.

Tables 1 and 2 show the following: The English description, on the one hand, reports 13 macro-events that are not further differentiated into subevents. The Kilivila description, on the other hand, reports 16 macro-events, six of which are differentiated as consisting of two subevents (Nos.1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 13) and one of which is differentiated as consisting of three subevents (No.6). This last mentioned macro-event reports a ‘motion event’. Of the six macro-events that are differentiated as consisting of two subevents, one reports a ‘take event’ (No.7), and five report the actual action and its respective end of various other macro events (Nos.1, 3, 4, 11, 13). Thus, we can observe that with respect to the reported macro-events it is not the case that Kilivila — a language with CSVCs and SVCs — segments all the reported events ‘with finer granularity’ than English does it. It is only some macro-events that get further differentiated in Kilivila and that are reported with this ‘somewhat finer granularity’. However, it is absolutely stunning to see that in this description the verbs, CSVCs and SVCs link macro-events in six cases (2. and 3. V and

12 This further research has to answer questions like the following: Do satellites express subevents?

SVC; 5. and 6. V and CSV; 7. and 8. and 9. and 10. CSV and V and V and V; 12. and 13. V and CSV; 15. and 16. V and V). Here SVCs are constituted that link more than just one event: SVCs in Kilivila do more than only describing what is conceptualised as a single event — they can also describe and link a series of single macro-events (that are probably conceptualised as a more complex part of an episode).

Let us have a look at another example of a description of a ‘staged event’ episode in Kilivila and in English. The following transcription (22) presents Moyadi’s description in Kilivila of the scenario presented in the 1 minute and 15 seconds long video-clip No.62 of the ‘staged events’:

- (22) *M-to-na tau e-kau la nepa,*  
 Dem-CP.male-Dem man 3.-take 3.Poss.Pro.III bush-knife  
*e-la e-viviya kai e-okwa, e-ke'imali e-meyaki*  
 3.-go 3.-chop wood 3.-finish 3.-take.along 3-bring  
*ma-na-na vivila, e-visilaki ma-kova-na kova,*  
 Dem-CP.female-Dem girl 3.-push.into Dem-CP.fire-Dem fire  
*e-sulu ma-kwela-na kwena, bogwa e-menu,*  
 3.-cook Dem-potlike-Dem pot already 3.-be.cooked  
*e-vanapula-ga Gunter. E-vanapula-ga Gunter, e-lola*  
 3.-appear-Emph Gunter 3.-appear-Emph Gunter 3.-walk  
*e-va i-siwa, e-yeya ke-yu paledi,*  
 3.-go.to 3.-stay 3.-serve CP.wooden-two plates  
*ke-tala e-seki m-to-na tau, ke-tala*  
 CP.wooden-one 3.-give Dem-CP.male-Dem man CP.wooden-one  
*e-seki Gunter, e-kamkwam-si.*  
 3.-give Gunter 3.-eat-Pl.

‘This man he takes his bush-knife, he goes he chops wood it is over, he takes along he brings it to this girl, he pushes it into this fire, she cooks (something in) this pot — already it is cooked, Gunter appears. Gunter appears, he walks he goes he stays, she serves two plates (of food), she gives one to this man, and one she gives to Gunter, they eat.’

The following transcription (23) presents an English native speaker’s description of this same scenario:

- (23) The scene starts with a young man eh chopping wood with an axe, he changes his mind, takes a machete and cuts then a couple of pieces of wood, collects the little pieces, carries them over to the woman who is stirring the soup over the fire, ehm puts it next to the, not that he adds it to the fire, but he puts the the wood next to her, she is in the process of tasting the soup, Gunter arrives and sits down, the young man goes and sits next to him, the woman serves them two bowls of soup, puts the lid back on the ... the pot of soup and waits for their ehm appreciation, but doesn’t have a bowl of soup herself.

Table 3 and Table 4 list again the events reported in Kilivila and in English

**Table 3:** Events reported in Kilivila with respect to ‘staged events’ clip 62

MACRO-EVENT	Subevent(s)	V / CSVC / SVC (+)
(1) S.O. TAKES S.TH.		V (linked with)
(2) GOES		V (linked with)
(3) CHOPS S.TH.	chop chop finish	SVC
(4) TAKES ALONG		V (linked with)
(5) BRING		V
(6) PUSHES STH. INTO S.TH.		V + Loc
(7) S.O. COOKS		V
(8) S.TH. IS COOKED		V
(9) S.O. APPEARS		V
(10) S.O. APPEARS		V (linked with)
(11) MOTION	walk go to stay	CSVC
(12) S.O. SERVES S.TH.		V
(13) S.O. GIVES S.TH. TO S.O..		V
(14) S.O. GIVES S.TH. TO S.O.		V
(15) S.O. EATS		V

**Table 4:** Events reported in English with respect to ‘staged events’ clip 62

MACRO-EVENT	Subevent(s)	V / CSVC / SVC (+)
(1) STH. STARTS		V
(2) S.O. CHOPPING S.TH.		V
(3) S.O. CHANGES S.TH.		V
(4) S.O. TAKES S.TH.		V
(5) S.O. CUTS S.TH.		V
(6) S.O. COLLECTS S.TH.		V
(7) S.O. CARRIES S.TH. OVER TO S.O.		V + satellite + Loc
(8) S.O. STIRS S.TH. OVER STH.		V + Loc
(9) S.O. PUTS S.TH. TO		V + Loc.
(10) S.O. DOES NOT ADD S.TH.		V
(11) S.O. PUTS S.TH. TO		V + Loc.
(12) S.O. TASTES S.TH.	be in the process of taste	V (present participle)
(13) S.O. ARRIVES		V
(14) S.O. SITS		V
(15) S.O GOES		V
(16) S.O. SITS		V
(17) S.O. SERVES S.TH.		V
(18) S.O. PUTS S.TH.		V
(19) S.O. WAITS FOR S.TH		V
(20) S.O. DOES NOT HAVE S.TH.		V

These two tables show the following: The English description reports 20 macro-events one of which is differentiated into two subevents. The Kilivila description reports 15 macro-events, two of which are differentiated as consisting of two and three subevents. One of them reports an action and its end (No.3), the other one reports a ‘motion event’ (No.11). In the Kilivila event report verbs, CSVs and SVCs link macro events in three cases (1. and 2. and 3., V and V and SVC; 4. and 5., V and V; 10. and 11., V and CSV; note also the tail-head linkage between macro-event 9. and 10.). Here the English event report is even ‘finer’ with respect to its granularity than the Kilivila report. And again we see that only some macro-events in Kilivila are differentiated into subevents.

Finally, I would like to look at very simple event reports in English and Kilivila that were elicited with the 13 seconds long video-clip No.15 of the ‘staged events’: one of the English native speakers reports this event as follows:

(24) They are just having a conversation, .... standing there and having a conversation.

The shortest Kilivila event report of this ‘staged event’ refers to the still photograph that goes with this film clip. It was produced by Moyadi:

(25) *E-tota-si e-bigatona-si-*  
3.-stand-Pl 3.-talk-Pl  
‘They stand, they talk.’

However, a few minutes before this reaction to the still photograph of this staged event he produced the following report as his reaction to the film clip:

(26) *M-to-na tau e-lola e-meki so-la*  
Dem-CP.male-Dem man 3.-walk 3.-come.to friend-3.Poss.Pro.IV  
*e-tota-si e-bigatona-si.*  
3.-stand-Pl 3.-talk-Pl  
‘This man he walks he comes to his friend, they stand, they talk.’<sup>13</sup>

I would like to use the two event reports presented in (24) and (25) to highlight the following general observation: Speakers of Kilivila hardly ever start an event report in such a way as illustrated with example (24) produced by a speaker of English. The extension of the event report produced by the English speaker — after a short pause, like a kind of afterthought — comes much closer to an event report that would be more acceptable for a Trobriand Islander. It is true that I find in the ‘staged events’ data which I collected with five Kilivila speakers one speaker who produced three event reports each consisting of a single verb only (for the video-clips No.7 and 20: ‘**eputuborasi**’ — ‘they play soccer’ and for the video-clip 32 ‘**esulusulusi**’ — ‘they cook’) — but this seems to be the exception in my data. These reports were produced by a woman who did not show much enthusiasm for the film clips that showed scenes from a soccer play; however, why she did not produce a more complex report on this one (of two) cooking scene(s) is something I cannot explain. Nevertheless, if I look at my overall corpus of elicited event reports it seems that one of the minimal requirements for a well-formed, acceptable and adequate event report in Kilivila is that there is at least some kind of contextualisation of

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13 Note that the video-clip only shows two men that are standing together and talk with one another. Thus, the first part of this sentence serves the Kilivila speaker as a kind of contextualisation device. For another event report elicited with the still photograph No.28 see sentence (16) in §5 above.

the gist of the reported event. And this contextualizing function can be fulfilled by just one other verb like *'-tota-* (to stand) — or, even simpler, by the verb *'-sisu-* (to be) — that is used to somehow introduce the most important part of the event to be reported (in the case in example (25) above: *'ebigatonasi* — 'they talk').

The observations made with the few examples presented above can be summarised as follows: If we compare English and Kilivila event reports we notice that it is an overgeneralisation to state that 'events are segmented with finer granularity in serialising languages than in non-serialising languages'. With respect to Kilivila this observation holds only for some of the reported events. And these events seem to include motion events, take events, and events that are marked with respect to an action and its end. *Here we have to find out which events are 'segmented with finer granularity', why this is so, and how the serialised verbs establish this 'finer granularity'.*

We also observed that Kilivila uses verbs, CSVCs and SVCs to link certain, but not all, macro-events in reports of scenarios. *Here we have to find out which of these events are linked, why they are linked, and why other events are not linked in this way.*

Finally, it seems that *event reports in Kilivila need a minimum of 'framing' or 'contextualisation' of the most important part of the report* — and the CSVCs and SVCs meet this requirement for producing well-formed, acceptable and minimally situation adequate event reports.

In the next step of my research I will analyse all the event reports I elicited with the 172 video-clips and photographs of the 'staged events' elicitation tool with five speakers of Kilivila (= 860 event reports). These analyses will result in tables that follow the principle of the Tables 1–4 presented above; however, I am convinced that the final event classification will be more refined than the one presented in this first approximation towards a sound analysis of the reported events. Then the event reports René Schiering collected with three speakers of English will be analysed accordingly. The results of this analysis will be compared with the results for Kilivila. These analyses will then serve the basis for answering questions like the ones presented above and in §4 (see also Senft 2004).

But let us come back to the observations made with the first and preliminary data analyses presented above. We saw that English and Kilivila event reports did not differ at all with respect to their overall 'granularity'. However, we observed differences with respect to what macro-events were reported and we also observed differences with respect to how some of these macro-events were reported with finer granularity in Kilivila. We also noticed that some (and not all) macro events are linked with verbs, CSVCs and SVCs in Kilivila, and we realised that Kilivila event reports need some contextualisation. At first sight these findings seem to be simply 'stylistic' devices of Kilivila. This may well be — however, as Volker Heeschen has pointed out several times, 'studies of style are of ... importance to linguistics' (Heeschen 1998:43). I would like to quote him here in some more detail. He writes (Heeschen 2001:156):

The composition of the vocabulary, the actual use of subsets of the lexicon and the ways these subsets lend themselves to being handled in grammar cannot be studied without the help of social anthropology: basic needs, social life, material culture, the importance of some objects or living beings as well as ways of speaking and communicative genres are like systems of 'navigation' for the growth and composition of the lexicon and its use in speech and discourse. Following Spitzer one could propose that grammatical rules are stylistic choices that have hardened into rules:



‘... denn bekanntlich ist die Allgemeinsprache nichts als ein Durchschnitt von Individualsprachen, die Grammatikalisierung verschiedener Sprechakte ... nihil est in syntaxi quod non fuerit in stylo’ (Spitzer 1961, vol.II:516–517)<sup>14</sup>

Depending on the original composition of the lexicon and on the mere size of its subsets, noun classification could be a good means of integrating reference to new objects, verb serialisation could be a good means for describing sequences of events, and nominalisations may be required in reasoning which links the references to different times and events.

Thus, there is more in these ‘stylistic devices’ than we usually assume. However, I would like to go even further. Like many other linguists researching the phenomenon of MVCs, I think they also allow for inferences with respect to how speakers of languages using these devices to conceptualise events that they report in, and with, these constructions. The linking of macro-events by verbs, CSVCs and SVCs, the way in which certain macro-events are differentiated into subevents and reported in CSVCs and SVCs and the way of how events are contextualised represent how speakers of Kilivila categorise and talk about situations and events in everyday life (see Pawley 1991:366). They represent what Pawley has called ‘stereotyped schemata’ or ‘speech formulas’, which he defines as

... a construction type whose lexical content is partly fixed and partly variable. It is a much more complex bundle of elements than a lexical unit. Besides being a conventional pairing of form and meaning associated with a particular grammatical category, a speech formula is indexed for occurrence in particular discourse contexts and discourse functions, can be varied according to formula-specific and general grammatical and idiomaticity constraints, and is spoken with a particular intonation and rhythm (Pawley 1997:24, see also Pawley 1985:95).

This definition shows that the ‘events’ that are expressed and reported in and with CSVCs and SVCs cannot be discussed detached from the individual language and its speakers. And — given our interest in the conceptualisation of events — this insight leads us straight to Dan Slobin’s observation that members of different speech communities organise their thinking for speaking in their respective language specific ways. Slobin (1991:23) notes that:

... we can only talk and understand one another in terms of a particular language. The language or languages that we learn in childhood are not neutral coding systems of objective reality. Rather, each one is a subjective orientation to the world of human experience,<sup>15</sup> and this orientation affects the ways in which we think while we are speaking.

Thus, in order to find out how speakers of Kilivila form and use their CSVCs and SVCs we first have to research what this speech community conventionalises verbally within the frame of an CSVC or SVC as an ‘event’. Only then it is possible to decide (and to describe

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14 ‘... for, as is well-known, common language is nothing else but an average of individual languages, the grammaticalisation of different speech acts ... nihil est in syntaxi quod non fuerit in stylo’.

15 Note that Slobin (1991:23) points out in this paper that ‘Wilhelm von Humboldt anticipated these questions as well. He wrote (1836/1988:60):

To learn a foreign language should therefore be to acquire a new standpoint in the world-view hitherto possessed, and in fact to a certain extent this is so, since every language contains the whole conceptual fabric and mode of presentation of a portion of mankind. But because we always carry over, more or less, our own world-view, and even our own language-view, this outcome is not purely and completely experienced’.

and to learn) whether a certain verb sequence within an MVC can be realised and will be accepted by the speech community, because it verbalises an event type which is plausible and reasonable for the speakers of the respective language (see also Enfield 1998, 2000). This explains why learners of languages with these constructions (like me) have these severe difficulties in learning and producing them properly and situation adequately. If we really want to speak these languages in an — almost — native speaker like way, we have to learn their ‘thinking for speaking’. This is possible to a certain extent, however, it seems that MVCs are extremely sophisticated and extremely culture- and language-specific means in which language-specific ‘thinking for speaking’ manifests itself. To learn this ‘thinking for speaking’ that leads to the proper and situation adequate production of CSVs and SVCs obviously asks for much deeper insights into the underlying cognitive and linguistic processes than other linguistic features of these languages.<sup>16</sup>

In the preceding sections and paragraphs I outlined a possible approach to get these insights by systematically gathering data of event reports in languages with (and without) MVCs. Minute analyses of these event reports and systematic comparison of reports of one and the same events in different languages should then provide the basis for answering the research questions that are relevant for a clear understanding

- of both form and meaning of MVCs on the one hand, and
- of the conceptualisation of events on which speakers of these languages base these reports on the other hand.

I am convinced that this is a promising way for further research in the field, although I am aware of the fact that there are problems that remain to be solved.

## **7 Problems and concluding remarks**

Probably the most important problem I myself have with our approach to research serial- and multi-verb constructions, event conceptualisation and event report is the fact that it is based on elicited data. The elicitation tool developed by us, the ‘staged events’, present a number of scenarios that were first set up and described by a group of linguists, anthropologists, and psychologists at the MPI in Nijmegen. Then some scenarios (those that present scenes from a European soccer match) were video-copied from television and cut according to our purposes. All other scenarios were staged by Miriam van Staden, Norah Carp, Alex Dukers, Marieke Haak, Ulrich Schroeders, Claudia Wegener, Sanne de Wit and me. Thus, our ‘staged-events’ are actually ‘Dutch-German staged-events’ and thus this elicitation tool is absolutely ethnocentric. Therefore, there is the danger that it may elicit artefacts, i.e., event reports speakers of non-Indo-European languages would never produce in real face-to-face interaction within the cultural environments of their indigenous speech communities. How can we overcome this bias and how can we control that the elicited event reports are or are not artefacts?

At the moment I see two ways in which we can solve this problem. First of all, fieldworkers can produce similar ‘staged event video-clips’ of events that are typical for the everyday life of the community they research within the field — and then use these additional clips (and stills) for further data elicitation. Moreover, I take it as being absolutely necessary to compare the elicited event reports with event reports that researchers have already documented in their corpus of natural speech data from the

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<sup>16</sup> This is certainly not true for all other such linguistic features (see Senft 1993)!

speech community they research. As I have shown elsewhere (Senft 1996), the comparison between elicited and naturally and spontaneously produced speech data provides excellent means to evaluate the ecological validity of elicited data.

The necessary analyses of event reports that we find in our corpora of spontaneously produced speech data will also help us to come up with a more refined analyses of what we categorise as macro- and subevents and what patterns we find in SVCs and MVCs that constitute ‘event formulae’. In a recent paper Heeschen reports such an analysis and shows that he could find four patterns that are constitutive for these formulae in Yale and Eipo.<sup>17</sup> He describes these patterns as follows (Heeschen 2001:161ff.):

‘... a human agent (or human-like agent) moves and acts upon something or creates something’,

‘... the sequence moving, **taking (carrying) and acting upon something**’,

‘... The ... sequence..of moving to or being somewhere + acting upon something or creating something’,

‘... movement, taking, acting upon something or creating something, and transfer ...’

He emphasises that the events condensed into these event formulae consist of ‘movement/position, taking, carrying, transferring, acting upon something, or creating something’ (Heeschen 2001:162). As my brief and cursory analyses of the Kilivila data in Tables 2 and 3 above have shown, some of the CSVCs and SVCs found there also fit into these patterns. I assume that we can only overcome Lord’s (1993:1) summary of the state of the art in research on SVCs as being ‘a sticky business’ by approaching these absolutely fascinating phenomena from two sides:

- from the (semi-) experimental field linguistics side – in which event reports with CSVCs and SVCs are elicited in a controlled way, and
- from the side of careful (philological-) linguistic analyses of spontaneously produced event reports in which speakers produce CSVCs and SVCs.

This bilateral approach in researching CSVCs and SVCs, event reports and event conceptualisations is certainly time consuming and extremely labour-intensive, however, I think it is inevitable if we really want to find answers to the questions that have been posed in the literature and asked above.

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17 Yale and Eipo are two Papuan languages of the Mek language family that are spoken in the eastern central mountains of Papua (Irian Jaya, West New Guinea), Indonesia. See Heeschen (1992, 1998).

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