

WIDENING THE CRITERIA FOR SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS - THE CASE OF CHUMBURUNG¹

Keir L. Hansford

Ghana Institute of Linguistics Literacy and Bible Translation
keir_hansford@sil.org

It has long been believed by scholars that for a Multi-Verb-Sequence to qualify as a Serial Verb Construction, the four most important criteria are:

- (1) The syntactic subject of Clause 2 (CL2) (VP2) has the same referent as the syntactic subject of CL1;
- (2) The verb of Clause 2 (CL2) (V2) has the same Mood-Aspect-Tense as that of the verb (V1) in CL1. This article argues that the second is not obligatory in the case of Chumburung.
- (3) There must be no conjunction joining CL1 and CL2. I argue that for Chumburung an apparent Subordinating Conjunction or Complementiser **a** between CL1 and CL2 does not break this rule.
- (4) Negation of V1 semantically negates the remaining verbs in the sequence.

Details are also given that Chumburung has a Causative Auxiliary verb **bó** which functions in certain SVCs where the syntactic NPObj of CL1 has become the semantic subject of CL2.

Another interesting feature of Chumburung, unlike many languages cited in the literature, is that it distinguishes between the intransitive verb 'come' **bà** and the transitive verb 'bring' **bàà**, and between intransitive **yò** 'go' and transitive **yàà** 'send'. These complementary pairs help to disambiguate SVCs where the NPObj of CL1 apparently becomes the NPSubject of CL2.

Finally two structural configurations are offered which seek to map the two well-known types of SVC.

Plusieurs chercheurs ont souvent considéré que pour qu'une séquence de plusieurs verbes soit qualifiée de construction verbale sérielle, il lui faut remplir quatre critères importants qui sont:

- (1) Le sujet syntactique de la deuxième proposition (CL2) (VP2) a le même référent que le sujet syntactique de la première proposition ;
- (2) Le verbe de la deuxième proposition (CL 2) (V2) a la même marque modale-aspectuelle-temporelle comme celle du premier verbe (V1) dans la première proposition (CL1). Cet article démontre que ce deuxième critère n'est pas obligatoire dans le cas de chumburung.
- (3) Il ne doit pas y avoir de conjonction qui unit la première proposition (CL1) à la deuxième (CL2). Je soutiens que pour le chumburung, un semblant de conjonction de subordination ou le complémentiseur **a** ne viole pas cette règle.
- (4) La négation de V1 étend son champ de négation sémantique sur le reste des verbes dans la séquence.

Des détails sont aussi donnés pour prouver que le chumburung a un verbe auxiliaire du causatif **bó** qui fonctionne dans certaines constructions verbales sérielles où le syntagme nominal objet syntactique de la première proposition (CL1) est devenu le sujet sémantique de la deuxième proposition (CL2).

Un autre trait intéressant du chumburung est qu'il distingue entre le verbe intransitif 'venir' **bà** et le verbe transitif 'amener' **bàà** et entre l'intransitif **yò** 'aller' et le transitif **yàà** 'envoyer', un phénomène relativement rare dans les langues. Ces paires complémentaires aident à lever l'équivoque sur l'ambiguïté des constructions verbales sérielles où le syntagme nominal objet de la première proposition (CL1) devient apparemment le syntagme nominal sujet de la deuxième.

En fin de compte, cet article propose deux configurations structurelles en vue de représenter les deux types bien connus de constructions verbales sérielles.

¹ Chumburung is spoken in Northern and Volta Regions of Ghana by about 60,000 people or more. According to Ethnologue, Chumburung is listed as [ncu], its code is ISO 639-3 and its language classification is Niger-Congo: Volta-Congo: Kwa: Potou-Tano: Tano: Guang: North Guang: River. The accepted orthography is used in all the data examples, but the orthography does not mark tones, except for one word, to distinguish it from an apparent homonym. The underlined letters are explained in the next sentence. There is vowel harmony in Chumburung, with the following vowel phonemes in the +ATR set, **i, e, o, u**; and the following in the -ATR set, **ɛ (=ɪ), ɛ ɔ, ɔ (=v)**. The vowel /a/ is in both sets. The letter **ŋ** is used for phonetic [ŋ] and /ny/ for the palatal nasal. The digraphs /ky/ and /gy/ are pronounced like English /ch/ and /j/ respectively.

0. INTRODUCTION

Serial Verb Constructions, for a long time referred to as Serial Verbs, are a subset of Multi-Verb-Sequences (MVS). They are set apart for treatment in the literature as a separate unit within the syntactic hierarchy, because each SVC comprises two or more clauses in sequence, the subject of each of which, whether overt or implied, has the same referent, but it functions as a single predicate. Its syntactic structure however is that of two or more clauses. These SVCs have been given various names by scholars.

Christaller (1875) was the first to distinguish between Accidental Combinations and Essential Combinations. Later writers of the early years included Westerman (1907, 1930). According to Sebba (1987) Westermann recognised rows of verbs with all the same tense or mood and a common subject and object.

According to Aikhenvald (2006:58:58) it was Balmer and Grant (1929) who introduced the title Serial Verb Construction, though for many years, even late in the twentieth century, many writers referred to them as Serial Verbs.

Bamgbose (1973, 1974), with examples from Yoruba, distinguished Linking types from Modifying types.

Later in 1982 Bamgbose distinguished Linking SVCs, which he also called Coordinate SVCs, from Modifying SVCs, and from Complex Verb SVCs. The last title he gave to those SVCs where the meaning of the two verbs is so intertwined that the resulting meaning of the whole construction is not the sum of the meanings of both verbs, e.g. V1 'receive' V2 'eat' meaning 'to believe'. In Yoruba these had long been known as splitting verbs, thus accepting one meaning for the combined whole, but denying that syntactically they comprised two verbs.

These Complex Verb SVCs have also been called Idiomatic SVCs, as Leynseele (1975) acknowledged. She used the word Relational SVC to apply to those constructions which also fit the definition of Modifying SVCs, where the Clause 2 (CL2) typically expresses such relations as Dative, Benefactive, Instrumental, Directional, and Comitative.

Kagni (1989) in a little known article originally in German, proposed that certain Modifying verbs, as mentioned by Bamgbose (1982), were on a continuum between verb and another category, in an unfinished process of Grammaticalisation. He thus coined the categories of Prepositionoid for Locative, Directional and Benefactive SVCs, Conjunctionoid for Comparative SVCs, and Adverboid for SVCs where the CL2 could be translated as an Adverb. I do not agree with his analysis.

Schachter (1974) was one of many who noted that in many examples of SVC the NP object of Clause 1 (CL1) became the semantic, but not syntactic, subject of CL2.

Sebba (1987) studied the creole language Sranam, a language with an English based lexicon but a West African (perhaps Akan) based syntax. He concluded that there were two basic types of SVC: Coordinating and Subordinating. So the word Subordinating was applied to what others had called Modifying, Idiomatic or Relational.

Later literature, especially Aikhenvald and Dixon (2006) make a distinction between Symmetric and Asymmetric SVCs.

As for mapping SVCs the literature is full of competing diagrams, many seeming to try to take account of the semantic relationships between clauses. George (1975, 1976) proposed a very useful schematic semantic mapping of all the known types of SVC, and their relationship to one another. Remember however that this was

a semantic diagram. I maintain that separating the semantic from syntactic relationships is fundamental to understanding SVCs. In Section 6 I make suggestions for mapping the syntax of the two basic types of SVC: Coordinating and Subordinating.

1. WHAT IS A SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTION?

1.1 TWO TYPES OF SVC

Expanding the definition of an SVC summarised in Section 0, there are two types recognized by most writers on the subject:

- a. A *sequence of events*, one in each clause, which may or may not be semantically connected, in which there is only one referent for subject. The subject of the second and subsequent clauses may be overtly absent syntactically or represented by an anaphoric pronoun.
- b. *Two actions*, one in each of two adjacent clauses, *which are semantically interdependent*, but which are nevertheless in sequence, even if only momentarily. CL2 will be semantically subordinate to CL1. I argue that it is also *syntactically* subordinate, and this can be mapped.

Of the second type, in most examples from the literature the two verbs form a syntactical sequence in time, however momentary that may be. However there seems to be a rather fuzzy borderline between simultaneous action and sequential action, as admitted by Aikhenvald (2006:11). She even says that the distinction may be culturally defined, depending on whether the speakers of the language think of the events as one action or two, rather than making a syntactic distinction.

1.2. CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING A SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTION

The following criteria for distinguishing a SVC from other Multi-Verb-Sequences (MVS) are well known in the literature. They were repeated in much expanded form in Aikhenvald and Dixon (2006:4ff and 338ff). Below are what seem to be the very essentials of an SVC, which if not present, will not allow an MVS to be called an SVC:

- The syntactic subject of CL2 has the same referent as the syntactic subject of CL1.
- The verb of CL2 (V2) has the same Mood-Aspect-Tense (MAT) as that of the verb (V1) in CL1. Stahlke (1970:80-81) expressed the generally held view that 'a distinguishing feature of serialization is the tense agreement' and 'verbs in series.... must all agree as to auxiliaries, negation, interrogative and mood'.
- There must be no conjunction joining CL1 and CL2.
- Negation of V1 semantically negates the remaining verbs in the sequence, even if, as in the case of the Akan Consecutive Verb Sequence, the Negator appears in every clause (Dolphyne 1987).

These seem to be the four criteria that a Multi-Verb-Sequence (MVS) must have to be categorized as an SVC. Other criteria may be optionally found which do not concern us at present.

1.3. THE AIMS OF THIS ARTICLE

This paper seeks to establish four things arguing from Chumburung data:

- a. Of the above four recognized criteria for distinguishing an SVC from other MVs two are found to be unnecessary in certain examples in Chumburung.
- b. There is a particle **bo** which occurs frequently in CL2 and sometimes subsequent clauses of an SVC, the equivalent of which I have not seen in the literature dealing with other languages that have SVCs. It seems to refer to the object of the verb in CL1, which some linguists have argued that has become the semantic subject of CL2, whilst the syntactic subject of CL2 continues to have the same referent as the syntactic subject of CL1. I do not argue that this means that CL2 has two subjects. This apparent problem of the object of CL1 becoming the semantic subject of CL2 has long exercised the minds of scholars. Chumburung gives a clue to answering the dilemma. I argue that this particle is an Auxiliary Verb, since it is preceded by the inflection which would otherwise precede the Main Verb. See Section 2.2.1. Its meaning can roughly be translated as “use the object of CL1 to perform the action of V2.”
- c. In Chumburung there are a few common verbs which frequently, but not exclusively, occur in SVCs, which have intransitive and transitive forms. These help to solve the problem that scholars have wrestled with in other languages, i.e. that the intransitive verb like ‘come’ occurring in CL2 seems to acquire the transitive meaning of ‘bring’. Likewise the intransitive verb ‘go’ occurring in CL2 seems to acquire the transitive meaning of ‘send/take’. These verbs are

- (1) **bà** ‘come’ and **bàà** ‘bring’ **yò** ‘go’ and **yàà** ‘send’²

See Section 2.2.3 for more details.

- d. A single syntactic structural configuration can be mapped to account for Type 1 SVC, and also a single structural configuration can be mapped to account for Type 2.

2. SOME TYPICAL SVCs IN CHUMBURUNG

2.1 TYPE 1 COORDINATING SVC

Chumburung offers many examples of SVCs, which scholars would not doubt to be SVCs. There are examples of Type 1 and examples of Type 2. The typical example of Type 1 appears in the often cited way of a sequence of CL1, CL2, CL3, etc, in which CL2, CL3 etc have only a root form without syntactic subject or inflection.

A Chumburung example follows, extracted from a folk story about Squirrel and how he got stripes:

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| (2) | NP _{su} | CL1_____ | CL2 | CL3 | CL4_____ | NP _{obj} |
| | mò | á yá | ↓gyí | gyéé | lòwè | kyĩnè mǎfó |
| | he | PST AUX.go-to | eat | bath | finish | rub oil |

² The tones of these monosyllabic verbs are as elicited and pronounced in isolation. Generally there is a lowering of the tonal register, i.e. there is automatic downstep occurring. This will remain unmarked, except where it occurs between L and H tones. I am indebted to Keith Snider (personal communication) for correcting mistakes I have made in marking tone in sentences. Any remaining mistakes are mine.

COMP	NP _{su}	CL1	CL2	
á	ś	táá	↓bó	yèrà-ś
that	he. SUBJ	take	AUX.CAUS.to	put.aside-SCT
when he had gone and eaten bathed finished rubbed on oil to take put aside				

Squirrel is the subject referent of all the verbs. After the SVC in line 1, which is a Subordinate Temporal Clause marked by the Temporal enclitic marker - ś (SCT), he accidentally knocks over the pot of oil, and then his troubles start. The syntactic problem for us lies in the clause introduced by **á**, which I would argue here is a Subordinator introducing a Purpose clause, in which the verb CL1 and CL2 have the same referent as subject. In mapping this particle in Section 6.1 I use the commonly accepted word Complementiser.

Mfś is the object of **kyìnè**. The verb **bó** refers back to the object of **kyìnè**. Within that Subordinate clause we see an SVC sequence **táá ↓bó yèrà** in which **táá** is Subjunctive, whilst **yèrà** is only the root form of the verb 'to put aside'. As I argue in Sections 2.2 and 3.1, I maintain that **bó** is an Auxiliary Verb, which I gloss as Causative (CAUS) 'cause to', or in long form 'use to perform the action of V2'.

The inference from the generally accepted criteria for SVCs is that the two verb roots **bó yèrà** should have the same MAT as the main verb **táá**, but the tones suggest otherwise. I maintain that this so called criterion is maintainable only if the grammatical tones of the root-only verbs copy that of the main verb (V1).

In the literature when examples of Ewe were cited, it was noted that V2, V3 etc were inflected, but without overt syntactic anaphoric subject pronoun, and that according to Dzameshie (personal communication) all the inflections involving verbal affixes are overtly marked in the case of future and habitual sequences on all verbs in a SVC, but without any anaphoric pronoun in CL2, CL3 etc. Past is unmarked, e.g.

- (2) a. **Mawuli de gbó**
Mawuli PST.go (and) PST.come
- b. **Mawuli de-na gbó-na**
Mawuli go-HAB (and) come.back-HAB
- c. **Mawuli a-de a-gbó**
Mawuli FUT-go (and) FUT-come.back

Examples from Akan, cited by Dolphyne (1987), showed that in a Consecutive verb sequence, if the verb in CL1 is negated, the negator is repeated before each verb in the sequence. But in most other languages cited in the literature, the first verb only can be syntactically negated, and the negation carries over semantically to the subsequent verbs. If in a sequence of clauses where the verbs are all positive and one later verb in the sequence is negated, this is usually taken as having signalled the termination of the extent of the SVC. This is true also for Chumburung.

2.2 TYPE 2 SUBORDINATING SVC

Within Type 2 SVCs writers such as Bamgbose (1982), and Leynseele (1975) have spoken of Modifying, Idiomatic, Relational and Complex SVCs. Sebba (1987) called these Subordinating SVCs. in that CL2 is semantically, and possibly syntactically, subordinate to and dependent on CL2.

Chumburung has examples to fit nearly all these categories mentioned in George's diagrams (George 1975, 1976). These will not be copied here, but examples are given below that illustrate the syntactic, as opposed to the semantic, unity between them. Syntactic differences will also be demonstrated. It should be noted however that despite the many semantic differences, the syntactic differences are few.

2.2.1 Examples of Subordinating SVCs with *bó*

As mentioned before I have glossed *bó* as an Auxiliary CAUSATIVE verb.

Instrumental

- (3) a. *Mò á bá kēs↓árée bó gyí ka↓ páre³*
 I PST use hand AUX.CAUS.to eat fufu
 I ate fufu with the hand

Manner

- b. *né mó nyáré-áná ↓ á ↓ táá ↓ ákón ná kàdùn↓fwí bó yó pé*
 and his friends PST take hunger and anger AUX CAUS.to go home
 And his friends went home hungry and angry

Causative

- c. *òó bá mó bó kyéná kúwúré sí*
 he.PST used me AUX CAUS.to sit kingship on
 he made me chief

Locative

- d. *mò á yówé mó á↓tánné bó ↓síí lòn-nó*
 I PST leave my money AUX CAUS.to remain house-in
 I have left my money in the house

Directional

- e. *né ò ó twéé dàpó bó dá-ró*
 and he.PST shoot hawk AUX CAUS.to fall-in
 and he shot hawk down
- f. *né ò ó ↓sówé mó tèsòrò àmó bó béyà*
 and he.PST lift.down my headload that AUXCAUS.to put.aside
 he helped me put down my headload

Dative/Benefactive

- h. *Mò á táá swééré àmó bó sá fó*
 I PST take land that AUX CAUS.to give you
 I have given you that land

³ Almost all the Chumburung data in this article was supplied by Chumburung speaker Isaac Demuyakor over a period of 35 years. I gratefully acknowledge his help and especially his expertise in whistling tones.

It will be noted that these are all examples where the syntactic NP subject of CL2 is absent, and the NP Object of CL1 has become the implied semantic subject of CL2, signalled by the Causative Auxiliary Verb **bó**. Language helper intuition confirms that **bó** refers back to the object of CL1.

2.2.2 Examples of Subordinating SVCs without **bó**

Let us now consider examples where **bó** is absent, and ask why this should be.

Benefactive

- (4) a. **Mò á wáá kúsún mó sáá fó**
I PST do work this give you
I have done this work for you

Resultative

- b. **Mò á wáá ká↓bógyíí ↓lówé pééé**
I PST do bird finish all
I have become a bird completely

In these two cases the semantic subject is the same in both CL1 and CL2. So there is no causation of one party upon another. Note that **lówé** 'finish' is still a verb root, and has not grammaticalised to become an Adverb.

Purpose

- (5) **Né bà á téé bámó lwéé-ró**
and they.PST call them enter-in
and they called them in

This is clearly a case of causation, but **bó** is absent. One explanation I can suggest is that it is partly idiosyncratic syntax, signalling a change of *syntactic* subject from CL1 to CL2, which however is implicit only. Or it may be that **bó** does not occur where humans (and animals in folk tales) are acting upon one another.

Comparative

- (6) a. **kènyánbrésé ámbò-ò à ↓bèrè ò kyón Kwágyòò mò ↓sé**
Old.man that PST grow.old he.PRES exceed Kwadjo his father
That old man is older than Kwadjo's father

This example begins to challenge the criterion that the MAT of each clause must be the same. Most examples in the literature insist that this is obligatory. But this example shows that the inflection V1 is Past, and that of V2 is Present. If it was Past the Anaphoric Pronoun **ò** would not have appeared, as in

- (6) b. **kènyánbrésé ámbò-ò à ↓bèrè ↓pòò**
Old-man that PST grow.old become.weak
That old man has grown old and got weak

Let us now consider in Section 3 other examples which challenge the two criteria that the MAT of both clauses must be the same, and that there should be no

connector marker joining the two clauses. Before doing so let us briefly note the unusual verbs denoting ‘bring’ and ‘send.’

2.2.3 The transitive verbs *bàà* ‘bring’ and *yàà* ‘send’

Chumburung has a set of verbs which have intransitive and transitive forms. They can function as main verbs or as the verb in CL2 of a SVC. These contrast with many examples in the literature where the verb in CL2 would be glossed as ‘come’ and ‘go’. Chumburung has separate verbs meaning ‘bring’ and ‘take/send.’ The combined meaning of ‘take/send’ is ‘take’ in Standard English, and ‘send’ in Ghanaian English.

- (7) a. **Mò á sáá ní↓kyú báá**
 I PST dip water bring
 I have fetched water
- b. **Bà á yáá mó ↓ swééré àm↓ ó sè**
 they.PST send him (to) land that on
 they took him to that land
- c. **Bà á táá mó ↓ yáá swééré àm↓ ó sè**
 they.PST take him send land that on
 they took him to that land

Contrast these examples with a typical example from Yoruba. There are similar examples in the literature from other languages

- (8) **ó mú ìwé wá**
 he took book come
 he brought a book (Bamgbose 1974:17)

Example (7a) contrasted with (8) is that in (7a) the verbs in both CL1 and CL2 are transitive. But in (8) a kind of fiction has been invented in the literature to say that the word for ‘come’ in CL2 has changed from being intransitive to being transitive. The Chumburung words *bàà* ‘bring’ and *yàà* ‘send’ are both transitive, in contrast to their counterparts *bà* ‘come’ and *yò* ‘go’.

3. TOWARDS SHOWING THAT TWO SO CALLED-CRITERIA FOR SVCs ARE NOT OBLIGATORY

3.1 MAT PARADIGM AS AN EXAMPLE

Let us take the MAT paradigm of one Instrumental SVC sequence ‘I eat/ate fufu with the hand’ in their different ‘conjugations’, as the old grammars used to call them.

- (9) a. Imperative
- bà kèsáréé ↓ bó gyí kà↓páré**
 Use.IMP hand AUX.CAUS.to eat fufu
 Eat fufu with the hand (Fufu is boiled pounded yam)

b. Past (3a repeated)

mò á bá ké↓sárée↓ bó gyí kà↓ páré
 I PST use hand AUX.CAUS.to eat fufu
 I ate fufu with the hand

c. Temporal Subordinate

mò á bà ké↓sárée↓ bó gyí kà↓ páré-ó..
 I PST use hand AUX.CAUS.to eat fufu-SCT
 when I ate fufu with the hand...

d. Stative-Habitual

ñ dé ké↓ sárée↓ bó gyí kà↓ páré
 I STAT.have hand AUX.CAUS.to eat fufu
 I (habitually) eat fufu with the hand

e. Future Conditional

mò yá ↓bá ké↓ sárée↓ bó gyí kà↓ páré
 I FUT.COND use hand AUX.CAUS.to eat fufu
 if I eat fufu with the hand...

f. Topical Past

mò yá ↓bá ké↓ sárée↓ bó gyí kà↓ páré
 I TOP.PST use hand AUX.CAUS.to eat fufu
 It was I that ate fufu with the hand

In these examples CL2 has no syntactic NP_{su}. Instead **bó** appears, which the language helper's intuition says refers back to the NP_{obj} of CL1. A possible explanation is that it is a kind of Infinitive as in the English 'to eat', a suggestion backed up by the English free gloss. But even that explanation must rely on the meaning of the sentence that 'I use my hand to eat fufu.' The hand is the means of eating, so **bó** could be the 'instrument' or preferably the 'cause.' I argue that it is an auxiliary verb, because nowhere in the vast data collected over many years has there occurred any example of Preverbal Adverbs. Adverbs, Adverbial Phrases and Instrumental Phrases invariably occur after the Verb.

Another way of looking at **bó** is to argue that it is the counterpart of **bá** 'to use', backed up by (12a) where **dé** appears in CL1 and **bó** is absent from CL2. However this is countered by Example (9d), where **dé** appears in CL1 and **bó** appears in CL2. Is perhaps **bó** a kind of Postposition following its Complement **kèsárée**? But Example (10c) contradicts that by inserting an apparent Subordinating Conjunction (to be argued for in 3.2.2) and a Pronoun subject in CL2 before **bó**.

Examples (10a-b) are cases where **bó** is absent.

(10) a. Stative Present Action

ñ dé ké↓ sárée↓ mó í gyí kà↓ páré
 I STAT.have hand I PRES eat fufu
 I am eating fufu with the hand

b. Present Conditional with Stative Verb

mó í **dé ké↓sárée↓** **mó í** **gyí** **↓kàpáré...**
 I PRES.COND have hand I PRES eat fufu
 if I am eating fufu with the hand...

c. Future

mò è **bá ké↓sárée↓** **à↓** **m** **bó** **gyí** **kà↓páré**
 I FUT use hand that I.SUBJ AUX.CAUS.to eat fufu
 I will eat fufu with the hand

Note two interesting features in these examples: (i) The MAT of CL1 and CL2 in (10a) and (10c) do not match and (ii) in (10c) there occurs what appears to be a Subordinating Conjunction joining the two clauses. With non-matching MATs and an apparent Conjunction occurring between CL1 and CL2, most scholars would argue that these examples fall outside the definition of a true SVC.

In fact syntactically there is little to distinguish CL2 in (10c) from a Purpose clause, as in (11).

- (11) **bà** **mórówé á↓né** **nà** **áné** **léé** **àsèñ ↓-nò**
 they.FUT save us that we.SUBJ go.out.of trouble-in
 they will save us so that we will get out of trouble (Hansford 1990)

However the obvious differences are that in a Purpose clause

- the subject of CL2 can be the same as or different from that of CL1,
- the linking particle is **na** not **a**,
- either clause could have a different polarity from the other.

But what of (10a) and (10b)? Here **bó** is missing. It seems consistent throughout the great majority of Chumburung examples in the data collected over 35 years that the use of the Stative verb **dé** in CL1 stops **bó** being used in CL2. The reason for this is not absolutely clear, but one can suggest that in (9d) **bó** is there only to distinguish Habitual action from Present action as illustrated in (10a). Likewise contrast the following three examples. The distinction in the semantics of these examples was recently explained to me by the language helper Isaac Demuyakor.

- (12) a. **ñ** **dé** **swééré↓** **mó mó** **é** **sá** **fó**
 I. STAT have land this I PRES give you
 (Right now. The donor is already in possession)
- b. **ñ** **dé** **swééré** **mó↓** **á** **m** **bó** **sá** **fó**
 I. STAT have land this that I.SUBJ AUX.CAUS.to give you
 (In the future. The donor is already in possession)
- c. **mó é** **táá ↓swééré** **mó** **↓á** **m** **bó** **sá** **fó**
 I FUT take land this that I.SUBJ AUX CAUS.to give you
 (In the future. The donor does not yet have possession)

I maintain that the examples (10) and (12) are all SVCs, despite the MAT of V1 not matching that of V2, because the various examples in the paradigm are just variants of one Subordinating SVC.

3.2 ARGUMENTS FOR A WIDENING OF THE CRITERIA FOR SVCs

3.2.1 Matching MAT is too restrictive

My contention is that most of the criteria for analysing the above data as SVCs are there.

- a. All the examples given show a tight-knit relationship between CL1 and CL2, such that the two clauses speak of one action, and not a sequence of separate actions.
- b. In all examples Negation of V1 will semantically negate V2.
- c. If Examples (9a-f) in the paradigm of MAT forms qualify for SVC status, why disqualify those in (10a-b) because one criterion is unfulfilled and (10c and 12b and c) because two criteria appear to be unfulfilled?

Readers of Aikenvald and Dixon (2006) will have remained persuaded that the MAT of V2 must match that of V1. However, in this same volume, Ameka (2006:137-138) opens up the possibility of a challenge to this view. He says of Ewe SVC constructions, “The VPs may be marked for the same categories, for example, progressive, habitual, aorist, potential, etc. However the VPs can be marked for different categories as well, *provided that they are semantically compatible*.(My italics).” He gives two examples, one where VP1 is in the aorist expressing a state and VP2 is in the progressive indicating an ongoing activity, which I copy below.

- (13) **Áma le nú ɖa gé á-ɖu**
 NAME be.at:PRES thing cook PROSP POT-eat⁴
 Ama will cook and eat

I argue therefore, following Ameka, that provided these different syntactic MATs are *compatible semantically*, the examples in dispute should be accepted as true SVCs.

Support for this view also comes from Pavey (2010), who arguing from the Role and Reference Grammar model, allows for the possibility of non-matching MATs, because that model distinguishes between nuclear level verbs and core level verbs.

3.2.2 The subordinating conjunction indicates irrealis

However what of the problem of the Conjunction/ Subordinator/ Complementiser which I have glossed as ‘that’? I tentatively suggest

- a. That this sequence of FUTURE + Subordinating Conjunction **a** + SUBJUNCTIVE occurs in all kinds of SVC, apart from Comparative, and in many Auxiliary Verbs. (See Section 4)
- b. That **a** is not to be viewed as a conjunction conjoining two actions, but a syntactic marker indicating an irrealis verb in CL2, i.e. the action of CL2 is in the future, and is dependent on the action of CL1 happening.
- c. That although the MAT forms do not match syntactically, the actions of both verbs are semantically in the future, following Ameka’s proposal.

⁴ The categories PROSP means Prospective and POT means Potential..

I maintain then that the disputed sequence is a true SVC.

4. SOME AUXILIARY VERBS ARE A SUBSET OF VERBS IN AN SVC

In Chumburung Auxiliary Verbs fall into three classes.

1. Those that function like any verb in CL1 of an SVC, except that they must inherently be Intransitive. See Examples (14a-b)
2. Those where negation can be optionally on the Auxiliary Verb or on the Main Verb. I will not deal with this type in this article.
3. Those that perhaps are in the process of grammaticalising from an inflected verb to a pre-verbal adverbial. Since there is only one example, which may be an aberration and therefore not reliable, I will not cite it.

Here are examples of an Auxiliary functioning like a V1 in an SVC.

(14) a. **mò á tááré wáá**

I PST able do

I was able to do (it)

b. **mò é tááre á ń wáá**

I FUT able that I.SUBJ do (it)

I will be able to do it

5. GRAMMATICALISATION

In much of the literature, scholars with a background of European languages have tried to see in Type 2 SVCs evidence of Grammaticalisation, in which the V2 has apparently changed category from Verb to an Adverb or an Adposition, or a Case-Marker: (Aikhenvald 2006:32). She and many scholars today see this as a universal phenomenon, not confined to West African languages. I maintain that in Chumburung there are only a few examples of true grammaticalisation of SVCs, where the resultant category appears to be a Headless SVC becoming a composite Preposition, as in (15) below. Note first that there are no other examples of Prepositions, since Chumburung has only three true Adpositions, and these are Postpositions.

Note that in these examples **bò** is a different verb, with the meaning ‘come.to’.

(15) a. **lèè ñdóó bó yó**

come.from today AUX.come.to go

from today onwards

b. **bò fó yén ↓ séná**

AUX.come.to reach midnight

up till midnight

c. **à lèè féyè / bò lèè féyè**

it comes.from that / AUX.come.to come.from that

because / because

d. **kàbóre ↓ mó né ká dà bó yó ↑ Sá ↓ lágà-ò⁵**

road this that it STAT.lies AUX.come.to go Salaga-SCT

this road which goes to Salaga

⁵ Keith Snider doubts the upstep marked here. This will need further investigation.

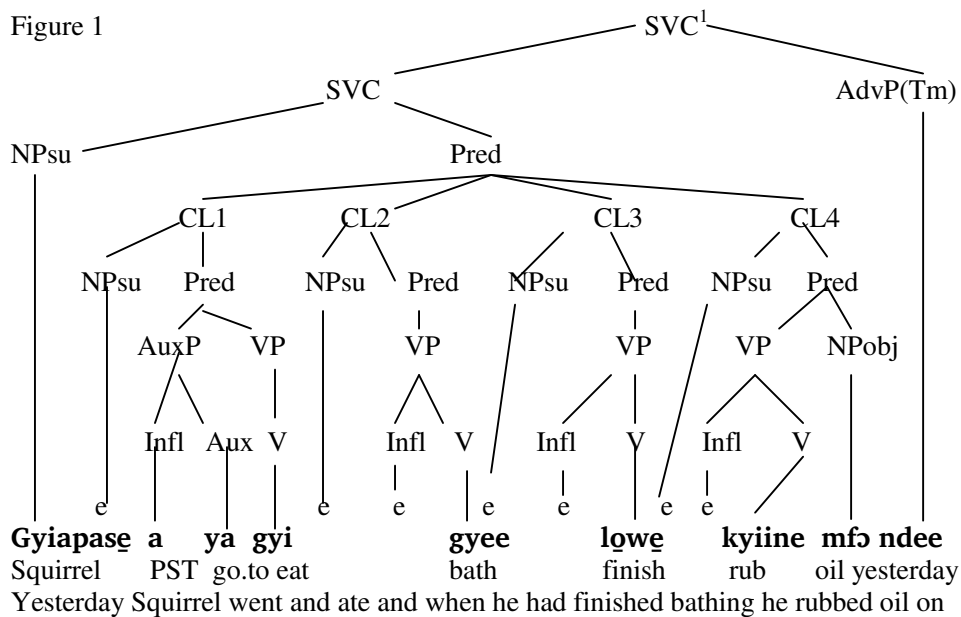
- e. **bà á yó bāmó kpá-ó yá ↓ bó fó tòn kó**
 they.PST go their way-DEF AUX.go-to AUX.come-to reach place certain
 they went on their way and reached a certain place

6. STRUCTURAL CONFIGURATIONS FOR SVCs

Various structural configurations have been suggested in the literature on SVCs, and particularly concerning whether their analysis calls for one description or several. Two basic structural configurations are offered here which account for Type 1 and Type 2 SVCs. The assumptions in this model reflect the insights of the Structure Function Model as used in Hansford (1990), combined with one of the early versions of TG. I believe one of the problems of the TG model was the use of the term VP to cover every category following the NP subject, because binary division and C-commanding are basic to that model. I define the VP as including only Inflection, Auxiliary Verb and Main Verb, and I reintroduce the category of Predicate, which covers what the TG model calls VP. In that model the traditional and very useful categories of Predicate and Clause were subsumed in the category of Sentence. Later still the category of Sentence was subsumed in the category of Phrase. In the configurations below, the feature of SVCs in which the NP subjects of both CL1 and CL2 have the same referent is accounted for by First-Subject Raising and sub-rule-based Second-Subject Deletion, leaving an Empty Space/Trace. An Adverbial Phrase of Time which covers the whole SVC, and not just one clause, also causes Raising. The controversial Subordinator is also dealt with by Raising.

6.1 TYPE 1 SVC STRUCTURAL CONFIGURATION

Figure 1



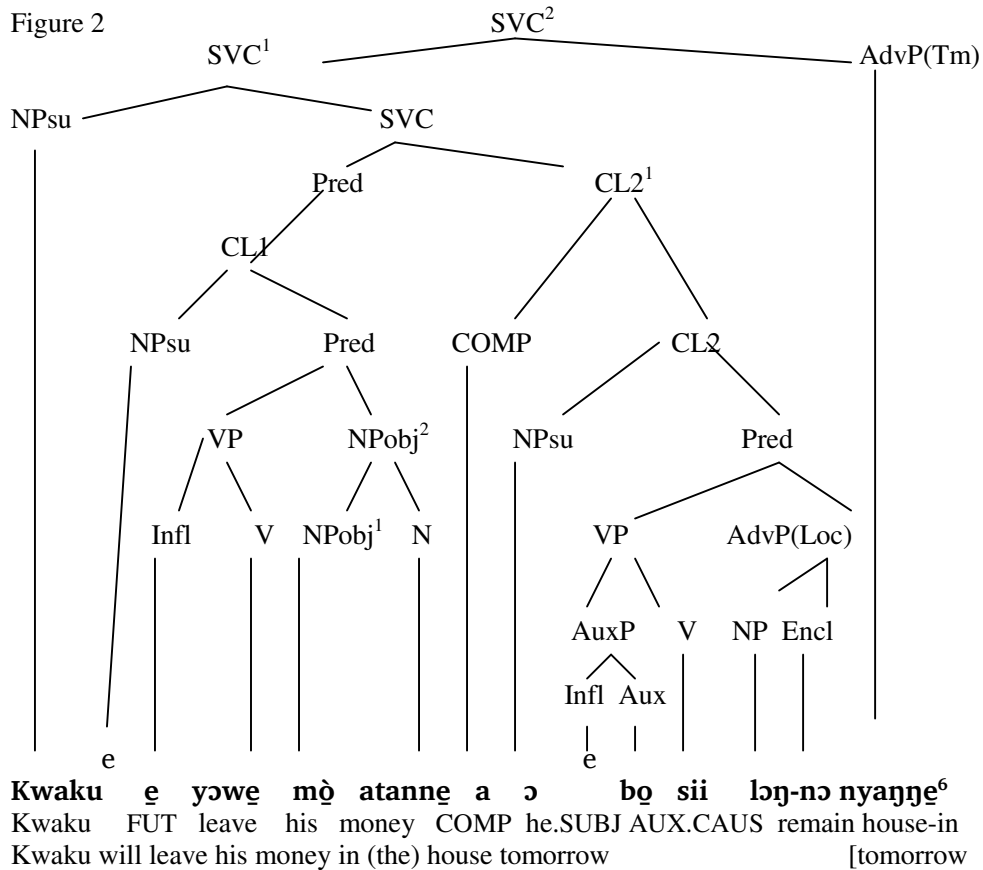
One configuration can be used to account for all the MAT variations of Type 2 by Deletion and Empty Spaces/Traces. In this configuration the only fronting that can happen is the Adverbial Phrase of Time being moved to before the NPsu **Gyiapase**, followed immediately by the Complementiser **ne** 'and', making **ne** and SVC¹ to be sisters, and **ndee** and SVC² to be sisters. This shows that only a phrase that affects

the whole sequence of verbs and not just one of them can be moved to the front of the whole SVC. But **mfo** the object of **kyiine** cannot be moved.

6.2 TYPE 2 SVC STRUCTURAL CONFIGURATION

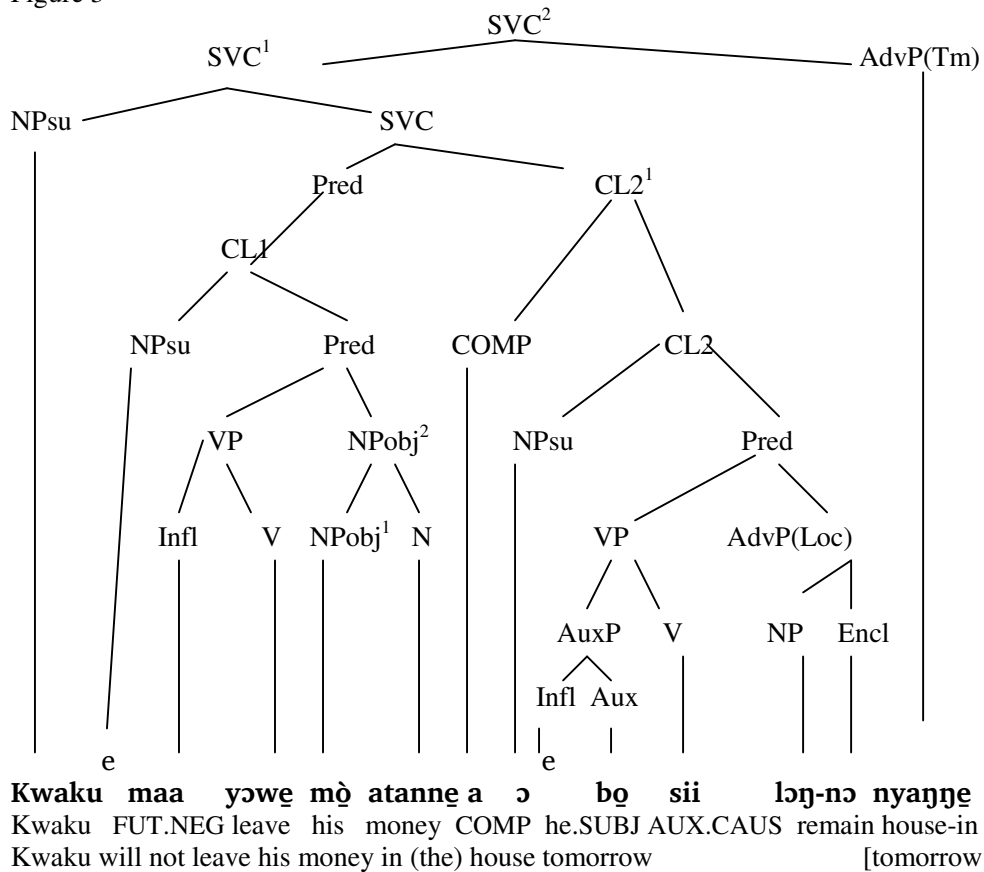
In Type 2 SVC the configuration must show that CL2 is subordinate to and dependent on CL1. I argue that one configuration can capture all the possible MAT mutations as listed in Section 3.1 by mapping the fullest possible forms, and assuming that missing NP subjects and verb inflections have been deleted, leaving only empty spaces/traces.

Figure 2



⁶ In these three Figures I have not had the opportunity to ask the language helper for the tones of the data examples.

Figure 3



If **lɔŋ-nɔ** 'house-in' were replaced by a WH- word such as **mfene** 'where', it would be raised and fronted to the beginning of the sentence, followed by the Complementiser **ne** leaving an empty space after the verb **sii**.

Figure 3 demonstrates that if any of these structures in Figures 1-2 were to be negated, the negator will occur in CL1, but not raised, replacing the positive MAT marker, and will not be repeated in CL2. The negator will semantically cover the whole structure, and not just CL1.

The advantages of the configurations in Figures 1-2 are:

1. They make it clear that the first subject nominal phrase is syntactically raised to be the subject of the whole SVC, leaving an Empty Position/Trace in CL1.
2. They locate the object nominal phrase within the appropriate clause, whilst leaving the AdvP(Loc) as a unit of the CL2, and the AdvP (Time) as a unit of the whole SVC.
3. The insertion of a Predicate and a Clause rank, enables the binary division model to be more productive.
4. The Clause rank contains the NPsu and VP, whilst the VP contains only the Inflection together with a Verb, or with an Auxiliary Verb and a Verb..

5. Since the configuration for both Types of SVC are maximal projections, a deletion rule is needed to account for those sequences using other MAT forms where CL2 (C3 etc) lack an overt NP_{su} and/or an Inflection.

CONCLUSION

It has long been believed by scholars that for a Multi-Verb-Sequence to qualify as a Serial Verb Construction, the most important criteria are:

First, the syntactic subject of CL2 has the same referent as the syntactic subject of CL1. This is not in contention.

Second, the verb of CL2 (V2) has the same Mood-Aspect-Tense as that of the verb (V1) in CL1. I have sought to argue in this article that the second is not obligatory in the case of Chumburung, and have cited an example from Ewe which apparently supports this claim.

Third, it has been long accepted until recently that there must be no conjunction joining CL1 and CL2. I have argued that for Chumburung an apparent Subordinating Conjunction or Complementiser between CL1 and CL2 does not break this rule.

Fourth, Negation of V1 in CL1 semantically negates the remaining verbs in the sequence. This is not in contention.

I have also shown that Chumburung has a Causative Auxiliary verb **bó** which functions in certain SVCs where the syntactic NP_{obj} of CL1 has become the semantic subject of CL1, and have tried to establish why in some examples **bó** does not occur.

I have also shown that Chumburung, unlike many languages cited in the literature, distinguishes between intransitive 'come' **bà** and transitive 'bring' **bàà**, and between **yò** 'go' and transitive **yàà** 'send'. These pairs help to disambiguate SVCs where the NP_{obj} of CL1 apparently becomes the NP_{su} of CL2.

Finally I have offered two structural configurations which map the two well-known types of SVC.

ABBREVIATIONS

AdvP(Loc)	Adverbial Phrase of Location	MAT	Mood-Aspect-Tense
AdvP(Tm)	Adverbial Phrase of Time	MVS	Multi Verb Sequence
AUX/Aux	Auxiliary Verb	NEG	Negator
CAUS	Causative	NP _{obj}	Noun Phrase Object
CL1	Clause 1	NP _{su}	Noun Phrase Subject
CL2	Clause 2	PRED	Predicate
COMP	Complementiser	PRES	Present
COND	Conditional	PST	Past
DEF	Definite	SCT	Subordinate Clause Terminator
Encl	Enclitic	STAT	Stative
FUT	Future	SUBJ	Subjunctive
HAB	Habitual	TOP	Topical
IMP	Imperative	VP	(Infl) (Aux) Verb
Infl	Inflection	VP1	Clause 1 (in other literature)

REFERENCES

- Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. and R.M.W. Dixon. 2006. *Serial Verb Constructions: A Cross-linguistic Typology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. 2006. *Serial Verb Constructions in Typological Perspective*. In Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. and R.M.W. Dixon. 2006. *Serial Verb Constructions: A Cross-linguistic Typology*, 1-68.
- Ameka, Felix K. Ewe Serial Verb Constructions in their Grammatical Context. In Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. and R.M.W. Dixon. 2006. *Serial Verb Constructions: A Cross-linguistic Typology*, 124-143.
- Balmer, W.T. and F.C.Grant. 1929. *A grammar of the Fante-Akan language*. London: Atlantis Press.
- Bamgbose, A. 1973. The modifying serial construction: a reply. *Studies In African Linguistics* 4.2
- _____. 1974. On serial verbs and verbal status. *Journal of West African Languages* 9.1.17-48.
- _____. 1982. Issues in the analysis of serial verb constructions. *Journal of West African Languages* 12.2.3-21.
- Christaller, Rev. J.G. 1875. *A Grammar of the Asante and Fante Language called Tshi*. Basel; Republished 1964 by Gregg Ridgewood.
- Dolphyne, Florence A. 1987. On negating the consecutive verb in Akan. *Journal of West African Languages* 17.2.70-80.
- George, Isaac 1975. Typology in verb serialization. *Journal of West African Languages* 10.1.7897.
- _____. 1976. Verb serialization and lexical decomposition. *StudiesIn African Linguistics Supplement* 6.63-72.
- Hansford, Keir L. 1990. *A Grammar of Chumburung*. PhD thesis. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
- Kagni, Atah-Ekoué. 1989. The syntactic relevance of Serial Verb Construction in Kwa languages. *Africanistische Arbeitspapiere (AAP) No.19*.97-126. Köln: Institut für Afrikanistik, Universität zu Köln. Translated from the German by Wycliffe Associates UK.
- Leynseele, Hélène van. 1975. Restrictions on serial verbs in Anyi. *Journal of West African Languages* 10.2.189-218.
- Pavey, Emma L. 2010. *The structure of language: An introduction to grammatical analysis*. Cambridge University Press
- Schachter, Paul 1974 A non-transformational account of serial verbs. *Studies In African Linguistics Supplement* 5.253-270.
- Sebba, Mark 1987. *The Syntax of Serial Verbs*. Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Snider, Keith L. 1990. *Studies in Guang Phonology*. Ph.D Thesis. Leiden University.
- Stahlke, H. 1970. Serial Verbs. *Studies In African Linguistics* 1.180-81.
- Westermann, D.H. 1907. *Grammatik der Ewe-Sprache*. Berlin: Diedrich Reimer.
- _____. 1930. *A study of the Ewe language*. London: Oxford University Press.