Verb serialization in Kammu

Arthur Holmer

1 Background

1.1 Kammu – general properties

Kammu is spoken by approximately 500,000 people primarily in northern Laos, northern Thailand, and northwestern Vietnam. It belongs to the Khmuic branch of Mon-Khmer languages. It is an isolating language, with no inflectional morphology and little derivational morphology (basically causatives and nominalizations). Word order is SVO, NA, NG and prepositional. Kammu *wh*-questions are formed by means of *wh*- in situ. Anaphoric relations can reach across clause boundaries: an anaphor in an embedded clause can be bound by the matrix subject. Some relevant examples are given in (1).

1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a.</th>
<th>yǒŋ ɗ ci pò mắh rŭŋ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>father 1s want eat rice steam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘My father wants to eat steamed rice.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>mē̆ kǔ̄n mò̆?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2sm see who?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Who did you see?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>kā̄ wèc tā̍ hā̅ kāŋ tē̆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3sm return LOC home REFL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He returned to his home.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>ɗ wè̄t trā̀k ná̆m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1s buy buffalo big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I bought a big buffalo.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1This paper represents partial results of the research project *Kammu reference grammar* (Holmer, Svantesson & Tayanin), funded by The Swedish Research Council. The data upon which this paper is based derives in its entirety from the Kammu native speaker Damaroag Tayanin. I hereby gratefully acknowledge his patient help and guidance, without which none of the work reported here would have been possible. Naturally, any mistakes are mine and mine alone.
1.2 Serial verb constructions

Various prototypical properties have been attributed in the literature to serial verb constructions (henceforth SVCs): shared arguments, defined either in terms of grammatical relations (e.g. subjects) or in terms of argument structure and semantic role (e.g. patients), shared tense, and shared propositional truth value. These all derive from the single most salient property of SVCs, namely that each construction represents a single event, and that the verbs in an SVC serve to express various facets of this event in different ways. In this paper, it will be assumed that this is the basic defining characteristic of an SVC. Other properties, in particular argument-sharing properties, will be seen as cross-linguistic or language-specific consequences of this.

2 Serial verb constructions in Kammu

Many grammatical relations between predicates in Kammu are expressed by means of what can be referred to impressionistically as verb concatenations. These are of various types, which can be distinguished according to various parameters, e.g. the presence or absence of subject markers, the (obligatory or optional) presence or absence of conjunctions or other linkers, the function of the construction itself and the coreference relations between the arguments of the two verbs. I have chosen to classify SVCs in terms of their function, rather than on other criteria. Nothing hinges on this choice except that it appears that such a classification illustrates, better than any other, the semantic relations between the verbs involved.

Having defined SVCs in 1.2 as constructions which make use of several verbs to denote a single event, the problem remains to define how an event is to be recognized. Ideally, we would wish to find a syntactic definition which can be applied across the board, without having to refer to the nuances of meaning of each separate example. Since Kammu has no morphological marking of tense / aspect on the verb itself, the idea of tense-sharing does not seem particularly promising. However, the behaviour of the preverbal irrealis / future marker cāθ will be applied as a test. If cāθ can be inserted between two verbs (henceforth V1 and V2), this is interpreted as a delay between the realizations of V1 and V2, i.e. implying that we are dealing with two events.

Thus, in (2a), V1 and V2 may or may not be interpreted semantically as two facets of the same event (depending on how wide our definition of an event is). However, in (2b), the insertion of cāθ shows that (2b) clearly involves two events, since a delay is explicitly encoded between the actions represented by V1 and V2 respectively and that (2b) is therefore not an SVC.

2.1 Prototypical SVCs and motion verbs

The most prototypical kind of serial verb construction in Kammu is, as in other serial verb languages, that used with motion verbs. We shall use this type as a base from which to explore other types. SVCs of motion in Kammu can involve the use of a substantial number of verbs, denoting manner, path, directionality, target, etc. Example (3) is a more or less maximal example.
3 ɖ tā r prī cū r rō t tā kūŋ
1s run go.through.undergrowth forest descend arrive LOC village
'I ran down through the undergrowth to get to the village.'

SVCs of motion have a strict linear ordering – any change in the order of
the verbs results in marginality or ungrammaticality (4).

4 a. ʔō tā r cū r prī rō t tā kūŋ
1s run descend go.through.undergrowth forest arrive LOC village
b. ʔō lā prī tā r cū r rō t tā kūŋ
c. ʔō cū r lā prī tā r rō t tā kūŋ
d. ʔō cū r tā r lā prī rō t tā kūŋ

While the other elements of a serial verb construction conspire to produce
a given reading of the action itself, the resultative element (e.g. rō t 'come' in
(3)), which is, if present, obligatorily SVC-final, rather contributes to the
Aktionsart. Semantically, this distinction may be rather subtle, but the
syntactic consequences are important. A resultative may not appear in an
irrealis clause (5a), a negated clause (5b) or together with a modal auxiliary
(5c). The same examples also illustrate that omitting the resultative ensures
grammaticality.

5 a. ʔō cō o ṭā r (rō t) tā kūŋ
1s IRR run arrive LOC village
'I will run to the village.'
b. ʔō pō o ṭā r (rō t) tā kūŋ
1s NEG run arrive LOC village
'I didn’t run to the village.'
c. ʔō cū ṭā r (rō t) tā kūŋ
1s want run arrive LOC village
'I want to run to the village.'

If the resultative is used specifically with irrealis cō o, the construction can
be rescued by anchoring the event by means of a temporal adverb (6a), an
option not open with negation or modal auxiliaries. Alternatively, the SVC can
be split up using the particle ūn 'PURPOSE' (< ūn 'give, let'), as in (6b).

6 a. κō o cō o ṭā r rō t tā kūŋ (sūjāŋ)
3ms IRR run arrive LOC village tomorrow
'He will run all the way to the village tomorrow.'

Another important feature of resultatives is that they are subject to certain
cooccurrence restrictions concerning wh-phrases. A locational goal may be
questioned with a wh-phrase (7a). On the other hand, it is at best marginal to
question the subject of the construction (7b). Instead, a cleft is used (7c).

7 a. ṭē tā r rō t tā mā?
2sm run arrive LOC where?
'Where did you run all the way to?'
b. ṭō mā tā r rō t tā kūŋ
who? run arrive LOC village
I.R: 'Who ran all the way to the village?'
c. māh mā tā r rō t tā kūŋ
be who? run arrive LOC village
'Who was it that ran all the way to the village?'

Resultatives are most felicitous when the event of which they denote the
result is referential, i.e. in a declarative realis clause. Therefore, tests concerning
the behaviour of cō o must necessarily be applied to examples without a
resultative. Applying the insertion of cō o between V1 and V2 as an SVC test,
we see that motion SVCs clearly qualify as SVCs (8a, b). Further, we see that
a negation may not be inserted either between V1 and V2 (8c).

8 a. ʔō cō o ṭā r (cō o) cū r tā kūŋ
1s IRR run IRR descend LOC village
'I shall run down to the village.'
b. ʔō ṭā r (cō o) cū r tā kūŋ
1s run IRR descend LOC village
'I (*shall) run down to the village.'
c. ʔō ṭā r (pō o) cū r tā kūŋ
1s run NEG descend LOC village
I.R: 'I didn’t run down to the village.'

It is hard to find a context in which it is felicitous to negate an SVC of
motion, unless some further information is added to the clause. When this
occurs, the most natural interpretation seems to depend entirely on the context
(9).
Incidentally, the relationship between manner and motion can also be expressed with adverbs derived from verbs of manner, but not verbs of motion (10a, b). This is exactly analogous to the situation holding in a verb-framed language such as Spanish^2 (Talmy 1985).

Taking motion SVCs as a prototype, we now compare other constructions to determine which features can be considered typical of SVCs.

2.2 Argument sharing

Where intransitive verbs of motion are concerned, argument sharing ensues as a matter of course. The single argument of each of the verbs of motion must necessarily be identical, otherwise we could not be dealing with a single instance of predication. It is therefore particularly interesting to investigate what happens when one of the verbs is transitive. Observe the following examples with a verb expressing caused movement (11).

11 a. *ô (*çêo) wàt åh kút taa êcêek
   1s IRR throw meat enter LOC drying-basket
   ‘I *will throw / threw the meat into the drying-basket.’

b. ô çêo wàt åh åh ùn ?(kâo) kút taa êcêek
   1s IRR throw meat let 3sm enter LOC drying-basket
   ‘I will throw the meat into the drying-basket.’

The first point to note is the cooccurrence restriction on the irrealis marker çêo and the resultative final verb (11a). If the irrealis marker is present, the construction can be rescued using åm ‘let’, splitting the SVC (11b). With transitives the use of åm requires the resumptive pronoun kâo ‘3sm’.

SVCs of caused motion also respect the same wh-restrictions as intransitive motion SVCs. While the goal location may be questioned with a wh-word (12a), neither the patient (12b) nor the causer (12c) may be wh-questioned, unless the event is made referential with an adverbial.

12 a. mèè wàt sêqo k’rûk taa mò
   2sm throw stick fall LOC where?
   ‘Where did you throw the stick so it fell?’

b. mèè wàt mòh k’rûk taa òm *(knaay)
   2sm throw what? fall LOC river there/that
   ‘What did you throw so that it fell into the river there?’

c. mò wàt åh kút taa êcêek ??(knaay)
   who? throw meat enter LOC drying-basket that/there
   ‘Who threw the meat all the way into that drying-basket?’

Caused-motion SVCs are parallel in behaviour to intransitive motion SVCs. In both cases, the resultative requires the event to be referential, precluding irrealis and wh-interrogatives, unless referentiality is otherwise ensured. However, the two SVC types have different argument sharing properties. For the intransitives, the shared argument is the subject. For transitives, the object of V1 is the subject of V2. According to Baker’s 1989 or Collins’ 1997 treatment of SVCs, this is not a problem, since it can be argued that the controlling argument is, in both cases, the Patient of V1, and the controlled argument is the Patient of V2. Thus, it would appear, at first blush, that argument sharing in Kammu SVCs supports Baker’s and Collins’ view that the shared argument in an SVC is an internal argument of both verbs (13).

13 INTRANSITIVES: [ ] V1 THj ] [V2 ò (TH)]

TRANSITIVES: [ ] [ ] [V2 ò (TH)]

The schema in (13) does not only hold for verbs of caused motion. Other types of verbs, with more prototypical patients, follow the same pattern (14).

14 a. kâo tii tràak tòe hân
   3sm beat buffalo REFL die
   ‘He beat his buffalo to death.’
Further, similar restrictions concerning wh-interrogatives and irrealis mood hold with these examples. Neither a causer (15a) nor a causee (15b) can be wh-questioned without an anchoring adverbial. Irrealis is marginal, but splitting the SVC with *um results in grammaticality (15c).

15 a. mə kɨːyus mə̀ krən tə pə ?(knə̑̀ nə̑́yəy)
   who? push 2sm fall LOC ground yesterday then
   ‘Who pushed you so you fell to the ground?’

b. mə̀ kɨːyus mə̀ krən ?(knə̑̀ nə̑́yəy)?
   2sm beat who? fall yesterday then
   ‘Whom did you push so he fell yesterday?’
   (i.e. speaker saw action but is unsure of identity of victim)

c. 6 cən kɨːyus ?(um kə̑) krən
   Is IRR push let 3sm fall
   ‘I will push him so he falls.’

The examples in (14) and (15) allow us to keep our generalization from (13), namely that the shared argument in an SVC is the Patient (or an internal argument). In fact, if we instead insert an unergative verb as V2 in the construction, this results in marginality or ungrammaticality (16a-c). Again, the construction can be rescued by splitting the SVC with *um (16c).

16 a. ʔkə̑ tə kən tə kə̑ yə̑n
   3sm hit child REFL cry
   I.R.: ‘He beat him until he was red.’

b. *kə̑ tə kən tə bə̑ kə̑n
   3sm hit child REFL do work
   I.R.: ‘He beat his child so it worked.’

c. 6 tə sə̑ tə kə̑ nə̑́ yə̑n pə̑ tə̑
   Is hit dog REFL let 3sm fall
   ‘I beat my dog so it ran away.’

However, this does not imply that the resultative is necessarily an unaccusative verb. Firstly, static verbs are subject to the same restrictions as unergative verbs in this position, irrespective of whether they take experienter arguments (17a) or theme arguments (17b). Secondly, arguably unaccusative verbs of motion which clearly involve some degree of volitionality are equally illicit as resultatives (17c). Thirdly, both statives and unergatives may appear in this position, provided they are accompanied by an expressive which denotes inchoativity and non-volitionality (17d, e, f). The importance of volitionality is particularly clear in the contrast between the minimal pair (17c) and (17g), where the latter does not involve any volition on the part of the subject of V2, and where V2 is therefore grammatical as a resultative.

17 a. *ə̑ tə kə̑ yə̑m
   1s hit 3sm red
   I.R.: ‘I beat him until he was red.’

b. *ə̑ tə kən tə mə̑nə̑̊j
   1s hit child REFL sad
   I.R.: ‘I hit my child so it was sad.’

c. *kə̑ tə kən tə yə̑n pə̑ tə̑
   3sm hit child REFL go LOC field
   I.R.: ‘He beat his child so it went to the fields.’

d. ə̑ tə kən tə mə̑n-pə̑nə̑̊j
   1s hit child REFL sad-EXPR
   ‘I hit my child so it became sad.’

e. ə̑ tə sə̑ tə tə tə̑-sə̑lə̑̊t
   1s hit dog REFL run-away-EXPR
   ‘I hit my dog so it ran away.’

f. kə̑ tə kən tə yə̑m-cə̑lə̑̊k
   3sm hit child REFL cry-EXPR
   ‘He beat his child so it cried out.’

g. kə̑ kə̑də̑ mə̑n tə kən tə pə̑ tə̑
   3sm push child REFL fall LOC ground
   ‘He pushed his child so it fell on the ground.’

The behaviour of resultatives follows more or less automatically by definition. Given that a resultative indicates that V2 is a result of V1, V2 must imply a change of state, and can therefore not have a stative meaning. Further, since V2 must be an automatic consequence of V1, V2 cannot involve any volitionality and its subject must be non-volitional.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to use our SVC test on examples (17 d-f), due to another restriction on the cooccurrence of expressives with irrealis cə (18a). However, the ungrammaticality of inserting a pronoun between V1 and V2 as subject of V2 suggests that we are, indeed, dealing with SVCs (18b).
The crucial facts shared by SVCs with a resultative verb is that they cannot combine freely with irrealis ɕaŋ, and that the subject of the resultative may not be freely wh-questioned.

Further, as far as argument sharing is concerned, we must conclude that SVCs in Kammu do not necessarily imply sharing of an internal argument (contra Baker 1989 and Collins 1997), unless we can argue that the expressive itself can treat the Agent of V2 as its Theme, by virtue of expressing non-volitionality and/or inchoativity. This treatment is reminiscent of Jackendoff’s 1990 distinction between two tiers in syntax. The exact application of Jackendoff’s model is, however, outside the scope of this paper.

2.3 Resultativity and purpose

We have seen that ungrammatical SVCs can be rescued by splitting them into two verb constructions, each denoting one event. In practice, this results in an interpretation where V2 is the purpose, rather than the result, of V1. So far we have seen the use of the verb əun ‘let’ in this context (19).

19 ə tii ːs tēe əun kəo tii
1s hit dog REFL let 3sm run.away
‘I beat my dog so it ran away / to make it run away.’

This əun construction is just a subset of purpose constructions, and these, as a whole, are not to be viewed as SVCs, since they allow the insertion of the irrealis ɕaŋ between V1 and V2 (20).

20 ə wëet plë (ɕaŋ) pn-məh kəo tēe
1s buy fruit IRR CAUS-eat child REFL
‘I bought fruit to feed my child later.’

While purpose clauses are not SVCs, they are sometimes indistinguishable from them on the surface, unless the ɕaŋ test is applied (the results of which also tally well with native speakers’ intuition that (20) represents two events, not one). For this reason, purpose clauses are relevant for comparison with other constructions which are demonstrably SVCs, as will be done in the following sections.

2.4 Instrumental and simultaneity SVCs

In section 2.3 we saw that purpose constructions typically had transitive V1 and V2, and that subjects, but not necessarily objects, are shared. This description would, however, as it stands, cover equally well another class of constructions, namely instrumental SVCs, which are characterized by the object of V1 being the instrument with which the action denoted by V2 is performed. Instrumental SVCs differ sharply from purpose constructions in that ɕaŋ-insertion in instrumental SVCs changes the only possible reading from an instrumental reading to a purpose reading. While it is grammatical to add ɕaŋ to (21a), the fact that such an addition radically changes the interpretation of the clause shows that (21a), but not (21b), is an SVC.

21 a. kəo məl ləsən tēe tii nəa
3sm take stick REFL hit 3sf
‘He hit her with his stick.’

b. kəo məl ləsən tēe ɕaŋ tii nəa
3sm take stick REFL IRR hit 3sf
‘He took his stick so as to hit her.’

Instrumental SVCs express the instrument used to perform the action of V2. A similar construction, which simply indicates simultaneity between V1 and V2, is distinguished from the instrumental in that the object of V1 is not interpreted as an instrument (22a). Further, V1 need not be transitive (22b).

22 a. kəo mət plë yəh təa ré
3sm carry fruit go LOC field
‘He went to the fields carrying an apple.’

b. kəo tən pə məh
3sm stand eat rice
‘He is standing and eating.’

This construction requires a static reading of V1, which tallies well with the function of indicating simultaneity. Given the static reading of V1, insertion of ɕaŋ leads to ungrammaticality rather than a purpose reading (23). This in fact leads to a methodological problem: since ɕaŋ-insertion is excluded from the simultaneity construction for independent reasons, it is perhaps not valid as a
test for SVC status as far as this construction is concerned. We shall treat it as an SVC for now, returning to this problem in section 3.

23 *kəə mət təey təe cəə yəh təa rə
3sm carry bag REFL IRR go LOC field
I.R.: ‘He carried his bag to go to the fields.’

Both instrumentals and simultaneity SVCs are compatible with irrealis cəə (24a, b) and the negation pəə. When the SVCs are negated, they are primarily interpreted as negating the content of V1 (24c, d).

24 a. kəə cəə mətə səə səə təi nəə
3sm IRR take stick REFL hit 3sf
‘He will hit her with his stick.’

b. kəə cəə mət təey təe yəh təa rə
3sm IRR carry bag REFL go LOC field
‘He will take his bag with him to the fields.’

c. kəə pəə mətə səə səə təi nəə
3sm NEG take stick REFL hit 3sf
‘He didn’t hit her with his stick (perhaps someone else’s stick).’

d. kəə pəə mət təey təe yəh təa rə
3sm NEG carry bag REFL go LOC field
‘He goes to the fields without his bag.’

Finally, both instrumental SVCs and simultaneity SVCs display the same pattern with respect to wh-question formation. Wh-questioning the object of V1 is generally acceptable (25 a, b), whereas it is ungrammatical to wh-question the subject (25 c, d). Wh-questioning the complement of V2 is marginal (25 e, f) but much better than wh-questioning the subject.

25 a. məə mətə məh təi kəə?
2sm take what? hit 3sm
I.R.: ‘What did you hit him with?’

b. məə mət məh yəh təa rə?
2sm carry what? go LOC field
‘What did you carry going to the fields?’

c. *mə mətə səə səə təi məə?
who? take stick hit 2sm
‘Who hit you with a stick?’

to summarize, instrumental and simultaneity SVCs are rather similar, the main difference being the consequences of cəə-insertion. In the following sections we shall see other SVCs which cannot be split using cəə either.

2.5 Directionality

A transitive V2 can be combined with a V1 denoting movement or direction (26a). Semantically, the resulting construction appears to be indistinguishable from a purpose construction. However, there are two important syntactic differences between this directional SVC and a purpose construction. Firstly, it is sharply ungrammatical to insert irrealis cəə between V1 and V2 (26a). Thus, it appears that this kind of SVC cannot be split. Secondly, the directional V1 may not take a locational complement (26c). If a locational complement is desired, it can only be inserted after the object of V2 (26c).

26 a. kəə yəh (*cəə) təp məən
3sm go IRR set rat-snare
‘He goes to set rat snares.’

b. *kəə yəh təa kənə prənə wəkə təək
3sm go LOC village other buy buffalo
I.R.: ‘He went to another village to buy a buffalo.’

c. kəə yəh wəkə təək təa kənə prənə
3sm go buy buffalo LOC village other
‘He went to buy a buffalo in another village.’

In contrast to the resultative SVC, there is no restriction against the use of the construction in irrealis (27) in the directional.

27 kəə cəə yəh təp məən
3sm IRR go set rat-snare
‘He goes to set rat snares.’
If a directional SVC is negated, the scope of the negation is determined pragmatically, referring either to V1 (28a), V2 (28b) or both (28c).

28 a. kəə pəə yəə wəət trəət ˈtan kəə ˈpriən
   3sm NEG go buy buffalo LOC village other
   ‘He didn’t go to buy buffaloes in another village (perhaps elsewhere).’

   b. kəə pəə yəə təəp məən
   3sm NEG go set rat-mare
   ‘He didn’t go to set his traps (he maybe went for another reason).’

   c. kəə pəə yəə wəət trəət
   3sm NEG go buy buffalo
   ‘He didn’t go to buy buffaloes (he probably didn’t buy any).’

Finally, this type of SVC displays the same kind of wh-restriction as instrumentals: objects can be wh-questioned (29a), but the subject can only be questioned if the object is definite / specified (29b).

29 a. məə yəə wəət məən?
   2sm go buy what?
   ‘What did you go to buy?’

   b. məə yəə wəət trəət ʔ(kaːə)?
   who? go buy buffalo that
   ‘Who went to buy that buffalo?’

Thus, the most important defining characteristic of directional SVCs is that they cannot be split with cəə into two events, and that wh-questioning the subject is marginal unless the event is anchored in some way.

2.6 Indirect object construction
The most remarkable SVC in Kammu is that used in double object constructions. An indirect object must be marked with what is sometimes described as an indirect object postposition, namely təə, which is synchronically identical to the verb ‘to get’. Omitting this marker results in ungrammaticality. Relevant examples are given in (30).

30 a. əə ˈun kəə *(təə) kəəməəl
   1s give 3sm IO money
   ‘I gave him money.’

   b. kəə cəə təə kəəməəl
   3sm IRR get money
   ‘He will get money.’

It might be argued that təə is only etymologically related to the verb ‘to get’ and that it is synchronically simply an indirect object marker. Support for this argument can be derived from the fact that təə in many cases has lost its lexical meaning, and can be used with indirect object constructions which do not involve the act of receiving anything concrete (31).

31 nəə rəəs kəə təə
   3p angry 3sm IO
   ‘They are angry with him.’

However, the double object construction displays further complexities. When the relationship of the direct object to the indirect object is that of eating or drinking, təə can be replaced by pəə ‘eat’ (32a) or ʔwiəək ‘drink’ (32b). In fact, if təə is used in this type of construction, there is a corresponding semantic difference (32c, cf. 32a).

32 a. nəə ˈkəər əə pəə ˈhəə ˈhəəjəə
   3sf roast Is eat meat chicken
   ‘She roasted chicken for me to eat.’

   b. kəə kəən əə ʔwiəəkˈpəəc
   3sm brew 1s drink wine
   ‘He brews wine for me to drink.’

   c. nəə ˈkəər əə təə ˈhəə ˈhəəjəə
   3sf roast Is 10 meat chicken
   ‘She roasted chicken for me (I might give it away).’

Clearly, therefore, the double object construction still reflects to a certain extent the semantics of V2, although it appears to be in the process of grammaticalization. Thus, this construction can not be extended to other types of verbs where it might be natural to assume the same kind of relation (33).

33 a. ʔkəə ˈtom nəə ˈməəm əə
   3sm boil 3sf wash water
   I.R. ‘He boils water for her to bathe in.’

   b. ʔkəə wəət əə ˈwəən tiəə
   3sm buy 1s wear trousers
   I.R. ‘He buys trousers for me to wear.’
c. *ô cêo nan mée nêag
1s IRR teach 2sm know
I.R: 'I shall teach you so you know.'

The double object construction cannot be split using cêo (34a), indicating that it is a clear instance of an SVC. If negated, the scope of the negation seems to cover the whole clause (34b), as opposed to the behaviour of the purpose construction with a similar meaning (34c).

34 a. *ô kwöe mée cêo ?wâk pûuc
1s brew 2sm IRR drink wine
I.R: 'I brew wine for you to drink later.'

b. ô pêô kâar yôn têe pô âh hyîar
1s NEG roast father REFL eat meat chicken
'I don't roast chicken for my father (probably doesn't roast at all).'

c. ô pêô kâar âh hyîar ùún yôn têe pô
1s NEG roast meat chicken give father REFL eat
'I don't roast chicken for my father (probably for someone else).'

In this construction both the subject of VI and the shared object can be when-questioned freely (35a, b). However, the subject of V2 can only be questioned if the event is made referential, e.g. by specifying the object (35c).

35 a. mô kâar mée pô âh hyîar?
who? roast 2sm REFL eat meat chicken
'Who roasted chicken for you to eat?'

b. mée kâar kôô pô mëh?
2sm roast 3sm REFL eat what?
'What did you roast for him to eat?'

c. mée kâar mô pô âh hyîar ?(knâay)?
2sm roast who? REFL eat meat chicken that
'Who did you roast that chicken for to eat?'

The most crucial difference between this type of SVC and more prototypical SVCs concerns argument sharing. In the double object SVC, the objects of VI and V2 are coreferent, but the subjects are not.

3 Interestingly enough, exactly this construction is the only comparable one of which I am aware outside Kammu, namely the colloquial Cantonese phrase gí? wâ lêf ji 'I tell you' (lit. I say you know).

4 Exactly the same situation obtains in English, where negation is primarily interpreted as referring to an adverbial. He doesn't drive fast usually means that he drives slowly, not that he doesn't drive at all.
Table 2. Prototypicality of Kammu SVCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coreference controller</td>
<td>pat</td>
<td>pat</td>
<td>pat</td>
<td>sub</td>
<td>sub</td>
<td>sub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coreference gap</td>
<td>pat</td>
<td>pat</td>
<td>sub</td>
<td>sub</td>
<td>sub</td>
<td>sub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single verb negation</td>
<td>(*)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*wh-questioning</td>
<td>V2S</td>
<td>V2S</td>
<td>V2S</td>
<td>V2S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As far as the ungrammaticality of wh-constructions is concerned, the coreference pattern confuses the issue to a certain degree. Certain positions are not realized in certain constructions, since they are obligatorily coreferent with preceding arguments. But if we abstract away from this, we see that for constructions 1 through 4, the argument which can not be wh-questioned is the subject of V2: either overtly, as in 2, or via coreference relations, as in 1, 3 and 4. In contrast, any argument can be wh-questioned in 5 and 6.

The generalizations are summarized in Table 2. In this context it is interesting to note that constructions 1 and 2 conform in their entirety to Collins’ 1997 claim that SVCs must share an internal argument (albeit that Collins does not explicitly discuss the possibility of V1 and V2 having two different agentive subjects, as is the case in 2). Construction 4 incidentally also conforms to this pattern, if we follow Collins’ assumption that instruments are also internal arguments (of V2). In construction 3, the only controller can be a patient, but it controls a subject gap. Constructions 4 through 6 define argument sharing entirely in terms of subjecthood.

Thus there seems to be a gradient as far as argument sharing from more prototypical to less prototypical SVCs according to Collins’ definition. Other properties which seem to be typical of Kammu SVCs are present in a decreasing degree from constructions 1 through 6. It is difficult to determine a clear cutoff point – depending on which criterion we examine, the most restrictive cutoff point is presumably between 3 and 4, and the most liberal one between 5 and 6, taking the cleft-insertion test as criterion. However, as mentioned in section 2.4, construction 5 excludes cleft-insertion for independent reasons (since V1 must have a static reading). This could in fact imply that 5 is not an SVC at all, in which case a possible boundary coincides with the data from wh-question restrictions.

3.2 Negation, wh-questions and SVCs

The tables above show a set of properties which we have claimed are typical of SVCs in Kammu. We have not, however, discussed reasons why these properties should have any relevance for verb serialization, with the exception of argument sharing, which has been covered at length. The purpose of this final section is to speculate on whether the negation properties and wh-restrictions are coincidental or in some way related to the nature of SVCs.

The question of negation is relatively unproblematic. If a negation selectively negates the content of a single verb, this suggests that the two verbs encode separate predications. If, on the other hand, the negation negates both verbs equally, this rather suggests that they represent a single predication. Likewise, if the reference of the negation is determined pragmatically, it could, in principle, negate either verb to an equal degree, also suggesting that there is no syntactic mechanism forcing one interpretation above the other, in other words that there is no structural asymmetry between the verbs.

Wh-restrictions, on the other hand, represent a more subtle problem. First, it should be noted that none of the restrictions outlined above can be attributed to purely structural considerations: if they could, we would not find that the wh-question can be rescued by temporal adverbs or demonstratives specifying the object. Rather, the reason must be semantic or pragmatic. The subject of V2 can only be questioned if the remainder of the clause is temporally or spatially anchored. Why should this be a typical property of SVCs?

Wh-constructions can typically have two interpretations: either a) the existence, but not the identity, of the questioned element is known; or b) neither the existence nor the identity is known. In the first case, the wh-question can be replaced with a clefted wh-question, in the second case it cannot. If the predicate of a clause is expressed by a serial verb construction, the verbs generally complement one another in supplying further information about the status of the arguments. In this sense, the presence of more than one verb (i.e. an SVC) generally presupposes at least the existence of the argument to which it refers. This further implies that only the identity, not the existence, of the relevant argument can be questioned felicitously, and one way to ensure this interpretation is to anchor the entire predicate in such a way that the wh-question becomes tantamount to a cleft.
4 Conclusion
In this paper, it has been shown that several constructions in Kammu display, to a varying degree, cross-linguistic and language-internal properties typically attributed to SVCs. This generates an interesting problem for theoretical accounts of SVCs to date: assuming that there is a single valid test for distinguishing SVCs from constructions such as covert coordination, the common properties which are shared across the resulting boundary must still be accounted for, either by means of structural parallels or by means of surface analogy.

References

Arthur Holmer <Arthur.Holmer@ling.lu.se>