

Multiple-marking SVCs

Multiple exponence vs. reduced adverbial clauses

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The multiple realization of Tense, Mood, and Aspect (TMA) in multiple-marking serial verb constructions (SVCs) presents a challenge for the monoclausal analysis of such constructions, as inflectional morphology is commonly associated with clausal structures. Recently, Rolle (2020) shows that multiple TMA-marking in Degema (Benue-Congo) does not reflect underlying syntactic complexity such as a bi-clausal structure but is instead an instance of multiple exponence of a single TMA category on each verb in a monoclausal one governed by morphophonological constraints, e.g. by the presence of an intervening phonological “heavy” object (1) (cf. Harris 2017).

Based on existing corpus and novel data from the field, we revisit the status of multiple-marking SVCs from the perspective of the Oceanic language Daakaka in this talk. By examining their morphosyntactic and prosodic properties, we demonstrate that multiple-marking SVCs in this language are best analyzed as structurally reduced adverbial clauses, distinct from both monoclausal SVCs and “true” bi-clausal covert coordination. Cross-linguistically, we argue that multiple-marking SVCs are therefore not a uniform phenomenon (cf. Bickerton 1982), with further implications for the typology of multi-verb constructions.

Daakaka (Oceanic) exhibits both single and multiple-marking SVCs (von Prince 2015). In contrast to Degema, the distribution of single or multiple TMA-marking is not sensitive to the position of the object nor must the two TMA-markers share their values (3). This is illustrated in (4) where the initial verb is marked for realis while the non-initial verb is marked for irrealis mood, indicating that the resulting state has not been reached yet. Despite distinct TMA-marking, the non-initial verb does not exhibit full clausal properties as subject agreement or the assertion marker *ka* (3) are infelicitous (3) (cf. Miyagawa 2017, Krifka 2016). Therefore, we argue that multiple-marking SVCs in Daakaka involve the adjunction of a reduced adverbial clause.

Multiple-marking SVCs in Daakaka thus somewhat resemble clause-chaining constructions in languages like Matukar Panau (Oceanic) in which clauses are linked by dependent forms of TMA-markers instead of conjunctions (4) (Mansfield & Barth 2021; cf. Weisser 2017). Yet, both constructions differ in their prosodic integration: While Mansfield & Barth (2021) show that each dependent clause in a clause-chaining construction is mapped onto its own clause-level intonational phrase (IP), our pilot study on Daakaka multiple-marking SVCs suggests a IP; a defining property of SVCs (Givon 1991). As a result, multi-verb constructions form a continuum that can be established based on their syntactic and prosodic integration (Table 1), for which we offer an analysis at the syntax/prosody interface (Selkirk 2011).

Examples

- (1) Degema
- a. *ovó nú mi=dúw tá=an?*
 who that 1SG=follow go=FACT
 'Who did I go with?' (Rolle 2020, p. 214)
- b. *mi=dúw=n óvo mǐ=tá=an?*
 1SG=follow=FACT who 1SG=go=FACT
 'I went with who?' (Rolle 2020, p. 215)
- (2) Daakaka
- a. *Bong ma ta mwelili-ane lee ente.*
 Bong REAL cut.INTR be.small-TR tree DEM
 'Bong made the tree small by cutting it.'
- b. *Bong ma te (lee ente) ma mwelili.*
 Bong REAL cut.TR tree DEM REAL be.small
 'Bong cut the tree small.'
- (3) Daakaka
- Mwe pyaos vyan #(ka) we tum-tum-ane ar an [...].*
 REAL row go ASR POT RED~be.right-TR place ART
 'He rowed straight to the place [...].' (von Prince 2015, p. 318)
- (4) Matukar Panau
- i samer pilau-ma i y-a-ma lul=te i tor-ago.*
 3SG sago.leaf put.on-D.HAB 3SG 3SG-go-D.HAB beach=LOC 3SG walk-I.REAL.IPFV
 'She puts on her sago leaf, she goes down to the beach, and walks around.'
 (Mansfield & Barth 2021, p. 423)

	single-marking SVCs	multiple-marking SVCs (mult. exp.)	multiple-marking SVCs (red. claus.)	clause-chaining construction	covert coordination
multiple TMA values	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
distinct TMA values	no	no	yes	yes	yes
independent TMA values	no	no	no	no	yes
bi-clausal prosody	no	no	no	yes	yes

Table 1: TMA and prosodic marking in various multi-verb constructions

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