

V-V Constructions in Sasaknese

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ABSTRACT

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). Sasaknese has a lot of serial verbs. This unique feature cannot be easily found in every language. This paper focused on analyzing the notion of 'single-event' in Sasaknese V-V constructions. In this study, the X-bar theory is applied to discuss the constituent structure of serial verb constructions. This study used the data of Sasaknese *meno-mené* native speakers' utterances by using observation method. The result of the study shows that Sasak serial verb constructions have V-V structure that describe one single event as a single predicate.

I. Introduction

A serial verb construction (SVC) is a sequence of verbs which act together as a single predicate, without any overt marker of coordination, subordination, or syntactic dependency of any other sort. Serial verb constructions describe what is conceptualized as a single event. They are mono-clausal; their intonational properties are the same as those of a mono-verbal clause, and they have just one tense, aspect, and polarity value. SVCs may also share core and other arguments. Each component of an SVC must be able to occur on its own. Within an SVC, the individual verbs may have same, or different, transitivity values (Aikhenvald: 2006: 1).

An SVC functions on a par with mono-verbal clauses in discourse, and occupies one core functional slot in a clause. Verbs which form an SVC act together as a syntactic whole. In addition, SVCs are often translatable as single predicates into non-serializing languages. Verbs which form an SVC cannot take separate markers of syntactic dependency. In Kambara (Austronesian), if an SVC is the predicate of a relative clause, it takes one relativizer per construction (Aikhenvald: 2006: 1), as shown in (1):

- (1) *Na pulung jia-ya na [pa-laku ngandi-na]*
ART word EXIST-3S ART RELATIVE.OBJ-go take-3SGENETIVE
'The gospel is what he brought'.
- (2) *Acong nono ndari maleq miong ah mudin bale.*
anjing itu lari mengejar kucing ke belakang rumah
'Anjing itu lari mengejar kucing ke belakang rumah'. (Pradnyayanti, 2010: 64)
- (3) *Amaq besoq pandiq montor=n.*
father clean take.a.bath motorcycle=3S
'Father is washing his motorcycle'. (Hijriati, 2016: 52)
- (4) *Nie pelai lawoq baruq.*
3-S run fall recently

'S(He) was in a rush'. (Hijriati, 2016: 52)

(5) *Kuring laju muru panto.*
 1TG berlari memburu pintu
 'Aku (melangkah) maju mengejar pintu'. (Muflikhatin, 2017: 54)

In sentence (3), the verb *besoq* 'clean' is usually use for things such as *besoq piring* 'cleaning dish(es)', or for part of body such as *besoq ima* 'washing hand'. Meanwhile, the verb *pandiq* 'take a bath' is commonly use for person, i.e. *Inaq pandiq Ariq* 'Mother bathes brother'. However, the serial verbs *besoq pandiq* act together as a single predicate, because they are followed by OBJ *montorn* 'his motorcycle'.

Bowden (2008:80) stated that it has often been noted by people writing on verb serialisation that SVCs fulfil 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'.

(6) We went eat sushi.
 (7) We went and ate sushi. (Li, 2015: 10)

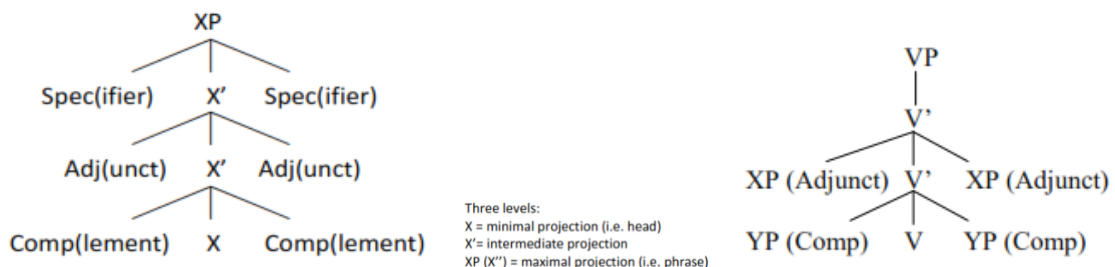
However, Li found out that the different in meaning between the V+V construction and a coordinate structure is not always distinct in Singaporean English. When both verbs in realis like in (6), its meaning is similar to that of a coordinate structure like (7) although the meaning of (7) suggests that there are two events (2015: 11). Li added that for monoclausity, the difference in beaning between some V+V constructions and a coordinate structure is not always distinct (2015: 15).

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 in Senft, 2008:12).

Louise Baird 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'. Baird (2008) 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 (in Senft, 2008:12).

A. SVCs in the X-bar theory

The principle of X-bar theory is that every phrase structure is endocentric or has a head. This principle applies not only to lexical categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs but also to functional categories like complementisers, finite auxiliaries, and determiners (Bresnan, 2001; Darlymple, 2001; Falk, 2001).



There are three levels of projection in the X-bar theory, which are a maximal projection (X'' or X phrase), an intermediate projection (X' or X-bar), and a minimal projection (X). These levels of projection are placed can be seen in tree diagram above.

II. Research Method

This study is a descriptive qualitative research. This study focused on analyzing the notion of ‘single-event’ in Sasaknese V-V constructions. The data for this study comes from the utterances of native speakers of Sasak *meno-mené* dialect as the informants. I, as a native speakers also as participatory observation to catch the data that spoken naturally from the conversation of the informants.

To get the data, I used the observation method with a note-taking technique. In this case, I noted down all serial verb constructions found in the data to see the forms of V-V structure and their constituents.

III. Finding and Discussion

A. Sasak SVCs describe single events

Verbs in Sasak serial verb constructions act together as single predicates and shares single events in a clause, and often translatable into non-serializing language, see:

(8) *Onyaq, kandoq tie teriq tumpah.*

slow food that fall.down spill

‘Careful do not let the food drop.’

(9) *Gong gamelan biur lantur.*

drums roar crash

‘The sound of the gong (typical drums in wedding ceremony) is booming’

(10) *Ye pété jari impan kaken anaq=n.*

3-S search for feed eat child=3S

‘S(He) works hard to get money to provide for his/her children’

(11) *Penganten=no cemoh leger rue=n.*

bride=DEF delight tremble appear=3S

‘The bride looks so thrilled’

(12) *Kanak=no paleng berangen.*

child=DEF fainted adore

‘S(He) is crazy about you.’

(13) *Nyeken eroq aseq dengan bemadu nani.*

PROG=3S sorrow pity person intr-honey now

‘She is grieving because her husband now has a mistress.’

In sentence (8), the verb *teriq* ‘fall’ is usually use for person such as *Aku teriq* ‘I fall’. Meanwhile, the verb *tumpah* ‘spill’ is commonly use for liquids, i.e. *Inaq tumpah=ang kupi* ‘Mother spilled the coffee’. However, the serial verbs *teriq tumpah* act together as a single predicate and create meaning ‘drop’, because preceded by the SUBJ *kandoq* ‘the food’. Moreover, the serial verb *teriq tumpah* can have another sense in the meaning ‘fall’ if the subject is a person, as in (14):

(14) *Ndaq ngebut, kapong anaq=m laun ye saq teriq tumpah leq rorong.*

not N-speed.up, hug child=3S later 3S REL fall.down spill LOC street

‘Don’t speed, hug your child tightly, don’t let him/her hurt (because of falling from the street)’.

The notion of ‘single-event’ is not easy to define since the exact boundary between a single event and a macro-event consisting of several subevents is fuzzy. A useful definition is provided by

Schultze-Berndt (2000 in Aikhenvald 2006:10): a single event is viewed as ‘conceptual representation, as linguistically encoded, which can be assigned boundaries, and/or a “location”, in time’. But there is more to it than that.

Combining verbs into an SVC may turn out to be unacceptable if they do not match a ‘recognizable event-type’ (Durie 1997 in Aikhenvald 2006:10). Only if a rationale for linking the verbs together can be provided SVC become acceptable as Sasak serial verbs in clause (9) *biur* ‘roar’ and *lantur* ‘crash’. In sasaknese, *lalo* ‘go’ and *lantur* ‘crash’ are normally viewed as distinct events, and thus cannot form one SVC. But the actions of *biur* ‘roar’ and *lantur* ‘crash’ are inseparable; they form one event, and can be combined into an SVC. They form one event as a single predicate in a serial verb construction. They are translated as ‘something is booming’. Semantically, when those two verbs are separated, there are two different events that has different meaning. This serial verb construction is acceptable as mono-clause to the native speakers of Sasak of *meno-mené* dialect.

The serial verbs *impan kaken* which form mono-clause of serial verb constructions cannot take separate markers of syntactic dependency, as seen in the following examples:

(15) a. *Ye pété jari pe-impan kaken anaq=n.*
 3-S search for PE-feed eat child=3S
 ‘S(He) works hard to get money to provide for his/her children’

b. **Ye pété jari pe-impan pe-kaken anaq=n.*
 3-S search for PE-feed PE-eat child=3S
 ‘S(He) works hard to feed and to eat his/her children’

The sentence (10) above shows that the serial verbs *impan kaken* in acusative formed by prefixing ‘pe’ to only the first verb *impan* in clause (15-a). They act as a single predicate, so only one verb has the morphological affixation. The clause becomes ungrammatical and unacceptable if the affixation attached to all of the verbs as seen in (15-b).

The sentence such as (11) above, repeated as (16-a) below, is best translated into English as ‘The bride looks so thrilled’.

(16) a. *Penganten=no cemoh leger rue=n.*
 bride=DEF delight tremble appear=3S
 ‘The bride looks so thrilled.’

b. *Penganten=no cemoh, leger rue=n.*
 bride=DEF CONT= 3S delight CONT=3S tremble appear=3S
 ‘The bride looks happy, yet very nervous.’

The conceptuality unity of (16-a) can be best illustrated by comparing it with (16-b) where two distinct events (one of enjoying and the other of trembling) are referred to. Here, the pause after *Penganten=no cemoh*, indicate that there are two clauses.

(17) a. *Kanak=no uah=n paleng berangen.*
 child=DEF PERF=3S fainted adore
 ‘S(He) has been crazy about you.’

b. *Kanak=no uah=n paleng.*
 child=DEF PERF=3S fainted
 ‘S(He) has fainted.’

c. *Kanak=no uah=n berangen.*
 child=DEF PERF=3S adore
 ‘S(He) likes someone.’

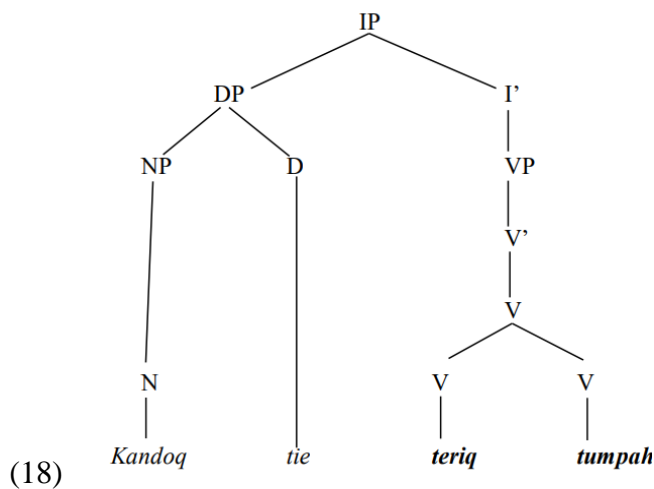
d. **Kanak=no jangke=n paleng jangke=n berangen.*
 child=DEF CONT=3S fainted CONT=3S adore
 ‘S(He) fainted and s(he) likes someone.’

In example (17-a) above, the serial verb construction shared the same aspect *uah*. However, the construction in (17-a) will have different meaning if the verbs are separated such as two sentences as in example (17-b) and (17-c). The verb *paleng* ‘fainted’ in sentence (17-b) has clear meaning ‘S(He) fainted’. The verb *berangen* ‘adore’ in sentence (17-c) also has a very clear meaning ‘S(He) likes someone’. If the aspect *uah* attached to both verbs, the sentence then becomes unacceptable (17-d).

The syntactical characteristics of Sasaknese serial verb constructions in clause (8), (9), (10), (11), (12) and (13) above have similarity with the characteristics of serial verb construction cross-linguistically, as Aikhenvald states that serial verb constructions are mono-clausal and act as a single predicate (2006: 4-6), serialization is restricted to sequence of events which are commonly associated culturally (2006: 11). Pawley (1996: 197) also stated that a SVC must be integrated conceptually into a single complex event.

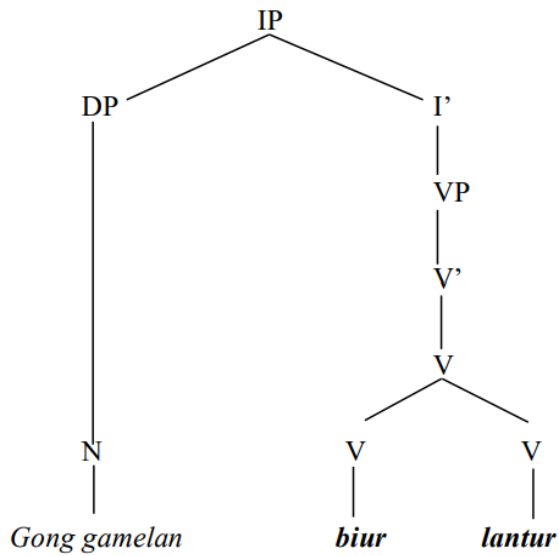
B. V-V Constructions

The concept of serial verb constructions in this context refers to Durie (1988) and Aikhenvald (2006). By using syntactic structures, I found that Sasak serial verb constructions form can have V-V constructions as single predicate which can be described as in the following phrase structure tree:



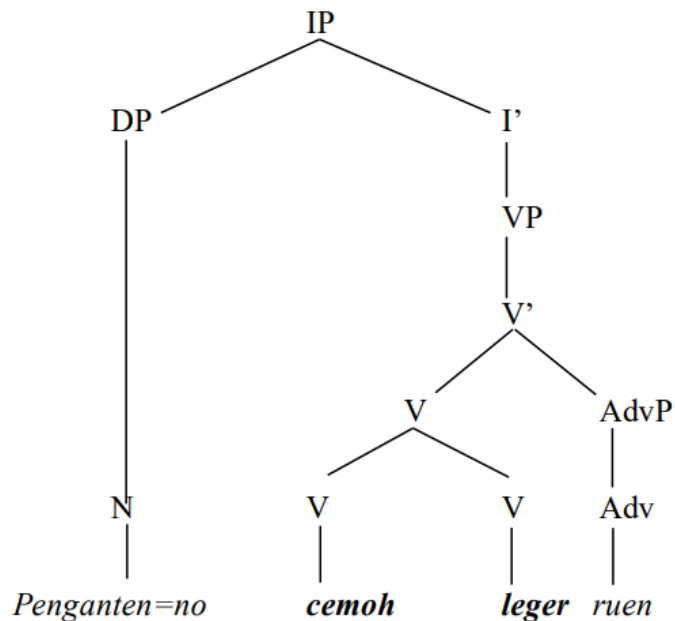
IP (Inflectional Phrase) corresponds to the clause (18) *Kandoq tie teriq tumpah*. This clause has V-V construction in *teriq* ‘fall’ and *tumpah* ‘spill’. below, Sasak serial verb construction form a single clause or mono-clause with SUBJ *Kandoq* ‘The food’ as the sharing argument. This subject contains a single predicate that can be ellipses.

(19)



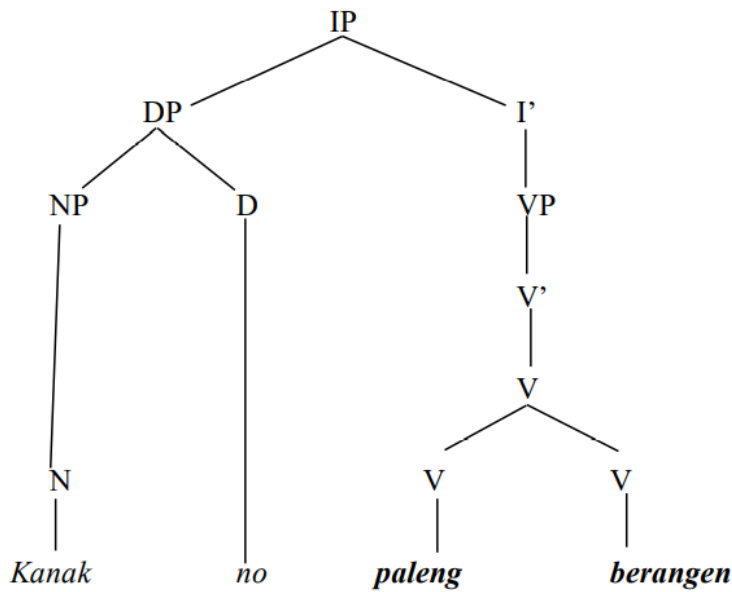
In the constituent structure (19), IP (Inflectional Phrase) corresponds to the sentence *Gong gamelan biur lantur* 'The sound of the gong (typically drums in wedding ceremony) is so booming'. This clause has V-V construction in *biur* 'roar' and *lantur* 'crash' together creates meaning 'booming'. They are treated as a single predicate in a clause as seen in the tree diagram above.

(20)



The constituent structure (20) above shows that the construction *Penganten=no cemoh leger ruen* 'The bride looks so thrilled'. The tree diagram above shows that the position of V-V construction is filled with the inseparable serial verbs *cemoh* 'delight' and *leger* 'tremble' in which *cemoh leger* creates meaning 'thrilled'.

(21)



IP (Inflectional Phrase) corresponds to the sentence *Kanak no paleng berangen* ‘S(He) is crazy about you’. The serial verbs filled with the verb *paleng* ‘fainted’ and *berangen* ‘adore’ that create meaning *paleng berangen* ‘crazy (about someone)’. The constituent structure (21) above shows that the construction has V-V structure in *paleng berangen* that treated as a single predicate in a clause.

IV. Conclusion

Serial verb constructions are a grammatical technique whereby two or more verbs form one predicate. A sequence of verbs qualifies as an SVC if there is no marker of syntactic dependency between the components. Sasaknese SVC describes what is conceptualized as one integrated situation, or one event. Verb serialization in Sasaknese is a syntactic resource which allows the speakers to express various aspects of a situation as a single cognitive package within one clause and with one predicate.

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