CHAPTER 3

Serial Verb Constructions in Malayalam: Properties

3.0 Introduction

The point of interest of this study is the Serial Verb Construction (SVC) in Malayalam. In an attempt to understand the construction in its proper character, we were going through (in the previous chapter) the general category under which SVC comes as a sub-type of construction; the multi-verb constructions (MVC). In our analysis of MVC, we identified three closely related constructions appearing in Malayalam, under MVC, show a Verb-Verb sequencing pattern that is very similar to that of SVC. We termed those three constructions as the Non-contiguous constructions, the Intervened constructions, and the Contiguous constructions; as exemplified in (1), (2) and (3) below, respectively. We will analyze whether the constructions in (1-3) are representatives of the three types of SVC in Malayalam. Non-contiguous constructions are instances of MVC where the constituent verbs of the construction stand separate. In Intervened constructions, an element such as a DP, adverb or a PP can appear between the constituent verbs. Contiguous MVCs are instances where the constituent verbs are morphologically compound, pronounced with an audible gemination or close proximity at the verb boundaries.

These constructions share some properties so that they come under the MVC types. For instance, they are single-event multi-verb constructions (as we are going to see in the coming sections). Nevertheless, these constructions have specific properties that distinguish them from each other too. What is important for us is that these
constructions show some properties that are similar to that of serial verb constructions.

It has to be verified whether the three examples given in (1-3) are Malayalam equivalents of the usually identified three sub-types of SVCs viz., Consecutive Construction (ConC), Covert Coordination (CC), and Serial Verb Construction (SVC) (cf. Chapter 2: § 2.3.3). This can be analyzed by observing the particular properties these constructions show. Expression of these specific properties is used as identification tests (diagnostic tests) for the SVC-hood of that particular construction.

In our attempt to understand SVCs properly, we will be using the identification tests for SVC-hood, and based on that we will classify which of the MVC types that we identified in the previous chapter come under SVC and which not. There is a general set of tools for these tests, which involve the tests of extraction, temporal sequencing, argument sharing, scope properties (of negation, tense/aspect, and mood), adverb distribution pattern, prosodic evidence etc. However, as explained in the previous chapter, no two languages can be completely identical. Therefore, each language has to have a specific set of tests to identify the "true" SVC in it. This set of tests may or may not share tools with other languages.

Before we begin with the tests, let me make it clear that it will be only at the end of the thesis that we will be able to clearly understand whether the three constructions we identified are SVCs or not. However, for the ease of discussion and naming, in the discussions in the forthcoming chapters, including this chapter, I will be tentatively calling the three constructions that represent the three types of V-V sequences as SVCs. With that, let us look at the SVC paradigm of Malayalam.

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12 Some linguists consider covert coordination as a type of serial verb constructions.
3.1 SVC in Malayalam: Introduction

Serialization is not a universal linguistic phenomenon. There are languages which do not have the grammatical technique of SVC in their language box. In such cases, a language will use alternate mechanisms to convey the same idea. For instance, English uses subordinating constructions and multicausal constructions to imply what can be conveyed by SVC in serializing languages. On the other hand, Malayalam has a strong and developed serialization technique. Let's look at the Malayalam SVC briefly.

Malayalam SVCs, as I shall demonstrate, come in three different formats of wordhood; Non-contiguous, Intervened and Contiguous. That means, they consist of two or more verbs which are divided phonologically and/or grammatically (single word vs multiple words), where the components can be contiguous and/or non-contiguous. The constituent verbs take a specific grammatical category marking with the last verb bearing the full inflection and the ones before it taking the default form. In the following sections, we will look into each of these properties briefly. Some examples for Malayalam SVCs are given below.

(1) Non-contiguous
amma coor uNTaaki kazhiccu
mother rice prepare-Compl eat-Past
'The mother ate rice' (or, 'Mother cooked (and) ate rice')

(2) Intervened
amma kaththi eTuththo appam muRiccu
mother knife-Inst take-Compl bread-Acc cut-Past
'The mother cut the bread with a knife' (or, 'Mother took a knife (and) cut the bread')
Here, in our discussion, we consider that example (1) is an instance of Non-contiguous SVC, (2) is an instance of Intervened SVC and (3) is an example for Contiguous SVC. The above observed SVCs are different from MVCs which have an overt conjunction marker such as the ones given below. Compare the examples below with (1) above.

(4) avan uruNT.um maRinj.um aviTe eththi
   He-Nom roll-Compl-Conj scroll-Compl-Conj there reach-Past
   'He rolled and scrolled, reached there'

(5) avan aviTe poovuka.(y)um paRayuka.(y)um ceythu
   He-Nom there go-Inf-Conj say-Inf-Conj do-Past
   'He went there and said'

All the constructions from (1) to (5) have multiple verbs in them. However, (4) and (5) are different from constructions in (1-3). Constructions in (1-3) do not have an overt conjunction marker -um on the verbs, whereas constructions in (4) and (5) do have it overtly present. There is a difference between (4) and (5) as regards the type of conjunction. In (4), the conjunction is happening at the clause-internal level. Here, the main event is 'reach' and the verbs 'roll' and 'scroll' indicate the manner in which the main event was carried out. We will explain this type of constructions in the following sections. In (5), on the other hand, the conjunction is between two clauses. Two main indicators of this difference are the presence of a helping verb 'do' at the end and the form of the verb stem. When the construction is a conjunction between clauses, the conjunction marker attaches to the infinitive stem form of the verbs, and there will be
a helping verb 'be' which takes all the grammatical marking such as tense, aspect, mood, negation etc. as in (5). *Au contraire*, if the conjunction is clause internal, then the main verb of the construction remains in tact, and the internal verbs in a completive form take the conjunction marker as in (4). It may be noted that a detailed analysis of conjunction constructions may not come under the research purview of this study. This study would solely revolve around the multiverb constructions that are generally assumed to be SVCs.

Apart from the regular combination of independent verbs, there is a general category of verbs which, in combination with other verbs, give rise to SVCs in Malayalam. For instance, categories of verbs such as 'give', 'place', 'see/search', 'gather/add', 'finish', and categories of verbs such as 'be'\footnote{This may be an instance of grammaticalization of the verb *irunn* 'sit'. See section 3.2.1.0 for a brief discussion.}, verbs of motion or posture etc. make SVCs in combination with other verbs.

\begin{verbatim}
(6) naaya cerippǝ maNaththǝ nookk.i
dog chappals-Acc smell.see-Past
'Dog smelled (the) chappals'
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
(7) paripaaTi niiTTi.vacc.u
Programme prolong.put-Past
'Programme got postponed'
\end{verbatim}

In the above constructions, the verbs 'see', 'put' etc. when they come contiguous to other verbs, form an idiomatic meaning, which is a typical behaviour of SVCs in many languages. We are not taking up all possible instances of SVCs in Malayalam in this study, instead, we will look at the three constructions which we assumed to be representatives of three types of constructions that define the SVC paradigm of Malayalam. Now let's look at the properties of those constructions.
3.2 SVC in Malayalam: Properties

As we have seen in the first chapter, a prototypical SVC will have a structure in which multiple sub-events are stringed together to convey a monopredicate notion of a whole single event, where the verbs will be adjoined or detached, with no markers of syntactic dependency between them. The constituents may be marked for grammatical category once for the construction or on each verb.

(8) Gungbe (Aboh 2009:3)
Àsíbá dà lési ṃù
Asiba made rice ate
'Asiba cooked the rice are (i.e. Asiba ate rice)

(9) Cantonese (Aikhenvald 2005:39)
lei lo di saam lai
you take PL clothing come
'Bring some clothes'

(10) Alamblak (Aikhenvald 2005:18)
ritm fi ŋji tandhi-ak-ni-r-mē-t-m
insect NEG roast-get-go-IRR-REM.PAST-3sgf-3pl
'She did not roast (and) get the insects (and) go' or
'She roasted the insects (and) did not have them'

Now, let us look at Malayalam data and see if they can be included into this general frame of SVC, and if yes, what are the features that Malayalam has adopted of the prototypical SVC and what are the ones that it hasn't?

In this section, we will look at the properties of the Malayalam SVC through four sub-sections, viz., wordhood (§ 3.2.0), symmetry (§ 3.2.1), lexical idioms (§ 3.2.2), and Negation (§ 3.2.3) and marking of TAM and other suffixes (§ 3.2.4).
3.2.0 Wordhood

By wordhood, we mean the lexical composition or distribution of the constituent verbs in a multi-verb construction. In chapter 2 (§ 2.3.3), We discussed the three general patterns of wordhood common in multiverb constructions in Malayalam. In this section, we are going to extend that classification into SVCs in Malayalam. SVCs can be classified into two types (in general terms); contiguous (construction where the constituents make a single grammatical word by combining the individual verbs) and non-contiguous (where the constituents make multiple words, grammatically, by standing separate). In the examples given below, (11) and (12) are non-contiguous constructions that are similar to (1), and (2) and, (13) and (14) are contiguous constructions that are similar to (3).

Non-contiguous SVCs

(11) amma cooR uNTaakki kazhiccu
mother-Nom rice-Acc make-Compl eat-Past
'Mother ate rice' (Lit., Mother cooked and ate rice)

(12) amma kaththi eTuththo appam muRiccu
mother-Nom knife take-Compl bread-Acc cut-Past
'The mother cut the bread with a knife' (or, 'Mother took a knife (and) cut the bread')

Contiguous SVCs

(13) pooliis kuttavaaLiye kooTathikkɔ viTTɔ.koTuththu
police-Nom accused-Acc court-Dat leave-Past.give-Past
'Police gave the accused to the court'

(14) kukkaR poTTiththeRiccu
cooker-Nom break.throw off-Past
'Cooker burst'
Examples (11-14) show that there are two major types of verb composition in these type of constructions. In (11 -12) the constituent verbs are distributed in non-contiguous fashion. It may be noted that these constructions can fall into a further classification where the verbs can be sequentially coming but still not contiguous as in (11). Another type is where verbs can be intervened by DPs or other elements as shown in (12). Examples in (13) and (14) show the other major type of wordhood in SVCs; the Contiguous type. Here the constituent verbs come as a combined single element where no other elements or heads are allowed to intervene them. We will discuss the structure of these constructions in detail in the next chapter. Now let us look at a property of SVCs that is induced by the wordhood; eventuality.

3.2.0.1 Single-event or Multi-event

We know that SVCs are cross-linguistically, single-event constructions. If we assume that all the constructions above (11-14) are SVCs, then an immediate question is, why there are two types of verb distribution in SVCs? Why can't there be a unified structure for all SVCs? In order to answer this, let us look at the two types, viz., contiguous and non-contiguous, in detail.

Before we discuss the eventuality in these constructions, a brief description of single-eventness is in order. A single-event is generally defined as an event that is conceptualized by the speaker-listener as a single "phase". It obligatorily has one core component and may or may not have other additional components. The additional components may indicate the inception, culmination, cause, effect, manner etc. with which the activity of the core component was carried out. A serial verb construction will have a minimum of one additional event component in addition to the obligatory
core component. Whether or not more than one additional components are present, the whole activity is conceptualized as a single phase of the event.

The single-event reading is, oftentimes, induced by the single appearance of a verb, and, multi-event reading is induced by multiple instances of verbs. All the constructions in (11 - 14) have multiple verbs which have full lexical capacity when they appear in independent clauses. Hence, it is reasonable to doubt whether these constructions are single-event constructions, as an SVC is supposed to be. Or, are they multi-event constructions?

Though there are multiple verbs, the distribution of the verbs is different in these constructions. In contiguous constructions the verbs do not literally appear as 'multiple', instead they make one single unit, morphologically. In such cases, a single-event reading is easily available. See (13) and (14) above.

With constituents coming as two separate grammatical words, i.e. a string of verbs as in (11) or with an intervening object as in (12) – non-contiguous type - the phonological and grammatical word divisions are easily detectable. And hence, the verbs can be interpreted as in their independent instance, each as a full lexical verb. Such an interpretation would confer the construction a multi-event reading.

But, many speakers find that these constructions have an interpretation that is closer to a single-event than to a multi-event. In other words, the non-contiguous constructions have a 'long-stretched, large single-event' reading while contiguous constructions have a 'simple single-event' reading. This intuition partially explains why there are two types of distribution for single-event constructions. In the case of intervened constructions (as in 12), it is clear that the verbs cannot make a single unit
as there is an object intervening them. But non-intervening types (as in 11) still pose a problem for the move towards a unified representation for SVCs.

Now, consider an alternative. What if we assume that the problem is with the contiguous types. That is, the contiguous constructions form a single unit of verbs because they are a special type. Consider examples (13) and (14). They can be classified as light verb constructions, and the apparent difficulty in forming a single verb unit can be attributed to this characteristic difference. In other words, SVCs with a light verb do form a single unit of verbs whereas those with non-light verbs (11 and 12) do not. However, this observation seems not plausible as the constructions in (15) and (16), though not light verb constructions, do form a single unit of verbs. Then the issue is not solely the light verb v/s non light verb difference.

(15) mazha puuRNNamaayum peythozhinju  
   rain-Nom complete shover.empty-Past
   'Rain completely rained away'

(16) meeghangaL ellaam pooymaRanju  
   cloud-Pl-Nom all go.disappear-Past
   'All clouds disappeared'

But, there is a difference between examples (13-14) and (15-16); the presence/absence of a gemination in the construction. In examples (13) and (14), there is a gemination at the boundary between the two constituent verbs (bolded in the examples). On the other hand, in examples (15) and (16), there is no gemination at the constituents' boundary. Hence, it fails to club the two sets (13-14 and 15-16) into one type, which in turn defeats us in our attempt to have a general account for their constituent distribution pattern.
In short, what this implies is that it is not possible to unify the verb distribution patterns in SVC in Malayalam. In other words, there is a clear difference between the two types. Now let us see where the difference lies.

A striking aspect of the contiguous and non-contiguous wordhood of SVC is that, there is a semantic difference between the two types. For instance, when the constituents are detached, i.e., non-contiguous, there appears to be a clear description of the sequentiality of the sub-events of the whole event. This sequentiality is not obvious in instances when the two constituents are adjoined, i.e., contiguous. See the examples below.

(17) oru marakkombǝ poTTi.viiNu
    one treebranch-Nom break-fall-Past
    'One treebranch fell'

(18) oru marakkomb poTTi viiNu
    one treebranch-Nom break-Past fall-Past
    '*One treebranch fell'
    'One treebranch broke (and then) fell'

Here, (17) is clearly interpreted as one event in which there really was no specification for sub-eventualities of the whole process of 'falling'. Though it is clear that there was an event of 'breaking', happening before the event of 'falling', the construction does not specify it. Whereas in (18), though the construction is conceived of as a single event of 'tree branch falling', the subtle sub-events are specified. Therefore, in this type, the order in which the sub-events occurred becomes crucial, and are represented in the order in which they come before (to the left of) the last verb of the series.

In short, the motive for having two different verb distribution patterns in the
Malayalam SVC can be attributed to the purpose of indicating the subtle difference between the kind of single-eventness they show.

3.2.0.2 **Homogeneous and heterogeneous single-events**

As we said in the last chapter (cf. Chapter 2 § 2.4.1), there are two types of single-events in the Malayalam SVC; homogeneous and heterogeneous. Homogeneous single-event constructions are SVCs with no specification of sub-eventualities available in the verb distribution of the construction. That is, the particular verbs in this type of construction do not specify the order in which the simple constituent parts of the whole event occurred. Contiguous constructions belong to this type. Heterogeneous single-event constructions are SVCs with a clear specification for the sub-eventualities of the whole event. Here, the order of the sub-events will be represented by the order of individual verbs representing them, however, they constitute a whole, larger single event. Non-contiguous constructions belong to this type. Therefore, SVCs in Malayalam maintain two types of verb distribution to show the two kinds of single-event nature they have.

Identifying the two above noted verb distribution patterns as two variants within SVC will get a couple of other things in place. For instance, this would eventually explain the role-difference between the constituent verbs in the two types of SVCs.

In the contiguous type, one of the constituents, the second/last verb in the case of Malayalam, takes a crucial role in setting the semantic and grammatical (Tense, Mood, Polarity etc.) aspects of the construction. For instance, consider (17) and (18); (17) with its morphologically undivided constituent verbs, gives a meaning that the
event of 'breaking' is not relevant to constitute the composite meaning of the SVC. On the other hand, (18) gives an idea that when the constituent verbs are detached, the two events denoted by the two verbs are equally relevant and the morphologically separate appearance of them suggests that the sequentiality of the sub-event is important for the composite meaning of the SVC. A similar case is exemplified in (19) and (20).

(19) kukkaR poTTi.ththeRiccu
     cooker-Nom break-bounce-Past
     'Cooker burst'

(20) paippinte aTapp poTTi theRiccu
     tap-Gen cap break-Past burst-Past
     'Tap's cap broke and burst'
     ? "Tap exploded"

In this section, we discussed the different lexical composition that is exhibited by verbal elements of the Malayalam SVC. We saw that the verbs, generally, come in two different patterns: contiguous and non-contiguous (specifically classified into three types; non-contiguous, intervened and contiguous). This bipartite classification leads to two types of eventualities in these single-event constructions: homogeneous and heterogeneous. Whichever be the type of eventuality, the construction will have a core verbal component (main VP) and an additional verbal component (additional VP). It is evident that the two verbs (or, the VPs) do not bear the same level of significance in the construction. There seems to be a head-sub division in the constituents' role in the constructions; a property that is shown by asymmetric SVCs, cross-linguistically. We will look at that property in the next section.
3.2.1 Symmetry

As we have said in the conclusion of the previous section, in Malayalam SVCs, each of the constituents seems not to possess the same weight. For instance, in constructions like (21), and (22) below, each of the constituent verbs is detached from one another, however, they are not equally crucial to constitute the composite meaning of the SVC.

(21) naaya cerippɔ koNTɔ.pooyi kaTiccɔ muRiccu
dog-Nom chappal take.go-Compl bite-Compl cut-Past
'Dog took away the chappals, bit (and) cut them'

(22) kuTTi cooRɔ cavacc.araccɔ iRakki
child-Nom rice tooth.crush-Compl swallow-Past
'the child chewed (and) swallowed the rice'

The composite meaning of the construction comes out as a reflection of one of the verbs, or in other words, one of the constituents seems to have a major share in the meaning of the whole construction. For instance, in constructions like (23), and (24) below, the first verbs maRinju 'turn' and theRiccu 'moved off' are not so crucial in constituting the whole meaning of the SVC. Instead, their role is in describing the manner in which the event described by the second verb is carried out. This is a property generally shown by asymmetric SVCs.

(23) arishTaththinte kuppi maRinjo.viiNu
medicine-Gen bottle turn.fall-Past
'The bottle of medicine fell over'

(24) kuTTi train.il.ninnum theRiccɔ.viiNu
child train-Loc-Dirc move off. fall-Past
'The child fell off the train'
It may be noted, in addition to this, that the verbs other than the last verb (morphologically), are grammatically defective as they cannot take tense/aspect, mood or any other grammatical inflections. This shows that there is an asymmetry between the verbs, in terms of their meaning, in this type of constructions.

In some SVCs, verbs may not have any direct contribution to the composite meaning of the construction. This is the case in SVCs with categories of verbs such as 'give', 'place', 'see/search', 'gather/add', 'finish', 'be', verbs of motion or posture etc.. These verbs need to stand in combination with other verbs. For instance, in the following SVCs, the first verb seems to have no direct contribution to the meaning.

See for instance the verb *kaTanna* 'pass/cross', in (25), (26) and (27).

(25) \[ \text{sainyam angooTTǝ kaTanna.kayaRi} \]
\[ \text{army-Nom there-Direction pass. enter-Past} \]
\[ '\text{Army entered there'} \]

(26) \[ \text{sainyam avare kaTann.aakramiccu} \]
\[ \text{army-Nom they-Acc pass.attack-Past} \]
\[ '\text{Army attacked them'} \]

(27) \[ \text{manthri ithuvazhi kaTanna.pooyi} \]
\[ \text{minister-Nom this way pass. go-Past} \]
\[ '\text{Minister went this way'} \]

This is so because the first verbs in these constructions are not employing their full lexical potential. Or in other words, there is some kind of restriction (thematic) on the verbs coming in this position. Certain verbs, which have a meaning when used in unrestricted positions do not encode that meaning when used in some restricted positions. This type of unrestricted appearance of the verb characterizes its lexical role and the restricted appearance its functional role. This forces us to assume (along the
lines of Aboh (2009)) that the first verbs in these constructions are functional verbs (possibly, light verbs) and the second verbs are lexical verbs.

3.2.1.0 Grammaticalization of 'sit' verbs

A similar phenomenon is seen in constructions with irikkǝ 'sit'. In this type, the verb irikkǝ 'sit' does not have any direct contribution to the composite meaning of the construction. For instance,

(28) maram nannaayi vaLaRnnirikkunnu
    tree well grow. sit-Pres
    'Tree has grown well'
(29) bhakshaNam thiiRnnirikkunnu
    food finish. sit-Pres
    'Food has got over'

This takes us to a new conclusion. Following the line of thinking we derived from the previous examples, the 'sit' verbs in these constructions can be taken to be in their functional role. Then we will have a new dimension to explore, that is, the position a functional verb can occupy in the Malayalam SVC. In the earlier examples, the functional verbs were observed as coming in the V1 position, but 'sit' verbs seem to differ from that, as they are coming as V2 in the construction. I assume that this is an instance of grammaticalization. The verb irikkǝ 'sit' with a tense inflection -nnu 'Pres' functions as a grammatical category marker for what is generally referred to as present perfect tense. Therefore, this instance of 'sit' cannot be considered as an instance of the verb, instead, it is a grammatical category marking. If we are right on analyzing this as expression of the perfective aspect, then we may not consider this type of constructions as serial verb construction. Similar instances of
'grammaticalization happened on serial verbs' can be seen in the passive constructions with *peTTǝ* 'trap' and the perfective constructions with *iTTuNTǝ* 'put have'.

(30)  avaR  enganeyoo karayil  eththi.ppeTTu
they  how-Disj  shore-Loc  reach-Past.trap-Past
'They somehow reached shore'

(31)  athinu  Seesham  avan  nannaayi  aRiya.ppeTTu
that-Dat  after  he-Nom  well  know. Trap-Past
'After that, he became very famous'

(32)  aa  kaTuva  cathth.iTTuNTǝ
that Tiger  die. put-Past. be-Past
'That tiger is dead' (Lit.'That tiger has died')

(33)  njaan  aviTe  pooy.iTTuNTǝ
I-Nom  there  go.put-Past.be-Past
'I had been there'

Coming back to SVCs, we have seen in the discussion above, that there are some common aspects shared by certain categories of verbs that constitute SVCs in Malayalam. That is, these verbs, when they join with other verbs in order to form SVC, are coming in a specified position. The reverse order of combination either changes the meaning entirely or makes the construction ungrammatical. The verbs that come in the V1 positions tend to have a restricted (thematic) role such as manner, instrument, etc. identifying themselves with the functional/light verbs.

In this section, we defined the symmetry-related specification of the constructions that we identified as SVCs of Malayalam. It is evident from the above data that one of the multiple verbs act as the head of the construction (morphologically final verb, consistently in our data) and the other verbs act as non-heads. The non-head verbs add to the specification about the event represented by the
head verb. In effect, the head verb can be classified as lexical (as it is the only verb with the full lexical form in the construction) and the non-head verbs, functional (as they stand for a functional role).

3.2.2 **Lexical idiom**

The adjoining of verbs in a particular order gives rise to the formation of lexical idioms in Malayalam. In such constructions, the meaning of the SVC may not be the combination of the individual verb meanings. Formation of lexical idioms is assumed to be a property of asymmetric SVCs, in which the V1 will be a functional/light verb with a meaning different from that of its appearance otherwise in the lexical form. Let us look at some examples.

(34) pazhaya aaSayangaLe avaR poLicc.ezhuthi
    old ideas-Acc they-Dat break.write-Past
    'They rewrote the old ideas'

(35) paripaaTi aTicc̄a.poLiccu
    program beat.break-Past
    'Programme rocked!'  

This idiomatic reading of the verbs is *not available* in the non-contiguous pattern. See (36) below.

(36) paripaaTi aTicc̄ poLicc.u!
    program beat.Compl break-Past
    *'Program rocked!'

In (36), it can only mean that *paripaaTi* 'program' has been beaten and broken in the sense that it was spoiled totally. Therefore, with the verbs detached (in non-contiguous constructions), it is impossible to get the idiomatic reading. This might hint a possibility that, with idiom-making as a property of SVCs, Malayalam
Contiguous constructions are clearly different from the Non-contiguous types.

3.2.3 Negation

Now, let us look at the marking of negation in SVC in Malayalam. For a prototypical SVC, negation will be marked once for the construction. We will repeat the important points of our discussion on negation in Malayalam from the last chapter. As we discussed in Chapter 2, there are two negation markers that commonly appear associated with SVCs in Malayalam, viz., illa and -aathe, and they come as marked once for a construction.

The place at which each of these negators, -illa and -aathe, come cannot be altered. That is, the marker -illa can come only on the last verb of the series and the marker aathe cannot come on the last verb, but can come elsewhere. Another difference is that -illa comes with finite verb forms while -aathe comes with non-finite verbs.

With respect to SVCs, a notable feature is that the marker -aathe cannot come between the constituents of an SVC. If it is marked within a contiguous SVC, as in example (37), the construction is seen as ungrammatical. The only chance for -aathe to come on the pre-final verb is when the constructions take a form that the two actions, are separate sub-events and hence it can only be written as in (38), which would imply a meaning completely different from its SVC form.

(37) *kukkaR poTT-aathe.theRiccu
    Cooker-Nom break-Neg.burst-Past
'Cooker did not explode'
From this, we are likely to assume that Malayalam SVCs vary with respect to their capacity to take negation markers. Contiguous constructions can take only *illa*, whereas Non-contiguous and Intervened constructions can take both *illa* and *aathe*.

But there seems to be more to the story. In Chapter 2, we observed that "-aathe leaves the construction in two polarity values". See example (42). But we might be wrong with this assumption. Because, this instance of negation cannot be considered a negation of the construction. Instead, it can be considered a manner description of the main event where the manner has a specificity of not having a particular thing, which is still the manner. That is, 'not having taken the knife' is the manner in which the main event of 'cutting the bread' was carried out. Hence, this can't be considered a different Neg value taking instance in the construction. The
construction still has only one polarity value, that is positive. If that is the case, then constructions like (42) has to be considered sentences with one polarity value for the construction, which is positive.

At this point, we have a difficulty in explaining constructions like (43) below where both the Neg markers come in the same construction.

(43) *amma kaththi eTu-kk-aathe appam muRicc-illa
mother knife-Dat take-Neg bread-Acc cut-Neg
'Mother did not cut the bread without taking knife'

It is grammatically correct if the main verb is in a different mood.

(44) amma kaththi eTu-kk-aathe appam muRi-kk-illa
mother knife-Dat take-Neg bread-Acc cut-Mod-Neg
'Mother will not cut bread without taking knife'

Due to constraints of time and space, we will not explore any further the Neg distribution here. We just note that there is a difficulty to have both the Neg markers appear in same construction in what is understood as an SVC in Malayalam. It can be concluded that negation is marked once in the construction for SVC. Though the marker can come on the verbs other than the main verb, only when the main verb is negated, the sentence is considered negative. In other cases, it is only an instance of a negative state or manner in which the main event is carried out. In such cases, irrespective of the presence of a polarity marker on the pre-final verbs, the construction gets the polarity value depending on the marker on the last/main verb.

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14 This possible with modals because MoodP is in the CP domain. NegP is possibly above MoodP. Since too many details are involved in this point, we will not elaborate on this here.
3.2.4 Marking of TAM and other suffixes

We saw in Chapter 2 that tense/aspect and mood marking are done once for the construction in multi-verb constructions in Malayalam. In this section we will look at the three constructions we identified as SVC in Malayalam with respect to the distribution of these markers.

TAM markers are suffixed only on the last/main verb in SVC in Malayalam as shown in the examples below. The construction gets the tense/aspect or mood interpretation depending on the tense/aspect or mood value of the last/main verb.

(45) amma cooRǝ uNTaakki kazhi-kk-uunu
     mother rice prepare-Compl eat-Pres
     'Mother is eating rice making (it)'

(46) amma kaththi eTuththǝ appam muRi-kk-um
     mother knife-Inst take-Compl bread-Acc cut-Mod
     'Mother will cut bread taking knife'

(47) kukkaR poTTiththeRi-kk-uunu
     cooker break.throw off-Pres
     'Cooker is bursting'

The intervening verbs are in a default completive form and doesn't carry any tense/aspect, or mood markers on them. The appearance of these inflections on the intervening verbs will render the construction ungrammatical. See the examples below.

(48) *amma cooRǝ uNTaakk-uunu kazhikk-uunu
     mother rice prepare-Pres eat-Pres
     'Mother is eating rice making (it)'
And, it is to be noted that the marker is not suffixed on all the verbs. That means Malayalam SVC does not take these markers on each constituent.

From these data, it is evident that the TAM markers appear once for the construction in the three types we identified as SVC in Malayalam. This is a feature exhibited by SVCs cross-linguistically. Now let us look at some other inflection patterns.

3.2.4.0 Other suffixes

When the construction is nominalized, only the last/main verb is undergoing the V→N conversion (cf. Chapter 2, § 2.5.3). It is to be noted that no other verb in the construction is undergoing this transformation. If the pre-final verb takes a nominalization marker, the constructions go ungrammatical for the intended SVC meaning.
Nominalization of the final verb will remove its case licensing capacity and hence we can expect an alteration in the case property of the subject, which was nominative when the licenser was a verb. The subject of the construction will have an inherent genitive case when the construction is nominalized.

(53) ammayuTe cooR ço uNTaakki kazhikkal
    mother-Gen rice prepare-Compl eat-Nom
    'The rice preparing (and) eating of the Mother'

(54) *amma cooR ço uNTaakki kazhikkal
    mother-Gen rice prepare-Compl eat-Nom
    'The rice preparing (and) eating of the Mother'

As we observed in Chapter 2, similar to that of TAM, polarity and nominalization suffixes, markers of conditional suffix -aal, temporal anchoring suffix -mbooL, instrumental marker koNTə, relativizer particle -a , comparative correlative -tooRum, causativizer particle -pp, passivization suffix -ppeT, etc. are also inflected only once for the construction. If these constructions take the same markers on the pre-final verbs or on all the verbs, the construction goes ungrammatical for the intended meaning.

Conditional

(55) amma cooR ço uNTaakki kazhicc-aal
    mother rice prepare-Compl eat-Cond
    'If mother made (and) ate rice'

(56) *amma cooR ço uNTaakki-yaal kazhicc-aal
    mother rice prepare-Compl-Cond eat-Cond
    'If mother made (and) ate rice'
(57) *amma cooRǝ uNTaakki-yaal kazhiccu
mother rice prepare-Cond eat-Past
'If mother made (and) ate rice'

Relativizer
(58) amma cooRǝ uNTaakki kazhicc-a paathram
mother rice prepare-Compl eat-Rel vessel
'The vessel in which mother ate rice'
(59) *amma cooRǝ uNTaakki-ya kazhicc-a paathram
mother rice prepare-Compl-Rel eat-Rel vessel
'The vessel in which mother ate rice'

Temporal anchoring
(60) kukkaR poTTiththeRi-kk-umboL
cooker break.throw off-Temp
'When cooker burst'
(61) *kukkaR poTT-umboL.theRi-kk-umboL
cooker breakTemp.bounce-Temp
'When cooker burst'

Causative constructions
(62) amma kaththi eTuththǝ appam muRi-ppi-ccu
mother knife-Inst take-Compl bread-Acc cut-Caus-Past
'Mother made (somebody) take knife (and) cut the bread'
(63) amitha marddam kukkaR poTTiththeRippiccu
over pressure cooker break.bounce-Caus-Past
'Over pressure caused the cooker burst'
(64) amma kuTTiye (koNTǝ) cooRǝ cavaccǝ araccǝ
mother-Dat child-Acc (with) rice chew crush kazhippiccu
eat-Caus-Past
'Mother made the child chew crush (and) eat the rice'
(65) *amma kaththi eTu-ppi-ccu appam muRiccu
mother knife-Inst take-Caus-Past bread-Acc cut-Past
'Mother made (somebody) take knife (and) cut the bread'

(66) *amma kaththi eTu-ppiccu appam muRi-ppi-ccu
mother knife-Inst take-Caus-Past bread-Acc cut-Caus-Past
'Mother made (somebody) take knife (and) cut the bread'

(67) *amitha marddam kukkaR poTTippiccǝtheRippiccu
over pressure cooker break-Caus.bounce-Caus-Past
'Over pressure caused the cooker burst'

(68) *amma kuTTiye (koNTǝ) cooRǝ cava-ppi-ccǝ
mother child-Acc (with) rice chew-Caus-Compl ara-ppi-ccǝ kazhippiccu
crush-Caus-Compl eat- Caus-Past
'Mother made the child chew crush (and) eat the rice'

Passive constructions

(69) ammayaal cooRǝ uNTaakki kazhikkappeTTu
Mother-by rice-Acc make-Compl eat-Pass
'Rice was eaten by mother' (Lit. Rice was made (and) eaten by mother)

(70) *ammayaal cooRǝ uNTaakkappeTTǝ kazhikkappeTTu
Mother-by rice-Acc make-Pass eat-Pass
'Rice was eaten by mother' (Lit. Rice was made (and) eaten by mother)

(71) ammayaal kaththi eTuththǝ appam muRikkappeTTu
Mother-by knife take-Compl bread-Acc cut-Pass
'Taking knife, bread was cut by mother'

(72) *ammayaal kaththi eTukkappeTTǝ appam muRikkappeTTu
Mother-by knife take-Pass bread-Acc cut-Pass
'Taking knife, bread was cut by mother'

(73) kukkaR poTTiTTthǝtheRikkappeTTu
kukkar break-bounce-Pass
'Cooker got burst'
In this section, we analyzed different suffixation patterns evident in the three types of constructions that we identified in the beginning of this chapter. We observed that the suffixes of polarity, TAM marking, nominalization, causativization, passivization etc. are marked only once for these constructions. This singular distribution of suffixes in the above discussed data show that there is a high chance for the three construction types we identified to be the SVCs of Malayalam. With this we will conclude the chapter and move on to other issues related to these three types of constructions.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, we looked at the properties of the three constructions we assumed to be the three types of SVCc of Malayalam, viz., Non-contiguous, Intervened, and Contiguous constructions. Serial Verb Constructions being single event constructions, showing idiomatic constitution in certain types, take a single marking for polarity and other grammatical values including tense, aspect, and modality. Serial verb constructions are identified maintaining, if not all, most of these properties in all the languages they are attested present. In our attempt, we analyzed the three constructions noted above with respect to their behaviour according to these properties.

We saw that though they differ in the wordhood in three ways, all these constructions are single event constructions. The construction takes single polarity value, and marks it on the main or lexical verb that often appears to be the last verb.
morphologically. The construction takes single value for all types of grammatical category marking including tense, aspect and modality. It is evident from the data we discussed that only the last/main verb takes all the grammatical values and all the pre-final verbs are in a default completive aspect. This indicates that only the last/main verb is the lexical verb in the construction and all other verbs are functional. This forces us to assume that these constructions are single event constructions with the lexical verb indicating the event and the functional verb/s giving a description of the event denoted by the lexical verb. We will explore this point further in the next chapter.