CHAPTER 4

Serial Verb Constructions in Malayalam: Tests

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, we will be taking the previously identified three constructions, given in (1-3), through the tests of argument sharing, mono-clausality, and covert coordination that may help us decide whether these constructions are SVCs in the conventional sense.

(1) Non-contiguous

amma cooRǝ uNTaakki kazhiccu
mother  rice  prepare-Compl  eat-Past
'The mother ate the rice' (or, 'Mother cooked (and) ate rice')

(2) Intervened

amma kaththi eTuththǝ 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')

(3) Contiguous

kukkaR poTTiththeRiccu
cooker  break.throw off-Past
'The cooker burst'
4.1 Argument sharing

Internal argument sharing is considered a defining property of Serial Verb Constructions (Baker (1989), Collins (1997), Aikhenvald (2006), inter alia). This is explained as an instance when two or more transitive verbs of an SVC exhaust their argument valency by Case/theta marking a common argument. Generally, it is attested that only the main verb takes an overtly realized direct object while the "unrealized object of the [other] verb is understood to be coreferential with the object of the first verb". If the direct object of V1 is understood as the direct object of V2, then it can be claimed that there is argument sharing in that construction. Though there are proposals like "in a serial verb construction, the verbs must share external and internal arguments" (Stewart 1998/2013), the commonly argued proposal is that 'at least one argument is shared in an SVC'.

There are different proposals to account for this phenomenon. The major ones are the "double-headed" structure (Baker (1989) et al), the VP-shell with an empty category (Collins (1997), among others), the VP-adjunction structure (Hale (1991), Jayseelan (2004), inter alia). Let us look at some of these proposals based on some Malayalam data.

4.1.0 Argument sharing: How it works

Traditionally, argument sharing is explained in two ways. One, analyzed with ternary branching, two, analyzed with an empty category. In the ternary branching analysis, the SVC is postulated to have a double-headed VP (Baker (1989), et. al.).
According to Baker (1989), V2 in (4) is a triadic verb that assigns an instrument/manner theta role to the object of V1. Baker explains the V1-XP-V2 or V1-V2-XP structure of SVC in terms of Argument Sharing Hypothesis (ASH). This hypothesis states that "in serial verb constructions, V1 and V2 must share an internal argument" (Collins 1997:463). It was a step advancing from the traditional transformational explanation that this kind of a structure is the result of deletion under identity (Aboh 2009:3). The ASH postulated a double-headed VP where V1 and V2 together theta-mark the internal argument.

After Kayne (1994), binary branching has become the standard conception of phrase structure in linguistic theory. Therefore, Baker's ternary branching analysis
may be not considered a plausible analysis for the structure. Another way the argument sharing is explained is the VP Shell analysis with an empty category.

4.1.0.1 The 'VP-Shell with an Empty Category' analysis

In this analysis, argument sharing is explained postulating an empty category that is an argument of V2 and is coindexed with the object of V1. Here, the external argument is introduced by the little v, the direct object is introduced by V1. The V1 then raises past the object and adjoins the v, where it is licensed. Spec VP2 hosts an empty category pro which is controlled by the object of V1. (Collins (1997), da Cruz (1997) et al.). Constructions of the Non-contiguous type (as in (1)) are generally explained to have argument sharing. In this type, the verbs are coming adjacent to each other but not compound as in Contiguous (as in (3)), nor detached as in Intervened (as in (2)). All the object arguments are sequenced to the left of all the verbs.

(6) amma appam eTuththə muRiccu
    mother bread-Acc take-Compl cut-Past
'Mother take (and) cut bread'
"Mother cut bread"

(7) amma cooRə uNTaaksi kazhiccu
    mother rice prepare-Compl eat-Past
'Mother made (and) ate rice'
Collins' evidence for the presence of an empty category is the optional licensing of a postposition in SVC (Collins 1997:471-2). The way Collins' argument stands is; there is a need for an empty category in SVC. And since there is an empty category, there is a need for a postposition to assign Case to it. Therefore, there is an 'e' and a 'P'. The empty category is a pro (Collins 1997:478). Let us look at some examples (from Collins 1997:41 and 79).
However, this analysis is taking a very complicated method of postulations and assumptions. Going by this, we meet a couple of instances in our analysis of Malayalam serial verb paradigm which are hard to explain in this way. A problem with this analysis is that it starts with the postulation of an empty category as the argument of V2, where the empty category is coindexed with the object of V1. In the following discussions, we will see that the object of V1 cannot always coindex the object of V2. We will also see that the object position of V2 cannot be null when there is only one DP argument. In other words, we will see that there actually is no argument sharing in these constructions. Hence, Collins' analysis, which stands on Argument Sharing Hypothesis, seems too expensive for us to buy.

Before we leave Collins' proposal and move on to the alternative proposal we have, let us analyze the proposal based on some Malayalam data and see some of the difficulties we face if we buy it. The construction in (6) can have an optional postposition as in (10a) below. In Collins' analysis, the postposition assigns case to the empty category, pro. The pro is coindexed with the object of V1.

If we strictly follow on Collins' lines, (10a) can be analyzed as V1 'take' assigns theme role to the instrument 'knife' merged under it, which (knife) controls the empty category pro which is introduced by the postposition koNT. In this type of constructions, V1 assigns the theta-role 'theme' to the instrument, which controls the
empty category *pro* introduced by the pre/postposition" (Veenstra (2000), da Cruz (1997), Baker and Stewart (2002), et al. agree on this analysis too).

(10)  

a. amma appam c'Tuththǝ *pro* koNTǝ muRiccu
Mother bread take-Compl (bread) with-Inst cut-Past  
(a) *'Mother cut (something) using the bread'* 
(b) *'Mother, taking the bread, cut (it)'*

b. amma appam c'Tuththǝ muRiccu
mother bread-Acc take-Compl cut-Past  
'Mother took (and) cut the bread'

This forces us to look at the nature of *koNT* a bit in depth.

4.1.0.1.0 *koNT* Constructions

It is clear that *koNT* has very commonly used full-lexical and postpositional variants (among other roles) in Malayalam. The postposition *koNT*, generally, is used as an instrument marker and the full lexical verb (as a transitive main verb) as shown in (11) and (12) below, respectively.

(11)  

TiiccaR vaTi koNTǝ aTiccu  
teacher stick-Inst with beat-Past  
'Teacher beat with a stick'

(12)  

aanakkǝ veTi koNTu  
elephant-Dat bullet-fire get-Past  
'Elephant got fired'  
i.e., 'Elephant got shot'

However, it may be noticed that *koNT* does not have any of those interpretations in cases like (9) as the gloss in (a) indicates. There the construction will have an interpretation as shown in (b). That is, *koNT* is not taking any instrument
marker role, neither a full lexical-verb role, there.

Therefore, the postposition *koNT*, that is available in these types of Malayalam constructions does not seem to support the kind of analysis Collins proposes. Assigning Case to an empty category which is coindexed with the object of V1 seems to be beyond the scope of the postposition *koNT* in these constructions.

If the postposition *koNT* is not doing that function, then an immediate question is, what function it is doing in this type of constructions. I would assume that it is functioning as a postposition, probably with progressive aspect marker (progressive 'be') role than an instrument marker, and evidently indicating an overlapping of eventualities or transition of effects between the verbs of the construction.

4.1.0.1.1  *koNT* as Progressive 'be'

If we assume *koNT* is not Case licensing the pro, instead it is giving a progressive aspect reading to the construction, then we can analyze (10a) in the same way as (6). In both the constructions, the manner in which the event of 'cutting' is described as being carried out by 'taking the bread'. The difference being that in (10a), the effect of 'taking of the bread' was continuing while the event of 'cutting' was happening. In the other, this overlapping is not specified. In other words, there is some sort of an overlapping between the main event and the manner action in the *koNT* version. Compare the following examples with (9).

(13)  amma appam eTuthth-iTTǝ muRiccu
mother bread-Acc take-Perf cut-Past
'Having taken the bread, Mother cut (it)’
(14) kuTTi appam e'Tuththa koNTǝ ooTi
    child bread-Acc take-Compl be-Prog run-Past
    'Child ran, taking the bread'

Changing the progressive 'be', koNT to the perfective 'be', -iTTǝ as in (13), the
construction gets a subtle difference in meaning. In (13) the meaning is that the
'taking' action is over while the 'cutting' action is happening. On the other hand, in
(14), the meaning is that the event of 'taking' was continuing while the event of
'running' was happening. The following construction will illustrate this assumption.

(15) ? amma cooRǝ uNTaakki koNT kazhiccu
    mother rice-Acc prepare-Compl Prog eat-Past
    'Preparing the rice, mother ate (it = rice)'

(16) amma cooRǝ uNTaakki-yiTTǝ kazhiccu
    mother rice-Acc prepare-Perf eat-Past
    'Having prepared the rice, mother ate (it = rice)'

Many speakers have identified (15) as "odd" while (16) as "okay". The oddity
with (15) can be explained by noting that the event of cooking something and the
event of eating it cannot overlap. That is, 'cooking' has to be finished for 'eating' to
begin. The presence of an 'overlap linker' between the events makes this construction
odd. If koNT was used as an instrument marker in this case, the interpretation of the
construction changes as shown below.

(17) *amma cooRǝ uNTaakki koNTi kazhiccu
    "Mother ate (something) preparing (and) using rice"

From the above discussion, we couldn't find compelling evidence to justify
Collins' claim that it stands right for Malayalam too. The optional postposition in
constructions like (6) is case licensers to the empty category, pro. What comes clear is
that the postposition koNT which follows the V1 is interpreted as a 'progressive
aspect marker’ or, an 'overlap linker', rather than as an instrument case licenser coindexed with the object of V1.

If koNT is an instrument marker or case licenser, then we have a problem in including this type of construction into SVC type, primarily because, it is indicating a syntactic dependency between the events. If koNT is functioning as a connector/linker between the events, suggesting an overlap between events, then, the construction can still be a part of the SVC team. Overlapping is not a syntactic dependency issue, and therefore, we have no problem to mark these constructions as SVCs. From the available data, it appears that koNT is only an overlapping marker. However, this point needs to be studied in detail separately.

4.1.0.2 An alternative analysis

Instead of going through all the problems with adopting Collins' analysis for Malayalam SVC, we will explain the alternative analysis we have and, wherever required we will compare it with Collins' analysis. Aboh (2009) proposes an analysis for SVCs that stands without argument sharing. In this analysis, V1 and V2 belong to two different domains at the clause structure. V2 merges as the head of the lexical field and V1 realizes as the head of the functional field. The functional V1 lacks an internal theta role, a property that generalizes to all verbs representing V1. On the contrary, V2 introduces internal argument (Aboh 2009:21). This brings a distinction between the verbs of the series in that V1 is functional and V2 is lexical.

The lexical verb stands fully inflected and it indicates the main event of the construction. Functional verb/s represent the functional roles such as instrumentality, manner, directionality aspects with which the main event (the event denoted by the
lexical/main verb) was carried out. Since only one of the verbs is representing the lexical/main event role, there is only one event in an SVC, as per this account.

If we adopt this analysis for the Malayalam data, a major challenge will be the question how the DP that appears to be the object of the functional V1 gets its accusative case. That is, how did 'bread'/appam in (6) get its case? In his proposal, Aboh prefers object movement over a control analysis for this type of constructions. The series involves a copy of the inverted object, instead of an empty category that requires control. This is the copy of the object that it leaves at the extraction site. He argues that this copy is subsequently deleted under identity or goes nondistinct from the head of the chain. We can explain the Malayalam case issue along these lines. We would assume that 'bread'/appam is actually the direct object argument of the V2 'cut'/muRiccu and from that position it gets its case and theta roles and then raises, leaving a copy there. See (18) below.
Another piece of evidence in favor of our assumption that the object is moved from a pre-V2 position to a pre-V1 position is the following. Example (19) is identified ungrammatical, unless the meaning intended is as shown in (b).

(19) *amma cooRǝ, uNTaakki athǝ, kazhiccu

Mother rice-Acc prepare that eat-Past
a. 'Mother prepared rice (and) ate rice'
b. 'Mother prepared rice (and) ate something (other than the rice she prepared)'

In (19), as per Collins' (1997) assumption, the object of 'eat'/kazhiccu is a null object (i.e., pro). But, we have some difficulties to buy that. One, we have an accusative case marked object in the pre-V1 position. Two, if we assume that the gap left in V2 is not the site from which the accusative-object raised, then, the V2 still has
its theta role unsaturated. It also fails to get case on 'bread'/appam. If that is so, then, the merging of a pronoun there should make no problem. But, what we see is that the presence of a pronoun (coindexed with the DP1) in that position makes the construction ungrammatical (as in (19) above). Now the question is why a pronoun is not licensed in that position?

This can be explained in the following way. 'rice'/cooRǝ is the object of V2, 'eat'/kazhiccu. V2 is a transitive verb and that assigns accusative case to its direct object, 'rice'/cooRǝ. With the accusative case, the object raises to a higher node and joins left to the V1. Merging of a pronoun coindexed with the object of V1, 'rice'/cooRǝ, in the pre-V2 position will hold the pronoun with no case licenser available since V2 already exhausted its case valency by assigning 'rice'/cooRǝ with accusative case. Hence, it renders the construction ungrammatical. Note that, a pronoun with a different antecedent can come in between V1 and V2 (as indicated in gloss (b)). That pronoun will be coming in the object slot of V2, and hence, will be case marked by V2. In this scenario, the DP 'rice' will not be case marked by the V2 (unless, of course, V2 is ditransitive or triadic). Therefore, in the non-pronoun versions, contra to Collins' claim, the object position of V2 is not null, instead, it has a copy of the raised object, and therefore, it cannot take a pronoun.

4.1.0.2.0 Object movement v/s object dropping

Before we move on to the next type, let us look at another subtle property with respect to the Non-contiguous types. Some speakers find an ambiguity associated with constructions like (6), repeated as (20) below. It appears that the availability of an instrument reading on the object DP, 'bread'/appam intervenes the interpretation. See
the examples below.

(20) amma appam eTuththə muriccu
mother bread-Acc/Inst take-Compl cut-Past

a. 'Mother took the bread (and) cut it' – Accusative
b. 'Mother took the bread and cut (something with the bread)' – Instrumental

(21) amma kaththi eTuththə muRiccu
mother knife-Acc/Inst take-Compl cut-Past

a. 'Mother took the knife (and) cut (it = knife)' – Accusative
b. 'Mother took the knife (and) cut (something with the knife)' – Instrumental

In these constructions, most of the speakers are familiar with the (a) readings. We explained that these readings are available when the object DPs, 'bread'/appam, and 'knife'/kaththi are moved up from their merging position as the direct object of V2. The speakers are also getting an Instrument reading – (b) reading – in these constructions. We have only a tentative proposal to account for this. I assume that the availability of the Instrument reading ('b' readings) on these DPs are because they (DPs) are coming under different nodes. That is, in the instrument reading versions (the (b) readings), the DPs 'bread'/appam, and 'knife'/kaththi are not moved from the V2 object position, instead, are merged directly in a functional position where the DP gets inherent instrument case. If that is so, the instrument reading and the accusative reading have different derivational structures as shown in (22) and (23), respectively.
(22) Mother took the bread and cut (something with the bread)' – Instrument

(23) 'Mother took the bread (and) cut it' – Accusative
If the above examples have their interpretation as in the (b) ones, then, the DP 'bread/appam, or 'knife/kaththi is merged in a higher functional node directly. Which means, in the (b) instances, the object slot of V2 is null or the object is dropped. If that is the case, then the insertion of a pronoun 'atha' coindexed with the dropped object (note, NOT the available object) should not make the construction ungrammatical, as shown in (24). That is, in instrument reading versions, V2 will have its argument valency unsaturated and hence, it can license a pronoun without any problem. Similarly, since the pronoun and the available DP are coming in two different slots, coindexing them would render the construction ungrammatical as shown in (25).

(24) amma appam eTuththǝ athǝ muRiccu
mother bread-Inst take-Compl that cut-Past
'Mother took bread (and) cut that (that ≠ bread)'

(25) *amma appamǝ eTuththǝ athǝǝ muRiccu
mother bread-Inst take-Compl that cut-Past
'Mother took bread (and) cut that (that = bread)'

We said, in constructions like (20), the DP 'bread' is understood as the object of the main verb V2 and it is subsequently raised to a pre-V1 position. We also said that V1 is a functional verb with no case or theta-roles to assign. Then the question is, what motivates the movement of the object of V2 to a pre-V1 position as in (26) below.

(26) amma appam eTuththǝ muRiccu
mother bread-Acc/Inst take-Compl cut-Past
'Mother took the bread (and) cut it'

This can be explained thus: the pre-V1 position is an EPP position\(^{16}\). Therefore

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\(^{16}\) Standardly, the Spec positions of little v and T are EPP positions, but not the Spec of V. However, if V1 in these are functional, one can motivate an EPP position for them.
in structures where the constituent preceding V1 subsequently raises to the EPP position left adjacent to V1. This explains the ungrammaticality of the following construction.

(27) *amma eTuthθ appam muRiccu
mother take-Compl bread-Acc cut-Past
'Mother took the bread (and) cut it'

In any case, the instrument reading for the DP is marginal, limited to a few speakers. Therefore, we will conclude this discussion here. In the next section, we will look at the proposal we have against the argument sharing hypothesis.

4.1.0.3 Against argument sharing

The data we discussed in this section consistently indicate that there is only one event in this type of constructions. Though there are more verbs than one, the last verb is generally coming out as the only verb in its full lexical capacity. The event denoted by the lexical verb is the main event of the construction. Verbs other than the main verb (which are not in their full lexical role), are in a functional role. What they stand for in their functional guise is not indicating an event, instead is giving an added information such as manner, direction, location, instrumentality etc., in which the main event was carried out (cf. Aboh 2009 for a discussion on this point). Let us look at the three types of constructions we identified in terms of argument sharing.

4.1.0.3.0 The Non-contiguous type of constructions

Let us start with some examples.

(28) amma appam eTuthθ muRiccu
mother bread-Acc take-Compl cut-Past
'Mother took (and) cut the bread'
In the above examples, for instance, there is only one main event, the event indicated by the last verb. See the arrangements below. The main events of the above constructions in (28-29) can be represented as below, in the respective order.

(30) amma appam muRiccu
    mother bread-Acc cut-Past
    'Mother cut the bread'

(31) kuTTi pusthakam muRiccu
    child book cut-Past
    'Child cut the book'

Examples in (30-31) are a representation of the main events of the constructions in (28-29). In all these cases, it is the last verb which acts as the main verb of the construction. Now, the other verb in the constructions will give an added information about the way the main event happened. In (28), 'taking the bread' is the manner in which the 'cutting' event was carried out. In (29) 'tearing the book' is the manner in which the 'cutting' was done. That means, of the two verbs, one is the main event and the other is a description of the main event. Therefore, we can clearly argue that there is only one event in this type of constructions. If there is only one event, there requires no predicate sharing. The arguments are solely of the main/lexical verb. The functional verb that indicates the manner, instrumentality etc. does not take arguments. In other words, there is no argument sharing in this type of constructions.

At this point, we are in line with Collins' (1997) claim too, that there may not be any object-sharing if one of the verbs in the SVC is in its functional role. That is,
instrument SVC, directional SVC, and idiomatic SVCs do not have argument sharing (Collins 1997:467-8). Therefore, we conclude that the Non-contiguous types of constructions have no argument sharing, contrary to what is expected as per the traditional analysis of the SVCs. Now, let us look at the second type of constructions, the Intervened type.

4.1.0.3.1 The Intervened type of constructions

The intervened type constructions will have an additional argument, when comparing them with their Non-contiguous counterparts. See the examples below.

(32) amma kaththi eTuththǝ appam muRiccu
Mother knife-Acc take-Compl bread-Acc cut-Past
'Mother cut the bread taking a knife'

(33) amma kuTTiye viLicc kaaryam paRanju
mother child-Acc call-Compl matter-Acc say-Past
'Mother called the child (and) told the matter'

In (20), the object 'bread'/appam was assumed to be the object of both the verbs (in the argument sharing analysis). But in (32), where there are separate objects for each verb, the construction is generally identified as not having argument sharing. In such cases, DP1, 'knife'/kaththi is realized as the object of V1, 'take'/eTuththǝ and 'bread'/appam are realized as the object of V2, 'cut'/muRiccu. The object of V2 is analyzed as the direct object of the construction.17

Though the two DPs are coming associated with two different verbs lexically, the DPs can easily be raised from their merging position. Insertion of a pronoun and

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17 If each object was of each verb and each verb is a full lexical verb, and each of them licenses an object argument DP, then the construction should have a VP coordination; overt or covert. But there is no coordination as we will see in the next section on coordination.
the subsequent ungrammaticality shows that the DP was moved from the object position of V2. See the examples below.

(34) amma appam kaththi eTuththø e muRiccu
    Mother bread-Acc knife-Acc take-Compl (bread) cut-Past
    'Mother took a knife (and) cut the bread'

(35) *amma appam kaththi eTuththø athø muRiccu
    Mother bread-Acc knife-Acc take-Compl that(bread) cut-Past
    'Mother took a knife (and) cut the bread'

Malayalam allows scrambling rather freely, however, a DP movement of the following type is not allowed for the intended reading shown in (a). The construction can take a meaning as that in (b).

(36) amma kaththi appam eTuththø e muRiccu
    Mother knife-Acc bread-Acc take-Compl (bread) cut-Past
    a. 'Mother took a knife (and) cut the bread' (NOT OK)
    b. 'Mother took a bread (and) cut the knife' (OK)

This brings us to a point where we think that (34) and (36) are derivations of the same construction. However, that does not appear to be the case. Let us see how the derivation of these constructions proceed.

Construction in (34) will have a derivation as shown in (37) and construction in (36) will have a derivation as shown in (38) below.

(37) amma [Top/Foc appam [VP1 kaththi [e] eTuththø [VP2 e] muRiccu]]

(38) amma [Top/Foc kaththi [VP1 appam [e] eTuththø [VP2 e] muRiccu]]

In both these cases, DP2 (or the object of the main verb) moves to the Spec Topic/Focus position. It is to be noted that in (34) and (36), both the DPs get
accusative case from their respective verbs before movement. Then the construction undergoes a reanalysis where the V1 turns functional and gives the construction an SVC reading. However, the DP in the functional verb phrase still retain the accusative case though acting as an instrument in the SVC, post reanalysis. A detailed account of this will call for a number of adjunction movements, all of which we have not presented here.\^\textsubscript{18} This must be a pragmatic issue rather than syntactic. This explains why the construction in (39) below has the (a) reading and not (b).

\begin{multicols}{2}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[(39)] amma kaththi appam eTuththǝ muRiccǝ
\end{enumerate}
\end{multicols}

\begin{enumerate}
\item mother knife-Acc bread-Inst take-Compl cut-Past
\end{enumerate}

a. 'Mother took a bread (and) cut the knife' (OK)
b. 'Mother took knife (and) cut the bread' (NOT OK)

Following Aboh's proposal, we will assume that functional verbs have no case values or theta-roles to assign (Aboh 2009:17). Therefore, the slot immediate left to V1 is a functional slot and hence, the DP adjacent to it gets functional roles like Manner/Instrument/Locational/Directional and whatever inherent case value it has. The only way to maintain this in examples like (34) and (39) is to say, V1 initially has theta and case marking properties, so the DP1 gets both, but then V1 in this construction undergoes a reanalysis to a functional role, giving rise to the SVC reading to the construction.

\subsection*{4.1.0.3.1.0 DP2 Moving to Topic/Focus}

Another issue that gets solved here is the slot to which the object of V2 (DP2) is raising. In the previous discussions, we assumed that it is moving up to a position within the higher verb phrase (VP1), see the tree diagram (18). The following

\textsuperscript{18} In recent studies, linguists like Kayne (1994 and subsequent works) has motivated such movements for getting the surface order right.
examples show that it may not be so. It appears that the target of V2 object raising is a topic/focus position above the higher functional VP (VP1).

(40) amma appam kaththi eTuththø e muRiccu  
Mother bread-Acc knife-? take-Compl (bread) cut-Past  
'Mother took a knife (and) cut the bread'

(41) amma appam, kaththi eTuththø e, muRiccu

On the other hand, raising of the DP1 'bread' to a position adjoined to VP1, and then raising DP2, 'knife' to the topic/focus position can yield (42).
(42) amma kaththi appam eTuththọ e muRiccu
Mother knife-Acc bread-Acc take-Compl (bread) cut-Past
'*Mother took a knife (and) cut the bread'
'Mother took a bread (and) cut the knife'

The following examples illustrate this point further:

(43) amma kuTTiye viLiccọ kaaryam paRanju
mother child-Acc call-Compl matter-Acc say-Past
'Mother called the child (and) said the matter'

(44) amma kuTTiye kaaryam viLiccọ paRanju
mother child-Acc matter-Acc call-Compl say-Past
'Mother called the child (and) told the matter'

(45) amma kaaryam kuTTiye viLiccọ paRanju
mother matter-Acc child-Acc call-Compl say-Past
'Mother called the child (and) told the matter'

In (43) apparently there is no movement to topic/focus. However, in (44) 'child'/kuTTi is in the topic/focus position, and in (45), 'matter'/kaaryam is in the topic/focus position, which I suppose is above vP but below TP.

4.1.0.3.1.1 Optional postposition in the Intervened type

As we saw in previous examples, the addition of a postposition koNT may be mistakenly interpreted an instrument marker 'with', in this type too.

(46) amma kaththi, eTuththọ pro, koNTọ appam muRiccu
Mother knife take-Compl (knife) with-Inst bread-Acc cut-Past
'Mother cut the bread with a knife'

(Mother took a knife, with that knife (she) cut the bread)

Most of the speakers find that kaththi/ 'knife' has an instrument reading on it. However, it is difficult to assume that the instrument case is assigned by (as Collins
(1997), da Cruz (1997), et. al assume) the postposition koNT. Compare (46) with (47).

(47)  amma paaTTǝ paaTi koNTǝ keekkǝ muRiccu
      mother song- sing-Compl Inst-? cake-Acc cut-Past
   'Mother cut the cake singing a song'

   *'Mother cut the cake with a song'

There are some unnecessary complications in the interpretation of koNT as an instrument marker in these instances. Primarily, the instrument case on 'knife' is available in construction without koNT too. See (32). Then, we have to find the source of the case. We are left with two options, one, the instrument case on 'knife'/kaththi is attributed by the V1, 'take/eTuththǝ'. Option two, the instrument case is inherently received.

If we assume V1, 'take'/eTuthth can assign case/theta roles, it can do so in (6) too, repeated below as (48). And, in this construction, if we say 'bread'/appam already received its case from its merging position as argument of V2, then we have a problem namely, how do we exhaust the case/theta assigning capacity of V1? One way is to say, in (48) there is a pro (coindexed with 'appam'). But better is to maintain that in (48) 'take' is only functional. Therefore, we have to assume (along the lines of Aboh (2009)) that V1 does not have Case/theta role assigning capacity in these types too. In other words, V1 is in a functional role in this type of constructions.

(48)  amma appam eTuththǝ muRiccu
      mother bread-Acc take-Compl cut-Past
   'Mother cut the bread taking (it)'

The availability of a full lexical/instrumental instances of koNT, such as (11) and (12), often induces some speakers to provide another interpretation with respect
to these constructions. For instance, some speakers have attributed a meaning such as
the one shown in parenthesis in (49). This is, as I understand, because they presume a
gap before the postposition. And, a pro coindexed with the higher object, is attributed
to the apparent gap.

(49) amma kaththi, eTuththǝ proǝ koNTǝ appam muRiccu
     (amma kaththi eTuththǝ, kaththi koNTǝ appam muRiccu)
Mother knife take-Compl (knife) with-Inst bread-Dat cut-Past
'Mother cut the bread with a knife'
     (i.e., Mother takes a knife, with that knife (she) cut the bread)
The same interpretation is available on the following type of constructions too.

(50) amma appam, eTuththǝ proǝ koNTǝ e muRiccu
Mother bread take-Compl (bread) with-Inst (bread) cut-Past
'Mother, taking the bread, cut (it)'

At this point, I don't have a clear explanation for this phenomenon. At least for
the construction in (50), the sentence should be marked ungrammatical since it is the
same object DP, 'bread'/appam that is case marked both instrument and accusative.
Pragmatically, what the interpretation says is that the object 'bread' was used as an
instrument to cut that object itself. This sounds implausible, pragmatically. Extending
this ungrammaticality to the previous one, (49), I would assume that this
interpretation is after confusing the full lexical roles of koNT with its functional roles.
In these constructions, koNT is in a functional role – progressive 'be', and hence, it
cannot license an object pro.\(^\text{19}\)

To conclude this, koNT has two functional roles, one as a postposition and the
other as a progressive 'be'. When it is a postposition, it can license a pro, and when a

\(^{19}\) See the discussion on examples (74) and (75) in § 4.3 for another point on the functional nature of koNT
progressive 'be', it cannot. Those who get an instrumental reading for 'knife' in (52) are treating koNT as a postposition, not as a progressive 'be'.

4.1.0.3.2 The Contiguous type of constructions

Contiguous constructions are a clear manifestation of the argument we were building so far. In contiguous constructions too, there is only one event, the one described by the main (last/right-most) verb. All the verbs preceding the main verb are indicating some added information regarding the event, with their functional role. Consider the example below.

(51) kaakka paRannǝpooy
crow fly.go-Past
'crow flew away'

(52) aana ooTippooyi
elephant run.go-Past
'Elephant ran away'

(53) kuTTi bakkettǝ maRicciTTu
child bucket-Acc turn.drop-Past
'Child dropped down the bucket'

In (51) and (52), the main event is the 'going of the crow/elephant', indicated by the V2. The addition of another verb (V1) made it clear that the manner in which the event of 'going' was carried out is by 'flying/running'. Therefore, there are no two events of 'going' and 'flying' here, instead, there is only one event of 'going' which was carried out in the manner of 'flying'. Similarly, in (53), both the subject and object arguments are licensed by the main verb (V2) – 'drop/iTTu, and the V1, 'turn'/maRicc is in its functional role indicating the manner in which the main event of 'dropping' was carried out.
The verbs indicating manner, instrumentality, location etc. are in a functional role, and not in their full lexical role. Similar to that of Non-contiguous and Intervened types, Contiguous constructions also have only one event and hence there is no argument sharing in this type too.

4.1.1 **In short**

In this section, we looked at the object distribution pattern within the predicate, with respect to the verb distribution. The discussion on argument sharing shows that we cannot clearly establish any instance of argument sharing in all three types of what is supposed to be serial verb constructions in Malayalam. Argument sharing is required only when the verbs describe an event (or a predication). In other words, when there are two events, and there is only one argument for the two events/predicates, then there requires a sharing of argument. But, when there are no two instances of predication, only the lexical verb is indicating an event and the verbs other than the main verb is representing a functional role, there needs no sharing of argument.

From the evidence presented in the above discussion, we may have to conclude that Malayalam SVC does not have object argument sharing. There are studies on languages where constructions with V1 and V2 taking different internal arguments are considered bona fide SVCs. Therefore, argument sharing in not necessary in SVC (cf. Aboh 2009 for a detailed discussion on this point). In the case of Malayalam, it appears that all SVC type constructions have only a single event represented by the last, finite lexical verb. All other verbs in the construction are functional verbs with no Case/theta role\(^{20}\), and hence, take no arguments. In that

\(^{20}\) Objects of the functional verbs had already received their case/theta values before the lexical V1
scenario, the multiple verbs in the Malayalam SVC cannot be said to be representing multiple events, nor are they sharing a single argument.

Having explained that what is identified as SVC in Malayalam are all single event constructions with no argument sharing, let us now look at the clause division in the same type of constructions.

4.2 Mono-clausality

Another defining property of serial verb constructions (other than argument sharing and single-event structure) is that they are monoclausal. The multiple verbs in the construction together constitute a single clause. In this section, we will analyze the three types of constructions we assumed to be SVCs for their clause structure. Specifically, we will be looking at negation and the suffixation including grammatical category marking, in terms of its occurrence in the three types of constructions. If a single occurrence of negation or grammatical category marking accounts for all the verbs in the construction, then it is possible that the construction is monoclausal, and otherwise bi/multi-clausal. Let us look at the negation paradigm first.

4.2.0 Negation and monoclausality

We saw that there are two negation markers in Malayalam that are commonly used, -aathe and -illa. Both of them cannot come in the same clause in a sentence (cf. Chapter 3, § 3.3.3). The only instance where both of them can come in the same sentence is if there are two different clauses in that sentence. In such cases, the embedded clause is negated with -aathe and main clause is negated with -illa.
Therefore, it appears that a property of the distribution of negation markers is that a clause cannot be negated twice. This feature comes as a crucial point with respect to the negation in multi-verb constructions. In multi verb constructions, certain constructions of the SVC type do not allow both the markers in the same clause.

(55) avan aviTe pooyi paRanju
    he there go-Compl say-Past
    'He went there (and) said'

(56) *avan aviTe pook-aathe paRanj-illa
    he there go-Neg say-Neg
    'He did not go there (and) say'

This is a piece of evidence to show that the constructions like (55) can be monoclausal. Scope of the negation can be a point in support for the monoclausality too. In the previous chapter, we saw that -*illa* is the negation marker in a serial verb construction in Malayalam. Though -*aathe* appears to be a negation marker that divides the verbs in the construction into two polarity values, we identified that -*aathe* is only indicating the negative manner of the functional verb, and not negating the whole construction. In an SVC, the whole construction gets a negative reading only when the negation marker -*illa* comes on the last verb21.

(57) avan aviTe pook-aathe paRanju
    he there go-Neg say-Past
    'He said without going there'

---
21 Actually, -*aathe* is a marker that negates vP and -*illa* is a marker that negates CP.
He did not say going there

The above described variation in the distribution of the negation markers and their effect on the construction forces us to consider that negation in Malayalam can employ two types of scope: limited and wide. Limited scope is when the negator has scope only over the constituent it is marked on, as in the \textit{-aathe} cases. Similarly, wide scope negator will have scope over the entire construction, though it is marked only on the last constituent of the construction, as in the \textit{-illa} constructions.

The scope of negation marker \textit{-illa} on the entire construction and the unavailability of the negation effect of \textit{-aathe} on the verbs other than on which it is marked, together imply that the whole SVC can take only one polarity value. That will be the value of the last/main verb. This is a forceful syntactic argument in favor of the claim that Malayalam SVC is a mono-clausal construction that can be taking a single polarity value.

Further evidence for monoclausality of Malayalam SVC comes from the suffixation paradigm, including the grammatical category marking.

\subsection*{4.2.1 Suffixation and monoclausality}

In Chapter 3, we observed that Tense/Aspect/Modal markers come only on the last/main verb. Pre-final verbs have to be in a default completeness form and hence they cannot take any TAM inflections. When the pre-final verbs were inflected with these markers, we explained them in terms of ungrammaticality for the intended reading (cf. § 3.2.4).
The construction in (59) is not an ungrammatical construction in the language, but for the intended reading it is ungrammatical. This can be grammatically correct if the gloss is as shown in (60).

(59) *amma kaththi eTu-kkum appam muRi-kk-um
    Mother knife-Acc take-Mod bread-Acc cut-Mod
    'Mother will take a knife (and) cut the bread'

(60) amma kaththi eTu-kkum appam muRi-kk-um
    Mother knife-Acc take-Mod bread-Acc cut-Mod
    'Mother will take a knife (and she) will cut the bread'

Here each verb is heading a clause and they are coordinated covertly as is clear from the gloss. The takeaway from this is that the ungrammaticality associated with (59) is only when it is taken as a mono-clausal construction. In other words, for the SVC reading, the construction is mono-clausal. Many similar ungrammatical instances become grammatical when given a bi/multi-clausal reading. These data, together with the single marking of inflections indicate that the three instances of SVC we assumed are in fact mono-clausal constructions.

Having said that, let us now move on to the third test for SVC-hood of the three constructions we identified; test of covert coordination.

4.3 Covert Coordination

In the discourse on serial verb constructions, it is generally argued that "if there is no direct object sharing, then the structure must be analyzed as an instance of covert I'-coordination"(Collins 1997: 490). And, covert coordination (or parataxis) is not SVC (Collins 1997:465). Certain constructions where each verb is taking an object argument are considered to have no argument sharing and hence they are
considered among covert coordination, as shown in (61) below (Collins 1997:466). Baker (1989) also explains similar constructions as instances of covert coordination, not SVC.

(61)  kofi  liɛ         ati   gbe ne.
Kofi climb tree pick coconut

'Kofi climbed a tree and picked a coconut' (Collins 1997:17)

Collins' test for distinguishing SVC from covert coordination is by applying future marking on them. When covert coordinations are changed to future, the marker will appear on each constituent as in (68), unlike SVC, where it appears only on one constituent. Since constructions like the one in (68) show future marking on all the constituent verbs, these types are not considered as SVC.

(62)  kofi  a        liɛ     ati *(a)  gbe ne.
Kofi  FUT climb tree FUT pick coconut

'Kofi will climb a tree and pick a coconut' (Collins 1997:20)

In that perspective, Malayalam SVC can be explained as having no argument sharing. When we analyze the constructions such as (2), which shows a structural pattern similar to that of Collins' examples (61), we may face some difficulty to buy this method of distinguishing SVC from covert coordination. This is precisely because Malayalam has both coordination form and SVC form for this structure distinctly in the language. For instance consider the SVC form in (63) below.

(63)  amma kaththi eTuththɔ appam muRiccu
mother knife-Acc take-Compl bread-Acc cut-Past

'Mother took knife (and) cut bread'

This construction has an overt coordination variant in the language, given in (64) below.
It is evident that the construction in (63) is not overtly coordinated as there are no conjunction markers or conjunction elements (-um) on each constituent. Moreover, a proof for (63) being an SVC is that a coordination form of the same construction is available in the language, and hence, this doesn't seem to be covertly coordinated. However, it may still be verified whether the construction is covertly coordinated.

SVCs are clearly distinguished from covert-coordinations in the following lines; SVC involves single tense/aspect and negation for the construction while coordination involves tense and negation on each conjunct. SVC has no sensitivity to extraction of arguments while coordinate structures display island effects (Baker 1989).

In a covert coordination, each constituent will be future marked, when converted into future. Whereas in SVC, the construction is future marked only once (Collins 1997:466). But consider the Malayalam constructions of this type. If we apply the test of future marking, we get the following result,

(65) amma kaththi eTuththǝ appam muRikk-um
    mother knife take-Compl bread-Acc cut-Fut
    'Mother will cut the bread taking a knife'

It is clear from this example that the construction is future marked only once and, therefore, it can be an instance of SVC (Since we did a detailed analysis of suffixation in the previous section, we will not elaborate on this point here).

If the construction is coordinated, overtly or covertly, the Coordinate Structure
Constraint will block the extraction from any one of the VPs. Let us consider question fronting paradigm.

(66) Questioning from VP2

enth aaNǝ amma kaththi eTuththǝ e muRiccaθǝ?
What be mother-Nom knife-Acc take-Compl wh cut-Past

'What did mother take knife and cut?'

Since an argument from one of the VPs can be specifically question-fronted, it is clear that the two VPs are not coordinated in such constructions. Therefore, these constructions cannot be instances of covert coordination.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we tested the three types of constructions we identified for Malayalam SVC for their properties with respect to argument sharing, eventuality, clausality, and coordination. Contrary to what is expected according to the general theory of serialization, the three types – Non-contiguous, Intervened, and Contiguous – are not showing any evidence for internal argument sharing. However, they strongly indicate single eventuality and monoclausality. Since the language has clear instances of coordination with overt conjunction marker and coordination elements marked morphologically on each constituent, we argued that the three types are not instances of covert coordination either.

In our analysis, we explained that the verbs in these constructions are divided into lexical and functional types. The lexical verb takes all the event implication and functional verb/s imply a descriptive meaning in terms of instrumentality, direction, location, manner etc. in which the main event was carried out. Since the lexical verbs
take all the semantic weight of the construction, the only event of the construction is the event indicated by the lexical verb. And since there is only one event verb, that verb takes all the arguments. Therefore, there cannot be any instance of argument sharing in these types.

With the absence of argument sharing, the three types of constructions we identified for Malayalam SVC differ from the prototypical features of SVC. However, the fact that they clearly are not covert coordination and these constructions are monoclausal, single event constructions, still persuade us to assume that they are the three types of Serial Verb Constructions in Malayalam.