

Serial Verb Constructions in Saudi Arabic

Mansour Q. Alotaibi

Department of Arabic, College of Education in Al-Kharj, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-kharj, 11942, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—Serial Verb Constructions have obvious implications for both descriptive and theoretical linguists (e.g., Newmayer, 2004; Aikhenvald & Dixon 2006; Haspelmath 2016). One fundamental question is whether the criteria of Serial Verb Constructions are universal (Déchaine 1993; Newmayer 2004; Muysken & Veenstra 2006) or language-specific (Stewart 2001). This paper aims to investigate this debate by examining data from Saudi Arabic (Semitic language family), which has not been examined or compared as a serializing code with other constructions in other languages. Based on the most noticeable features of Serial Verb Constructions such as descriptive facts, syntactic and semantic features, the present study concluded that Verb + Verb combinations in Saudi Arabic could satisfy the relevant criteria of Serial Verb Constructions.

Index Terms—linguistics, syntax, verb + verb compounds, serial verb construction, Saudi Arabic

I. INTRODUCTION

The present paper principally aims at discussing Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs, henceforth) as represented and used in Saudi Arabic (SA, henceforth) from a semantic-syntactic perspective. The main assumption is that the patterns of SVCs found in SA are in line with most of the patterns of SVCs already identified in related literature (Aikhenvald & Dixon 2005; Haspelmath, 2016).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section two introduces the most common linguistic definition of SVC, taking in account numerous proposals offered by linguists who considered SVCs as a phenomenon that requires special linguistic attention. The third Section reviews the literature, showing that SVCs in Arabic have received very little attention in scholarly linguistic research. The fourth Section offers a descriptive background on SA, considering the salience of SVCs in SA. The fifth Section presents evidence to support the claim that Verb + Verb (V + V henceforth) combinations in SA are considerably frequent as they adhere to the criteria of SVCs introduced in section two. Section six summarizes the key research findings, implications, and remarks.

II. NATURE PROPERTIES OF SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS

The recognition of SVCs is basically based on a combination of formal syntactic and semantic properties. SVCs represent a sequence of verbs which act together as a single predicate (as a syntactic whole) and they are not separated by an overt marker of coordination, subordination, or syntactic dependency of any sort. SVCs are perceived of as monoclausal where there is no intervening morphological or intonational marker at clause boundaries, i.e., they are the same as those of a monoverbal clause. A construction of this type may have same-subject SVCs (Aikhenvald, 2006). Strictly speaking, “SVCs with shared subjects are the major type of SVCs in any language” (Aikhenvald 2006, p.14). Having explained the nature of SVCs, in what follows the formal properties of SVCs are comprehensively discussed and instantiated as mentioned in the literature.

A. Single Predicate

Aikhenvald (2006, p. 1) assumes that the most common definition of an SVC is “[...] a sequence of verbs which act together as a single predicate, without any overt marker”; that is, it “functions on a par with monoverbal clauses in discourse and occupies one core functional slot in a clause” (Aikhenvald, 2006, p. 4). The two serial verbs cannot be marked separately with any kind of marker or any sort of syntactic dependency, viz. they are one clause. The following example from Toqabaqita (Austronesian), mentioned in Lichtenberk (2006, p. 261), shows that the two serial verbs *raa* ‘work’ and *ofu* ‘be together’ represent a single predicate and the relative marker *na* can only take one construction.

1. ...ka faqarongo-a toqa nia ki [na kere raa ofu
3sg:seq tell-3:OBJ people 3SG PL REL 3PL:NFTUT work be.together
bii nia] ...
COMIT 3SG

‘... he told those people of his who were working with him [to do such and such]’

If an SVC is the predicate of an embedded clause, its components cannot be embedded independently. Example (2) from Tariana (Arawak), cited in Aikhenvald (2006, p. 5), shows that the subordinator *-ka* marks the SVC as a whole clause at its end.

2. [nhuta nu-thaketa]-ka di-ka-pidana
1SG+take 1SG-cross+caus-subord 3SGNF-see-REM.PAST.REP

‘He saw that I took (it) across’ (lit. take-cross)

B. Single Event

The notion of ‘single event’ is viewed as ‘conceptional representation, as linguistically encoded, which can be assigned boundaries, and/or a “location”, in time’ (Schultze-Berndt 2000, p. 36). SVCs express a single overall event. Also, they indicate actions which are strongly connected and can be understood as a single complex event where no verb is dependent on the other inside SVCs (Haspelmath 2016). In addition, on his study on a serializing language such as Yoruba, Lord (1967, 1974, p. 96ff) states that “the action or state denoted by the second verb phrase is, in terms of the real world, an outgrowth of the action denoted by the action of the first verb phrase; the second verb phrase represents a further development, a consequence, result, goal, or culmination of the action named by the first verb”. Therefore, SVCs have only one event when contrasted to other constructions such as coordinate clauses. In this connection, consider the contrast between instances (3a) and (3b).

3a. Taba (Austronesian: Bowden 2001, p. 297)

n=babas welik n=mot do
3SG=bite pig 3SG=die REAL
‘It bit the pig dead.’

b. Taba (Bowden 2001: 297–8)

N=babas welik n=ha-mot i
3SG=bite pig 3SG=CAUS-die 3SG
‘It bit the pig and killed it.’

Instance (3a) shows that one verb inside SVCs could describe the effect of the other verb. More precisely, the death of pig is the result of being bitten. In contrast, instance (3b) shows that there are two clauses with some differences in the semantic proposition. That is, the death of the pig is a result of bleeding which may be happened as a non-immediate consequence of being bitten. What can be considered of defining SVCs as a single event is that these constructions have a single-complex-event meaning and they do not require intonational breaks.

C. Monoclausality of SVCs

SVCs can be defined as a monoclausal construction containing two or more verbs or verb phrases with no element linking them as well as no predicate-argument relation between the verbs (Hapelmath, 2016, p.296). Indeed, this is one of the fundamental criteria that distinguish between SVCs and other constructions such as coordination, complementation, subordination, and other multiclausal constructions. Bisang (2009) discusses how this criterion can be used to distinguish between SVCs and other constructions. For example, the presence of an overt coordinator with a conjunction can distinguish coordinate constructions from SVCs. Consider the difference between an SVC and Coordination in Yoruba as instantiated by instances (4a) and (4b) below.

4a. Yoruba (Stahlke 1970, p. 61):

Mo mú ìwé wá ilé
I take book come house
‘I brought a book home.’

b. Yoruba (Stahlke 1970: 78)

Mo mú ìwé mo sì wá ilé
I take book I and come home
‘I picked up a book and came home.’

However, inserting an overt marker between the two serial verbs in SVCs may result in ungrammatical clauses which are also semantically odd. Recall that both the subject and object are shared in SVCs (section 3 would offer further details). There are some tests that can help to distinguish SVCs and coordinated structures such as extraction (Cf. Baker, 1989). In contrast to coordination, it is acceptable to propose one argument to the clause-initial focus position in SVCs. That is, while it is permissible to propose the object ìwé (book) and position it sentence-initially in SVCs as illustrated in instances (4a) and (5a), it is not permissible to propose the same object ìwé (book) and position it sentence-initially in coordinate constructions as illustrated in instances (4b) and (5b) (Yoruba: Stahlke 1970, p. 79).

5a. ìwé ni mo mú wá ilé

Book FOC I take come house
‘It was a book that I brought home.’

b.* ìwe ni mo mú mo sì wá ilé

book FOC I take I and come home
*‘It was a book I took, and I came home.’

Thus, in contiguous SVCs, the serial verbs occur adjacently as illustrated above. Whereas, in non-contiguous SVCs, some constituents can go between the verbs as in instance (6) from Baule (Kwa, Niger-Congo: Creissels 2000, p. 240).

6. O`-a`-fa` i` swa` n a`-kle` mi`
he-ANT-take his house DEF ANT-show me
‘He has shown me his house’ (take-show)

A component of an SVC can be complex as it could be incorporated with a noun as shown in instance (7) from Mwotlap (cited in Alexandre, 2006, p. 226).

7. nok [suwyeg-qen te—y] nu-sus
 1SG AOR:cast-net hold ART-shoes
 ‘I go net-fishing with my shoes on.’

In this example, the object of the first verb is incorporated. That is, the first object is suffixed to the verb, and thus it intervenes between the two verbs. Alexandre (2006) assumes that the only way to explain this exceptional case is to assume that the first constituent in the SVC is not the transitive verb *suwyeg* (cast). It is rather an intransitive verb, and the object is attached to this verb as a suffix. Alexandre (2006) also asserts that a construction such as instance (7) does not violate the rule of contiguity between the two serial verbs.

D. Sharing Arguments

The two serial verbs must share their arguments, whether it is one argument or more than one argument, and whether it is in a subject or object position.¹ Aikhenvald (2006, p. 12) states that SVCs share at least one argument and there could be SVCs with no shared arguments, but such cases are rare.² If SVCs have a shared subject, more often the subject shows up once per SVC. Sharing of subject arguments is a basic property of SVCs. Consider the following example from Matthews (2006, p. 74).

8. ngo bong lei daa din-waa
 I help you make phone-call
 ‘I’ll make a phone call for you.’

Matthews (2006) declares that the verb *bong* (help) in instance (8) means ‘help you by making the call’, not ‘help you to make the call’; thus, the two serial verbs share the same subject. The case role in the SVC in instance (8) is benefactive (for other case roles see Mathews (2006, pp. 74–76). As for object-sharing SVCs, consider the following typical example from Yorùbá (Lord, 1974; Baker, 1989):

9. Bol á sè eran tà (*á).
 Bola cook meat sell it.
 ‘Bola cooked meat and sold it.’

Instance (9) shows that the two transitive verbs (cook and sell) share one object. However, object sharing is not obligatory in serialization (Baker, 1989; Slonit, 2006).

Eastern Kayah Li (Slonit, 2006: 148)

10. ?ū [bə mo mɛ ho] lū
 3INDEF reach open look secretly 3OBV
 ‘They opened [it] and peeked at him.’

In general, SVCs basically tend not to permit duplicate roles. That is, they do not have two different agents, two objects, or two instruments (Durie, 1997, p. 340–1). Furthermore, transitive verbs may become less transitive when it is used in an SVC. For example, the verb *tí* (hit) in Igbo is ditransitive as it takes two objects referring to a theme and recipient when used in normal declarative sentences (see instance 11a), while it only takes one object when used in an SVC as in instance (11b) from Igbo (Lord, 1975; Aikhenvald, 2006, p. 13).

- 11a. ó tí-rí nwǎkè áhù ákpó
 he hit-TENSE man that blow
 ‘He hit that man’ (lit. he hit that man a blow)
 b. ó tígbrù-rù nwǎkè áhù
 he hit-kill-TENSE man that
 ‘He beat that man to death’ (lit. hit-kill).

E. Shared Grammatical Categories

All components of a SVC must share tense, aspect, mood, modality, illocutionary force, and polarity values. As a result, verbs in SVCs are not lexically independent. This property would help to distinguish SVCs and multiclausal structures (Durie, 1988; Aikhenvald, 2006). In contrast to multiclausal structures such as coordinate structures, only one functional projection of each of these grammatical categories is allowed per SVC.³ In comparing and contrasting the two examples, the tense feature in instance (12a) is in future mood and it is marked once in the case of the SVC. Expressing it with each verb renders the sentence ungrammatical. On the other hand, the tense feature must be marked with each verb in the case of the coordinate structures. Consider instance (12b) from Ewe (Collins, 1997, pp. 463–464).

- 12a. Me a fo kaÄEgbE *(a) gba.
 I FUT hit lamp FUT break
 ‘I will hit the lamp and break it.’
 b. Me a fo kaÄEgbE *(a) gba (yEmE) tsimini.

¹ However, subjects are more often shared though this property is not sufficient to distinguish SVCs (Law & Veenstra 1992, p. 187).

² For more discussions see also Bisang (2009).

³ Compare Haspelmath (2016)

I FUT hit lamp FUT break its glass
 'I will hit the lamp and break its glass.'

Furthermore, there is only one exclusive method to form the negation in SVCs. The negator must be in a position with scope over all the serial verbs. Taking into consideration that there is only one negator per SVC, such property would make it clear that the defined action is thought of as one event. Even though, this event may have two different sub-events, the verbs are strongly related and form one unit (Aikhenvald, 2006; Bohnemeyer et al., 2007). A typical example of this serializing construction with one negator is provided by Armoskaite and Koskinen (2014, p. 12). They show that the negator *ei* suffices to express negation of the event. Consider instance (13).

13. Sen järkeen mummu ei en ää k ävel-l ä k öntyst ä-nyt
 that after granny not.3SG anymore walk-INF IdPh-PAST.PARTICIPLE
 'After that, the granny did not trudge along anymore.'

If the sentence, however, has more than one negation marker, the sentence is remarked as ungrammatical as in instance (14).

- 14* Sen järkeen mummu ei en ää k ävel-l ä ei(-k ä) k öntyst ä-nyt
 that after granny not.3SG anymore walk-INF not.3SG(-NOR) IdPh- PAST.PARTICIPLE
 'After that, the granny did not walk nor trudge anymore.'

However, Armoskaite and Koskinen (2014) assert that it is possible to have more than one negation marker in non-SVCs. Consider instance (15).

15. Sen järkeen mummu ei en ää k ävel-lyt ei-k ä k öntyst ä-nyt
 that after granny not.3SG anymore walk-PAST.PARTICIPLE not.3SG-NOR IdPh-PAST.PARTICIPLE
 'After that, the granny did not walk nor trudge anymore.'

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Saudi Arabic (SA)

Saudi Arabic is the official spoken language in Saudi Arabia. Within Saudi Arabic, there are, at least, three sub-dialects that keep distinguished properties: Najdi Arabic, Hijazi Arabic, and Gulf Arabic. However, there is no significant difference between these dialects in terms of their V + V combinations. Most differences among them are noted on the lexical-phonological level. The present paper addresses Najdi Arabic which is spoken by over than eight million people. It is the language of Najd region that locates at the center of Saudi Arabia. It is the language used by the government and local administrations. It can be considered as the primary language spoken over whole region.

B. SVCs in Arabic

SVCs in Arabic have received very little attention in scholarly linguistic research. Most of related studies aimed to argue for their existence as syntactic evidence to support some kinds of different arguments (Versteegh 1984). Versteegh (1984) claims that "in most Arabic dialects we find a phenomenon of verbal construction that bears a striking resemblance to what is called 'verbal serialization' in pidginized languages" (pp. 199-100). Versteegh uses this phenomenon as an example to support the argument that Arabic varieties could be a consequence of pidginized, creolized, and finally decreolized processes. However, there are at least two studies that discussed the phenomenon in Arabic under the heading of SVCs. Both studies addressed Levantine Arabic.⁴ While Hussein (1990) discussed SVCs in Palestinian Arabic, Altakhaineh and Zibin (2017) discussed them as represented in Jordanian Arabic and English. Hussein's analysis, on the one hand, was based on an examination of some semantic and syntactic properties of the construction in relation to some basic criteria of SVCs as found in the literature. Thus, he showed evidence of a similarly unrestricted construction resembling the go get construction. He assumed that the first verb that precedes the other is limited to five types: (1) functioning as an adverb, (2) expressing various aspects, (3) expressing emphasis, (4) conveying an action, or (5) serving an expressing purpose. Altakhaineh and Zibin (2017), on the other hand, have a different viewpoint. They showed that Jordanian Arabic and English could be classified as either SVCs or V + V compounds. Given that, English is traditionally termed as a non-serial language. Therefore, they argued that the cross-linguistic criteria of SVC which have been investigated in the literature are not sufficient. However, it has been noticed that not all V + V combinations or multi-verb structures can be classified as an SVC. This may refer to the lack of agreed-upon criteria. Ostensibly, linguists have assumed different definitions to such constructions. Some studies considered some features of SVCs and others considered some irrelevant constructions like coordinate structure as an SVC (Cf. Larson, 2010). Thus, this study attempts at categorizing and understanding the criteria that have been established for identifying classifying SVCs. In so doing, this study is geared toward offering an integrated account of SA V+V combinations.

IV. SVCs IN SAUDI ARABIC

⁴ Levantine Spoken Arabic is a general term that covers a continuum of spoken dialects along the Eastern Mediterranean Coast of Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Syria.

A. Overview

Given the set of criterial properties of serial verb constructions outlined in section 2, the two verbs that appear in V+V sequences in SA are viewed as serialized. Before proceeding to explore such constructions in SA, it would be revealing to discuss some arguments raised by Altakhaineh and Zibin (2017) regarding SVCs in Arabic. In instance (16), they observed that it has a combination of the present perfective tense *ʔaxa ʔa* (started) and the progressive tense *yadrusu* (studying). The mismatch in tense feature between these two verbs leads to violate the Shared Grammatical Categories Condition.

16. ʔaxa ʔa Ali yadrusu
 started.3SG.M Ali studying.3SG.M
 ‘Ali started studying.’

Another violation underlying instance (16) is that *Ali* intervenes between the verbs *ʔaxa ʔa* (started) and *yadrusu* (studying). The use of these two verbs violates the criterion that the two serial verbs forming a SVC are strictly contiguous. That is, no element is permissible to occur between them. Furthermore, the verb *ʔaxa ʔa* (started) in instance (16) functions as a defective verb which lacks some certain properties. As demonstrated in related literature, verbs can convey a lexical meaning or can be used to perform grammatical functions without conveying meaning. According to Bauer (2010), main verbs are those which carry lexical meaning, stand alone in a sentence, and give the key meaning in any group of verbs. The other type of verbs lacks lexical meaning, cannot stand alone in a sentence, and cannot function independently as a verb on its own right. Under Chomsky’s analysis, any clause containing a defective T constituent is a defective clause (Cf. Radford, 2009, p. 320).⁵ Thus, in SA, the equivalent verb of the defective verb *ʔaxa ʔa* (started) can be *beda* (started). This verb is used as a defective, and thus it cannot combine with another verb to form multiverb SVCs, considering the criteria outlined in section two.

17. Ahmed beda yadrus
 Ahmed started.3SM studying.3SG.M
 ‘Ahmad started studying.’

Another argument proposed by Altakhaineh and Zibin (2017, p. 49) is that a verb such as *qa:m* (rose) can be used as a member of serial verbs when it is followed by a past tense verb as shown in instance (18a); however, it can be used as a defective verb when it is followed by a progressive verb as shown in instance (18b).

- 18a. ali ga:m liʕib fatbo:l gabil sa:ʕa
 Ali rose.3SM played.3SM football before hour
 ‘Ali did play football an hour ago.’
 b. ali ga:m yiliʕib fatbo:l
 Ali rose.3SM playing.3SM football
 ‘Ali has been playing football.’

Now, consider the following examples from SA. The verb *qa:m* (rose) may convey a lexical meaning as potentially shown in instance (19a). Yet in instance (19b), the same verb has no lexical meaning.

- 19a. Ahmed qa:m daras yaum dʒa l-mudarris
 Ahmed rose.3SM studied.3SM when came.3SM the-teacher
 ‘Ahmed rose and studied when the teacher came’.
 Lit. Ahmed rose studied when the teacher came.
 b. Ahmed qa:m ydaras yaum dʒa l-mudarris
 Ahmed rose.3SM studied.3SM when came.3SM the-teacher
 ‘Ahmed has been studying when the teacher came’.

Based on Altakhaineh and Zibin’s (2017) assumption, it could be argued that the lexical specification of the first verb, whether it is a defective or not, is subsequently anchored to the tense of the second verb. Also, it is hypothesized that it is identified as a defective if the latter is not matching its tense feature. However, it is more likely that these constructions may not be considered on a par with SVCs because a conjunctive marker can be inserted between the components with no change in meaning. The output of this insertion is given in instance (20) compared to instance (19a).

20. Ahmed qa:m wa daras yaum dʒa l-mudarris
 Ahmed rose.3SM and studied.3SM when came.3SM the-teacher
 ‘Ahmed rose and studied when the teacher came’.
 Lit. Ahmed rose studied when the teacher came.

As a conjunctive marker can be inserted between the verbs as in instance (20), the verb *qa:m* (rose) must not be treated as a member of serialized verbs. Therefore, a structure such as that shown in instance (19a) must be treated as an example of a noncontiguous serial verb. Having demonstrated the properties of Serial Verb Constructions as a unit constituent, the next section discusses further properties of verbs inside CSVs.

B. The Nature of Verbs in SVCs

⁵ The label T stands for Tense Projection. T is the locus of tense; it is the tense property of a tensed clause. Tense is the “grammaticalized expression of location in time” (Comrie, 1985, p. 9).

Since the first verb (Vi) comprises the manner of the first part of SVCs, its properties as an ordinary verb – rather than a manner of motion SVC – would be firstly discussed. Some verbs can occupy Vi-position, whereas others cannot though they determine the same meaning of the overall structure. For instance, the verb *qa:m* (rose) in instances (18a) and (31a) may not be substituted by the verb *weqaf* (stood up) as shown in instance (31b).

- 31a. ali ga:m liʕib koorah gabil sa:ʕa
 Ali rose.3SM played.3SM football before hour
 ‘Ali did play football an hour ago.’
- b.? ali weqaf liʕib koorah gabil sa:ʕa
 Ali stood-up.3SM played.3SM football before hour
 ‘Ali did play football an hour ago.’

In other clauses rather than SVC, the verb *weqaf* (stood up) may substitute the verb *qa:m* (rose). Consider the following instances.

- 32a. ali qa:m fajʔah
 Ali rose.3SM suddenly
 ‘Ali rose of a sudden’
- b. ali weqaf fajʔah
 Ali stood-up.3SM suddenly
 ‘Ali stood up of a sudden.’

The difference between instances (31) and (32) is potentially semantic. In Arabic SVC, it is preferable to have the Vi position occupied by verbs that demonstrate actions with no manner. More precisely, the information of the lexical entry of Vi does not participate in the way an action proceeds. The manner of the action is determined by Vii (Cf. Airola, 2007). The second reason refers to the notion ‘bleaching’, a term widely used in the literature on grammaticalization (Eckardt, 2006, pp. 30-34). The participation to the truth conditions of the ‘bleached’ item is less than the non-bleached item. The difference between them is just like a sentence containing an adjective and another with no adjective.

- 33a. Melita has a black cat.
 b. Melita has a cat.

The adjective black participates to the truth conditions, and thus the circumstances that make instance (33a) true are in a subclass relation with the circumstances that make less restrictions on instance (33b) (Crisma, 2015, p. 145). Given this, it would be assumed that the Arabic Vi is bleached. Consider the difference between the verb and the adjective in instances (34a) and (34b).

- 34a. l-bahth Sar miktamil
 the-research became.PAST.3SM completed.ADJ
 ‘The research is completed.’
- b. l-bahth miktamil
 the-research completed.ADJ
 ‘The research is completed.’

In instance (34a), the verb *Sar* ‘became’ is used with an adjectival object, while in instance (34b), the verb is omitted, and only the adjective is used. The meaning of both sentences is similar.

To sum up, SVCs may consist of two or more elements. Yet the longest number of serialized verbs highlighted in the literature is four verbs. In this study, I will, firstly, attest the formal criteria for ‘simple’ serial verbs that apply for two verbs. Indeed, the formal criteria of SVCs can be considered in accordance with those outlined in section two using the terminology set out in the same section.

V. ANALYSIS

A. Single Predicate

As mentioned in section two, every SVC can only function as a monoverbal clause. Also, only one functional node is allowed per SVC. Consider instance (35).

35. Aħmed hwa illi Ttar safar li-dubai ams
 Ahmed is who.3SM fled.3SM travelled.3SM to-Dubai yesterday
 ‘Ahmed is the one who travelled to Dubai yesterday.’

Lit: Ahmed is who fled travelled to Dubai yesterday.

The relative marker *illi* (who) only marks the dependency, and therefore the serialized verbs *Ttar* (fled) and *safar* (travelled) are counted a single predicate. That is, in addition to the main verb, the clause in instance (35) contains a termination phase which serves as a resultative function; thus, it is considered as an SVC.

B. Single Event

As mentioned earlier in section two, a serial verb typically describes one single event, and any SVC must have a close connection between its components.

36. aT-Tiyarah aqlaʕat Ttarat li-dubai ams

The-airplane took.3SF-off flied.3SF to-Dubai yesterday
 ‘The airplane took off to Dubai yesterday.’

Lit: the airplane took off flied to Dubai yesterday.

In view of the proposition underlying instance (36), the event is singular. That is, as asserted in the paraphrase, a serial verb is only used when an actual act of taking off precedes the act of flying. In another way, the act of flying would not have happened unless the act of taking off had had taken place. Thus, flying is really an immediate result of taking off and this construction in instance (36) has a single-complex-event meaning and does not require intonational break.

C. Monoclausality of SVCs

In section two, it has been made clear that no intervening marker or pause is permitted to take place between the serialized verbs in SVCs. Instance (37) shows that V+V combinations in SA perform a single clause.

37. Ahmed Ttar safar li-dubai ams
 Ahmed flied.3SM travelled.3SM to-Dubai yesterday
 ‘Ahmed travelled to Dubai yesterday.’

Lit: Ahmed flied and travelled to Dubai yesterday.

Inserting an overt marker between the serialized verbs in instance (37) renders the clause ungrammatical as shown below.

38.* Ahmed Ttar wa safar li-dubai ams
 Ahmed flied.3SM and travelled.3SM to-Dubai yesterday
 ‘Ahmed travelled to Dubai yesterday.’

Lit: Ahmed flied and travelled to Dubai yesterday.

D. Sharing Arguments

Saudi Arabic SVCs have only one explicit subject, represented by *Ahmed* as shown in instance (37). Adding another subject, as represented by *Ali* in instance (39), produces an ungrammatical sentence.

39.* Ahmed Ttar Ali safar li-dubai ams
 Ahmed flied.3SM Ali travelled.3SM to-Dubai yesterday
 ‘Ahmed flied Ali travelled to Dubai yesterday.’

However, a sentence could have two subjects, but in a coordinate structure. As shown in instance (40), the two verbs are broken apart and become independent.

40. Ahmed Ttar wa Ali safar li-dubai ams
 Ahmed flied.3SM and Ali travelled.3SM to-Dubai yesterday
 ‘Ahmed flied and Ali travelled to Dubai yesterday.’

E. Shared Grammatical Categories

In addition to the previous criteria, the fifth criterion is also met as far as Saudi Arabic is concerned. In section (2.5), it is stated that no more than one specification for tense aspect per SVC is allowed. In instance (41), the two verbs unequivocally share the same mood, viz. the imperative.

41. khi ð iʃrab ʃahi
 take.2SM drink.2SM tea
 ‘Take a cup of tea.’
 Lit: take drink a tea.

In view of instance (41), only one negation marker is allowed per each SCV structure. In instance (42), it is noticed that the negative particle *ma* ‘not’ suffices to express negation of the whole SVC.

42. l-walad ma Taħ injarah ams
 The-boy not fell-down.3SM injured.3SM yesterday
 ‘The boy did not fall down and injured yesterday.’
 Lit: the boy not fell down injured yesterday.’

Instance (42) shows that the two serial verbs share one negative marker which takes place just before the first verb, allowing it to negate the whole event (cf. Hasplemath, 2016, p. 309). Consequently, inserting an additional negative marker would produce ungrammatical sentences. Consider instance (43).

43.* l-walad ma Ttaħ ma injarah ams
 The-boy not fell down.3SM not injured.3SM yesterday
 ‘The boy did not fall down and injured yesterday.’
 Lit: the boy not fell down not injured yesterday.’

In contrast, a coordinate structure containing the same verbs might contain two negative markers placed at the front of each verb as shown in instance (44):

44. l-walad ma Ttaħ wa ma injarah ams
 The-boy not fell down.3SM and not injured.3SM yesterday
 ‘The boy did not fall down and injured yesterday.’

Lit: ‘the boy not fell down and not injured yesterday.’

Therefore, it could be concluded that the V+V constructions in SA are best analyzed as Serial Verb Constructions. Conversely, SV verbs that are not SVC have not met the set criteria. To date, this is the first study that compares serial verbs versus non-serial verbs in SA. Table 1 presents a summary of the Serial Verb Construction properties in contrast to those that are not Serial Verb Constructions in SA.

TABLE 1
PROPERTIES OF SVCs IN SAUDI ARABIC

SA	sharing subject	Sharing object	Sharing tense	Sharing aspect	Coordination	Pause
Serial Verbs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
V (and) V	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

Note that this account is not restricted to semantic features as it seeks to figure out syntactic rules. Therefore, any structure of coordinated verb-verb is excluded.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND REMARKS

The present paper empirically aimed at arguing for the classification of Saudi Arabic Verb+Verb constructions as an SVC. The analysis of such constructions was based on a test of semantic and syntactic features of the sentence structures found in the related literature on SVs as offered by Newmayer (2004), Aikhenvald and Dixon (2006), Haspelmath (2016), among others. Furthermore, the descriptive properties of the verbs that show up in SVCs are outlined. While the first verb is classified as ordinary without any specified manner, the second verb determines such manner classification. Equally important, an SVC account of the constructions has been proved as analogous to that of their syntactic and morphological distributions. Such an account raises intuition to the syntax and the morphology of Arabic that goes beyond stylistic effect that has been the research focus of studies that addressed this structure. Taking the delimitations of the current study into consideration, further studies addressing the semantic and pragmatic properties of SVCs in Arabic are required to offer a more comprehensive account of the linguistic profile of such constructions.

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Mansour Qazan Alotaibi is an associate professor in Arabic department at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Alkharj, Saudi Arabia. He has a Ph.D. in Linguistics, 2015, Essex University, United Kingdom. He is interested in topics related to syntax, especially in generative syntax. The author's ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0452-5309>.