THE RISE AND FALL OF SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS

Special Issue of Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics PLUS

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Determining the origins of serial verbs is a strenuous task [... since for] no language family in the world do we have enough historical evidence to confidently trace the roots and the development of [these types of] constructions – concludes Alexandra Aikhenvald in her 2018 book Serial Verbs.

Despite this dearth of direct diachronic evidence, a number of generalizations related to the ORIGIN of SVCs and the tendencies governing the gradual development of their sources towards more canonical serializing structures have been proposed, mostly through comparative methods and typological research: (a) verbal SVCs from clause fusion, modification, result or concurrent grammaticalization; (b) while the first two scenarios account for the development of both symmetrical and asymmetrical SVCs, the third scenario is limited to the emergence of asymmetrical SVCs; (c) asymmetrical SVCs that express direction/orientation, aspect, extent, and change of state develop faster than modal, valency-increasing, and argument-adding SVCs, with SVCs used for comparative, valency-decreasing, and other purposes developing lastly; (d) the emergence of two-segment SVCs precedes the development of more elaborated structures; (e) symmetrical SVCs evolve only once asymmetrical SVCs have been developed; (f) the emergence of SVCs compensates for the reductive processes affecting inflectional morphology, thus being correlated with the expansion of analytical strategies; (g) the development of SVCs is motivated by language contact.

Evidence related to the development of SVCs after reaching the stage of a canonical SVC, and thus their **DEMISE**, is slightly more abundant although the generalizations proposed also rely heavily on comparative and typological research rather than direct diachronic data: (a) the fate of post-canonical asymmetrical SVCs is different from that of symmetrical SVCs: asymmetrical SVCs undergo grammaticalization, while symmetrical ones undergo lexicalization; (b) minor verbs in asymmetrical SVCs are decategorized: they evolve into auxiliaries, adpositions, particles, conjunctions, complementizers, and a range of bound morphemes, eventually losing their verbal status entirely; (c) functionally, minor verbs in asymmetrical SVCs tend to evolve into markers of tense, aspect, and modality, including evidentiality, as well as expressions of directional, locative, comparative, and superlative domains; (d) symmetrical SVCs develop into lexical units, ultimately contributing to the expansion of the verbal lexicon of a language; (e) all the above changes are gradual and give rise to fuzzy cases characterized by categorial ambiguity.

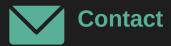
Call for Submissions

Alexander Andrason & Alexandra Aikhenvald invite scholars working in the area of SVCs to contribute to the volume that aspires to advance our knowledge of the **evolutionary dynamics of SVCs**, in particular their rise and fall. We aim to test the above generalizations put forward by Alexandra Aikhenvald (2018) on a large and diverse language sample and provide a new body of evidence that shows how SVCs are dynamically related to other categories, whether pre-canonical (from which they derive) or post-canonical (into which they evolve). We welcome diachronic, comparative, and typological studies (of max. **8.000** words) dedicated to the emergence and demise of SVCs conducted from empirical and/or theoretical perspectives.



Important dates

submission decision final manuscript publication 1 May 2021 1 August 2021 1 October 2021 December 2021



guest editor Alexander Andrason andrason@sun.ac.za