

# SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS IN PAPUAN MALAY: FORMS, FUNCTIONS AND INDETERMINACY

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## Abstract

This paper describes serial verb constructions in Papuan Malay, an eastern Malay language, spoken in coastal West Papua, on the island of New Guinea. Papuan Malay employs serial verb constructions to encode complex events by means of verb sequences, or to express grammatical categories. However, the identification of Papuan Malay verb sequences as monoclausal serial verb constructions is often less than straightforward. This is due to the structure of Papuan Malay which is characterized by little productive morphology, no inflectional morphology, and the pervasive use of syntactic argument elision. In consequence, Papuan Malay multiverb constructions often have an indeterminate status; they could be interpreted as monoclausal serial verb constructions or as multiclausal chaining constructions with elided subject arguments. It is suggested here that the interpretation of such indeterminate verb sequences needs to be pragmatically inferred.

**Keywords:** serial verbs, clause chaining, indeterminacy, indeterminate verb sequences

**ISO 639-3 codes:** pmy

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This paper discusses serial verb constructions (SVCs) in Papuan Malay, an eastern Malay language spoken in coastal West Papua, on the island of New Guinea.<sup>2</sup>

Papuan Malay serial verb constructions encode complex events or express grammatical categories. In such a construction, two or more verb stems are juxtaposed, with no connecting morphology, to form a monoclausal construction that describes a single event. Quite often, however, Papuan Malay verb sequences are not readily identifiable as SVCs. Instead, they could also be interpreted as clause chaining constructions (CCCs) with elided subject arguments.

Typologically, Papuan Malay is near the isolating end of the analytic-synthetic continuum in terms of its morphology. The language has no inflectional morphology and very little productive morphology. Papuan Malay has three open and several closed lexical classes. The open word classes are nouns, verbs, and adverbs.<sup>3</sup> Papuan Malay verbs express actions, events, and processes, such as *lari* 'run' or *bunu* 'kill', as well as states or more time-stable properties, such as *kecil* 'be small' or *tinggi* 'be high'. They have the following defining syntactic and functional properties:

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank René van den Berg of SIL International for his helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> In coastal West Papua, Papuan Malay is the language of wider communication and the first or second language for an ever-increasing number of people of the area (2,000,000, according to the 2020 Indonesia census) (Harms forthcoming; see also BPS Statistics Indonesia 2021:13).

<sup>3</sup> A number of categories display membership overlap, most of which involves verbs, including the overlap between verbs and nouns (see Kluge 2017:320–323).

1. Valency: each verb takes a specific number of arguments.
2. Predicative function is predominant; besides, verbs also have attributive uses in noun phrases.
3. Modification with adverbs, including intensification and grading.
4. Negation with *tida* ‘NEG’ or *tra* ‘NEG’ (not with *bukang* ‘NEG’).
5. Occurrence in causative and in reciprocal constructions.

Verbs fall into four groups, namely trivalent, bivalent, monovalent dynamic and monovalent stative verbs: examples are trivalent *bli* ‘buy’ or *kasi* ‘give’, bivalent *angkat* ‘lift’ or *makang* ‘eat’, monovalent dynamic *mandi* ‘bathe’ or *jalang* ‘walk’, and monovalent stative *mera* ‘be red’ or *tua* ‘be old’. The four groups of verbs can be distinguished in terms of two main criteria which also account for most of their other properties, namely their valency and their function which is mainly predicative. The word order in Papuan Malay is SVO; arguments are very commonly elided, however, if the referent’s identity is already known. (For details see Kluge 2017:242–261; see also Kluge 2016, 2017:119–126, 2021.)

The first part of this paper describes the compositional and functional properties of Papuan Malay SVCs. The identification of Papuan Malay verb sequences as monoclausal serial verb constructions is often less than straightforward, however. This is due to the structure of Papuan Malay which is characterized by little productive morphology, no inflectional morphology, and the pervasive use of syntactic argument elision. In consequence, Papuan Malay verb sequences often have an indeterminate status; they could be interpreted as monoclausal serial verb constructions or as multiclausal chaining constructions with elided subject arguments.

Before discussing such verb sequences of indeterminate status, the second part of this paper briefly describes the compositional and functional properties of Papuan Malay CCCs. In such a construction, two or more clauses follow one after another, encoding the temporal sequentiality or simultaneity of distinct but related events.

The third part of this paper examines verb sequences of indeterminate status in more detail.

The indeterminate status of Papuan Malay verb sequences is briefly illustrated in (1) to (4). The verb sequence in (1) is a typical SVC, while the examples in (2) and (3) are typical CCCs, with the subject arguments being elided in the second and third clause in (3). In (4), however, the verb sequence has an indeterminate status. This example is part of a narrative about unexpected visitors. The four sequential verbs in (4) can receive two interpretations. One interpretation is that the four sequential verbs in (4a) encode one complex event, namely that of running quickly to see the visitors. Following this interpretation, the utterance in (4a) represents a SVC comprised of four verbs, with the SVC breaking down this complex event and accentuating its different components. An alternative interpretation of this sequence of four verbs is that they encode distinct but related events, as indicated in (4b). Following this interpretation, (4b) represents a multiclausal chaining construction that describes three consecutive events related to seeing the visitors: running quickly, standing, looking.

Serial verb constructions, clause chaining constructions, and verb sequences of indeterminate status<sup>4</sup>

- (1) saya **bawa pulang** sabit  
1SG bring go.home sickle  
‘I **brought** the sickle **home**’ [080922-002-Cv.0006]
- (2) langsung **sa** pegang, **sa** putar, **sa** cari  
immediately 1SG hold 1SG turn.around 1SG search  
‘immediately **I** held (the plate), **I** turned around, **I** looked around’ [081011-005-Cv.0034]
- (3) **saya** mulai siap~siap, **Ø** pegang jubi, **Ø** pegang dayung  
1SG begin RDP~get.ready hold bow.and.arrow hold paddle  
[About hunting wild pigs:] ‘I’m getting ready, (**I**) take my bow and arrows, (**I**) take an oar’ [080919-004-NP.0008]

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion concerning the long and short personal pronoun forms, such as the first person pronouns *saya* and *sa*, see Kluge (2017:327–344).

- (4) a. sa **cepat~cepat lari berdiri liat** padahal ...  
1SG RDP~be.fast run stand see whereas  
'I ran **quickly** (and) **stood** (and) **looked** but ...' [080921-002-Cv.0003]
- b. sa **cepat~cepat lari Ø berdiri Ø liat** padahal ...  
1SG RDP~be.fast run stand see whereas  
'I **ran quickly**, (I) **stood** (and I) **looked** but ...'

Hence, the outline of this paper is as follows: SVCs are discussed in detail in §2, CCCs are briefly described in §3, and verb sequences of indeterminate status are examined in §4. The findings of this research on SVCs are summarized in §5. These findings show that there are no tight structural and semantic properties for differentiating monoclausal SVCs and multiclausal CCCs with elided subject arguments; their interpretation needs to be pragmatically inferred.

All language data presented in this paper were collected by the author during fieldwork in the Sarmi area, which is located about 300 km west of Jayapura; both towns are situated on the northeast coast of West Papua. The data represent transcriptions of recordings of spontaneous conversations between Papuan Malay speakers. (For details concerning the corpus see Kluge 2017:56–62.) For the present study, 1,468 verb sequences were extracted from the corpus and investigated.

The present study is a first exploration of this topic in Papuan Malay; hence, a number of details will have to remain unexamined. Moreover, one limitation of the present description is that it is entirely based on a corpus of natural speech. That is, no grammaticality judgements tests with constructed examples were conducted for disambiguating types of multiverb constructions; such tests are recommended for follow-up studies on Papuan Malay multiverb constructions (see also §2.2 and Footnote 5).

## 2 Serial verb constructions

Serial verb constructions (SVCs) are very commonly used in Papuan Malay to encode complex events. They are characterized by a number of compositional properties, discussed in §2.2, and functional properties, examined in §2.3, that have also been identified for SVCs in other languages. Before exploring these properties in detail, pertinent theoretical considerations are discussed in §2.1.

### 2.1 Theoretical considerations

In a SVC, two or more verb stems are juxtaposed to form a monoclausal construction without any connecting morphology. Cross-linguistically, most scholars agree on these three basic morphosyntactic characteristics of SVCs, namely their verbhood, their monoclausality, and the absence of any connecting morphology. Scholars disagree, however, how restrictive or inclusive such a definition of SVCs should be.

The following discussion of these morphosyntactic characteristics relies on Lovstrand (2021) who outlines the primary issues and controversies concerning the criteria that define SVCs cross-linguistically.

#### 2.1.1 Verbhood

With regard to the notion of verbhood, Lovstrand (2021:112–114) considers three issues in more detail: wordhood, morphosyntactic criteria, and semantic criteria.

#### **Wordhood**

The notion of wordhood raises the question what counts as a verb in a SVC. Scholars disagree whether two verb roots in a single morphosyntactic word should be regarded as one or two verbs. Some scholars such as Cleary-Kemp (2015:104–105, 109) and Crowley (2002:13–14) restrict SVCs to multiword constructions, thus excluding verb-verb compounds. By contrast, others such as Aikhenvald (2006:37–38) and Nishiyama (1998) do recognize verb-verb compounds as a type of SVC.

#### **Morphosyntactic criteria**

Taking into account morphosyntactic criteria, a major issue is the question whether the verbs in a SVC must be independent verbs. It seems that most scholars consider this a necessary criterion for SVCs. Cleary-Kemp

(2015:102–115) and Lovestrand (2021:113), for instance, maintain that each verbal component in a SVC has to be capable of occurring as the only verb in a monoverbal clause (see also Haspelmath 2016:296, 303). In consequence, auxiliaries are excluded from the range of verbs that can occur in a SVC. Aikhenvald (2006:3), by contrast, submits that the verbal components of a SVC “may or may not form independent grammatical or phonological words”.

### ***Semantic criteria***

With regards to semantic criteria, the question presents itself whether verb sequences with noncompositional semantics also count as SVCs, or only sequences with compositional semantics. Some scholars, such as Cleary-Kemp (2015:109–112) and Haspelmath (2016:296, 303) restrict SVCs to verb sequences in which the semantics of each verb are predictable from the meanings of their constituent verbs. Following this restrictive approach, verb sequences with, for instance, aspectual meanings would not count as true SVCs. Others, such as Aikhenvald (2006:22) and Lynch et al. (2011:46), by contrast, accept noncompositionality or semantic shift as a property of SVCs. Reviewing both approaches, Lovestrand (2021:114) notes, however, that it is often not possible to draw a clear line between compositional and noncompositional semantics. Focusing on verb sequences with aspectual meaning, Lovestrand (2021:114) therefore concludes that such constructions should still be described as SVCs, “provided that the verb that has grammaticalized meaning retains the morphosyntactic features of a verb”.

### ***2.1.2 Monoclausality***

Discussing the monoclausal nature of SVCs, Lovestrand (2021:114–119) examines four issues in more detail: negation, tense-aspect marking, argument structure, and eventhood. Another issue relating to monoclausality is intonation.

### ***Negation***

There seems to be common agreement that negation is marked only once per SVC, with the negator preceding the first verb and usually having scope over the entire SVC (see for instance Aikhenvald 2006:3–4; Haspelmath 2016:299; see also Lynch et al. 2011:46). As Aikhenvald (2006:8) points out, however, the negator can also have just part of the SVC as its scope. Furthermore, Cleary-Kemp (2015:142) submits that in some languages the negator can occur between the verbal components of a SVC. And Lovestrand (2021:115) notes that although the negator is placed before the first verb in a SVC, the scope of negation may be ambiguous. Hence, Cleary-Kemp (2015:116) and Lovestrand (2021:116) conclude that the single scope of negation in a SVC does not allow the unambiguous identification of this construction as monoclausal.

### ***Tense-aspect-modality***

There also seems to be widespread agreement that all verbs in a SVC have the same tense-aspect-modality values (see for instance Aikhenvald 2006:43; Haspelmath 2016:307; Lovestrand 2021:116; see also Lynch et al. 2011:46). The marking can be agreeing (all verbs are marked), sharing (only one verb is marked), or isolating (there is no marking on the verbs) (Ross 2021 in Lovestrand 2021:116). While agreeing that a shared tense-aspect-modality value is a necessary criterion of monoclausality, Cleary-Kemp (2015:116, 120–126) shows that this criterion does not unambiguously establish the monoclausality of a construction. By contrast, Haspelmath (2016) seems to question the obligatory sharing of the same tense-aspect-modality values, at least as far as aspect is concerned. He notes that “it is less clear” that cross-linguistically all verbs in a SVC must share the same aspectual value (2016:308). And Senft (2008:206–207) shows, for instance, that in the Austronesian language Kilivila the verbs in a SVC may have different tense-aspect-modality markers.

### ***Argument structure***

There also appears to be general agreement that cross-linguistically all verbs in a SVC share at least one argument (Aikhenvald 2006:12; Haspelmath 2016:309; see also Lynch et al. 2011:46). Aikhenvald (2006:14) further specifies that a major feature of prototypical SVCs is subject sharing. Discussing “ambient” serialization, as described by Crowley (1987:40), however, Cleary-Kemp (2015:153) and Lovestrand

(2021:118) conclude that argument sharing should not be considered a defining or necessary criterion of monoclausality.

### ***Eventhood***

Some scholars argue that another aspect of the monoclausal nature of SVCs is their conceptualization as a single event. That is, SVCs describe what is perceived as “a single event” (Aikhenvald 2006:1), “a single unitary event” (Bruce 1988:28), or “a recognizable event-type” (Durie 1997:322). More specifically, Schultze-Bernd (2000:36) defines the notion of single event as a linguistically encoded conceptual representation that “can be assigned boundaries, and/or a ‘location’, in time”. In addition, Bruce (1988:28) submits two conditions for events to be conceived as single unitary events: they must be “somehow conceived as notably more commonly associated together in experience”, or they must “form a culturally important concatenation of events”. Other scholars, however, argue that the notion of a single event is problematic and not practical to apply, as it is highly subjective and culture-dependent (see for instance Givón 1991:140; Haspelmath 2016:306; Lovstrand 2021:119). More precisely, Bisang (2009:803) comes to the conclusion that “common sense definitions” of eventhood “are anything but precise in their practical application to individual constructions”. In fact, “the definition of conceptual unity is notoriously vague as soon as it depends on cultural factors” (2009:810). Cleary-Kemp (2015:120-126, 153) also acknowledges that the criterion of single eventhood is difficult to apply given the lack of a precise definition. She submits, however, that it is possible to identify constructions that depict single events by applying Bohnemeyer et al.’s (2007) concept of the Macro-Event Property (MEP) as a diagnostic. More specifically, Cleary-Kemp (2015:153) argues that MEP-based syntactic tests allow “to formalize the intuition that a SVC is equivalent to a single clause in a cognitive sense, not just syntactically”.

### ***Intonation***

Following Aikhenvald (2006:7), SVCs have the prosodic properties of monoverbal clauses; that is, in a SVC no intonation breaks or pauses can occur between its verbal components. This view that there are no pauses between the verbs of a SVC is also shared by Cleary-Kemp (2015:153) and Haspelmath (2016:308) (see also Givón 1991:171). Cleary-Kemp (2015:118) adds, however, that the absence of a pause does not prove that a verb sequence is indeed a SVC. Bisang (2009) also addresses the issue of intonational properties of SVCs. However, while recognizing that the probability of intonation breaks between the verbs of a SVC is lower than in other verb sequences, Bisang (2009:797) comes to the conclusion that intonation is rather problematic as a defining criterion, as it “can reflect a vast number of other factors from phonology, syntax [...] and pragmatics” (see also 2009:803).

#### ***2.1.3 Absence of any connecting morphology***

As regards the absence of any connecting morphology, Lovstrand (2021:119–120) considers the question whether the absence of a linking marker should be considered a critical criterion for identifying SVCs. Most scholars seem to agree that the absence of such a marker is indeed a critical criterion (see for instance Bisang 2009:793; Haspelmath 2016:296; Lovstrand 2021:120). Cleary-Kemp (2015:116–118) also agrees that SVCs do not allow the presence of linking or subordinating markers. She adds, however, that the absence of such a linking element does not entail that a given verb sequence is indeed a SVC.

Other scholars take a more expanded view concerning the obligatory absence of linking elements, as Haspelmath (2016:304–305) and Lovstrand (2021:119–120) point out. For instance, while concurring that a SVC cannot contain any linking element, Aikhenvald (2006:6, 20) also accepts verb sequences as SVCs that contain a “special marker” which distinguishes this construction “from other types of constructions but does not mark any dependency relations between the components” (see also Aikhenvald’s 2018:21 notion of “empty morpheme” or “dummy” marker that functions as a “simple indicator of a serial verb”). Another scholar taking apparently a more expanded view is Foley. In his grammar of Yimas, Foley (1991:326) presents an example of a SVC in which the two verbs are linked with a sequential-marking morpheme that is also used to mark dependent verbs.

In comparing both the more restricted and the more expanded view on linking elements in SVCs, Lovstrand (2021:120) concludes, however, that there “is no need to lump all functionally similar constructions into the same category”.

### 2.1.4 Summary and conclusions

The theoretical considerations presented in §2.1 show that there is no generally agreed-upon precise definition of SVCs. While, overall, scholars seem to agree that SVCs are characterized by juxtaposed verb stems that form monoclausal constructions without any linking morphology, there is disagreement how restrictive or inclusive such a definition of SVCs should be. While some scholars, such as Haspelmath (2016) or Cleary-Kemp (2015), propose a restricted approach to defining SVCs, others, such as Aikhenvald (2006), propose a more inclusive approach.

In reviewing the more restrictive and the more inclusive approach to defining SVCs, Lovstrand (2021:124–125) points out their advantages and disadvantages. A more restrictive approach is valuable in the context of quantitative crosslinguistic studies. The major disadvantage, however, is that a restrictive approach does not take into account SVC-like constructions that do not fulfill all criteria. A more inclusive approach, by contrast, allows to include cases that fail to satisfy one or more of the criteria, thereby allowing broad cross-linguistic generalizations. On the other hand, such an approach is not suitable for quantitative crosslinguistic studies.

Along similar lines, Bisang (2009:811) also compares two different approaches to defining SVCs:

SVCs can be defined according to certain grammatical categories that are structurally manifested or in terms of the one overarching cognitive property of single eventhood. Definitions of the first type have the advantage of providing clear-cut criteria for deciding whether a given construction is a SVC but they are arbitrary in terms of the cognitive foundations that motivate SVCs. Definitions of the second type tend to be fuzzy but they may provide the basis for cross-linguistic typological comparison.

For the present study on SVCs in Papuan Malay a more inclusive approach is taken to allow broad cross-linguistic generalizations and typological comparisons for follow-up studies. The specific compositional properties of Papuan Malay SVCs are discussed in §2.2.

### 2.2 Compositional properties

In Papuan Malay SVCs, two or more verb stems are juxtaposed, with no connecting morphology, to form a monoclausal construction that describes a single event. These three basic SVC characteristics correspond to those identified for SVCs cross-linguistically, as discussed in §2.1. Table 1 gives an overview of the cross-linguistic characteristics of SVCs and indicates whether these features are present in Papuan Malay. More specifically, the left-hand column lists the characteristics of verbhood, monoclausality, and absence of connecting morphology, including their different aspects. For the verbhood criteria, the left-hand column also indicates whether a given feature corresponds to a more restrictive or a more inclusive approach. Concerning the criteria of monoclausality and absence of any connecting morphology, the left-hand column also shows whether a given feature is disputed among scholars. The right-hand column indicates whether a given feature is present in Papuan Malay. Overall, these features reflect the more inclusive approach adopted for this study, mentioned in §2.1.4.

**Table 1:** Basic characteristics of SVCs cross-linguistically and in Papuan Malay

Basic cross-linguistic characteristics of SVCs	Papuan Malay SVCs
1. Verbhood	
Wordhood	
– Multiverb constructions (restrictive definition)	Yes
– Multiverb constructions and verb-verb compounds (inclusive definition)	No
Morphosyntactic criteria	
– Independent verbs (restrictive definition)	No
– Independent verbs and auxiliaries (inclusive definition)	Yes
Semantic criteria	
– Noncompositional semantics (restrictive definition)	No
– Compositional or noncompositional semantics (inclusive definition)	Yes

Basic cross-linguistic characteristics of SVCs	Papuan Malay SVCs
2. Monoclausality	
Negation	
– Marked once per SVC	Yes
– Negator precedes V1	Yes
– Scope over entire construction (disputed)	Yes
Tense-aspect-modality	
– Obligatory sharing of tense-aspect-modality values (disputed)	Yes
Argument structure	
– Obligatory sharing of at least one argument (disputed)	Yes
Eventhood	
– Conceptualization as a single event (disputed)	Yes
Intonation	
– Prosodic properties of monoverbal clauses (disputed)	Yes
3. Absence of any connecting morphology	
Obligatory absence of a linking marker (disputed)	Yes

In the following, the different aspects of verbhood, monoclausality, and the absence of any connecting morphology are illustrated and discussed in more detail. In addition, the different verb classes are discussed that occur in SVCs. As mentioned in §1, this description is based on a corpus of natural speech; that is, no tests with constructed examples were conducted for disambiguating SVCs from other types of multiverb constructions.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.2.1 Verbhood

The different aspects of verbhood are demonstrated in (7) to (11), namely wordhood, morphosyntactic and semantic criteria.

Wordhood: Papuan Malay SVCs are multiword constructions, most often comprised of two verbs, as in (7) and (8). SVCs with three verbs, however, are also quite common, as in (9) to (11).

Morphosyntactic criteria: Typically, the verbs in a SVC are independent verbs that can also occur as the only verbs in monoverbal clauses. This is illustrated with *taw* ‘know’ in (5) and *bawa* ‘bring’ in (6). In (7) and (8), the same verbs occur in SVCs, with *taw* ‘know’ taking the V1 position in (7) and *bawa* ‘bring’ taking the V2 position in (8). By contrast, the potentative modal *bisa* ‘can’ in (10) and the deontic modal *harus* ‘have to’ in (11) are auxiliaries. Hence, they do not occur as main verbs in monoverbal clauses. However, if the context is understood, they can occur as the only verbs in monoverbal clauses (see ‘Modality’ in §2.3.9 for more details). It is recognized, however, that a more restrictive definition of SVCs might not count verb sequences formed with auxiliaries as true SVCs, as discussed in §2.1.1.

Semantic criteria: The SVCs in (9) to (11) have compositional semantics. The SVCs in (7), by contrast, has noncompositional semantics with bivalent *taw* ‘know’ reading ‘habitually V2’ in habitual marking constructions (see ‘Aspect’ in §2.3.9 for more details).

#### Verbhood

- (5) mama de blum **taw** tempat itu  
 mother 3SG not.yet know place D.DIST  
 ‘mother doesn’t **know** yet that place’ [080917-008-NP.0031]

<sup>5</sup> One of the anonymous reviewers suggested a number of tests to address the monoclausal nature and the different verb classes that occur in SVCs. Concerning the issue of monoclausality, the first test targets the order of verbs and their arguments. The second test focuses on the placement of adverbs in verb sequences. Regarding the issue of verb classes that occur in SVCs, a third test targets restrictions concerning the verb order in SVCs. A fourth test investigates which verb collocations are permissible in SVCs.

- (6) baru de **bawa** dia ke hutang  
and.then 3SG bring 3SG to forest  
'and then he **brought** her to the forest' [080927-009-CvNP.0021]
- (7) ana~ana Pante-Barat laing tu, dong **taw maing** foli  
RDP~child Pante-Barat be.different D.DIST 3PL know play volleyball  
'the young people from Pante-Barat are different (EMPH), they **habitually play** volleyball'<sup>6</sup> [081109-001-Cv.0117]
- (8) tadi kitong **pergi bawa** kayu  
earlier 1PL go bring wood  
'earlier we **went** (and) **got** (fire)wood' [080927-004-CvNP.0004] (Lit. 'go bring wood')
- (9) itu yang tong **bawa pergi tidor** honay  
D.DIST REL 1PL bring go sleep traditional.Dani.hut  
'that's why we **brought** (him) **away** (to) **sleep** (in) the grass hut' [081014-017-CvPr.0079]
- (10) supaya bapa **bisa datang ambil** kamu, e?  
so.that father can come fetch 2PL eh  
[A worried father on the phone:] [... so that you will remain healthy and strong] so that I ('father') **can come** (and) **get** you, eh? [080922-001a-CvPh.0979]
- (11) setiap hari sa **harus pergi liat** apa dong makang  
every day 1SG have.to go see what 3PL eat  
'every day I **have to go** (and) **check** what they eat' [080925-003-Cv.0212]

### 2.2.2 Monoclausality

Monoclausality with its different aspects is illustrated in (12) to (19), that is, shared polarity, shared tense, aspect, and modality values, shared arguments, eventhood, and intonation.

Shared polarity: The SVCs in (12) to (16) share the same polarity, namely positive polarity in (12) and (7), repeated as (13), and negative polarity in (14) to (16) (the SVCs in (17) to (27) also share the same positive polarity). In (14) and (15), the negator is *tra* 'NEG', while it is prohibitive *jangan* 'NEG.IMP, don't' in (16). In negating a SVC, the negator precedes the first verb where it has scope over the entire SVC.

Monoclausality: Shared polarity

- (12) orang jalang itu **mo pergi sembayang**  
person walk D.DIST want go worship  
[About a youth retreat:] 'people doing that traveling **want** (to) **go worshipping**' [081006-016-Cv.0015]
- (13) ana~ana Pante-Barat laing tu, dong **taw maing** foli  
RDP~child Pante-Barat be.different D.DIST 3PL know play volleyball  
'the young people from Pante-Barat are different (EMPH), they **habitually play** volleyball' [081109-001-Cv.0117]
- (14) ... karna hujang tong *tra* **pergi sembayang**  
because rain 1PL NEG go worship  
[About a youth retreat:] '... because (it was) raining we *didn't* **go worshipping**' [081025-006-Cv.0083]

<sup>6</sup> For details concerning the emphatic reading of the demonstratives see Kluge (2017:379–381).

- (15) ... baru sa tra **taw maing** foli  
 and.then 1SG NEG know play volleyball  
 ‘... but I *don’t* **habitually play** volleyball’ [081006-008-Cv.0002]
- (16) ... baru potong, jangang **potong kecil~kecil**, supaya besar~besar  
 and.then cut NEG.IMP cut RDP~be.small so.that RDP~be.big  
 ‘then cut (the food), *don’t* **cut** (the pieces) **equally small**, so that (they) are equally big’ [081025-009a-Cv.0094]

Shared tense, aspect, and modality values: The SVCs in (17) and (18) illustrate the typical characteristic of shared grammatical categories. In (17), deontic modal *harus* ‘have to’ takes the V1 slot where it has scope over the entire SVC. Likewise, bivalent *mo* ‘want’ in the V1 slot in (18) has scope over the whole SVC, signaling optative modality. However, optative modal *mo* ‘want’ can also take the V2 slot, as in (19), where it has scope over the V3 *masuk* ‘enter’ but not over the V1 *mulay* ‘begin’ (see also ‘Modality’ in §2.3.9 for more examples of SVCs with *mo* ‘want’ in V2 position.)

Shared arguments: In the SVCs in (17) to (19), and also in (12) to (16) and in (20) to (27), the verbs share the same subjects and objects. In (16), however, both core arguments are elided, and in (19), the subject argument is elided.

Eventhood: The SVCs in (17) to (19) depict single events. In (17), for instance, a pastor relates that she ‘has to go check’ whether the men doing construction work at her church have enough to eat. And in (18), a mother relates that she ‘wants to go pick up’ her children. The issue of eventhood is discussed in more detail in §4.1.

Monoclausality: Shared tense, aspect, and modality values, shared arguments, eventhood

- (17) setiap hari sa **harus pergi liat** apa dong makang  
 every day 1SG have.to go see what 3PL eat  
 ‘every day I **have to go check** what they eat’ [080925-003-Cv.0212]
- (18) sa **mo pergi ambil** sa pu ana~ana  
 1SG want go fetch 1SG POSS RDP~child  
 ‘I **want** (to) **go pick-up** my children’ [080922-001a-CvPh.0251]
- (19) ... naik, su **mulay mo masuk** di kampung de kasi  
 ascend already begin want enter at village 3SG give  
 nasihat kitorang  
 advice 1PL  
 [About a stranger giving advice during a trip:] ‘... (she) climbed onto (our truck and when we) **were just about to drive into** the village, she gave us (some) advice’ (Lit. ‘**begin want enter**’) [081025-008-Cv.0141]

Intonation: The SVCs in (12) to (19), and also the ones in (24) to (26), have the typical SVC intonation contour of monoverbal clauses; that is, no intonation breaks or pauses occur between the respective verbs. Likewise, no intonation break occurs in the SVC *pergi bli* ‘go (and) buy’ in (20). In (21), however, the same verb sequence with the same meaning is characterized by an intonation break marked by a pause occurring between *pergi* ‘go’ and *bli* ‘buy’. Along similar lines, there is no intonation break in the SVC *masuk maing* ‘enter (and) play’ in (22). In the near-identical SVC in (23), however, a pause occurs between *masuk* ‘enter’ and *maing* ‘play’, a pause even more pronounced than the one in (21). The SVC in (27) is also marked by audible pauses between the three verbs *pulang* ‘go home’, *mandi* ‘bathe’, and *bersi~bersi* ‘be really clean’. In (21), the symbol “[” signals a short pause; in (23) and (27), “[|” signals a longer pause; pause durations were not measured. The issue of intonation is discussed in more detail in §4.2.

Monoclausality: Intonation

- (20) suda ko **pergi bli** apa untuk ko makang suda  
 already 2SG go buy what for 2SG eat already  
 ‘all right, you **go** (and) **buy** whatever so that you (can) eat for now’ [080921-004b-Cv.0020]
- (21) saya **pergi | bli** di kios, sa bli senter, batrey  
 1SG go buy at kios 1SG buy flashlight battery  
 [About hunting preparations:] ‘I **go** | (and) **buy** at the kiosk, I buy a flashlight, batteries’ [080919-004-NP.0004]
- (22) Efraim ko lagi **masuk maing** bola  
 Efraim 2SG again enter play ball  
 ‘you Efraim **enter** (the court again and) **play** volleyball’ [081109-001-Cv.0116]
- (23) babi suda **masuk || makang** saya punya hasil kebung  
 pig already enter eat 1SG POSS product garden  
 ‘the pig has already **entered** (my garden) || (and) **is eating** my garden crops’ [080919-004-NP.0018]

2.2.3 Absence of connecting morphology

The absence of any connecting morphology is exemplified in (24) to (27). In all four SVCs, the verbs are juxtaposed with no connecting morphology.

Absence of connecting morphology

- (24) ana **rajing sembayang**, ikut skola minggu ...  
 child be.diligent worship follow go.to.school week/Sunday  
 ‘the kid **worships diligently**, he goes to Sunday school ...’ [081115-001a-Cv.0069]
- (25) ... kalo begitu suda, ko lagi naik, tete lagi **turung**  
 if like.that already 2SG again ascend grandfather again descend  
**bli** pinang dulu  
 buy betel.nut be.prior  
 ‘[his grandfather said,] ‘... if it’s like that, well, you just climb up again, I **go down** (to the market to) **buy** betel nuts for now’ (Lit. ‘grandfather again descend’) [081109-005-JR.0008]
- (26) adu mas ojek kitong dua **lari plang~plang**  
 oh.no! brother motorbike.taxi 1PL two run RDP~be.slow  
 ‘[I said,] ‘oh no, Mister Motorbike-Taxidriver, (let) the two of us **drive slowly**’ [081015-004-Cv.0012]
- (27) olaraga tong **pulang || mandi | bersi~bersi**  
 do.sports 1PL go.home bathe RDP~be.clean  
 ‘(after having) done sports, we **went home** || (to) **bathe | really cleanly**’ [081022-002-CvNP.0006]

2.2.4 Verb classes

The examples in (7) to (27) in the preceding sections show that SVCs are typically formed with independent verbs from all verb classes. Most often, SVCs are formed with dynamic verbs. For instance, trivalent **ambil** ‘fetch’ in (18) and **bli** ‘buy’ in (25) take the respective V2 slots. Bivalent **turung** ‘descend’ in (25) and **pulang** ‘go home’ in (27) take the respective V1 slots, bivalent **sembayang** ‘worship’ in (24) takes the V2 slot, and **lihat** ‘see’ in (17) takes the V3 slot. Monovalent dynamic **pergi** ‘go’ in (20) and **lari** ‘run’ in (26) take the respective V1 slots, while monovalent dynamic **mandi** ‘bathe’ in (27) takes the V2 slot. Monovalent stative

verbs occur less frequently. They tend to take the final SVC slot, such as *plang* ‘be slow’ in (26) or *bersi* ‘be clean’ in (27). Less often, stative verbs take the V1 slot, such as *rajing* ‘be diligent’ in (24); see also *cepat* ‘be fast’ in (4). In addition, given the more inclusive approach adopted here, auxiliaries are included in the range of verbs that can occur in a SVC (see §2.1.1). The SVC in (10), for instance, is formed with potentative modal *bisa* ‘can’, while the SVC in (11) is formed with deontic modal *harus* ‘have to’.

### 2.3 Functional properties

Cross-linguistically, the main function of SVCs is to organize discourse, to package information coherently, and to represent complex events. This is achieved in that SVCs break down complex events and accentuate their different components. Another pertinent function of SVCs is to express grammatical categories. (See Aikhenvald and Dixon 2006:11, 46; Aikhenvald and Stebbins 2007:252; Ansaldo 2006:261–262.)

These cross-linguistic typical functional properties of SVCs also apply to Papuan Malay. In organizing discourse, packaging information coherently, and representing complex events, Papuan Malay SVCs encode seven different semantic notions:

- Cause-effect relations (§2.3.1)
- Change-of-state relations (§2.3.2)
- Comitative relations (§2.3.3)
- Degree relations (§2.3.4)
- Extension (§2.3.5)
- Motion (§2.3.6)
- Sequential relations (§2.3.7)
- Simultaneous relations (§2.3.8)

In addition, Papuan Malay SVCs also express a number of grammatical categories, examined in §2.3.9.

#### 2.3.1 Cause-effect relations

In cause-effect relations, it is typically the action or event of the V1 that brings about the action or state of the V2. In (28), for instance, the action of *buang* ‘discard’ brings about the state of *tinggal* ‘stay’ of the remains of the barbecued pig. In (29), the action of *pukul* ‘beat’ brings about the effect of *mati* ‘die’. Less commonly, SVCs express reversed cause-effect relations, that is, effect-cause relations in which the action or state of the V2 brings about the action or state of the V1. In (30), for example, the action of *cuci* ‘wash’ brings about the effect of *mati* ‘die’. In (31), the action of *omong kosong* ‘talk stupidly’ brings about the state of *sakit* ‘be sick’.

Cause-effect relations and effect-cause relations

- (28) suda babi itu, Roni dong **buang tinggal**  
 already pig D.DIST Roni 3PL discard stay  
 [Having to leave in a hurry:] ‘well, that pig, Roni and the others **left** (it) **behind**’ (Lit. ‘**discard stay**’) [080917-008-NP.0133]
- (29) de bilang saya, tong baku **pukul mati**  
 3SG say 1SG 1PL RECP hit die  
 ‘he said to me, ‘we’re **beating** each other **dead**’ [081011-023-Cv.0168]
- (30) saya stenga **mati cuci**  
 1SG half die wash  
 ‘I’m **exhausted** (from) **washing** (the kid’s laundry)’ (Lit. ‘half **dead wash**’) [080917-006-CvHt.0006]
- (31) nanti baru sakit, **sakit omong kosong**  
 very.soon and.then be.sick be.sick gossip be.empty  
 ‘and then very soon he’ll be sick, **sick** (from) **talking stupidly**’ [080927-001-Cv.0009]

### 2.3.2 Change-of-state relations

In change-of-state relations, bivalent *jadi* ‘become’ takes the V1 slot, as in (32) to (34), whereas the verb in the V2 slot depicts the changed state, such as *bingung* ‘be confused’ in (32), *herang* ‘feel surprised (about)’ in (33), or *hitam* ‘be black’ in (34)

Change-of-state relations

- (32) dia turun, dia **jadi bingung** di plabuang  
 3SG descend 3SG become be.confused at harbor  
 [About a youth driving alone on a motorbike down to the coast:] ‘he came down (to the coast), he **got confused** (about directions) in the harbor’ [080923-006-CvNP.0003]
- (33) de **jadi herang**  
 3SG become feel.surprised(.about)  
 ‘she **became surprised**’ [081006-026-CvEx.0007]
- (34) makangang itu **jadi hitam**  
 food D.DIST become be.black  
 ‘that food **became black**’ [080927-002-CvNP.0005]

### 2.3.3 Comitative relations

In comitative relations, bivalent *ikut* ‘follow’ takes the V1 slot, as in (35) to (37), whereas the V2 designates the action that the subject joins in, such as *cari* ‘search’ in (35), *jalang* ‘walk’ in (36), or *kulia* ‘study’ in (37).

Comitative relations

- (35) majelis dong smua ikut, **ikut cari** Wili  
 church.elder 3PL all follow follow search Wili  
 ‘all the church elders joined (my husband), **joined** (him) **looking for** Wili’ [081025-008-Cv.0042]
- (36) ana~ana jalang, de juga **ikut jalang**  
 RDP~child walk 3SG also follow walk  
 ‘the kids walked (around), he also **joined** (them) **walking** (around)’ [081025-006-Cv.0349]
- (37) ... tapi kalo bisa **ikut kulia** tra bisa setiap hari to?  
 but if can follow study NEG can every day right  
 ‘... but if (she) can **join** (them) **studying** (English, that) won’t (happen) every day, right?’ [081025-003-Cv.0200]

### 2.3.4 Degree relations

SVCs may also express degree relations, that is, intensification or attenuation. While presenting the constructions in (38) to (48) as SVCs conveying degree relations, it is recognized that a more restrictive approach might not count all of them as true SVCs. This would be due to the semantic shift that some of the verbs involved undergo in these constructions: *tamba* ‘add’ reads ‘more’, as in (38) and (39), and *dulu* ‘be prior’ reads ‘for now’, as in (44) and (45). Neither may a more restrictive approach accept fixed expressions as true SVCs, as in (40) to (43), and (46) and (47).

Intensification relations are encoded in two ways, with intensifying *tamba* ‘add’ taking the V1 slot, or with two verbs forming a fixed expression in which an intensifying verb takes the V2 slot.

The first option is achieved with bivalent *tamba* ‘add’ taking the V1 slot where it intensifies the action or status of the V2 in the sense of ‘more V1’. Examples are *tamba ganas* ‘feel more furious’ in (38), or *tamba lapar* ‘be more hungry’ in (39).

Intensification relations: Intensifying *tamba* ‘add’ in the V1 slot

- (38) orang itu ganas ... **tamba ganas** di situ  
 person D.DIST feel.furious(.about) add feel.furious(.about) at L.MED  
 ‘those people were feeling furious ... (they) were **feeling more furious** over there’ [081025-006-Cv.0286]
- (39) tim dari sana dong **tamba lapar**  
 delegation from L.DIST 3PL add be.hungry  
 [About a youth retreat:] ‘the delegation(s) from over there, they were **more hungry**’ [081025-009a-Cv.0107]

The second option is that the verb in the V2 slot intensifies the action or status of the V1 in the sense of ‘performing V1 very intensely’. In this case, the intensification is achieved with two verbs forming a fixed expression, such as *ganas mara* ‘feel really angry (about)’ (Lit. ‘feel furious (about) feel angry (about)’) in (40), *tenang tedu* ‘be really quiet’ (Lit. ‘be quiet be calm’) in (41), *mabuk kaco* ‘be totally drunk’ (Lit. ‘be drunk be confused’) in (42), or *panas pica* ‘be piercing hot’ (Lit. ‘be hot be broken’) in (43). In (40) and (41), the intensifying V2 is a synonym or near-synonym of the V1, while in (42) and (43) the intensifying V2 is non-synonymous with the V1.

Intensification relations: Fixed expressions

- (40) orang Papua **ganas mara** ...  
 person Papua feel.furious(.about) feel.angry(.about)  
 ‘(we) Papuans **feel really angry (about)** ...’ (Lit. ‘feel furious (about) feel angry (about)’) [081025-004-Cv.0077]
- (41) sa hajar dong smua, hantam, **tenang tedu**  
 1SG beat.up 3PL all strike be.quiet be.calm  
 ‘I reprimand them all, (I) strike (them all), (they all are) **really quiet**’ (Lit. ‘be quiet be calm’) [080917-010-CvEx.0193]
- (42) ... **mabuk kaco**  
 be.drunk be.confused  
 ‘... (he) was **totally drunk**’ (Lit. ‘be drunk be confused’) [081014-016-Cv.0028]
- (43) tong jalang itu **panas pica** dari bandara  
 1PL walk D.DIST be.hot be.broken from airport  
 ‘from the airport we walked [EMPH] being **piercing hot**’ (Lit. ‘be hot be broken’) [080922-002-Cv.0077]

SVCs designating attenuation relations are formed with monovalent stative *dulu* ‘be prior’ or with bivalent *kurang* ‘lack’.

SVCs formed with *dulu* ‘be prior’ serve to mitigate or soften requests or commands, with *dulu* taking the SVC-final verbal slot. Examples are *tunggu minum dulu* ‘wait (and) drink for now’ and *makang dulu* ‘eat for now’ in (44), or *pergi dulu* ‘go for now’ in (45).

Attenuation relations: *dulu* ‘be prior’

- (44) a, **tunggu minum dulu, makang dulu**  
 ah wait drink be.prior eat be.prior  
 ‘ah, **wait (and) drink for now, eat for now**’ [080925-003-Cv.0111]

- (45) ko **pergi dulu**, ko pergi bilang ...  
 2SG go be.prior 2SG go say  
 [Sending her son on an errand:] ‘you **go for now**, you go (and) say ...’ [080917-008-NP.0066]

SVCs formed with *kurang* ‘lack’ serve to lessen the impact of an utterance for politeness reasons, with *kurang* taking the V1 slot. In (46) and (47), for instance, the speakers suggest that the respective referents are lacking the positive qualities of being *ajar* ‘taught, educated’ or *bagus* ‘be good’, instead of bluntly declaring that they are ‘impolite’ or ‘bad’. Along similar lines, the speaker submits in (48) that the referent’s sense of hearing is lacking being *tajam* ‘be sharp’, instead of directly asserting that his hearing is ‘impaired’.<sup>7</sup>

Attenuation relations: *kurang* ‘lack’

- (46) baru dong isi dong pu kolor dalam situ,  
 and.then 3PL fill 3PL POSS undershorts inside L.MED  
**kurang ajar** skali  
 lack teach very  
 [About a youth retreat:] ‘and then they put their undershorts into that place, (they were) very **impolite**’  
 (Lit. ‘**lack be educated**’) [081025-006-Cv.0023]
- (47) ... karna itu **kurang bagus**  
 because D.DIST lack be.good  
 [About traditional customs:] ‘... because those (old customs) are **bad**’ (Lit. ‘**lack be good**’) [080923-013-CvEx.0010]
- (48) memang de punya pendengarang **kurang tajam**  
 indeed 3SG POSS hearing lack be.sharp  
 ‘indeed, his hearing is **impaired**’ (Lit. ‘**lack be sharp**’) [081014-016-Cv.0017]

### 2.3.5 Extension

SVCs denoting extension are formed with biverbal *sampe* ‘reach’. Taking the final verbal slot, *sampe* conveys the spatial reading ‘all the way to’ or the temporal reading ‘all the way until’ or ‘on and on’. Again, a more restrictive approach to SVCs might not count verb sequences formed with *sampe* ‘reach’ as true SVCs, given the semantic shift of ‘reach’ to ‘all the way to/until’ or ‘on and on’.

In the SVCs expressing spatial extension, *sampe* ‘reach’ takes the V2 slot as in (49) or the V3 slot as in (50). The verbs in the preceding slots denote the action that is continued *sampe* ‘all the way to’ a spatial goal, such as *gendong* ‘hold’ in (49), or *bawa pulang* ‘bring home’ in (50).

Spatial extension

- (49) sa **gendong sampe** di ruma  
 1SG hold reach at house  
 ‘I **carried** (him) **all the way to** the house’ [081025-009b-Cv.0046]
- (50) ... ambil sayur smua **bawa pulang sampe** di ruma  
 fetch vegetable all bring go.home reach at house  
 ‘... (he) takes all the vegetable (and) **brings** (them) **home all the way to** the house’ [081014-007-CvEx.0047]

SVCs designating temporal extension are also marked with *sampe* ‘reach’, as in (51) to (53). The verbs in the preceding slots denote the action that is temporally extended, such as *menyanyi* ‘sing’ in (51) and (53), or *tinggal jalang* ‘keep walking’ in (52). This action is continued *sampe* ‘all the way until’ it reaches a terminal

<sup>7</sup> See also Kluge (2017:501–504) for a discussion of the inferiority-marking function of *kurang* ‘lack’.

point, such as *tiba* ‘arrive’ in the V3 slot in (51), *tong cape* ‘we were tired’ in (52), or *jam dua* ‘two o’clock’ in (53).

Temporal extension

- (51) tong jalang saja, jalang tong **menyanyi sampe tiba** di Webro  
 1PL walk just walk 1PL sing reach arrive at be.tired  
 ‘we were just walking, (while) walking we were **singing all the way until arriving** at Webro’  
 [080917-008-NP.0118]
- (52) ... tong **tinggal jalang sampe** tong cape  
 1PL stay walk reach 1PL be.tired  
 ‘[we were walking in the heat yet] we **kept walking all the way until** we were tired’ [080922-002-Cv.0079]
- (53) ... trus malam **menyanyi sampe** jam dua  
 next night sing reach hour two  
 ‘... then at night (we) **sang all the way until** two o’clock (in the morning)’ [080923-003-Cv.0002]

In SVCs denoting temporal extension, the terminal point may also be omitted, however. This type of extension-marking SVC signals that the action is extended without terminal point, such as *tertawa sampe* ‘laugh on and on’ in (54), or that the action is carried out intensely, such as *bertriak sampe* ‘scream strongly’ in (55). In addition, the final vowel in *sampe* ‘reach’ may be lengthened, adding further emphasis, such as *menyanyi sampeee* ‘sing on and on (EMPH)’ in (56).<sup>8</sup>

Temporal extension with omitted terminal point

- (54) adu, prut sakit malam kitong nontong itu,  
 oh.no stomach be.sick night 1PL watch.for.entertainment D.DIST  
 eee, **tertawa sampe**, sa larii pigi jaaaw  
 hey! laugh reach 1SG run go be.far  
 ‘oh no!, (my) stomach hurt (that) night (when) we watched that (movie), hey, (we) **laughed on and on**, I ran (EMPH), going far away (EMPH) (to laugh by myself)’ [081006-014-Cv.0009]
- (55) ibu Marta **bertriak sampe**, sa bilang, ...  
 woman Marta scream reach 1SG say  
 ‘I (‘Marta’) **screamed strongly**, I said, ...’ [080916-001-CvNP.0004]
- (56) dong biking acara, **menyanyi sampeee**, dansa lemon-lipis itu  
 3PL make ceremony sing reach dance citron D.DIST  
 biasanya dansa lemon-lipis itu  
 usually dance citron D.DIST  
 ‘they made a ceremony, (they) were **singing on and on (EMPH)**, (they) danced that citron (dance), usually (they) dance that citron (dance)’ [081110-005-CvPr.0098]

### 2.3.6 Motion

Rather frequently, SVCs designate motion. In such a construction two motion verbs take the V1 and V2 slots. Typically, such SVCs express the motion of bringing an object across, away, back, down, inside, etc., or they denote some kind of movement, such as moving away, back, down, or up. Table 2 lists the different meaning aspects conveyed by the motion SVCs attested in the corpus.

<sup>8</sup> For details on vowel lengthening see Kluge (2017:84).

**Table 2: Meaning aspects of SVCs expressing motion**

Motion	SVC	Gloss
bring across	bawa menyebrang	bring cross
bring away	antar pergi bawa antar bawa lari bawa pergi pergi antar pergi bawa	bring go bring bring bring run bring go go bring go bring
bring back	bawa kembali bawa pulang	bring return bring go.home
bring down	bawa turung	bring descend
bring forward	maju bawa	advance bring
bring here	bawa datang datang bawa	bring come come bring
bring inside	bawa masuk masuk antar	bring enter enter bring
bring outside	bawa keluar	bring go.out
bring up	bawa naik	bring ascend
lift up	bawa kas naik	bring CAUS ascend
move away back	mundur pulang	back.up go.home
move back	datang kembali jalang pulang pulang pergi	come return walk go.home go.home go
move back up	naik kembali	ascend return
move down back	turung pulang	descend go.home
move down bring	turung bawa	descend bring
move down away	turung lari	descend run
move out away	keluar pergi	go.out go
move away	jalang pergi lari pergi pergi lari	walk go run go go run
move away back	lari pulang	run go.home
move here	lari datang	run come
move here up	datang naik	come ascend
move toward	jalang menuju	walk aim.at
move up to	naik lanjut	ascend continue

Most often, motion SVCs are comprised of two verbs. The two-verb SVC in (57), for instance, depicts the motion of bringing someone inside: *bawa masuk* ‘bring enter’. In (58), the SVC designates the motion of moving back: *datang kembali* ‘come return’. In (59), the SVC denotes the motion down back: *turung pulang* ‘descend go home’.

Motion SVCs comprised of two verbs

- (57) **bawa masuk** dia dulu  
bring enter 3SG be.prior  
[Talking to her son about his younger sister:] ‘bring her inside for now’ [081006-023-CvEx.0058]
- (58) ... baru sampe di Tor, di Tor baru **datang kembali**  
and.then reach at Tor at Tor and.then come return  
‘... and then (we) arrived at Tor, (having arrived) at Tor only then (did the truck) return back (to Sarmi)’ [081022-003-Cv.0010]

- (59) ... saya pake dayung dengang prahu **turung pulang** di kali ...  
 1SG use paddle with boat descend go.home at river  
 ‘[I went home,] I used the paddle with the boat, **returning home going down** the river (all the way to the beach) ...’ [080919-004-NP.0025]

Less often, motion SVCs are comprised of three verbs. In such a SVC, the third verb very commonly expresses a grammatical category, such as causativity, as in (60) with the causative marker *kas* ‘CAUS’, or optative modality, as in (61) with optative *mo* ‘want’ (see ‘Causativity’ and ‘Modality’ in §2.3.9 for more details). Also rather commonly, verbal sequences are comprised of two motion verb and a third, non-motion verb, as in (62). SVCs comprised of three motion verbs, however, are not attested in the corpus.

Motion SVCs comprised of three verbs

- (60) dia rasa pusing, langsung dong **bawa kas naik** dia  
 3SG feel be.dizzy immediately 3PL bring CAUS ascend 3SG  
 ‘she felt dizzy, immediately they **lifted** her (onto the bed)’ (Lit. ‘**bring cause ascend**’) [081014-008-CvNP.0016]
- (61) ... tapi sa tida **mo pulang pergi**, biking cape  
 but 1SG NEG want go.home go make be.tired  
 ‘... but I don’t **want** (to) **do a round-trip**, (that’s) tiring’ (Lit. ‘**go home go**’) [081008-003-Cv.0046]
- (62) laki-laki **pikol bawa pulang** ke ruma  
 man shoulder bring go.home to house  
 [About sago production:] ‘the men **shoulder** (the sago starch and) **bring** (it) **home**’ [081014-007-CvEx.0046]

### 2.3.7 Sequential relations

In sequential relations, the action expressed by the V1 precedes that of the V2. Sequential SVCs can receive a temporal order or a purpose reading.

The temporal order reading highlights the fact that the action expressed by the V1 occurs before that of the V2, such as *tokok ramas* ‘crush (and) knead’ in (63), or *hela taru* ‘haul (and) put (down)’ in (64). The same applies to the SVC in (65): *pergi kas tau* ‘go (and) inform’. Rather commonly, the same SVC can also receive a purpose reading; it emphasizes the fact that the action expressed by the V2 designates the goal of the V1, such as *tokok ramas* ‘crush to knead’ in (63), or *pergi kas tau* ‘go (to) inform’ in (65).

Sequential relations

- (63) sa **tokok ramas**, Anelia de jaga de pu ade Efana  
 1SG tap press Anelia 3SG guard 3SG POSS younger.sibling Efana  
 [About sago production:] ‘I’m **crushing** (and) **kneading** (the sago pith) / I’m **crushing** (the sago pith to) **knead** (it), while Anelia is guarding her younger sibling Efana’ [081014-007-CvEx.0065]
- (64) dong dua blum perna liat kura-kura, **hela taru**  
 3PL two not.yet ever see turtle haul put  
 [About two friends going fishing:] ‘the two of them haven’t yet ever seen a turtle, (he) **hauls** (it and) **puts** / **hauls** (it to) **put** (it down)’ [081109-010-JR.0002]
- (65) nanti sa **pergi kas tau** mama-tua dong dua  
 later 1SG go CAUS know older.aunt 3PL two  
 ‘later I’ll **go** (and/to) **inform** both older aunts’ (Lit. ‘**go cause know**’) [080925-003-Cv.0210]

### 2.3.8 Simultaneous relations

In simultaneous relations, the events described by the V1 overlap in time with the events expressed by the V2. This is illustrated with *hilang mandi* ‘got lost (while) bathing’ in (66), *datang menangis~menangis* ‘came crying’ in (67), and *rebus pake* ‘boil using’ in (68).

Simultaneous relations

- (66) dia **hilang mandi**  
 3SG be.lost bathe  
 ‘he **got lost** (while) **bathing**’ [080921-004a-CvNP.0072]
- (67) jam satu nene ko **datang menangis~menangis**  
 hour one grandmother 2SG come RDP~cry  
 ‘at one o’clock you grandmother **came crying**’ [081014-008-CvNP.0009]
- (68) laing rebus, **rebus pake** garam, enak skali  
 be.different boil boil use salt be.pleasant very  
 ‘some boil (the food), **boil** (it) **using** salt, very delicious’ [081025-009a-Cv.0094]

### 2.3.9 Grammatical usages

Papuan Malay SVCs also rather commonly express grammatical categories, namely:

- Aspect (completion, continuation, habituality, inception, iteration)
- Causativity
- Complementation
- Manner
- Modality (deontic, optative, potentative)
- Passive voice

While analyzing the verb sequences in the following sections as SVCs, it is acknowledged that a more restrictive approach might not recognize all of them as true SVCs. More specifically, aspectual *trus* ‘be continuous’ is not attested in the corpus as an independent verbs; that is, it does not occur as the only verb in monoverbal clauses.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, as auxiliaries, potentative modal *bisa* ‘can’ and deontic modal *harus* ‘have to’ do not qualify as independent verbs. However, as already mentioned in §2.2, they can occur as the only verbs in monoverbal clauses if the context is understood. In addition, a number of verbs undergo semantic shift when occurring in verb sequences expressing grammatical categories: monovalent stative *habis* ‘be used up’ reads ‘to complete’ or ‘completely’ in completive aspect marking constructions, biverbal *ada* ‘exist’ reads ‘V2-ing’ in continuous marking constructions, bivalent *taw* ‘know’ reads ‘habitually V2’ in habitual marking constructions, and trivalent *kas(i)* ‘give’ reads ‘cause to’ in causative marking constructions. (See the following sections on ‘Aspect’, ‘Causativity’, and ‘Modality’).

#### Aspect

One major grammatical category expressed by means of SVCs is aspect. More specifically, Papuan Malay employs SVCs to express the aspectual categories of completion, continuation, habituality, inception, and iteration.

#### Completive aspect

Completive aspect is encoded with two verbs of completion, monovalent stative *habis* ‘be used up’ and bivalent *selesay* ‘finish’.

Stative *habis* ‘be used up’ marks completion or exhaustion and can occur in V1 or V2 position. In V1 position, it conveys that an activity has been done completely or exhaustively, such as *habis sembayang* ‘having completed worshipping’ in (69), or *habis lari naik* ‘having completed running up’ in (70). In V2 position, *habis* ‘be used up’ conveys that the patient of the activity depicted in the V2 slot is affected

<sup>9</sup> Kluge (2017:568, 591) lists *trus* ‘be continuous’ as a monovalent stative verb.

completely. Examples are *ramas habis* ‘knead (s.th.) completely’ in (71), and *makang habis* ‘eat-up (s.th.) completely’ in (72). An initial investigation of the uses of *habis* ‘be used up’ suggests a telicity distinction depending on its position in a SVC. The examined data suggest that in V1 position *habis* ‘be used up’ describes atelic situations, that is, actions or events not heading for any particular endpoint. In V2 position, *habis* ‘be used up’ denotes telic situations, that is, actions or events that have a specific endpoint. This issue requires more research, however.

Completive aspect: *habis* ‘be used up’

- (69) **habis** **sembayang** makang siang, **habis** **sembayang** makang  
 be.used.up worship eat midday be.used.up worship eat  
 [About a youth retreat:] ‘**having completed worshipping** (we) ate lunch, **having finished worshipping** (we) ate’ [081022-002-CvNP.0002]
- (70) **habis** **lari naik** di tangga su tarik~tarik napas ini  
 be.used.up run ascend at ladder already RDP~pull breath D.PROX  
 ‘**having completed running up** the ladder (we) were breathing heavily (EMPH)’ [081006-036-CvEx.0020]
- (71) su **ramas habis** kas duduk dia sebentar  
 already press be.used.up CAUS sit 3SG in.a.moment  
 [About sago processing:] ‘having **kneaded** (the sago pith) **completely**, let it sit for a while’ [081014-006-CvPr.0053]
- (72) jadi su tau ana~ana, to? ana~ana dong **makang habis**  
 so already know RDP~child right RDP~child 3PL eat be.used.up  
 [About a youth retreat:] ‘because (everybody) already knows (about) children, right?, the kids **eat-up** (everything) **completely**’ [081025-009a-Cv.0034]

Referring to a temporal endpoint, bivalent *selesay* ‘finish’ signals that an activity itself has finished. Like *habis* ‘be used up’, *selesay* ‘finish’ can also occur in V1 or V2 position, the semantic effects of both positions are yet to be investigated, however. Examples for the V1 position are *selesay mandi* ‘having finished bathing’ in (73) and *selesay sembayang* ‘having finished worshipping’ in (74). Examples for the V2 position are *mandi selesay* ‘having finished bathing’ in (75) and *sembayang selesay* ‘having finished worshipping’ in (76).

Completive aspect: *selesay* ‘finish’

- (73) sa bangun, **selesay mandi** datang ke mari  
 1SG wake.up finish bath come to hither  
 ‘I woke up, **having finished bathing** (I) came here’ [080923-001-CvNP.0009]
- (74) dorang masak tikus-tana ... **selesay sembayang** tong makang  
 3PL cook spiny.bandicoot finish worship 1PL eat  
 ‘(yesterday evening,) they cooked spiny bandicoot ... **having finished worshipping** we ate’ [080923-012-CvNP.0012]
- (75) de **mandi selesay** jalang pulang, Yuli di depang, tong di blakang  
 3SG bathe finish walk go.home Yulius at front 1PL at backside  
 ‘(after) he had **finished bathing**, (we) walked home, Yuli in front, we in the back’ [081025-006-Cv.0326/0327]
- (76) kemaring malam, bapa **sembayang selesay** pulang itu  
 yesterday night father worship finish go.home D.DIST  
 ‘yesterday evening, **having finished worshipping** father went home (EMPH)’ [081006-035-CvEx.0027]

*Continuous aspect*

Continuous aspect is expressed with three verbs of continuation. Bivalent existential *ada* ‘exist’ and monovalent dynamic *tinggal* ‘stay’ take the V1 slot, while monovalent stative *trus* ‘be continuous’ takes the V2 slot. All three verbs of continuation express the ongoing, nonhabitual, action or stage depicted by the respective juxtaposed verb.

Examples for ongoing actions are presented in (77) to (81). In (77) and (79), *ada* ‘exist’ and *tinggal* ‘stay’ take the V1 slots where they indicate the ongoing action of biverbal *maing* ‘playing’, respectively. Likewise, *ada* ‘exist’ and *tinggal* ‘stay’ signal the ongoing action of monovalent dynamic *jalang* ‘walking’ in (78) and (80), respectively. Along similar lines, V2 *trus* ‘be continuous’ in (80) and (81) encodes the ongoing action of *jalang* ‘walking’ and *makang* ‘eating’, respectively.

Continuation of an action

- (77) baru ana~ana prempuang dong **ada maing** bola  
and.then RDP~child woman 3PL exist play ball  
‘but the girls **were playing** football’ [081109-001-Cv.0084]
- (78) kemaring kitong dua **ada jalang** di kampung sama~sama  
yesterday 1PL two exist walk at village together  
deng Raymon  
with Raymon  
‘yesterday, the two of us **were walking** in the village together with Raymon’ [081011-024-Cv.0092]
- (79) ko **tinggal maing** HP saja  
2SG stay play cell.phone just  
‘you just **keep playing** (with your) cell phone’ [080922-001a-CvPh.1163]
- (80) kam lagi **tinggal jalang**, jalang, jalang, **jalang trus**  
2PL again stay walk walk walk walk be.continuous  
‘you **keep walking**, walking, walking, **walking continuously**’ [080922-002-Cv.0117]
- (81) ... sa kang **makang trus**, sa taru di samping  
1SG you.know eat be.continuous 1SG put at side  
‘[as for my betel nut waste,] I’**m continuously eating** (betel nut), you know, (as for the waste,) I put (it) aside’ [081025-006-Cv.0281]

All three verbs of continuation also express the ongoing, nonhabitual, state expressed by the respective juxtaposed verb, as shown with *ada sakit* ‘being sick’ in (82), *sakit trus* ‘be sick continuously’ in (84), and *tinggal dinging* ‘stay cold’ in (83).

Continuation of a state

- (82) dong bilang, ah, de **ada sakit**  
3PL say ah 3SG exist be.sick  
‘they said, ‘ah, he’**s being sick**’ [080919-007-CvNP.0025]
- (83) ini kas **tinggal dinging**  
D.PROX CAUS stay be.cold  
[About muffler problems:] ‘this (muffler) causes (it) to **stay cold**’ [081011-017-Cv.0003]
- (84) akhirnya ana itu lema, de **sakit trus**  
finally child D.DIST be.weak 3SG be.sick be.continuous  
‘in the end, that child is weak, he/she is **continuously sick**’ [080917-010-CvEx.0101]

In addition, the corpus includes one SVC formed with a fourth verb of continuation, namely *sambung* ‘continue’, presented in (85).

Continuation marked with *sambung* ‘continue’

- (85) ... dong lari ke pante, **sambung bakalay** di situ  
 3SG run to beach continue quarrel at L.MED  
 [About mischievous children:] ‘[Mr. Teacher and the others reprimand them, but] they run to the beach (and) **continue fighting** there’ [081115-001a-Cv.0008]

#### Habitual aspect

Habitual aspect is signaled with monovalent stative *biasa* ‘be usual’ or biverbal *taw* ‘know’ in the V1 slot. They indicate that the occurrence of the event or state encoded in the V2 slot is typical for a certain period of time. SVCs formed with *biasa* ‘be usual’ emphasize the habit itself, as illustrated in (86) and (87).

Habitual aspect: *biasa* ‘be usual’

- (86) itu yang de **biasa bicara**, de bilang, ...  
 D.DIST REL 3SG be.usual speak 3SG say  
 ‘that’s what she **used to say**, she said, ...’ [081011-023-Cv.0323]
- (87) sa punya temang, e kenalang yang **biasa datang** ke ruma  
 1SG POSS friend uh acquaintance REL be.usual come to house  
 de kerja bangungang di Takar sana  
 3SG work building at Takar L.DIST  
 ‘my friend, uh, acquaintance who **usually comes** to the house, he works in construction in Takar over there’ [081029-005-Cv.0003]

SVCs formed with *taw* ‘know’ also denote habituality; at the same time, however, they subtly suggest that the habit was somewhat acquired, as in (88) and (89).

Habitual aspect: *taw* ‘know’

- (88) jadi dorang yang **taw merokok** dorang merokok, kitong tra  
 so 3PL REL know smoke 3PL smoke 1PL NEG  
**taw merokok** ini, tong makang pinang saja  
 know smoke D.PROX 1PL eat betel.nut just  
 [After a successful hunt:] ‘so, those who **habitually smoke**, they smoked, we (who) **habitually don’t smoke**, we just chewed betel nuts’ [080919-004-NP.0042]
- (89) dong sana cari anging, tong juga **taw cari** anging  
 3PL L.DIST search wind 1PL also know search wind  
 [Sitting outside at night:] ‘they over there are looking for a breeze, we are also **habitually looking** for a breeze’ [081025-009b-Cv.0076]

#### Inceptive aspect

Inceptive aspect is encoded with bivalent *mulay* ‘begin’ in the V1 slot. It expresses the beginning of the event or state depicted in the V2 slot, such as trivalent *kasi* ‘give’ in (90), monovalent dynamic *jalang* ‘walk’ in (91), or monovalent stative *dinging* ‘be cold’ in (92).

Inceptive aspect

- (90) sa **mulay kasi** nasihat dorang  
 1SG begin give advice 3PL  
 ‘I **started giving** them advice’ [081115-001a-Cv.0100]

- (91) pagi sa **mulay jalang turung** ke laut  
 morning 1SG begin walk descend to sea  
 ‘in the morning, I **started walking down** to the seaside’ [080918-001-CvNP.0055]
- (92) baru tong **mulay dinging**  
 and.then 1PL begin be.cold  
 ‘and then we **started** (feeling/getting) **cold**’ [081025-006-Cv.0054]

#### *Iterative aspect*

Iterative aspect is expressed with bivalent **ulang** ‘repeat’ in the V1 slot, where it signals the repetition of an event or state, such as **naik** ‘ascend’ in (93).

Iterative aspect

- (93) baru sampe di Arbais dong **ulang naik**  
 and.then reach at Arbais 3PL repeat ascend  
 ‘and then having arrived in Arbais, they **climbed up again**’ (Lit. ‘**repeat ascend**’) [080921-002-Cv.0014]

#### *Causativity*

Causativity is also a major grammatical category encoded with SVCs. In these constructions, the notion of cause is encoded by a causative verb in the V1 slot, namely with trivalent **kasi** ‘give’, with its short form **kas**, or bivalent **biking** ‘make’. The notion of effect is encoded by the verb in the V2 slot. (For more details see Kluge 2017:480–489.)

In causative constructions, **kas(i)** ‘give’ reads ‘cause to’. Such constructions accentuate the outcome of the manipulation, as in (94) to (96). The effect expression in the V2 slot is either a monovalent verb, such as stative **habis** ‘be used up’ in (94) or dynamic **tinggal** ‘stay’ in (95), or a bivalent verb such as **makang** ‘eat’ in (96).

Causativity: **kas** ‘CAUS’

- (94) minum te dulu, **kas habis**  
 drink tea be.prior CAUS be.used.up  
 ‘drink tea for now, **finish** (it) **off**’ (Lit. ‘**cause be used up**’) [081011-001-Cv.0240]
- (95) sa **kas tinggal** ana kecil  
 1SG CAUS stay child be.small  
 ‘I **left** the small child (behind)’ (Lit. ‘**cause stay**’) [080923-012-CvNP.0005]
- (96) saya **kas makang** anjing deng papeda  
 1SG CAUS eat dog with sago.porridge  
 ‘I **fed** the dogs with sago porridge’ (Lit. ‘**cause eat**’) [080919-003-NP.0002]

Causatives with **biking** ‘make’ have a slightly different function. They focus on the manipulation of the circumstances itself which brings about the effect. The effect expression in the V2 slot is always a monovalent verb, such as stative **pusing** ‘be dizzy’ in (97) or **rusak** ‘be damaged’ in (98).

Causativity: **biking** ‘make’

- (97) dong dua deng Wili tu **biking pusing** mama  
 3PL two with Wili D.DIST make be.dizzy mother  
 ‘he and Wili there **caused** (their mother to) **be worried**’ (Lit. ‘**make be dizzy/confused**’) [081011-003-Cv.0002]

- (98) ... baru **mo biking rusak** barang  
 and.then want make be.damaged stuff  
 [About the young people in the house:] '[they are just used to work drunk,] and then (they) **want** (to) **destroy** things' (Lit. '**make be damaged**') [081011-011-Cv.0053]

**Complementation**

Papuan Malay also employs SVCs as a complementation strategy. In such a construction the complement-taking verb precedes the complement verb. (See also Dixon and Aikhenvald's 2006:34–35 cross-linguistic study on complementation strategies.)

Complement-taking verbs include verbs of assistance, cognition, communication, propensity, and volition, some of which are listed in Table 3.

*Table 3: Complement-taking verbs*

Semantic category	Verb	Gloss
Assistance	bantu	help
	tolong	help
Cognition	blajar	study
	harap	hope
	ingat	remember
	lupa	forget
Communication	bicara	speak
	mengaku	confess
	minta	request
	panggil	call
	permisi	ask permission
	stop	stop
	suru	order
Propensity	tanya	ask
	benci	hate
	malas	be listless
	snang	feel happy (about)
	suka	enjoy
	susa	be difficult
	rasa	feel
takut	feel afraid (of)	
Volition	coba	try
	rencana	plan
	siap	get ready
	usaha	attempt

Examples for complementation in Papuan Malay are presented in (99) to (108).

The complement-taking verbs are the assistance verbs *bantu* 'help' in (99) and *tolong* 'help' in (100), the cognition verbs *ingat* 'remember' in (101) and *lupa* 'forget' in (102), and the communication verbs *panggil* 'call' in (103) and *suru* 'order' in (104).

Complementation relations: Assistance, cognition, and communication

- (99) ana itu de **bisa bantu timba** air  
 child D.DIST 3SG can help fetch water  
 [About the blessing of having children:] ‘that child, he/she can **help** (to) **fetch** water’ [081006-024-CvEx.0090]
- (100) kawang, bantu ka?, **tolong terjema!**  
 friend help or help translate  
 ‘friend, will (you) help (me)?, **help** (me to ) **translate** (this English text)!’ [081115-001a-Cv.0167]
- (101) mungking stenga jam saja sa tidor, **ingat kerja,**  
 maybe half hour just 1SG sleep remember work  
 sa harus kerja apa?  
 1SG have.to work what  
 ‘I slept maybe just half an hour, (then I) **remembered** (to) **work**, ‘what do I need to work?’ [081115-001b-Cv.0056]
- (102) sa **lupa bawa** ko pu kaing  
 1SG forget bring 2SG POSS cloth  
 ‘I **forgot to bring** your cloth’ [081110-008-CvNP.0233]
- (103) ... kalo ada tamu, yo, bakar pisang, e, bakar sago, bla klapa,  
 if exist guest yes burn banana uh burn sago split coconut  
**panggil duduk makang** sama~sama begitu  
 call sit eat together like.that  
 ‘[in the past,] when there were guests, yes, (we) grilled bananas, grilled sago, split coconuts, (we) **called** (them to) **sit** (and) **eat** together (with us), (it was) like that’ [081014-009-CvEx.0019]
- (104) ... suda, ibu **mulay suru gambar**  
 already woman start order draw  
 ‘[in this school, Ms. Teacher started ordering the school kids to start drawing a monkey on a banana tree,] well, Ms. Teacher **started ordering** (them to) **draw**’ [081109-002-JR.0001]

In the SVCs presented in (105) and (106), the complement-taking verbs are the propensity verbs *malas* ‘be listless’ and *snang* ‘feel happy (about)’, respectively. The SVCs in (107) and (108) are formed with the volition verbs *rencana* ‘plan’ and *usaha* ‘attempt’, respectively.

Complementation relations: Propensity and volition

- (105) ... jadi kitong **malas datang** dia pu ruma  
 so 1PL be.listless come 3SG POSS house  
 ‘[we don’t feel happy about her,] so we’re **unwilling** (to) **come** to her house’ [080927-006-CvNP.0032]
- (106) jadi dorang **snang bantu** saya  
 so 3PL feel.happy(.about) help 1SG  
 ‘so, they’re **glad** (to) **help** me’ [080919-004-NP.0070]

- (107) jadi kalo Siduas saja bapa tra bisa **rencana berangkat**  
 so if Siduas just father NEG can plan leave  
 [Talking over the phone with his daughter:] ‘so if was just for (your brother) Siduas, I couldn’t **plan**  
 (to) **leave**’ [080922-001a-CvPh.0373]
- (108) mama **usaha biking** kebung  
 mother attempt make garden  
 ‘mama **attempts** (to) **make** a garden’ [081011-023-Cv.0169]

### **Manner**

Papuan Malay SVCs also encode manner. In such a construction, the verb specifying the manner may precede or follow the verb that designates the actual action or state. The former is the case in (109) to (111), with the verbs in the V1 slots functioning as verbal modifiers, namely, **rajing** ‘diligently’, **lancar** ‘fluently’, and **cepat** ‘quickly’, respectively.<sup>10</sup> In (112) to (114), by contrast, the verbs in the SVC-final slots are functioning as verbal modifiers: **cepat** ‘quickly’, **bengkok** ‘crookedly’, and **brat** ‘seriously’, respectively.

#### Manner

- (109) ... sa pu hidup itu **rajing sembayang**  
 1SG POSS live D.DIST be.diligent worship  
 ‘[I can’t be mischievous,] (all) my life (I) **worshiped diligently**’ [081110-008-CvNP.0191]
- (110) kalo sampe di SMA de suda **lancar bicara**  
 if reach at senior.high.school 3SG already be.fluent speak  
 ‘if (she) gets as far as senior high school, she’ll already **speak fluently** (English)’ [081025-003-Cv.0191]
- (111) ko **cepat pulang ambil** itu Natalia punya mama  
 2SG be.fast go.home fetch D.DIST Natalia POSS mother  
 ‘you **quickly go home** (and) **fetch**, what’s-her-name, Natalia’s mother’ [081110-008-CvNP.0057]
- (112) yo, tong **mo biking cepat**, smua dari uang  
 yes 1PL want make be.fast all from money  
 [About a building project:] ‘yes, we **want** (to) **do** (it) **quickly**, all that (depends) on the money’  
 [080927-006-CvNP.0034]
- (113) ... tapi de jatu deng motor, itu yang de **jalang bengkok**  
 but 3SG fall with motorbike D.DIST REL 3SG walk be.crooked  
 ‘... but he fell with (his) motorbike, that’s why he’s **walking crookedly**’ [081006-020-Cv.0008]
- (114) saya lagi **sakit brat**  
 1SG again be.sick be.heavy  
 ‘I was again **seriously sick**’ [081006-001-Cv.0002]

### **Modality**

Another major grammatical category expressed by SVCs is modality, namely deontic, optative and potentative modality. In such SVCs, the modality-encoding verbs usually take the V1 slot. The exception is, as already mentioned in §2.2.2, the optative modal **mo** ‘want’, as shown below.

<sup>10</sup> Papuan Malay does not have a distinct class of adjectives. Instead, monovalent stative verbs encode the semantic types typically associated with adjectives (see Kluge 2017:243).

Deontic modality is encoded with bivalent *biar* ‘let’ as in (115), bivalent *perlu* ‘need’ as in (116), bivalent *usa* ‘need’ as in (117), or auxiliary *harus* ‘have to’ as in (118).

Deontic modality

- (115) jangang tanya, **biar diam** saja  
 NEG.IMP ask let be.quiet just  
 [About the lack of food during a youth retreat:] ‘don’t ask them (whether they’re hungry), **let’s just be quiet**’ [081025-008-Cv.0076]
- (116) waktu saya berburu saya **perlu makang** pinang  
 time 1SG hunt 1SG need eat betel.nut  
 ‘when I’m hunting I **need** (to) **chew** betel nuts’ [080919-004-NP.0011]
- (117) yo, tra **usa kasi** HP sama Siduas  
 yes NEG need give cell.phone to Siduas  
 ‘yes, (you) don’t **need** (to) **give** (your) cell phone to Siduas’ [080922-001a-CvPh.1267]
- (118) sa **harus bli** pecis, sa **harus ambil** senter  
 1SG have.to buy light.bulb 1SG have.to fetch flashlight  
 [Hunting preparations:] ‘I **have to buy** small light bulbs, I **have to take** a flashlight’ [080919-004-NP.0003]

Optative modality is designated with bivalent *mo* ‘want’ as in (119) to (122). Most often, the optative modal takes the V1 slot as in (119) and (120). Not infrequently, however, *mo* ‘want’ takes the V2 slot where it has scope over the V3 but not over the V1, as in (121) and (122); both SVCs have a typical monoclausal intonation contour with no intonation breaks or pauses occurring between the respective verbs.

Optative modality

- (119) sa **mo bawa titip** di depan situ  
 1SG want bring deposit at front L.MED  
 ‘I **want** (to) **bring** (and) **deposit** (your stuff) in front over there’ [081110-002-Cv.0015]
- (120) kitong dua **mo bli** bensing  
 1PL two want buy gasoline  
 ‘the two of us **want** (to) **buy** gasoline’ [081015-003-Cv.0007]
- (121) ... **lari mo pana** babi, bantu sama dengang saya  
 run want bow.shoot pig help to with 1SG  
 [About hunting wild pigs:] ‘[because they were far away,] (they) **ran wanting** (to) **bow shoot** the pig, (they wanted to) help me’ [080919-003-NP.0010]
- (122) kitong su **mulay mo dorong** prahu  
 1PL already begin want push boat  
 ‘we already **started wanting** (to) **push** the boat’ [081015-003-Cv.0005]

Potentative modality is signaled with auxiliary *bisa* ‘can’ as in (123), monovalent stative *mampu* ‘be capable’ as in (124), or monovalent stative *sanggup* ‘be capable’ as in (125).

Potentative modality

- (123) tong **bisa bli**, tong **bisa makang sampe** tong cape  
 1PL can buy 1PL can eat reach 1PL be.tired  
 [About fresh fish:] ‘we **can buy** (it here), we **can eat** (it) **until** we have enough’ [080921-004b-Cv.0002]
- (124) jadi bapa tida **mampu tinggal** dengang sa punya kluarga banyak  
 so father NEG be.capable stay with 1SG POSS family many  
 ‘so (my) husband isn’t **capable** (of) **living** with my large family’ [081110-008-CvNP.0087]
- (125) kalo de bilang spulu milyar, pemrinta **sanggup bayar**  
 if 3SG say ten billion government be.capable pay  
 ‘if he tells (them that this costs) ten billion, (then) the government is **capable** (of) **paying**’ [081029-004-Cv.0073]

**Passive voice**

Papuan Malay also employs SVCs to express adversative passive voice; the language has no morphologically marked passive voice (see also Kluge 2017:22, 2021:45–46).

In passive-denoting SVCs, bivalent **dapat** ‘get’ takes the V1 slot, where it marks the inception of an event that adversely affects the subject. The verb in the V2 slot expresses the actual event, such as an unpleasant experience or a violent act that the subject undergoes. Examples are **dapat injak** ‘get stepped upon’ in (126), **dapat mara** ‘get scolded’ in (127), or **dapat strap** ‘get punished’ in (128).

Passive voice

- (126) Oktofina suda **dapat injak** ini  
 Oktofina already get step.on D.PROX  
 [About a trip:] ‘Oktofina already **got stepped upon** (EMPH)’ [081022-002-CvNP.0012]
- (127) ... itu sala, sa **dapat mara**  
 D.DIST be.wrong 1SG get feel.angry(.about)  
 dari kaka dorang  
 from older.sibling 3PL  
 ‘[that was not allowed,] that was wrong, I **got scolded** by (my) older sibling and the others’ [081006-024-CvEx.0088]
- (128) ... tinggal deng orang-tua tida kerja **dapat strap**  
 stay with parent NEG work get punish  
 ‘[when you’re] staying with (your) parents (and you) don’t work, (you) **get punished**’ [081115-001b-Cv.0057]

**3 Clause chaining constructions**

Papuan Malay verb sequences often have an indeterminate status, as mentioned in §1, due to the overall structure of Papuan Malay. That is, they could be interpreted as monoclausal SVCs or as multiclausal CCCs with elided subject arguments. Therefore, before examining such verb sequences of indeterminate status in more detail in §4, this section briefly describes CCCs.

Papuan Malay very commonly employs CCCs to encode distinct but related events. They are characterized by a number of compositional and functional properties that have also been identified for CCCs in other languages (see Dixon 2010:410; Foley 1986:178, 2007:386–387).

In terms of their compositional properties, CCCs refer to sequences of clauses that follow one after another. In such a construction, each verb takes its own set of core (and peripheral) arguments, corresponding to its own clause.

Clause chaining is a characteristic feature of right-headed OV languages, such as the majority of Papuan languages; they typically distinguish between independent and dependent clauses (Foley 2000). While independent clauses “are characterized by fully inflected verbs, in particular for subject agreement and tense-aspect-mood”, dependent clauses “contain morphologically simpler, stripped down verbs” (2000:383). In CCCs, the independent clauses usually follow the dependent clause, with the independent clause supplying the specifications for person, number, tense, aspect and/or mood for the dependent clauses (see Foley 1986:175–198, 2007:386–387). Concurrently, CCCs in Papuan languages are often characterized by some same-subject/different-subject switch reference system (see Aikhenvald and Stebbins 2007:245, 255; Foley 2000:383–384; Klamer and Ewing 2010:11; Pawley 2006:168).

Cross-linguistically, the main function of clause chaining is to describe a sequence of distinct but related events by encoding “differences of temporal relations between the clauses” (Foley 1986:180). Within this function, chaining constructions very commonly encode temporal sequentiality; that is, the events in a chaining construction are understood to be consecutive, with the order of the verbs mirroring the order in which the events occurred. Chaining construction may also, however, encode temporal simultaneity; that is, the events in a chaining construction are understood to be overlapping in time (see Farr 1999:19; Foley 1986:180).

As mentioned in §1, Papuan Malay makes pervasive use of elision. That is, in Papuan Malay verbal clauses in general syntactic arguments are readily elided if the referent’s identity is already known (for details see Kluge 2017:467–480). This also applies to syntactic arguments in CCCs, such as the subject argument *saya* ‘1SG’ in the second and third clause in (3), repeated as (133).

#### Compositional properties

- (129) Nofi, nanti **ko** kejar saya, **ko** liat, **ko** tunggu, **tong dua** bla  
 Nofi later 2SG chase 1SG 2SG see 2SG wait 1PL two split  
 ‘Nofi, in a moment **you** chase me, **you** observe (me), **you** wait, **we two** crack (the coconut) open’  
 [080917-004-CvHt.0001]
- (130) jadi pagi **saya** bangun, **sa** kas makang anjing  
 so morning 1SG wake.up 1SG CAUS eat dog  
**sa** pegang sa pu parang  
 1SG hold 1SG POSS machete  
 [About hunting wild pigs:] ‘so in the morning, **I** got up, **I** fed the dogs, **I** took my machete’ [080919-003-NP.0003]
- (131) **tong** potong hari itu, **tong** bagi buat kitorang  
 1PL cut day D.DIST 1PL divide for 1PL  
 [About hunting wild pigs:] ‘that day **we** cut up (the meat), **we** distributed (it)’ [080919-003-NP.0014]
- (132) ... kalo begitu suda, **ko** lagi naik, **tete** lagi turung  
 if like.that already 2SG again ascend grandfather again descend  
 bli pinang dulu  
 buy betel.nut be.prior  
 ‘[his grandfather said,] ‘... if it’s like that, well, **you** just climb up again, **I** (‘grandfather’) go down (to the market to) buy betel nuts for now’ [081109-005-JR.0008]
- (133) **saya** mulai siap~siap, **Ø** pegang jubi, **Ø** pegang dayung  
 1SG begin RDP~get.ready hold bow.and.arrow hold paddle  
 [About hunting wild pigs:] ‘**I**’m getting ready, (**I**) take my bow and arrows, (**I**) take an oar’ [080919-004-NP.0008]

Papuan Malay CCCs, however, do not share all identified cross-linguistic typical compositional properties of CCCs. Given its lack of inflectional morphology, the language does not make the typical distinction between independent and dependent clauses. Instead, the juxtaposed clauses remain of the same rank, as shown in (129)

to (132). (See Stassen's 1985:76–77 discussion of balancing and deranking languages.) Neither do Papuan Malay CCCs employ the typical Papuan trait of a concomitant switch reference system. Instead, chaining constructions allow same subjects, as in (130) and (131) (see also (134), (136) and (137)), or different subjects, as in (129) and (132) (see also (135) and (138)).

In terms of their compositional properties, Papuan Malay CCCs most often encode the temporal sequentiality of distinct but related events. In (129), for instance, the chained clauses describe four consecutive events related to two boys playing outside. In (134) and (135), each of the chained clauses depicts two sequential events related to a motorbike accident. In (136), the four sequential events relate to a visitor who looked in vain for food. Less often, chaining constructions signal temporal simultaneity, as in (137) and (138), with the chained clauses describing events that overlap in time.

Functional properties: Temporal sequentiality and simultaneity

- (134) **sa** jatu, **sa** rasa kepala pusing  
 1SG fall 1SG feel head be.dizzy/confused  
 [About a motorbike accident:] 'I fell, I felt a headache' [081015-005-NP.0019]
- (135) ... ah mama, **sa** kasi obat, **mama** minum  
 ah mother 1SG give medicine mother drink  
 [About a motorbike accident:] '[the doctor said to me,] 'ah Madam, I give (you) medicine, you ('mama') take (it)'' (Lit. 'mother drink') [081015-005-NP.0049]
- (136) **kaka** **Beni de** datang, **de** cari makangang, **de** taru  
 older.sibling Beni 3SG come 3SG search food 3SG put  
 piring, **de** duduk  
 plate 3SG sit  
 'older brother Beni he came, he looked for food, he put the plate (back because there was no food), he sat down' [081025-009a-Cv.0036]
- (137) adu, **sa** pu bahu sakit, **sa** pu pinggang sakit,  
 ouch! 1SG POSS shoulder be.sick 1SG POSS loins be.sick  
**sa** pu blakang sakit,  
 1SG POSS backside be.sick  
 [About a motorbike accident:] 'ow, my shoulder hurts, my loins hurt, my back hurts' [081015-005-NP.0032]
- (138) mama-ade, **ko** masak daging, **sa** biking papeda e?  
 younger.aunt 2SG cook meat 1SG make sago.porridge eh  
 [Cooking together:] 'younger aunt, you cook the meat, I make the sago porridge, eh?' [080921-001-Cv.0073]

#### 4 Verb sequences of indeterminate status

The discussion so far suggests that multiverb constructions in Papuan Malay can be readily identified as SVCs or as CCCs.

A typical example of a SVC is the verb sequence in (1), repeated as (139). This construction fulfills the SVC criteria discussed in §2.1. The verb sequence satisfies the criterion of verbhood: it is comprised of independent verbs, with the entire sequence having compositional semantics. The verb sequence also meets the criterion of monoclausality: it is characterized by a shared positive polarity, shared tense, aspect, and modality values, and shared arguments; it describes a single event; and it has the prosodic properties of a monoverbal clause with no intonation breaks or pauses occurring between the verbs. Furthermore, the sequence

fulfills the third criterion, namely the absence of any connecting morphology between its verbs. These features indicate that the verb sequence in (139) is a monoclausal SVC.<sup>11</sup>

The verb sequence in (2), repeated as (140), is a typical example of a CCC and satisfies the CCC criteria outlined in §3. The construction fulfills the criterion of multiclausality, in that each of the three verbs takes its own set of arguments; in this case the subjects are the same. The juxtaposed clauses remain of the same rank, given the Papuan Malay lack of inflectional morphology. The construction also fulfills the semantic criterion in that it describes a sequence of distinct but related events, in this case encoding temporal sequentiality.

Often however, verb sequences in Papuan Malay have an indeterminate status given that the language has no inflectional morphology and only very little productive morphology, while it makes pervasive use of argument elision. Due to this lack of overt formal marking, verb sequences rather commonly allow more than one syntactic analysis, in that they could be interpreted as monoclausal SVCs or as multiclausal CCCs. The verb sequence in (4) in §1, repeated as (141a), and the sequence in (21) in §2.2.2, repeated as (142a), for instance, were interpreted as monoclausal SVCs. As discussed below, however, one could also argue that both verb sequences are CCCs with elided subject arguments, as in (141ab) and (142b).

Verb sequences of indeterminate status

- (139) saya **bawa pulang** sabit  
 1SG bring go.home sickle  
 ‘I **brought** the sickle **home**’ [080922-002-Cv.0006]
- (140) langsung **sa** pegang, **sa** putar, **sa** cari  
 immediately 1SG hold 1SG turn.around 1SG search  
 ‘immediately **I** held (the plate), **I** turned around, **I** looked around’ [081011-005-Cv.0034]
- (141) a. sa **cepat~cepat lari berdiri liat** padahal ...  
 1SG RDP~be.fast run stand see whereas  
 ‘I ran **quickly** (and) **stood** (and) **looked** but ...’ [080921-002-Cv.0003]
- b. sa **cepat~cepat lari Ø berdiri Ø liat** padahal ...  
 1SG RDP~be.fast run stand see whereas  
 ‘I **ran quickly**, (I) **stood** (and I) **looked** but ...’ [080921-002-Cv.0003]
- (142) a. saya **pergi | bli** di kios, sa bli senter, batrey  
 1SG go buy at kios 1SG buy flashlight battery  
 [About hunting preparations:] ‘I **go** | (and) **buy** at the kiosk, I buy a flashlight, batteries’ [080919-004-NP.0004]
- b. saya **pergi Ø bli** di kios, sa bli senter, batrey  
 1SG go buy at kios 1SG buy flashlight battery  
 [About hunting preparations:] ‘I **go** (and I) **buy** at the kiosk, I buy a flashlight, batteries’ [080919-004-NP.0004]

Applying the criteria for identifying verb sequences as SVCs or CCCs (§2.2 and §3) to the verb sequences in (141) and (142) yields the following results.

As for the SVC criteria, both sequences satisfy the verbhood criterion, in that each of them is comprised of independent verbs with each construction having compositional semantics. Both sequences also fulfill the monoclausality criterion, in that each sequence is characterized by a shared positive polarity and a shared subject argument; there are no additional grammatical markers. Likewise, both sequences fulfill the third criterion, namely the absence of any connecting morphology between the verbs. In turn, given the shared subjects arguments, neither verb sequence fulfills the CCC criterion of multiclausality which requires that each

<sup>11</sup> As mentioned in §1, for the present study no grammaticality judgements tests with constructed examples were conducted for disambiguating types of multiverb constructions (see also Footnote 5).

verb takes its own set of arguments, corresponding to its own clause. These features suggest that both verb sequences should be analyzed as monoclausal SVCs and not as multiclausal CCCs.

The findings are less clear, however, when applying the criteria of eventhood and intonation. According to the SVC monoclausality criteria, a SVC describes a single event with the verb sequence having the prosodic properties of a monoverbal clause with no intonation breaks or pauses occurring between the verbs. According to the CCC criteria, a CCC describes a sequence of distinct but related events, encoding temporal sequentiality or simultaneity.

The verb sequence *pergi bli* ‘go (and) buy’ in (142) is a typical motion SVC with the entire construction depicting a single event.

This SVC interpretation of *pergi bli* ‘go (and) buy’ is not supported, however, by the intonation contour. The verb sequence does not have the required monoclausal intonation contour, given the pause between *pergi* ‘go’ and *bli* ‘buy’. This pause, in turn, suggests the interpretation of the verb sequence as a CCC with elided subject argument. In consequence, it is not quite clear whether the example in (142) should be interpreted as a SVC, as in (142a), or as a CCC, as in (142b).

The example in (141), by contrast, has a typical monoclausal intonation contour, indicating a SVC interpretation of the entire verb sequence. In terms of eventhood, however, the question presents itself, whether the four juxtaposed verbs *cepat~cepat lari berdiri liat* ‘run quickly stand look’ indeed depict one or several, albeit, related events. Hence, it also remains unclear whether the verb sequence in (141) should be interpreted as a SVC, as in (141a), or as a CCC with elided subject argument, as in (141b).

Given these ambiguities, both criteria, eventhood and intonation, are examined in more detail in §4.1 and §4.2, respectively.

#### 4.1 Eventhood

The conceptualization of SVCs as single events is considered by some scholars as a defining criterion, as outlined in ‘Eventhood’ in §2.1.2. That is, the individual events encoded by the verbal components are “somehow conceived as notably more commonly associated together in experience”, or they must “form a culturally important concatenation of events” (Bruce 1988:28). Other scholars, however, argue that the notion of “single event” is problematic and not practical to apply as it is highly subjective and culture-dependent.

The problematic nature of the notion of single eventhood as a defining criterion for SVCs also holds for verb sequences in Papuan Malay, as illustrated above with *cepat~cepat lari berdiri liat* ‘run quickly stand look’ in (141). The verb sequences in (1), repeated as (143), to (147), further exemplify this problem.

The verb sequence *bawa pulang* ‘bring go.home’ in (143) denotes a typical single event, as implied in (143a). As shown in (143b), this verb sequence cannot be interpreted as a CCC with elided subject argument that encodes a sequence of distinct but related events. Assuming an elided subject argument between *bawa* ‘bring’ and *pulang* ‘go.home’, as in (143b), would change the meaning of this utterance, rendering it meaningless and unacceptable. Hence, it can be concluded that *bawa pulang* ‘bring go.home’ is a SVC; it is a typical SVC.

SVC compositional criteria: Notion of eventhood

- (143) a. saya **bawa pulang** sabit  
 1SG bring go.home sickle  
 ‘I **brought** the sickle **home**’ [080922-002-Cv.0006]
- b. \*saya **bawa** Ø **pulang** sabit  
 1SG bring go.home sickle  
 ‘I **brought**, (I) **went home** (to/from) the sickle’
- (144) sa **duduk makang** dengang prempuang yang ...  
 1SG sit eat with woman REL  
 ‘I **sat** (and) **ate** with a woman who ...’ [080923-009-Cv.0060]

- (145) Foni tu, de **duduk**, de **makang** begitu  
 Foni D.DIST 3SG sit 3SG eat like.that  
 ‘Foni (EMPH), she **sat** (and) she **ate** like that’ [081011-005-Cv.0036]
- (146) baru pace de **pergi tanya**, adu Adolof ...?  
 and.then man 3SG go ask oh.no! Adolof  
 ‘and then the man **went** (and) **asked**, ‘oh no, Adolof ...?’ [081014-003-Cv.0025]
- (147) de **pergi** de **tanya** sama orang~orang yang ...?  
 3SG go 3SG ask to RDP~person REL  
 ‘he **went** (and) he **asked** people who ...’ [081011-022-Cv.0240]

In (144), the verb sequence is comprised of the two verbs *duduk makang* ‘sit eat’. In Papuan communities, the event of sitting and eating together is very “commonly associated together in experience” and forms a culturally most “important concatenation of events”, following Bruce’s (1988:28) defining conditions of eventhood (see ‘Eventhood’ in §2.1.2). This, in turn, suggests that in terms of eventhood the verb sequence *duduk makang* ‘sit eat’ is a SVC. In (145), however, *duduk makang* ‘sit eat’ is not depicted as a single event but as a set of distinct, albeit related events, clearly marked by the repetition of the pronoun *de* ‘3SG’. This, in turn, raises the question whether the verb sequence in (144) should indeed be analyzed as a SVC or rather as a CCC with elided subject argument.

In (146), the verb sequence is comprised of the two verbs *pergi tanya* ‘go ask’, with their juxtaposition suggesting their interpretation as a single event and therefore as a SVC. In (147), however, the same two verbs each take their own set of core arguments, namely *de* ‘3SG’, corresponding to their own clause. This, in consequence, raises the question whether the verb sequence in (146) should really be interpreted as a SVC or rather as a CCC with elided subject argument.

These examples suggest that in Papuan Malay it is difficult, and in many cases impossible, to make a clear distinction between SVCs and CCCs with elided subject arguments. In other words, the proposed cross-linguistic notion of eventhood does not work to make a clear distinction between Papuan Malay SVCs and CCCs.

#### 4.2 Intonation

Another generally accepted criterion of SVCs is that they have the intonational properties of monoverbal clauses, with no intonation breaks or pauses occurring between the verbs. Some scholars, however, submit that intonation is rather problematic as a defining criterion, as mentioned in ‘Intonation’ in §2.1.2. According to Bisang (2009:797), for instance, it “can reflect a vast number of other factors from phonology, syntax [...] and pragmatics”.

The problematic status of intonation as a defining criterion for SVCs also applies to Papuan Malay, as indicated above with *pergi bli* ‘go buy’ in (142). The verb sequences in (148) to (150), all three of which involve the sequence *pergi cari* ‘go search’, further illustrate this problem.

The verb sequence in (148) has a typical monoclausal intonation contour with no pause occurring between *pergi* ‘go’ and *cari* ‘search’, thus indicating that this verb sequence may be a SVC. During the same narrative, a few turns earlier, however, the same speaker produced the same verb sequence, this time, however, with an audible pause between *pergi* ‘go’ and *cari* ‘search’, as indicated with “|” in (149a). This pause marker suggests that this verb sequence may not be a SVC but rather a CCC with elided subject as indicated in (149b). At the same time, the sequence *pergi bli* ‘go buy’ remains semantically a typical “prior motion” construction.

In the verb sequence *mo pergi cari* ‘want go search’ in (150), there are also intonation breaks or pauses, indicated with “|” for a short pause and “||” for a longer pause. The first break, however, occurs in a rather unexpected place, namely between *mo* ‘want’ and *pergi* ‘go’. The optative modal verb *mo* ‘want’, however, always precedes the main verb. Hence, one would expect a pause between *mo pergi* ‘want to go’ and *kluar* ‘go out’ but not between *mo* ‘want’ and *pergi* ‘go’.

Intonation

- (148) kitorang **pergi cari** kayu bakar  
 1PL go search wood burn  
 [Household chores in the afternoon:] ‘we **go** (and) **look for** firewood’ [080924-001-Pr.0004]
- (149) a. torang **pergi | cari** kayu bakar lagi  
 1PL go search wood burn again  
 [Household chores in the afternoon:] ‘we **go** (and) **look for** firewood again’ [080924-001-Pr.0002]
- b. torang **pergi Ø cari** kayu bakar lagi  
 1PL go search wood burn again  
 [Household chores in the afternoon:] ‘we **go** (and we) **look for** firewood again’ [080924-001-Pr.0002]
- (150) kitong dua **kluar mo** || **pergi | cari** pinang  
 1PL two go.out want go search betel.nut  
 ‘the two of us **went out, wanting** (to) **go** (and) **look for** betel nuts’ [081006-009-Cv.0014]

These examples, especially the one in (150), demonstrate that in Papuan Malay it is also difficult, and in many cases, impossible, to draw a tight distinction between SVCs and CCCs with elided subject arguments based on intonation. That is to say, the widely-accepted cross-linguistic criterion of a monoclausal intonation contour does not work in Papuan Malay to distinguish SVCs from CCCs.

## 5 Summary and conclusions

Papuan Malay very commonly employs SVCs to encode complex events or to express grammatical categories. The identification of Papuan Malay verb sequences as monoclausal SVCs, however, is often less than straight forward. This is due to the structure of Papuan Malay which is characterized by little productive morphology, no inflectional morphology, and the pervasive use of syntactic argument elision. Hence, there are no overt formal properties that distinguish SVCs from CCCs with elided subject arguments. Moreover, the notion of eventhood and intonation are also problematic criteria for differentiating both construction types. In consequence, there is no tight structural and semantic distinction between SVCs and CCCs with elided subject arguments. Hence, Papuan Malay verb sequences often have an indeterminate status. That is, they could be interpreted as monoclausal SVCs or as multiclausal CCCs.

This indeterminate status of multiverb constructions is another example of a pertinent trait of Papuan Malay. Due to its structure, Papuan Malay does not oblige its speakers to employ particular structures if those are understood from the linguistic or extralinguistic context. This lack of formal properties that delineate one construction from another also applies to other types of constructions (Kluge 2017, 2018). There are, for instance, no formal distinctions between:

- Coordination relations and subordination/dependency relations (2017:537–553)
- Compounds and phrasal expressions (2017:178–183)
- Information-seeking questions and rhetorical questions (2018:89)
- Dynamic verbs and stative verbs (2017:468)

As a result of this lack of formal properties, Papuan Malay constructions often have an indeterminate status that allows more than one possible syntactic analysis. That is, their interpretation needs to be pragmatically inferred.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> A pragmatic inference is required, for instance, to distinguish the compound *orang-tua* ‘parent’ from the phrasal expression *orang tua* ‘old person’ given that neither phonological, morphological, morphosyntactic, nor semantic criteria allow the unambiguous classification of juxtaposed *orang* ‘person’ and *tua* ‘be old’ as a compound or phrasal expression. (For more details see Kluge 2017:178–183.)

As shown throughout this paper, this also applies to multiverb constructions in Papuan Malay that are neither typical SVCs nor typical CCCs: their interpretation also needs to be pragmatically inferred.

### List of abbreviations and conventions

Abbreviations and conventions			
1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person	PL	plural
CAUS	causative	POSS	possessive
D.DIST	demonstrative, distal	RDP	reduplicant
D.PROX	demonstrative, proximal	RECP	reciprocal
EMPH	emphasis / emphatic	REL	relativizer
IMP	imperative	SG	singular
L.DIST	locative, distal	VVV	vowel lengthening
L.MED	locative, medial		short pause (length not measured)
L.PROX	locative, proximal		longer pause (length not measured)
NEG	negation, negative	~	separates reduplicant and base

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