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2007 - CILLA III

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Serial Verb Constructions in Southeastern Tepehuan: a Uto-Aztecan language

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Palabras Claves: Southeastern Tepehuan, serial verbs, Uto-Aztecan language.

1. Introduction¹

According to Foley (1985:18), serial verb constructions (SVCs) are common in many languages, especially those of West Africa, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Papua New Guinea. These verbs in constructions share a common actor or object and they are merely juxtaposed, with no intervening conjunction. In addition, Lord (1993) points out that a crucial characteristic of SVCs is that the semantic and the pragmatic relationship between the verb phrases varies somewhat from one language to another one. An interesting example is founded in African languages, where one of the verbs in each sentence can be assigned a semantic function with respect to the other, while in the Mandarin sentences the relationship seems to be temporal and pragmatic.

Southeastern Tepehuan has some limited complex verb phrases formed by the combination of two verbs with no overt subordination or coordination markers. In addition, these constructions exhibit the following properties of SVCs: i. they share the same subject and markers of tense and aspect; ii. they contain two verbs without overt markers of coordination or subordination; iii. the verbs form a single predicate; iv. serialized verbs also occur alone in non-serial constructions; and v. the negation particle *cham* has scope over the two verbs. All these characteristics suggest that these expressions exhibit properties of a single event. It is interesting to note that Mesoamerican languages are not generally classified as serial verb languages. According to Zavala (2006:274), serial verb constructions have been attested only for Mixe-Zoquean languages, Gulf Nahuatl and a few Mayan languages.

In this paper, I attempt to provide a functional-typological analysis of this type of construction in Southeastern Tepehuan. In section 2, I provide some general characteristics of Southeastern Tepehuan. In section 3, I review some remarks about SVCs. In section 4, I provide the analysis of SVCs in Southeastern Tepehuan. In section 5, I summarize some main points of this paper.

The data cited for this work and subsequent analysis come from my last fieldwork (CONACYT² ref. 39777 (Summer 2006³)) with Virginia Flores, a native speaker of Southeastern Tepehuan. Also, this paper is supported by the reference grammar of

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³ Thanks to Dr. Nora England for the financial support received to do fieldwork on this language.

Thomas L. Willett (1991) *A Reference Grammar of Southeastern Tepehuan* and the unpublished dictionary by the same author.

2. Typological characteristics on Southeastern Tepehuan

Southeastern Tepehuan is a Uto-aztecan language of the Tepiman family, spoken in the region of Durango, Mexico, principally in the Ejido de Santa María, Ocotán and Xonocostle. This is a mountainous region in the heart of the Sierra Madre Occidental. According to the 2001 Census, there are about 25,544 native speakers of Tepehuan. Southeastern Tepehuan is related to Northern Tepehuan, which is spoken in Southern Chihuahua, México, to the Pima and Papago languages, and to the now extinct Tepecano (Mason 1916). The native speakers of Southeastern Tepehuan called themselves *o'dham* “people of the mountains.”

2.1. Constituent order typology

Southeastern Tepehuan shows various features that are prototypical of VO languages: (a) the noun is followed by the genitive; and (b) a complement clause follows the main verb. In addition, ST also exhibits OV features such as (a) postpositions and (b) adjectives occurring before the noun.

ST can be characterized as a fusional language with a small number of prefixes and many suffixes. A simple sentence in this language consists of a verb word plus affixes. According to Willett (1991:39), the basic word order in this language is verb initial, which is less common cross-linguistically (3%). However, the texts that I have been analyzing, which are from the same variety of Tepehuan, also show a tendency towards SVO order. This order is attributed to the fact that Southeastern Tepehuan speakers tend to move the subject to initial position in order to topicalize it. Data showing these different order patterns are illustrated in (1) and (2). In (1) the order is SVO, *Juan ate tortillas*. In (2), in which the order is VOS, the sentence is preceded by a peripheral complement.

	S	V	O	
(1)	Juan	juu	gu	tɨmkahl
	Juan	eat.PAS	ART	tortillas ⁴
	‘Juan ate tortillas’			

	V	O	S		
(2)	mo'-ram	das-tu'	gu	bai'ñdya-kar	dyi ubí
	head-up	put-MOT	ART	throw.water-thing	ART woman
	‘The woman is carrying the water with her head’				

⁴ Abbreviations: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, APPL = applicative, ART = article, COP = copula, COPR = co-preterit, CAUS = causative, CONJ = conjunction, DEM = demonstrative, DUR = durative, IMPF = imperfective, FUT = future, MID = middle, MOT = motor, NEG = negation, PST = past, POSP = postposition, PL = plural, PUNT = punctual, PROG = progressive, REFL = reflexive, RECP = reciprocal, RDP = reduplication, REP = repetition, RLZ = realization, REL = relative, SG = singular, TEMP = temporal, UNP = unexpected situation.

2.2. Pronoun case

Southeastern Tepehuan does not have morphological case. This language shows its grammatical relations by means of the subject and object pronouns, and it has a nominative-accusative alignment system. This is shown in the pronominal system of subject and object pronouns presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. Pronouns and pronominal affixes

	Free Subject	Subject Suffix ⁵	Object Prefix	Reflexive/ Reciprocal Prefix
1SG	añ	-’iñ, -(a)ñ	(ji)ñ-	(ji)ñ-
2SG	ap	-’ap, -(a)p	(ju)m-	(ju)m-
3SG	guñi	-Ø	Ø-	(ju)m-
1PL	ach	-’ich, -(a) ch	(ji)ch-	(ji)ch-
2PL	apim	-’(a)pim	jam-	(ju)m-
3PL	am	-’(a)m	ja-	(ju)m-

In (3) an intransitive sentence with the verb *walk* is presented; the subject pronoun is the second person singular *ap*. In the example in (4), we can observe the same second person singular pronoun *ap* marking the subject of the verb *ni’i’n* ‘see’; the direct object is marked by the pronoun *jiñ* the first person singular pronoun. Example (5) shows the pronoun *ap* as the agent of the ditransitive sentence and the pronoun *jiñ* as the beneficiary of the sentence *ap jiñ maamít gu tumin* ‘you gave me money’. Thus, the examples (3) and (4) show that Southeastern Tepehuan has a nominative accusative alignment system, because the set of pronouns show the alignment illustrated below, where the subject of the intransitive behaves the same way as the agent of the transitive and different from the patient.

Intransitive

- (3) **ap** oirí
 2SG walk
 ‘You walk’

Transitive

- (4) **ap jiñ-ni’i’n**
 2SG 1SG-see
 ‘You see me’

Ditransitive

- (5) **ap jiñ-maa-mít** gu tumin
 2SG 1SG-give-PFV ART money
 ‘You gave me money’

⁵ The subject suffix in ST is optional, but object agreement is required, which according to Croft (2006:106) is more likely to have verbal agreement for subject than object.

- (6) **ap jum-saba'lh** gok tatoxkolh
 2SG 3SG-give.PAS two pigs
 'You bought him two pigs'

The examples above also present evidence that Southeastern Tepehuan is characterized as a primary object language, which treats the indirect object of a ditransitive sentence in the same way as the object/patient of the transitive sentence even when the theme and the goal are both animate, as we can observe in (6).

3. Some remarks about serial verb constructions

Sebba (1987:1) points out that there was a lot of confusion between the terms 'serial verbs' and 'co-verbs' in the early 1980's. This author refers specifically to the case of Chinese Mandarin, where Li and Thompson used the term 'co-verbs' to account for verbs with grammatical modifiers, while SVCs were restricted to cases where the link between the two verbs is temporal rather than one being a grammatical modifier of the other one. However, recently, Shibatani (ms) argues that the formal difference between these two types of complex predicates does not warrant separate treatments. This argument is not developed in detail in this paper.

Sebba defined SVC as follows: "serial verb refers to a surface string of verbs or verb-like or verb phase-like items, which occur within what appears to be a single event". Some examples are illustrated below:

Igbo(Igbo, Benue-Congo, Niger-Congo: Lord 1975:27)

- (7) ó **tì-wà-rà** étéré à
 he hit-split.open-tense plate the
 'He shattered the plate'

Yoruba (Bamgbose 1974:17)

- (8) ó **mù iwé wá**
 he too k book come
 'He brought the book'⁶

In addition, the previous definition follows an inventory of other criteria that define a SVC because, as Sebba notes in his work, there are some languages which have what appears to be more than one verb within a single sentence, such as English and Dutch. Both languages have constructions in which two or possibly more verbs may occur in the same clause, but in these cases, one of the verbs usually shows dependency on the other verb, either by some sort of morphological marking or by position. Christaller (1875) describe this as *essential combination* and *accidental combination*. In the first one, one of the verbs depend on the other one, while in the *accidental combination*, two or more predicates expressing different successive actions have the same subject and are merely joined together without conjunction (SVCs).

⁶ Examples taken from Aikhenvald (2006:2).

In the definition of SVCs, there is a big effort to unify the formal and semantic criteria in order to identify this type of clause. Sebba mentions in his work that SVCs have at least the following properties shown in table (2):

Table 2. SVCs Characteristics (Sebba 1987:87)

-
-
- a. They have only one overtly expressed (syntactic) subject;
 - b. They contain two or more verbs without overt markers of coordination or subordination;
 - c. The actions expressed by the verbs are either simultaneous or consecutive, and all verbs are interpreted as having the same tense;
 - d. Negation, whether marked once or more than once, applies to the whole string;
 - e. Tense, aspect, mood and polarity (or whichever of these a particular language has) are either marked only once in the string, or else each verb in the string is marked as having the same tense, aspect, mood and polarity;
 - f. Either the semantic subject of V_i is the subject of V_{i+1} , or the object of V_i is the semantic subject of V_{i+1} .

Unfortunately, this set of six criteria does not cover the universal phenomenon of SVCs, since there are some languages that can include all these characteristics without the speaker conceiving of the sentence as a single event. Foley and Olson (1985) provide more evidence in the intent to unify the characterization of SVCs. In their treatment of SVCs, they agree with all the previous characteristics, but they also include some new criteria to identify this type of clause from multi-clausal constructions such as the introduction of the adverbial as another cue to identify SVCs. I list below the characteristics that were added to the treatment of SVCs. It is important to mention that Foley and Olson do not differ with Sebba previous observations. They are just trying to narrow the definition of SVCs across languages.

Table 3. SVCs Characteristics (Foley & Olson 1985)

-
-
- i. SVCs and multi-clausal coordinated structures contrast in meaning. The sequence of verbs are associated, the second verb is always a result or goal of the first verb.
 - ii. In many cases, one of the clauses to be posited as underlying SVC is ungrammatical by itself⁷.
 - iii. Intonation patterns can also be a cue for distinguishing SVCs, since these show us phonological evidence to prove that we have one single word.
 - iv. Adverbial operators: they must modify both verbs simultaneously.

⁷ This argument seems to contradict the definition of SVCs, however is not contradicting it. Foley mentions (1985:22) that in some languages such as Igbo, you can have an SVC by the combination of three verbs: hit-split-open, which all these verbs interact with the object *éféré* 'plate'. In Igbo you can have those verbs by themselves; however you cannot have the verb *tì* 'hit' interacting with the object 'plate'. This would be ungrammatical in Igbo.

- v. A classification of common verbs in SVCs: motion, posture, stative, process.
- vi. In some languages, SVCs can express a case-role relationship such as locative, benefactive and so on.

An example of the adverbial criteria, it has been observed by Foley and Olson (1985:39) in Barai, which the adverbial functions as a test for SVCs. This adverbial works in the same way as the negation, they need to have scope over the two verbs in SVCs. In (9) we have a sequence of two verbs, but the adverbial operator has scope only over one of the verbs, in this case over the verb *fi* 'sitting'. This is not a characteristic of SVCs. In (10) the adverbial operator *isema* 'wrongly' has scope over both verbs, which follows the definition of SVCs.

Barai (Foley 1985:39)

No SVCs

- (9) fu [isema fi] fase isoe
 he wrongly sit letter write
 'He sat wrongly **and** wrote a letter'

SVCs

- (10) fu fase [isema fi isoe]
 he letter wrongly sit write
 'He wrongly sat writing a letter'

Aikhenvald (2006:1) integrates in her work previous ideas about SVCs (Foley and Olson 1985, Durie 1997, Crowley 2002, etc.), having as a result the following definition:

“An SVC is a sequence of verbs which act together as a single predicate, without any overt marker of coordination, subordination, or syntactic dependency of any other sort. They are monoclausal; their intonation properties are the same as those of a monoverbal clause and they just have one tense, aspect, and polarity value. SVCs may also share core and other arguments. Each component of an SVC must be able to occur on its own right”.

She also mentions that properties of SVCs in an individual language are expected to have most characteristics, but not necessarily all, which suggest that a language can be more or less like the prototype construction.

In addition to this, Aikhenvald (2006:3) proposes four parameters to classify SVCs, which capture the main characteristics of this type of construction. The first parameter is composition, which divides SVCs with respect to the semantic composition

of the verbs into ‘symmetrical’ and ‘asymmetrical’. Aikeinvald (2006:22) defines that in the first one, SVCs consist of sequence of verbs that have the same status in that none of them determines the semantic or syntactic properties of the construction. While ‘asymmetrical’ consists of one verb from an unrestricted-open class, and another from a semantically restricted-closed class such a motion or posture verb.

The second parameter is ‘contiguity’ versus ‘non-contiguity’ of the verb mailing up the SVCs. Some examples of this are shown below. The example in (11) follows the non-contiguity parameter since we can have the object between the verbs, while the example in (12) follows the contiguity parameter.

Non-contiguity

Taba (Austronesian: Bowden, 2001:297)


- (11) n=babas **welik** n=mot do
 3sg=bite pig 3sg=die real
 ‘It bit the pig dead’


Contiguity

Igbo(Lord 1975: 25)

- (12) ó **bù-lá-rá** íté
 he carry-go home-fact pot
 ‘He carried the pot home’

The third parameter is ‘wordhood of component’, which indicates that SVCs may or may not form independent grammatical or phonological words. Foley and Olson (1985:39) present a nice example of this in Barai, a Papuan language of Papua New Guinea, which is presented in (13) and (14). In the example in (13), phonological evidence shows that the two verbs are not one phonological word, since we have two peaks (pauses) between the verbs. In contrast, in (14), we can observe that there is a single word.

- (13) 
 fu fi fase isoe
 he sit letter write
 ‘He sat down and wrote a letter’

- (14) 
 fu fase fi isoe
 he letter sit write
 ‘He sat writing a letter’

The fourth parameter is ‘marking’, which allows SVCs to be marked by tense, aspect, negation and so on just one time per construction.

4. Serial verbs in Southeastern Tepehuan

In Southeastern Tepehuan there are some constructions that contain two verbs without the overt connective particles *gio* ‘and’ or *na* ‘subordinator’. The two verbs in this construction in ST do not show any kind of dependency. Some properties that characterize this type of construction in ST are: (i) no coordination marker, (ii) the two verbs share the same subject, (iii) they share the same tense and aspect markers and (iv) the negation particle *cham* has scope over the two verbs, as we will see in more detail in the next sections.

4.1. SVCs versus coordinated constructions

In ST there is a clear distinction in meaning between SVCs and coordinated constructions or subordinated clauses. Serial constructions express a single event, where the actions of verbs are simultaneously related and they are conceived by the speaker to be one event. However, in a coordinated or subordinated expression, the verbs are perceived by the speaker to be two different events with different references time, and the verbs express some morphological dependency. Some examples that illustrate this are presented in (15) through (18).

No coordination

SVCs

(15) gu chi-chioñ **jimut-am** **tu-tusa-im** gu tai
 ART RDP:PL-man move/walk-3PL DUR-extinguish-PROG ART fire
 ‘The men walked extinguishing the fire’

(16) * gu chi-chioñ **jimut-am gio tu-tusai-m** gu tai
 ‘The men walked and extinguished the fire’

Coordinated Construction

(17) gu chi-chioñ bopami-t **gio** tusaa gu tai
 ART RDP:PL-man run-PST CONJ extinguish ART fire
 ‘The men run and extinguish the fire’

Subordinated Clause

(18) gu chichioñ bopami-t **na-mit** tusa-m gu tai
 ART RDP:PL-man run-PST SUB-PST extinguish-3SG ART fire
 ‘The men run to extinguish the fire’

4.2. Assymetrical SVCs in ST

According to Aikhenvald’s parameter, SVCs in this language can be characterized as ‘assymetrical’, because they are restricted to verbs of motion, posture and process. ST allows the following combination of verbs: (a) INTRANSITIVE + INTRANSITIVE; (b)

INTRANSITIVE + TRANSITIVE; and (c) TRANSITIVE + TRANSITIVE. In addition, these constructions follow the ‘contiguity’ parameter, since they always occur next to each other. Some examples that illustrate this are shown in (19) through (24). An interesting aspect occurs when an intransitive verb is involved in a serial verb construction. If the SVC is combined by two intransitive verbs, the movement verb or posture verb always occurs in the second position, some examples are showed in (19) and (20). While if an intransitive is combined with a transitive verb in a SVC, then the intransitive occurs the first position, as we can observe in (21).

Intransitive + Intransitive

(19) gu ahlii **suaki-t mii** dii'n bui ja'k
 ART boy cry-PST run.PST mother toward
 ‘The boy ran crying to his mother’

(20) gu ubii **suaki-t bi**
 ART woman cry.PST stay.PST
 ‘The woman stayed crying’

Intransitive + Transitive

a. Movement:

(21) gu chioñ **mii biñora-t** gu jun
 ART man run.PST carry-PST ART corn
 ‘The man ran carrying the corn’

b. Postures:

(22) daakat tusom [sit + sew]
 (23) bo'kat tuku [lay down + eat]

Transitive + Transitive

(24) gu chioñ **mua gñbimuk** jodai-ki'n
 ART hombre kill.PST hit.PST rock-POSP
 ‘The man killed him, hitting him with a rock’

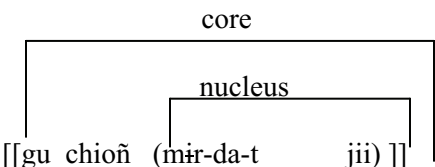
Following Lichtenberk' (2006:258) SVC analysis for Toqabaqia, an Oceanic language spoken on the Island of Malaita, the asymmetrical SVCs show some behavior similar to that of ST. In both languages, it is the case that in some SVC constructions, one of the verbs is the semantic head, which encodes the event, and the other verb is a modifier, which expresses the manner in which the event takes place. A similar observation is made by Foley and Olson (1985:19). They notice that the second verb in a SVC is always in some sense a further development, result or goal of the first verb in the construction, which also seems to be the case of ST if we observe the examples presented above.

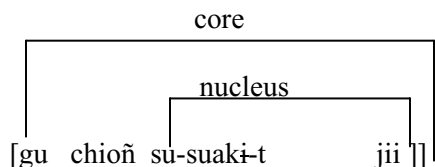
In addition, as I mentioned before, SVCs in Southeastern Tepehuan show some restrictions in the selection of the verbs, for example we cannot have two verbs from the same category [i.e. motions verb], while in a coordinated construction this type of combination is allowed, as we can observe in the ungrammatical example in (25).

- (25) *gu ahlii m̄l-chu natutdak-im
 ART boy run-DUR jump-PROG
 The boy runs jumping
- (26) gu ahlii m̄l-chu **gio** natutdak-im
 ART boy run-DUR CONJ jump-PROG
 ‘They boy is running and jumping’

4.3. Shared arguments, tense and aspect

Foley and Olson (1985:37) mention that SVCs form a single unit or complex nucleus, where all core and peripheral layer arguments are shared equally by all verbs in the nucleus. ST follows this general characteristic of SVCs, as we can observe in the examples in (27) and (28) presented below. In both examples, the nucleus shows agreement with the actor *gu chioñ* ‘the man’.

- (27) 
 [[gu chioñ (m̄r-da-t jii)]]
 ART man run-CONT-PST move.PST
 ‘The man went running’

- (28) 
 [gu chioñ su-suaki-t jii]
 ART man RED⁸-cry- PST:3SG move.PST
 ‘The man went crying’

In addition, we can observe in the case of (29) that the nucleus also shares the same instrument *jodai* ‘the rock’, this can be prove it by the position of the argument in the clause. ST always posits the object after the verb in a simple clause. In (29) the instrument is located after the compound verb, while in (30) the instrument *gu jodai* ‘the rock’ is located after the first verb *k̄iyasa* ‘hit’.

⁸ In ST reduplication in verb expresses the aspectual meaning of iterative.

- core
-
- (29) gu chioñ **mua** **gibimuk** jodai-kin
 ART man kill. PST hit. PST rock-POSP
 ‘The man killed hitting him with a rock’
- (30) gu ahlii kiiyasa [**gu jodai**] nii-dha-t [**gu diin**]
 ART child throw.PST ART rock see-APPL-PST ART mother
 ‘The child through the rock looking at his mother’

SVCs are monoclausal and they do not allow morphological markers that indicate a syntactic dependency on their component or verbs. This is one of the crucial criteria to distinguish SVCs. According to Aikhenvald (2006:8), a language may mark tense and aspect, mood or evidentiality on every verb like in Lango or these categories are marked one per SVC like in Khwe, Cantonese and Eastern Kayah Li.

SVCs in Southeastern Tepehuan show the same tense in both verbs, which can be mark by morphology or by the other mechanisms such as lengthening of the vowel or by a suppletive form of the verb. However, aspect is not a straightforward issue. ST has characteristics of both groups mentioned in the previous paragraph, since we can have one aspectual morpheme per SVC or we can have the aspectual markers in both. Examples that illustrate this are shown below. In (31) and (32) both verbs are in past tense; however, the second verb is the one that carries the aspectual marker *-tu*, which refer to duration. In (33) both verbs have reference time in the past and each one is coded by the durative aspectual marker *-tu*.

- (31) gu ubii daaka-t tu-som
 ART woman sit-PST DUR-sew.PST
 ‘The woman was sewing sitting’
- (32) gu baak bo’ka-t tu-kua
 ART cow rest.PST DUR-eat .PST
 ‘The cow was eating lying down (resting)’
- (33) gu ahlii tu-ku’a-da-t tu-a’ga
 ART child DUR-eat-CONT-PST DUR-talk.PST
 ‘The child talked eating’

The assignment of the aspectual markers in Southeastern Tepehuan is optional, not obligatory such as the case of Mandarin (Smith 1997). This suggests that the occurrence of the aspectual morpheme on the verb depends if the speakers want to be more detail about the situation. Verbs such as ‘eat’ or ‘talk’ usually take the durative aspectual prefix *tu-*, because those activities are conceived by the speaker to happened over a long period of time. However, the assignment of aspect in ST needs further investigation.

4.4. Negative polarity value

Negation in a serial verb construction can be marked once or more than once, but it has to apply to the whole string. The ST negative particle *cham* can be used in a SVC. The negation test indicates that the negative particle must have scope over the sequence of verb, which confirms the idea of as single event. In this case, we can observe in the example in (34) that the negative particle *cham* is modifying both verbs: *m̄rdat* ‘run’ and *jii* ‘move’. The speaker’s intuition confirms that the negative particle can not negate only one of the verbs. Another example is illustrated in (35) because, where the negation test also has scope over the two verbs.

SVCs

- (34) gu chioñ [**cham m̄r-da-t** **jii**]
 ART man NEG run-CONT-PST move.PST
 ‘The man did not go running’

SVCs

- (35) Juan [**cham jum-jīp-da-t** **oiri**]
 John NEG 3sg-rest-CONT-PST walk.PST
 ‘John walks without resting’

While in (36) the negation test indicates that the particle *cham* only has scope over the predicate ‘eat’ and not over both verbs. Another example is presented in (37), where the particle *cham* has scope only over the verb *ua’nan* ‘write’. In the case of the construction in (37), we don’t have the conjunction *gio* as in (36), instead they use the particle *ku:gu* ‘but’.

No SVCs:

- (36) jim-da-t gio [**cham ko’-im**] gu manzan
 walk-CONT-PST CONJ NEG eat-PROG ART apple
 ‘(he) was walking and (he) was not eating apple’
- (37) añ daibok [*ku:gu* **cham** tu-ua’nan-ich]
 1SG sit.PST but NEG DUR-write.PST-1SG
 ‘I sit down, but I did not write’

4.5. Adverbial Test

Another criteria to determine whether or not a language has SVC, is the adverbial test. The position of the adverbial in ST is always before the verb. The SVC in (38) contrasts with the Non-SVC example in (39); in (38) the adverbial has scope over the two verb, while in (39) only has scope over the verb *daibo* ‘sit’.

- (38) jaroi’ [**jotmatda’** ḡibimuk mua]
 someone quickly hit.PST kill.PST
 ‘Someone quickly hit killed him’

- (39) añ [jotmatda' daibo] gio u'anan-ich ma'n gu u'uan
 1SG quickly sit.PST CONJ write.PST one ART document
 'I quickly sit down and wrote a document'

4.6. Resultative SVCs

Following Aikhenvald (2006:19), constructions that involve a resultative action without any shared arguments are a rare type of SVCs. These SVCs are reminiscent of cause-effect serialization. In ST we can find a resultative construction, which is not very common in this language, but in this case the verb shares arguments. In the example of (40) V₂ 'cry' refers to the effect of V₁ 'laugh'; both verbs are intransitive. While, in the example in (41), we have the opposite order: V₁ 'loose' refers to the effect of V₂ 'break; in addition both verbs are transitive.

- (40) gu ahlii gilhim **suaki-mik ma-jimo**
 ART girl a lot cry-IMP UNP-laugh⁹
 'The girl cried from laughing so much'

- (41) añ **mai'bua-** gu bhotella **jaiba-**
 1SG loose.FUT ART bottle break.FUT
 'I throw the bottle breaking it'

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, it is unusual for a Uto-Aztecan language to exhibit Serial Verb Constructions. In ST, these SVCs are characterized as asymmetrical, because they are restricted to the combination of two verbs of a particular type: motion, posture, process verbs. ST allows three combinations of verbs: (a) intransitive + intransitive; (b) intransitive + transitive; and (c) transitive + transitive. Motion verbs are the most productive in Southeastern Tepehuan SVCs, which follows Aikheinvold predictions. In some cases, one of the verbs in a SVC involves the expression of manner, while the other one encodes an action, a path [motion verbs] or in some cases a result.

In addition, these SVCs follow the parameter of contiguity, in other words this combination always occurs in sequence and we can not have anything between these verbs. Other general characteristics of SVCs in ST are the following: they show no overt connectives. These types of constructions show the combination of only two verbs, which share the same subject. In addition, these constructions share tense and aspect markers. The absence of a subordinate marker shows that there is a high degree of integration between those two verbs, in which they are conceived by the speaker to be a single event. The analysis that is presented here shows that ST behaves more likely with respect to the characteristics of SVCs found cross-linguistically.

⁹ UNP is used in the glosses as unexpected event.

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