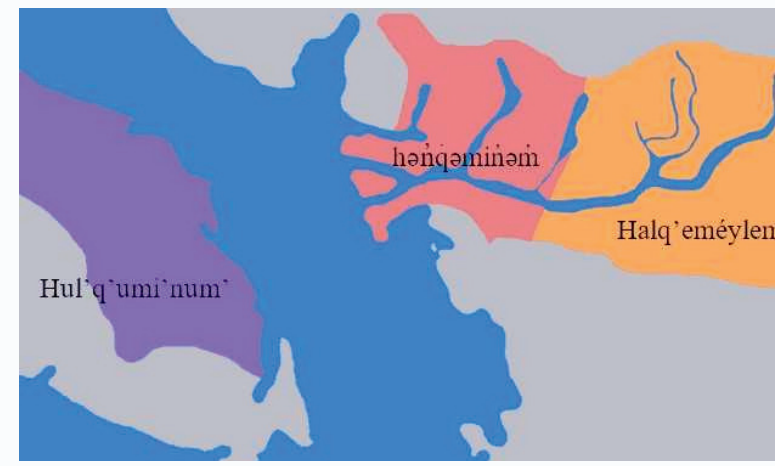


Voice, valence, and Hul'q'umi'num' Salish switch-function serial verb constructions

Lauren Schneider | Simon Fraser University | leschnei@sfu.ca
Rosemary Webb | University of Victoria | rosemarywebb@uvic.ca

The Hul'q'umi'num' language

- There are 23 Salish languages.
- Hul'q'umi'num' is the Island dialect of Halkomelem (Central Salish).



Are there SVCs in Salish?

- Hul'q'umi'num' makes frequent use of multiple verbs in a row in discourse.
- (Schneider 2021, 2023b)
- Verb serialization is attested in a handful of other Central Salish languages.
- (cf. Campbell 2023, Montler 2008)
- No clause boundary between the verbs:

(1) a. ni? =cən xʷəʔaləm ʔiməš.
DIST.AUX=1SG.SUB return walk
'I walked back.' (return + walk)

b. *ni? xʷəʔaləm=cən ʔiməš.
DIST.AUX return =1SG.SUB walk

Serial verb constructions (SVCs)

- SVCs are monoclausal constructions involving multiple independent verbs with no linking element of coordination or subordination.
- In a **switch-function SVC**, the object of V1 is the subject of V2

Hul'q'umi'num' SVCs

- Matching transitivity
 - **INTR-INTR**, as in (1), share a subject,
 - and **TR-TR** share both subject and object arguments.
- Mismatching transitivity
 - **INTR-TR**, as in (2), share a subject, and the transitive verb adds an object in the the argument structure
 - **TR-INT**: switch-function

Mixed-transitivity SVCs

(2) səw̌ čəm̌ ťəw̌nił̌ kʷən-ət-əš ťeý̌ ʔeq̌ ťə ʂəptəň.
N.CN jump PRO.DT take-TR-3SUB DT long DT knife
'And then the young man jumped [and] grabbed a long knife.' (EW)

(3) ni? čeləm̌-ət-əš kʷθə sq̌əmeý̌ wəwəʔəš.
DIST.AUX hear-TR-3SUB DT dog bark
'S/he heard the dog bark.' (DL 2023)

- (2) consists of an INTR verb followed by a TR verb, where the subject argument is shared by both verbs: **FIGURE 1**.
- (3) consists of a TR verb followed by an INTR verb, where the **object** of V1 is simultaneously the **subject** of V2;
 - The shared argument is the *stimulus of perception*, **FIGURE 2**, and
 - V2 is intransitive and **agent-oriented**.

(4) *ni?=cən ləm̌-nəx̌ θə q̌em̌i? kʷən-ət-əš ťə sitəň.
DIST.AUX=1SUB see-LCTR DT.F girl take-TR-3SUB DT basket
Intended: 'I saw the girl take the basket.' (DL 2023)

(5) *ni? čeləm̌-ət-əš kʷθə ʔapəlš q̌w̌əš.
DIST.AUX hear-TR-3SUB DT apple fall.into.water
Intended: 'S/he heard the apple fall into the water.' (DL 2023)

- (4) and (5) illustrate that not all types of verbs can serve as V2 in a switch-function SVC:
 - (4) excludes **transitives**, and
 - (5) excludes **patient-oriented** verbs, e.g. *hiləm* 'fall', *q̌w̌ix̌* 'miss'.
 - Other **agent-oriented** verbs were grammatical as a switch-function V2: e.g. *yənəm* 'laugh' and *taǩw̌* 'fly'.

INTR	TR
Subject _i	Object
Agent	Patient

Figure 1 | Same-subj. INTR-TR

TR	INTR
Subject	Object _i
Agent	Patient

Figure 2 | Switch-function

	V2
Agent-oriented intr.	✓
Patient-oriented intr.	✗
Transitive	✗

Table 1 | Switch-function V2 types

Passive

(6) nem̌ həyaʔ-st-əm̌ ʔəyq̌-ət-əm̌ sə̌š ʔəw̌ θəx̌w̌.
go.AUX leave-CS-PAS pin-CS-PAS N.AUX.3POS CN disappear
'He was taken away, pinned down, and he disappeared.' (ET 28247)

- (6) is an example of pair of passivized transitives;
 - The argument structure of the verbs is identical: **FIGURE 3**.

(7) səw̌ nem̌ tqa-st-əm̌ nem̌ ʔə ťə stələw̌.
N.CN go.AUX block-CS-PAS go.DIR OBL DT river
'So he was intercepted going on the river.' (MG 1677)

- (7) contains a passive followed by an intransitive.
 - The shared argument is the **syntactic subject** of both verbs: **FIGURE 4**;
 - The subject is not explicit and is recoverable from the discourse.

(8) ʔeʔ̌ wəť nem̌ kʷən-ət-əm̌ θə sleniʔ̌ ʔə-ʔ̌ John.
too then go.AUX take-TR-PAS DT.F woman OBL-DT John
'John went and grabbed the woman.'
* 'The woman went and was grabbed by John.' (Gerds 1988: 861)

(9) səw̌ ʔaǩw̌ taan-t-əm̌ ťeý̌.
N.CN go.home leave.someone-TR-PAS DM.M
'And so they went home, he was left (by them).' (PM 32507)

- (8) consists of an auxiliary followed by a passive.
 - In contrast with (7), it is not a syntactic subject that is shared but the **semantic agent**: **FIGURE 5**.
 - (Gerds 1988b)
- Similarly, (9) is made up of an intransitive verb followed by a passive.
 - There is no shared syntactic argument, but there is a shared **semantic referent** (recoverable from the context): **FIGURE 6**.

TR.PAS	TR.PAS
Subject	Object>Subject
Agent	Patient

Figure 3 | Two passivized verbs

TR.PAS	INTR
Subject	Object>SUB _i
Agent	Agent

Figure 4 | Same-subj. PAS-INTR.

AUX	TR.PAS
Subject	Subject>OBL
Agent _i	Patient

Figure 5 | Same-agent AUX-PAS.

INTR	TR.PAS
Subject	Subject
Agent _i	Patient

Figure 6 | Same-agent INTR-PAS.

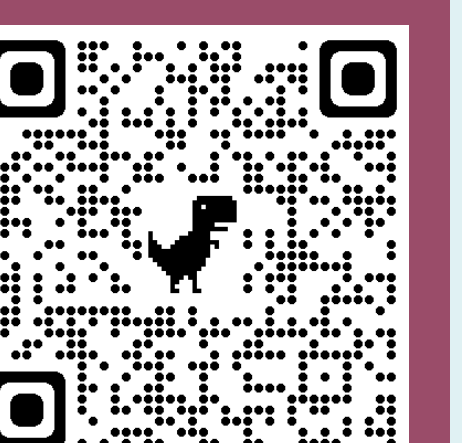
Discussion

- Same-subject, same-agent SVCs are by far the most common: (1), (2), and (6).
 - These can express more varied semantic domains and have more flexible word orders.
 - (cf. Schneider 2022, 2023a)
- SVCs involving non-identical subjects (e.g., cumulative subject & switch-function) function in restricted semantic domains and exhibit rigid word orders.
- The literature disagrees on whether constructions without shared arguments can be considered SVCs.
 - Tao (2009) analyzes switch-function constructions in Mandarin Chinese as SVCs, which behave similarly to Hul'q'umi'num' switch-function constructions.
 - Haspelmath (2016: 310): "an SVC cannot have two different agents"
 - Aikhenvald (2018: 45) includes all variations on argument/referent sharing in the inventory of SVCs.
- Under the current analysis, all of these constructions are being treated as SVCs.

Conclusion

- Salish languages have a complex syntax-semantics interface:
 - (cf. Beck 2000; Gerds 1988a)
 - Subject-sharing between verbal elements in the same clause is not required—(8) & (9).
- This study sheds light on the Hul'q'umi'num' SVC syntax-semantics interface by revealing that serialized verbs may share either a syntactic subject or a semantic referent.
- Verb serialization is unexpected and understudied in Salish languages and thus analyzing these structures makes new contributions to both Salish and SVC literature.

References & Acknowledgments



SFU

University of Victoria Linguistics