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are nearly 2,300 tokens, and nearly 300 different noun collocates that occur two times or more. The same is true for IGE-GB, the synchronic corpus. There are only twenty-eight tokens of *crack* as a noun, and only two of the noun collocates occur two times or more. This is of course much less than in a corpus like COCA, where there are nearly 6,000 tokens and 1,275 of the noun collocates occur two times or more. This limitation in terms of lexically oriented searches is not a serious criticism of ICE-GB and the DCPSE, however, since they never really make the claim that the corpora can or should be used for anything besides grammatical research.

In terms of the big picture, we note that on the website for IGE-GB and the DCPSE, it suggests that the two corpora 'will permit research into synchronic and diachronic grammatical variation' and that the DCPSE 'will be a major new resource for linguists interested in "current change"'. In other words, the corpora can be used to examine changes from the 1960s to the 1990s (via the DCPSE) and to compare different genres from the 1990s (via IGE-GB). If one looks at high-frequency features such as tense, aspect, mood, voice, modals, and pronominal usage (features that have already been exhaustively studied with other small corpora of English), then this is probably true. In fact, major publications to this effect are beginning to appear (see Leech et al. 2009). But our sense is that such diachronic and genre-based investigations of medium- and low-frequency syntactic constructions (as well as most lexically oriented queries) would be very difficult with these small one-million-word corpora.

In summary, ICE-GB and DCPSE fulfill a very useful niche in the world of English corpora. For high-frequency constructions and structures, the quality of the tagged corpora and the well-designed corpus interface will allow researchers to carry out advanced, fine-grained analyses of English syntax that would be difficult or impossible with almost any other corpora.

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Serial verb constructions: A cross-linguistic typology. Ed. by ALEXANDRA Y. AIKHENVALD and R. M. W. DIXON. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xxiv, 369. ISBN 019923342X. \$55.

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This welcome volume offers a set of empirical studies of serial verb constructions (SVCs) framed in a consistent general typological-descriptive framework. Previous work on SVCs has focused on studies of single languages, language groups, or restricted geographical areas (e.g. Matisoff 1969, Thepkanjana 1986, Sebba 1987, Steever 1988, Jarkey 1991, Bisang 1991, Veenstra 1996, Crowley 2002), or has been theoretically and methodologically varied (e.g. Joseph & Zwicky 1990, Lefebvre 1991), more narrowly formal (e.g. Schiller 1991, Déchaine 1993, Stewart 2001), or historical in focus (Lord 1993).

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In the preface, Aikhenvald and Dixon remark that despite important previous crosslinguistic and typological treatments of SVCs (e.g. Foley & Olson 1985, Durie 1997), ‘no one has so far attempted a book-length cross-linguistic typological study of the phenomenon, which would provide a comprehensive analytic framework, based on a wide range of languages of different typological profiles and genetic affiliations’ (xi). The aim of the book is to fill this gap, and it succeeds.

The book offers a detailed survey of SVCs, in three forms: (i) a detailed introductory overview, (ii) a set of fourteen descriptive chapters, and (iii) a concluding thumbnail conspectus. The introductory chapter by Aikhenvald is long (nearly seventy pages). It is a descriptive/typological survey of SVCs, covering previous literature and incorporating new material, with special attention to data from the descriptive chapters of the book.

Fourteen invited contributors’ chapters provide substantial descriptions of SVCs and their grammatical (and in some cases, sociocultural) contexts. Geographical and genealogical balance among languages is good, considering the need to privilege depth over breadth. The descriptive chapters include three on languages of Southeast Asia (STEPHEN MATTHEWS on Cantonese, A. V. N. DILLER on Thai, DAVID B. SOLNIT on Eastern Kayah Li), four on languages of the Pacific, including New Guinea (ANDREW INGRAM on Dumo, ALEXANDRE FRANÇOIS on Mwootlap, JOHN HAJEK on Tetun Dili, FRANTISEK LICHTENBERK on Toqabaqita), four on languages of Africa (BIRGIT HELLWIG on Goemai, CHRISTA KILIAN-HATZ on Khwe, FELIX K. AMEKA on Ewe, AZEB AMHA and GERRIT J. DIMMENDAAL on Wolaitta), and three on languages of the Americas (ALEXANDRA AIKHENVALD on Tariana, ROBERTO ZAVALA on Olutec, WILLEM J. DE REUSE on Lakota). Data from the Australian language Dyrbal is supplied in R. M. W. DIXON’S chapter.

In his ‘Conspectus and coda’ (Ch. 16), Dixon brilliantly summarizes the findings of the entire book in just seven pages, followed by a reconsideration of a Dyrbal construction that he had previously described as ‘verb-plus-adverbial’. He presents arguments that it is in fact an SVC. While Dixon’s is the final chapter of the book, it should be read first (or at least the key pages: 338–44).

SVC is defined in the opening lines of the book’s introductory chapter:

A serial verb construction (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. Serial verb constructions describe what is conceptualized as a single event. They are monoclausal; their intonational properties are the same as those of a monoverbal clause, and they have just 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. (1)

This definition is fleshed out at considerable length in the body of the introduction. Dixon presents the criteria in point form (339–44):

- A. An SVC consists of more than one verb, but the SVC is conceived of as describing a single action.
- B. There is no mark of linkage or subordination in an SVC.
- C. Each verb in an SVC may also occur as the sole verb in a clause.
- D. An SVC functions like a single predicate.
- E. An SVC will generally have its own transitivity value.
- F. There must almost always be (at least) one argument shared by all the verbs in an SVC.
- G. The verbs in an SVC may make up one word, or may remain separate words.
- H. The components of an SVC may be contiguous or non-contiguous.
- I. There must be some general rules for what makes up an SVC:
 - a. Asymmetrical variety (one major verb, one minor verb)
 - b. Symmetrical variety (both verbs unrestricted and of equal status)
- J. Asymmetrical SVCs tend to become grammaticalized, and symmetrical SVCs tend to become lexicalized.
- K. Although most SVCs in a language involve just two verbs, in most languages there can be three or more verbs involved.

The descriptive chapters treat each of these points to varying degrees of detail depending on facts of each language and interests of each researcher.

In the tradition of previous collections from the same editors, this book has a tight unity of style, framing, and methodological stance. Each invited contributor is a fieldworking descriptive linguist. The general approach is defined as basic linguistic theory, ‘the cumulative typological functional framework in terms of which almost all descriptive grammars are cast’ (xi; cf. Dixon 1997:128ff., Dryer 2006). In addition to this unity of methodology, the format and organization of chapters is consistent. Each author addresses aspects of their language’s relation to the statements put forward by Aikhenvald in Ch. 1 (which began as a position paper for the symposium on which the book is based).

Is the category ‘SVC’ an appropriate one for description and comparison? Some authors have urged caution in presuming the comparability of *a priori* categories, and have especially questioned the legitimacy of using many preestablished categories in language description (e.g. Croft 2001, Haspelmath 2007; cf. also Wierzbicka 1998). Luckily, this book is realistic—there is no suggestion that SVC is a unified, crisp, or stable category for exact crosslinguistic description or comparison. It is portrayed here more as a type of strategy that languages can exploit. Aikhenvald explains, ‘SVCs are a grammatical technique covering a wide variety of meanings and functions. They do not constitute a single grammatical category’ (2). Accordingly, each contributing author goes to commendable lengths to avoid the hazards of merely presuming crosslinguistic comparability, through careful and explicit presentation of the language-specific evidence upon which each analytic decision is based. This allows the reader to assess each author’s decisions, a luxury not always available in linguistic work. See for example the masterful laying out of information in tables 1 and 2 in Hellwig’s chapter, table 2 in Ameka’s chapter, and table 2 in de Reuse’s chapter.

The SVC phenomenon raises a wide and varied set of issues, too many to assess or discuss in a few pages. In the rest of this review, I raise just two points of special interest for the analysis and comparison of SVCs arising from a reading of the volume, and which, I think, identify issues for close attention in subsequent research.

A first issue of general and fundamental concern for any study of putative SVCs is a definitive criterion for SVC-hood, namely that two or more elements of the construction ‘must be lexical verbs’ (Sebba 1987:39). A standard way to test whether an element in a complex construction counts as a lexical verb is to see if it ‘may also occur as the sole verb in a clause’ (Dixon’s chapter, 339). But is it the same element when it occurs as verb-in-SVC and as sole-verb-in-clause? What if there is a meaning difference? Must they have exactly the same meaning to count as ‘the same verb’? Or what if there is a formal difference, with the verb-in-SVC being de-stressed or otherwise formally backgrounded? (See Kilian-Hatz’s chapter, 115; Amha and Dimmendaal’s chapter, 334.) As the chapters of this book show, the lexical item in question often seems to mean something different in the two contexts. Some cases are listed in Table 1.

LANGUAGE	VERB	AS SOLE V	IN SVC	PAGE REF.
Cantonese	<i>deoi</i> ³	‘treat’	‘towards’	71
Goemai	<i>t’ong</i>	‘sit’	‘irrealis’	100
Khwe	<i>caá</i>	‘miss a target’	‘fail in doing’, ‘mis-’, ‘mal-’	118
E. Kayah Li	<i>be</i>	‘strike, affect’	‘with drastic, often destructive effect’; ‘must’	153
Tariana	<i>pe</i>	‘throw’	‘telic action’	189
Olutec	<i>jo:y</i>	‘get lost, lack’	‘complete affectedness’	293
Wolaitta	<i>wor-</i>	‘kill’	‘extreme degree’	328

TABLE 1. Some examples of lexical items that have different meanings when functioning as sole verb versus when in putative SVC.

Do these cases involve one and the same verb? The answer depends on how an analyst wants to treat semantic relatedness between formally identical components of formally unidentical constructions. A first problem is simply to establish that a meaning difference is attributable to distinct senses of a lexical item, and not to some constructional meaning. Dealing with homonymy

or polysemy can be relatively straightforward when the constructional context remains constant (cf. *We have pens₁ for writing notes* vs. *We have pens₂ for keeping pigs*; *Let it (the engine) run₁ for a while* vs. *Let it (the dog) run₂ for a while*). But in the case of heterosemy (when an apparent difference in meaning corresponds to a difference in constructional environment; Lichtenberk 1991), it is more difficult to distinguish between two accounts for why the meaning of a lexical item differs. By an ambiguity account, there are two distinct lexical entries, each with a different meaning, and they happen to be used in different grammatical contexts. Opinions will differ as to whether two lexical entries with different but related meanings should be considered ‘the same verb’. By a monosemy account, a single lexical entry has one and the same meaning in the two grammatical constructions, and it is the constructions themselves that contribute different semantic content, resulting in different overall interpretations. To establish that a monosemy account is correct, the analyst needs to provide an explicit account of (a) the unified semantics of the lexical entry in question, and (b) the distinct semantics of the two constructions, such that the resultant meaning differences are properly generated by the proposed lexical-constructional combinations, consistent with a storable unitary meaning for the verb element that is common to the two constructions (cf. Enfield 2006).

Truly satisfactory resolution of this issue would require a degree of attention to semantic detail beyond what is normal or indeed reasonable in general descriptive grammar. In this book, we see different judgments among authors on the questions of (a) whether an element is ‘the same verb’ in the two environments (in-SVC versus as-sole-V), and (b) when the two elements are indeed judged NOT to be one and the same, whether this is sufficient grounds for arguing that the construction is therefore not, after all, an SVC. Solnit, for example, allows some latitude when discussing asymmetrical SVCs in Eastern Kayah Li, where the minor verb item ‘either is OR IS RELATED TO A verb’ (153, emphasis added). Thus, perceived relatedness alone is taken to be enough for a verb-in-SVC and a sole-verb to be counted as ‘the same verb’. Other authors seem to allow yet further latitude. For example, on the use of a ‘throw’ verb as minor element of an SVC, Aikhenvald comments that in that context ‘it has nothing to do with throwing’ (197). In many cases through the book, while the item in question clearly has a different meaning in the two contexts, it is nevertheless counted as a single verb, where the meanings are related in some way, for instance, by known or suspected diachronic relationship, or by plausible conceptual proximity.

Some contributors, however, are more conservative, regarding mere relatedness between an item in the two contexts to be insufficient grounds for calling the former a verb. Hajek, for example, states that a Tetun Dili aspect marker *hela* ‘CONT’ is both cognate with and homonymous with a verb *hela* ‘stay’ (248). He concludes that the sequences in which *hela* is an aspect marker are not SVCs. This conclusion is based on the different behavior that *hela* has in this function. Lichtenberk on Toqabaqita is similarly strict in the application of these criteria. Ingram, too, says that certain ‘highly lexicalized verb sequences’ should not be regarded as SVCs, ‘despite displaying properties of SVCs’ (219). And finally, Amha and Dimmendaal are yet more conservative with reference to Wolaitta, which they regard as having no SVCs at all (a point they never really tackle head-on), only the ‘verbal compounding’ cited in the chapter’s title. They nevertheless press on with an analysis of these structures cast in the same terms as SVCs in the rest of the volume.

To summarize the discussion so far, the apparently simple criterion that an SVC must have more than one lexical verb turns out not to be straightforward, allowing inconsistency in interpretation when applied by different researchers to the description of different languages. The core of the problem is a degree of subjectivity inherent in the analyst’s decision as to whether or not to treat the relevant item in the putative SVC as being the same item as its formal counterpart in sole-verb function. To treat it as effectively the same (often despite semantic and formal differences) allows us to say it is ‘a verb’ in the complex structure, and therefore that this structure is an SVC. This analytical decision is utterly consequential, making the difference between inclusion and exclusion in the very category being compared across languages in this project. It is, however, not at all fatal to the book’s collective goal, precisely because of the insistence

on generous provision and explication of data upon which each author's judgments are based. With this, the reader has sufficient scope to assess alternatives.

A second major analytical issue that runs through the chapters of this book is the identification of distinct SVC types. Each author grapples with a distinction between two broad types of SVC, introduced in Aikhenvald's introduction: (i) *ASYMMETRICAL SVCs* 'consist of one verb from a relatively large, open, or otherwise unrestricted class, and another from a semantically or grammatically restricted (or closed) class' (21); and (ii) in *SYMMETRICAL SVCs*, 'all components . . . come from unrestricted classes' (22).

The notion of 'class' intended here—with open/unrestricted versus closed/restricted types—is generally taken to refer to categories of lexical item such as verb, noun, preposition, or determiner. But relative openness is less a property of items than it is a property of constructional slots. To define, say, the open class 'verb' in a language we list a set of grammatical environments and count as a member of the class 'verb' any element that fits in these environments. If the set of such words is unrestricted (i.e. large, and perhaps may be freely added to), we say it is an open class. Though the distinction open versus closed is ostensibly discrete, there is much range in what is taken by different authors to fall into one or the other type, illustrated, for example, by the possibility of positing 'closed classes' with as many as 100 items (in Dumo; Ingram's chapter, 202), or even 600 items (in Ewe; Ameka's chapter, 125).

The subjective nature of 'restricted' for this analytic decision is evident in the variety of judgments from different authors as to whether their SVCs are asymmetrical or symmetrical. Matthews states semantic restrictions on slots in Cantonese SVCs that he classes as symmetrical: for example, in cause-effect serial constructions one slot is 'necessarily intransitive' (75) (thus in a sense restricted, that is, to a subset of verbs), and in posture serialization 'V2 cannot be stative' (83). Kilian-Hatz says that while in Khwe symmetrical SVCs the slots are 'formed per definition with verbs from an open class, they are, however, restricted'. Again, drawing attention to semantic restrictions on certain slots within SVCs, she states, for example, that certain types 'must contain at least one process or cognition verb' (114). Similarly, in Eastern Kayah Li cause-effect SVCs, V2 must be a one-argument verb (Solnit's chapter, 149). And according to Ingram, in Dumo there are asymmetrical SVCs in which 'even the major verb is highly restricted' (206), clearly putting strain on the definition of 'major verb' (i.e. 'from a relatively large, open, or otherwise unrestricted class'). While some authors allow that symmetrical SVCs may have slots that are restricted, often in semantic terms, other authors take the same type of restriction to be grounds for identifying a slot as 'closed', thus evidence of an asymmetrical SVC. For instance, Lichtenberk describes a type of asymmetrical SVC in Toqabaqita where the restriction on the minor verb is that it 'can only be intransitive unaccusative' (258).

All this suggests that a degree of subjectivity in analysts' judgments as to the 'restrictedness' of the two verb slots will lead to different decisions as to which of just two distinct types an SVC falls into. Ameka, on the one hand, finds almost nothing in Ewe that he regards as sufficiently restricted to qualify as a 'minor slot', and accordingly, concludes that asymmetrical SVCs are 'virtually absent' (136). His notion of symmetrical has very wide scope, including, for example, comparative constructions whose equivalents in some other chapters are regarded as *Asymmetrical*. Diller, on the other hand, identifies Thai asymmetrical constructions in which the restricted-slot verb is in 'a limited semantically-defined class in each case, albeit rather large' (170), and where the so-called restricted slot is in fact 'technically open' (in the sense that new verbs could join the class). For Diller, a construction is asymmetrical if there is any kind of asymmetry in the *RELATIVE* openness of the two slots, regardless of either slot's absolute degree of openness. Amha and Dimmendaal also adopt this relative notion of symmetry. For them, in symmetrical constructions, V1 and V2 'contribute an equally important content to the construction as a whole, rather than one modifying the other' (327).

This reader is left a little confused as to what counts as 'open' versus 'closed' in the context of slots in these constructions. In the domain of SVCs, it seems clear that there are no truly unrestricted slots, at least relative to more broadly accessible 'sole-verb-in-main-clause' environments.

I have focused in this review on a couple of judgment calls that are critical in the business of identifying and classifying SVCs. Two decisions in particular seem at first glance to be straightforward, but in fact turn out to be rather open to interpretation, illustrating a degree of subjectivity inherent in doing grammatical analysis. The first decision that all authors faced is whether a lexical item in a putative SVC qualifies as 'the same item' as its homophonous counterpart in a sole-verb slot, and therefore whether it counts as a 'lexical verb'. This decision determines whether the structure in question is to be counted as an SVC at all. The second decision is whether one or another slot in an SVC qualifies as 'restricted', either in absolute terms or relative to the other verb slot in the construction. This decision determines whether the SVC is of the symmetrical or asymmetrical type. Some degree of subjectivity in such decisions is inherent in grammatical analysis, whether it is highly formalized or of the basic descriptive variety. The great advantage of the approach exemplified in this volume is that readers are generously supplied with enough of the data and reasoning that we can ultimately make up our own minds.

Many further issues are raised in the volume, each of which deserves to be extensively explored in subsequent research on SVCs. Numerous authors comment on the special intonational properties of SVCs, a formal dimension of the problem that will benefit greatly from application of recent advances in the analysis of intonation and prosody. Matthews points out the need for psycholinguistic research on SVCs (84), which would be particularly useful in assessing the widely intuitive but so far untested claim that SVCs 'are conceptualized as single events'. Several authors discuss the relation between SVCs and morphological type (e.g. Matthews, Ameka); Amha and Dimmendaal make a useful related point in the context of language contact and change, namely that certain 'self-organizing principles' could lead to the independent emergence of similar structures in neighboring languages, but not because of genealogical or areal relations (335–36; cf. Enfield 2001:284–87, 2003:357–61). Finally, some authors offer welcome support for their analyses from domains of linguistic usage that are not often invoked in standard grammatical description; for example, indices of structural cohesion in SVCs are found in 'backchanneling behavior' by addressees in conversation (in Goemai; Hellwig's chapter, 93) and in the formulation of repeat-style 'yes-answers' to questions that incorporate SVCs (in Khwe; Kilian-Hatz's chapter, 121, and in Tariana; Aikhenvald's chapter, 184).

In sum, the book is a feast for thought. Anyone with an interest in SVCs and related types of complex predicate must read it, for the crash course it provides, for the insights it offers, and for its valuable orientation toward a host of remaining issues to be explored.

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The word weavers: Newshounds and wordsmiths. By JEAN AITCHISON. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xvii, 257. ISBN 9780521540070. \$28.99.

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The study of language above the sentence level has taken a long time to be incorporated into linguistics proper. But more and more, we see all forms of linguistic expression as grist for our mills. Declaring that our work begins with phonetics and stops with syntax does not make much sense. Still, the study of connected discourse has been to recalcitrant to the methods of linguistic analysis developed over the twentieth century, and we are always looking for new ways to study it, whether they involve close examination of only one type of discourse (e.g. Labov & Waletzky 1967, the beginning of narrative analysis within linguistics; or Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974, the introduction of conversation analysis into linguistics), or cross-genre comparisons and contrasts (e.g. Bakhtin 1986:2–44, offering a categorization of discourse genres, or Tannen 1989, which looks at the uses of one device, repetition, across several different genres).

The word weavers, in the same vein, contrasts two types of contemporary formal written discourse: journalism and artistic writing (fiction and poetry). Aitchison is interested in structural