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DOI

[10.1075/slcs.235](https://doi.org/10.1075/slcs.235)

Publication date

2024

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

Predication in African Languages

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Citation for published version (APA):

Kotowski, R. J. S., Aboh, E. O., & Don, J. (2024). The eventive functional sequence: *Take and Give* serial verb constructions in Gungbe. In J. Essegbey, & E. O. Aboh (Eds.), *Predication in African Languages* (pp. 189-221). (Studies in Language Companion Series; Vol. 235). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/slcs.235>

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This is a contribution from *Predication in African Languages*.

Edited by James Essegbey and Enoch O. Aboh.

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The eventive functional sequence

Take and give serial verb constructions in Gungbe

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The Kwa languages (Niger-Congo) of West Africa are well-known for displaying Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs). The literature on SVCs contains various definitions of the phenomenon and recapitulates the general observation that these constructions express fine-grained information about a complex event and the participants involved therein. This paper seeks to shed light on the structure that underlies *Take and Give* SVCs in Gungbe, a Gbe (Kwa) language spoken in Benin and Nigeria. The examples discussed in the paper demonstrate how Gungbe is able to employ SVCs to encode specific details about the eventive structure. The proposed analysis further sheds light on elements which were classified in the Kwa literature as ‘verbid’ (cf. Ansre 1966) for their ambiguous status between adpositions and lexical verbs. It is argued that the ambiguity reduces to the nature of roots and their functions in Gungbe: the same root can occupy different grammatical functions.

Keywords: serial verb constructions, Kwa languages, eventive structure

1. Prelude

The Kwa languages (Niger-Congo) of West African are well-known for displaying multiple verb constructions commonly referred to as Serial Verb Constructions (hereafter SVCs) (cf. Christaller 1875; Stewart 1963). In his description of Ewegbe (a Western Gbe language of the Kwa family), Westermann (1930:126) states:

A peculiarity of Ewe is that we often find a row of verbs one after the other. The chief feature of this are that all the verbs stand next to each other without being connected, that all have the same tense or mood, and that in the event of their having a common subject and object, these stand with the first, the others remaining bare: should a conjunction stand between the two verbs, the subject and object must be repeated.

The literature on SVCs contains various definitions of the phenomenon (e.g., Baker 1989; Collins 1997; Aikhenvald & Dixon 2006; Haspelmath 2016; Veenstra & Muysken 2017; and Aikhenvald 2018) and most studies recapitulate the properties in Westermann's descriptions, which are found to various degrees in different languages across the world. One such often mentioned property is the monoclausal nature of these constructions, which appear to refer to a single event. The example in (1) from Gungbe (an Eastern Gbe language also of the Kwa family) illustrates Westermann's description.

- (1) *Súrù hèn mán cè fíʒ.* [Gungbe]
 Suru hold vegetable.soup my burn
 'Suru caused my vegetable soup to burn.'

The combination of the verbs *hèn* 'hold' and *fíʒ* 'burn' does not denote two separate events (i.e., a holding event followed by a burning event), which can be commented on or modified individually. For instance, in an SVO sentence with a single verb, it is possible to insert the adverb *bléún* 'quickly/fast' after the object to make a comment on the speed of the holding action, (2a). However, in the SVC in (2b), inserting *bléún* after the object following V1 (with the intent of commenting on the manner in which the event expressed by V1 alone is carried out) is impossible. Accordingly, the sentence is ungrammatical. Rather, as example (2c) shows, the adverb *bléún* must follow V2 *fíʒ* 'burn' even though it takes scope of the entire event in which *Súrù* caused the soup to burn.

- (2) a. *Súrù hèn mán cè bléún* [Gungbe]
 Suru hold vegetable.soup my quickly
 'Suru quickly held my vegetable soup.'
 b. **Súrù hèn mán cè bléún fíʒ.*
 Suru hold vegetable.soup my quickly burn
 'Suru (quickly) held my vegetable soup until it burned.'
 c. *Súrù hèn mán cè fíʒ bléún.*
 Suru hold vegetable.soup my burn quickly
 'Suru (quickly) caused my vegetable soup to burn (quickly).'

The semantics of (2c) suggests there is no holding event at all. Instead, the *hèn X fíʒ* 'hold X burn' event is interpreted as a causative construction in which the agent caused the vegetable soup to burn. In the description to follow, we will refer to the linearly first verb as V1, and the second one as V2, and so on. For the sake of clarity, we will mainly use examples involving two verbs, but series can involve more than two verbs. We believe our analysis extends to those cases as well. One telling example of such a verb series is given in (3).

- (3) *Súrù zé zò-kèkè cè yì sà dǔ.* [Gungbe]
 Suru take fire-bike 1SG.POSS go sell eat
 ‘Suru has gone to sell my motorbike (for his own profit).’

If SVCs involved a succession of separate events, (3) could be interpreted as reporting a series of events in which the agent took a motorbike, went to some selling place, and sold it. Instead, the provided interpretation shows that the whole sentence is interpreted as one event in which some agent takes the initiative to sell a motorbike that is not his, and kept the money. As such, the four verbs involved in this example are not interpreted individually, but together as a complex structure in which each verb-like element provides bits of information about the event, including the arguments, the speaker’s perspective, as well as how the event was carried out. Facts such as these have led several authors to compare SVCs to complex predicates of which a classical example in English is given in (4). In this paper we maintain that the only formal difference between this English sentence and the Gungbe examples in (1), (2c) and (3) is that the former involves an adjectival predicate combined with a verbal one.

- (4) Bill *hammered* the metal *flat*.

In (4), the verb *hammered* expresses the event simultaneously with the manner by which the event was carried out (including the instrument used), while *flat* expresses the result of that event. A comparable example in Gungbe could be the sentence in (5) in which the verb *zé* ‘take’ introduces the manner while *kpé* ‘meet’ expresses the resulting event.

- (5) *Súrù zé àdǐ kpé gbé ví lé.* [Gungbe]
 Suru take anger meet union member PL
 ‘Suru met the union members with anger.’

We return to examples like (5) in Section 3 and 4 below. We will not dwell any further on the parallels with complex predicates, and we refer the interested reader to the relevant references (e.g., Baker 1989; Neeleman 1994).

In the context of the current discussion, we retain the following generalizations adapted from Ameka’s (2006: 128–129) description of SVCs in the Gbe languages and more generally in Kwa, to wit:

- The VPs are construed within the same temporal frame and tend to share the same mood.
- The VPs can be formally marked for the same or different aspects.
- The VPs fall within the scope of a single negation marker. SVCs containing distinct negative markers on the verb give rise to negative concord.

- There is a unique syntactic subject for all VPs that is expressed only once before VP₁.
- There are no conjunction or subordination markers between the VPs.

The Kwa languages differ as to the extent to which they display these properties or how these interact with other language-specific rules regulating the expression of TMA (including negation) or the arguments and their predicates (cf. Shluinsky 2017). In terms of TMA marking, Shluinsky discusses three variations:

- i. Symmetric: both verbs take the same marker.
- ii. Zero: where the linearly first verb takes a marker, but the second one does not.
- iii. Consecutive: where the second verb takes on a second, distinct marker that does not contribute to the overall TMA value of the construction.

The examples in (6a)–(c) illustrate (i–iii) above, respectively (cf. Shluinsky 2017: 350).¹

- (6) a. *Bà boè dzè kē fɛ.* [Attié]
 3PL come.PRF give.PRF 3SG yam
 ‘They brought him a yam.’
- b. *A-bobi-e o-to-kle fiɛ a-tawalibi-wɔ.* [Logba]
 CL-moon-DEF SG-HAB-shine exceed CL-star PL
 ‘The moon shines brighter than stars.’²
- c. *Kofi bɛ-tɔ bukuu a-ma Ama.* [Twi]
 Kofi FUT-buy book TMA-give Ama
 ‘Kofi will buy a book for Ama.’

Bearing these general characteristics of SVCs in mind, two research questions are of interest in this chapter:

- i. What syntactic structure underlies SVCs?
- ii. What different grammars can be postulated based on this structural make-up?

To address these research questions, we will focus on two verbs in Gungbe which, in their citation forms, can be translated as *take* and *give*. These verbs play a role

1. The morphosyntactic microvariation of TMA observed between the various Kwa languages are discussed here for the reader’s reference and will not be discussed further in this paper. Although examples from multiple Kwa languages are discussed, they are comparable in the fact that they all exhibit SVCs.

2. We have retained the translation given by Shluinsky, however, we propose that the translation ‘The moon *overshines* the stars’ to be a more faithful translation of this comparative SVC which, in a language such as English, is accomplished through the use of inflection.

in specifying the way in which a single event is carried out rather than indicating the separate ‘taking’ or ‘giving’ events. We will defend in later sections that the presence of these two sorts of SVCs implies that the verbal domain requires a more fine-grained structure beyond V and little *v* (i.e., the projections that introduce the internal and external arguments, respectively). We will also argue that although these series involve two apparent lexical verbs, they do not act individually as such. Instead, each morpheme contributes to specific facets of the event expressed by the SVC.

In regard to the second research question, we must acknowledge the wealth of literature on SVCs suggesting that they serve, cross-linguistically, as springboards for the development of argument-marking elements (e.g., adpositions and case markers). This seems intuitively correct if we compare the Twi Example (6c), in which the verb *ma* introduces the beneficiary/receptient, to its English translation in which this participant is introduced by the preposition *to*. Such parallels have led some authors to argue that certain verbs in SVCs grammaticalize into adpositions or case affixes. Such a grammaticalization path has been argued for based on the Kwa languages, as in, for example, work by Heine et al. (1991) and Lord (1993).

A study of the individual Kwa languages shows that these verbs can fulfil the functions of full lexical verbs with the basic meanings *take* and *give* or as argument introducing verbs in SVCs. In the case of *take*-series, the verb may introduce an instrument as in (4) or a lative DP. In the case of *give*-series, the verb may introduce a recipient/benefactive or dative DP. Interestingly, while *take* occurs as V1 in instrument series, *give* occurs as V2 thus indicating that these two verb types encode different structural positions as argument introducers.

The following sections address the two research questions listed above. Section 2 provides a bird’s eye view of relevant serializing patterns found in Gungbe with a focus on *take*- and *give*-series. In the course of describing the data, we also mention previous analyses that are relevant to the discussion. Section 3 continues the discussion on literature addressing the syntactic structure of SVCs. In particular, we highlight how the literature raises the necessity of having a functional layer within V to account for the functional V1 found in *take*-series. Importantly, the existence of *give*-series suggests that V2 can also take on a functional role requiring a reformulation of the underlying syntactic structure. In Section 4, we apply the functional sequence of eventive features proposed by Ramchand (2008, 2015) and present our proposal for the Kwa data in Section 2. Importantly, we discuss how Ramchand’s structure allows the Kwa languages to accommodate grammars in which *take* and *give* are ambiguous as to their verbal or adpositional qualities. Section 5 concludes this paper with some remarks on directions for future research into SVCs.

2. The Kwa data

This section provides an overview of the Kwa morphemes, which in their purely verbal forms, can be translated as *take* and *give*. These items can take on different roles, namely:

- i. as a main predicate in a clause;
- ii. combined with another verb in an SVC;
- iii. as an argument introducer (i.e., comparable to an adposition or case affix).

The individual Kwa languages differ in the extent to which these items fulfil all three functions. In showing relevant examples of this behaviour in some Kwa languages, we do not intend to mean that these pieces of evidence can be grouped together as converging evidence for a grammaticalization process for the development of adpositions in a single language or across the Kwa family. From our perspective, we regard these language-specific facts as a brief catalogue of the varying properties of Kwa clause structure that a learner of these languages must unravel during acquisition. Section 2.1 discusses *take*-series and Section 2.2 discusses *give*-series. Section 2.3 offers an interim summary.

2.1 *Take*-series

When used as a main predicate in a clause, *take* expresses a single event of taking an object, as illustrated by the example in (7a). In this usage, this verb only selects ‘takeable’ DPs as internal arguments, hence the ungrammatical Example (7b), which has an abstract DP.

- (7) a. *Súru zé zò-kèkè cè.* [Gungbe]
 Suru take fire-bike 1SG.POSS
 ‘Suru took my motorbike.’
- b. **Súru zé wánnýínnyín cè.*
 Suru take love 1SG.POSS
 ‘Suru took my love.’

In an SVC, *take* can combine with different types of verbs to encode change of location or manner (cf. Lefebvre & Brousseau 2002). In such constructions, *take* can be followed by DPs referring to both concrete and abstract referents. This is, for example, the case in the instrumental series in (8a), or the example (8b) in which the combination *take-enter* indicates a change of location (i.e., motion towards or into a goal). The example in (8c) instantiates an expression of manner. Note that in (8c), *take* can be followed by the DP *wánnýínnyín* ‘love’, unlike in (8b). The contrast between (8b) and (8c) suggests that *take* fulfils some grammati-

cal role (e.g., argument marking) in SVCs and, consequentially, does not have the same selectional requirements when used as a main predicate.

- (8) a. *Sùrù zé màrtó gbà flécé ló.* [Gungbe]
 Suru take hammer break window DET
 ‘Suru broke the window with a hammer (by means of a hammer).’
- b. *Sùrù zé màrtó bíṣò xò mèn.*
 Suru take hammer enter room INSIDE
 ‘Suru took a hammer into the room.’
 ‘Suru entered the room with a hammer.’
- c. *Sùrù zé wánnyínnyín yí wéxòmè-ví lé.*
 Suru take love receive pupils PL
 ‘Suru received the pupils with love.’

The idea that *take* expresses grammatical functions in some SVC appears to be further supported by the fact that in some series it is not immediately obvious what lexical import *take* would bring. Consider the following pair in (9) from Gungbe (see also Lewis 1992 for similar data in Gengbe, a Western Gbe language).

- (9) a. *Dótù kàn wémá ló.* [Gungbe]
 Dotu write paper DET
 ‘Dotu wrote the letter.’
- b. *Dótù zé wémá ló kàn.*
 Dotu take paper DET write
 ‘Dotu took it upon himself to write the letter.’

Example (9a) indicates that the verb *kàn* ‘write’ can license an internal argument on its own, as a garden variety transitive verb. This, however, seems irreconcilable with (9b) in which *take* seems to be doing the same thing even though the interpretation is different from a complex event of taking a letter and writing it. Instead, the addition of *take* in such series does not seem much related to the internal argument (or shared object as proposed in Baker 1989) *wémá ló* ‘the letter’, but rather to the expression of the manner/condition in which the event was carried out by the Agent. In Gungbe, (9b) would be felicitous in a context in which either no one volunteered to write the letter or *Dotu* decided to write it, even though he was not the legitimate person to do so. Given this description, one would conclude that the grammatical function of *take* in series such as (9b) is to introduce the external argument. We return to this in Sections 3 and 4 below.

In Section 2.2 below, we overview some relevant properties of *give*-SVCs. These constructions introduce a recipient/benefactive or dative DP, but unlike *take*-SVCs in which *take* realize V₁, this morpheme realizes V₂ in SVCs.

2.2 Give-series

Similar to *take* (see Section 2.1), *give* can occur on its own as the main predicate of a sentence. In such contexts, most Kwa languages exhibit a double object, as illustrated by the Akan and Ewegbe examples in (10a) and (10b), respectively.

- (10) a. *Mààmé nó má-à m- bòfrá nó èdzibáń.*
 women DEF give-COMPL PL child DEF food
 ‘The woman gave the children food.’ [Akan, Osam 2003: 123]
- b. *Me na ga Kofi.*
 1SG give money Kofi
 ‘I gave Kofi money.’ [Ewegbe, Heine et al. 1991: 1]

In *give*-SVCs, the interpretation of the combined verbs is typically ambiguous between lexical *give* (i.e., donation of an object to someone) or expression of a recipient/benefactive (i.e., someone who receives or benefits from the actions of the agent). Disentangling these two interpretations is not often straightforward, because the felicitous meaning depends on the context, as well as the verb with which *give* is combined. This is illustrated by the Gungbe example in (11). Under appropriate circumstances, this sentence can have the meaning in (a) or (b).

- (11) *Fífà zé távó ló ná Dóná.* [Gungbe]
 Fífa take table DET give Dona
 a. ‘He took/carried the table for Dona.’
 b. ‘He gave the table to Dona.’

The Abé example in (12) further confirms this ambiguity.

- (12) *Apy di džumâ ló ši.*
 Apy do work give father
 ‘Apy did work for his father.’ [Abé, Shluinsky 2017: 374]

Even though Shluinsky provides a single interpretation of (12), it is reasonable to interpret this string as being vague as to whether *Apy*’s father is the direct beneficiary of *Apy*’s work or rather that *Apy* did some work on behalf of his father. The role that discourse plays in distinguishing between these different usages of *give* is further illustrated by example (13). In this sentence, we observe that the agent prepares her/himself for an exam, and the goal/objective of her preparation is expressed by *ná*. In this example, therefore, the function and interpretation of *ná* are comparable to that of English *for*.

- (13) *me srõ nu vevie na dodokpõ*
 1SG do thing hard give exam
 ‘I worked hard for the exam.’ [Ewegbe, Essegbey pc. 15-02-2023]

In a way comparable to *take*-SVCs presented in (5), lexical *give* displays selectional restrictions which are not found in *give*-SVCs in which V2 appears to have an adpositional usage. Consider the following examples in (14) from Gungbe.

- (14) a. **Lúkù ná àwàjìè Súrù.* [Gungbe]
 Luku give joy Suru
 ‘Luke gave Suru joy.’
 b. *Lúkù dó àwàjìè ná Súrù.*
 Luke plant joy give Suru
 ‘Luke made Suru happy.’

It is noteworthy that (14a) is ungrammatical in Gungbe even though not in English. In this sentence, lexical *give* cannot select for an abstract theme such as *joy*. Therefore, the benefactive reading is blocked unlike in English. In the SVC example in (14b), however, the combination of the verb *dó* ‘plant’ and *ná* ‘give’ allows for a locative meaning (lit. ‘Luke caused joy in Suru’), which can entail benefactive. Similar restrictions on *give*-SVCs have been discussed in the literature (cf. Aikhenvald 2018; Couvée & Pfau 2018; and references therein).

Several cross-linguistic examples in the literature indicate that Kwa languages involve *take*- and *give*-series in which the sole function of these verbs appears to be licensing of new arguments. We therefore reach the characterization that both the positions V1 and V2 can host a functional verb in SVCs.

2.3 Intermezzo

The data discussed thus far reveal two important implications for the research questions of this paper, repeated below.

- i. What syntactic structure underlies *take*- and *give*-SVCs?
- ii. What possible grammars can arise out of this underlying structure?

With regard to (i), it appears that SVCs imply a fine-grained event structure such that the verbs combined in the series express different facets of the event including internal aspect of the event, causality, manner, as well as subject-oriented versus object-oriented actions. Accordingly, verb series appear to encode event properties that are readily expressed by functional morphology (e.g., case or TMA) in other languages. This leads us to research question (ii). Indeed, the variation observed across Kwa, as well as the various meanings associated with *take*- and *give*-SVCs indicate that Kwa speaker-learners of these languages presumably entertain competing learning hypotheses, some of which are compatible with certain SVCs being reanalyzed as a combination of a verb and an adposition.

In order to address these questions, the following section focuses on the internal structure of SVCs. We adopt a complementation approach to SVCs in which the verbs in a series belong to a single functional sequence (e.g., Aboh 2009). Adopting Ramchand's (2008, 2015) approach to event structure, we further argue that *take* and *give* identify a sub-stretch of the eventive features in V.

3. The necessity of a decomposed V

In this section, we overview relevant literature pertaining to the structure of SVCs. Building on this literature, we offer an analysis of SVC structure that accounts for the data discussed in Section 2 and that allows us to understand what grammars can be possibly constructed by Kwa speaker-learners. In Section 3.1, we briefly address the debate on object sharing in SVCs before discussing the implications of Aboh's (2009) account of *take*-series *vis-à-vis* *give*-series. In Section 3.2, we discuss the literature addressing double object and *to*-dative constructions in order to shed light on the underlying structure of *give*-series. In Section 3.3, we overview the functional sequence of eventive feature proposed in Ramchand (2008, 2015).

3.1 Demarcating a functional layer within V

Several authors have observed that verbs in a series may share the same internal argument (e.g., Baker 1989; Agbedor 1994; Da Cruz 1995; Collins 1997, 2002). Baker (1989), who was the first to formalize this observation in syntax, argued for a serializing parameter that permits double-headed VPs in which the two heads both theta-mark a shared object. A direct consequence of Baker's argument sharing hypothesis was that such double-headed VPs were ternary branching (cf. Agbedor 1994 for a variant of the double-headed VP). Collins (1997) further refined Baker's proposal, which became untenable under binary structure required by the X-bar theory. In terms of Collins (1997), Baker's argument sharing hypothesis can be understood in terms of a control structure involving two embedded VPs in which the lower V₂, heading VP₂, theta-marks an empty category (i.e., *pro*) that is bound by the object of the higher VP₁ headed by V₁. While Collins solved the technical issues related to ternary branching *à la* Baker, it still leaves open the controversial claim that argument sharing is a defining feature of SVCs. Since the beginning of studies on SVCs, there has been a wealth of data indicating that many series violate the argument sharing hypothesis. The example in (15) involves an unergative V₁ followed by a transitive V₂. While the two verbs share the same subject, only V₂ takes an object.

- (15) *Wékpólómètó ló lón xé távó jí.* [Gungbe]
 teacher DET jump climb table on
 ‘The teacher jumped on top of the table.’

Aboh (2009) presents cogent arguments indicating that in Gungbe series V₁ typically fails to assign any theta-role to the DP immediately following it. Under his view, V₁ does not introduce any additional thematic role that would require marking an internal argument. Using *take* and similar series as prototypical examples, he argues that V₁ rather expresses information associated with TMA, manner, or causation that specify the nature of the event carried out by V₂ (cf. Aboh 2009 and references therein for a detailed discussion). What matters for our current discussion is Aboh’s (2009) claim that in SVCs, V₁ belongs to the functional sequence (similarly to TMA, event-related modifiers, or expression of cause) that represents the extended projection of the main predicate (i.e., V₂ under Grimshaw 1991). Aboh’s analysis is part of a larger effort in understanding restructuring structures involving functional verbs. While we will pursue this general observation, one issue requires closer examination.

As evidenced by the examples discussed in Section 2.2, SVCs can accommodate multiple DP arguments. The question that arises is how these DPs are licensed (i.e., theta-marked or case-marked) if V₁ has no theta-role and only functions as a TMA-like element. Aboh (2009) addresses these cases by assuming that the main predicate V₂ introduces all arguments, while V₁ can introduce the causer in causative series. In this regard, classical instrument series such as (16) are reinterpreted as causative SVCs as suggested by the approximate translation below.

- (16) *Súrù zé màrtó gbà flécé ló.* [Gungbe]
 Suru take hammer break window DET
 ‘Suru causes the window to break (by means of a hammer).’

In terms of Awóyalé’s (1988) seminal paper, this would mean that V₁ in this example belongs to the field of *Modality* which he defines as expressing “how the Event is carried out: how frequently, how quickly, how reluctantly, in what physical or emotional dimension, with what technique. Invariably, the modality will reveal the volitional or non-volitional involvement of the designated argument which is the subject of the action denoted by the Event” (p.9). Accordingly, V₁ in (16) expresses “with what technique” the event has been carried out, i.e., by using a hammer.

Whilst this analysis in terms of a functional V₁ extends to several types of SVC discussed in Aboh (2009), it does not seem to immediately capture all the relevant cases of *give*-SVCs. In the *give*-SVCs discussed thus far, it appears that, in some instances, it is V₂ that takes a functional role, marking a recipient and or benefactive DP. In terms of Awóyalé (1988), such a function of *give* would correspond to

his notion of *state* which encodes “the physical, mental, emotional outcome of the EVENT, whether completed, incomplete, successful, final etc. The STATE will also specify the direct or indirect, immediate or eventual result of the Event” (p.9). Awóyalé (1988: 9) presents a graphic representation of his analysis in the form of the template of which a simplified version is given in (17).

- (17) The Semantic template of verb serialization
MODALITY<>EVENT<>STATE

According to Awóyalé, these different domains, which can be individually complex, interact through interfaces, represented here by the symbols <>, which determine to which domain an apparent lexical verb belongs in an SVC. Following this rationale, it would therefore seem that elements occurring within the MODALITY or STATE zones can represent functional material.

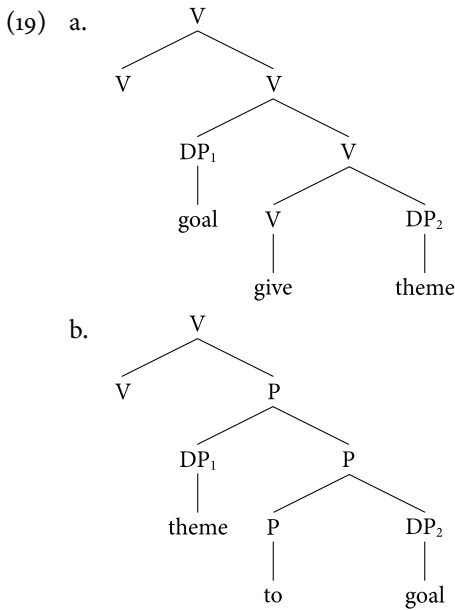
In order to further understand the structure of SVCs, therefore, and to translate intuitions in Awóyalé (1988) and Aboh (2009) in current theories of EVENT structure (e.g., Ramchand 2008, 2015), we first revisit a standard analysis of benefactive constructions involving lexical *give* (i.e., double objects and *to*-dative constructions in English). To this end, Section 3.2 takes up Hale and Keyser’s (2002) account of argument structure in double objects and *to*-dative constructions.

3.2 Double object constructions and give-series

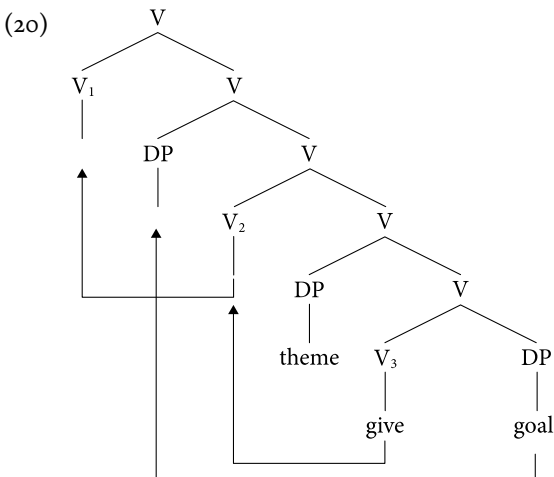
Hale and Keyser (2002) discuss the structural differences between double object and *to*-dative constructions examples of which are given under (18a) and (18b), respectively (adapted from Hale & Keyser 2002: 163).

- (18) a. ...give the baby its bottle.
b. ...give the bottle to the baby.

The structures of (18a) and (18b) differ in that the former seems to involve two direct objects whilst the latter involves a single direct object and an indirect object (i.e., an adjunct). The surface structures of (18a) and (18b) given in Hale & Keyser (2002: 161–162) are illustrated in (19a) and (19b), respectively.



Hale and Keyser (2002) state that the surface configuration of GOAL-THEME in double object constructions is derived from an underlying *to*-dative structure which exhibits a THEME-GOAL configuration (19b). The authors propose that the surface structure of double object constructions is derived via head movement whereby the verb *give* raises to the upper V1 to realize an otherwise empty head. The goal DP then raises to a specifier position in V2 in order to receive accusative case from *give* thus yielding the GOAL-THEME order. This derivation is illustrated in (20).



Hale and Keyser (2002) further discuss the nature of the upper V in regard to causation, agency, volition, and instrumentality. They argue that the upper V indicates pure causation whereas in *to*-datives the upper V can take an agentive subject. Here similarities can be drawn with V₁ as discussed in Aboh (2009), as well as Awóyalé's (1988) complex event structure. The difference between English (Germanic) and Gbe (or Kwa generally) would therefore be that in the case of *take*-series, V₁ houses an overt verb unlike in double object and *to*-dative constructions that involve lexical *give*, which raises via head movement to V₁. If we relate this account of double object constructions to dative *give*-series in the Kwa languages, it seems that both V₁ and V₂ in Hale and Keyser's (2002) analysis host an apparent lexical verb, thus yielding verb serialization. Building on Aboh (2009), however, it seems a more accurate characterization is that both the upper and lower loci for Vs can house both lexical and functional elements, that is, both V₁ and V₂ can be functional. This observation leads us to further conclude that what is generally labelled as V is much more finely articulated and involves functional structure. In Section 3.3 below, we take on this view and introduce the functional sequence of eventive features proposed in Ramchand (2008, 2015). This work formalizes Awóyalé's (1988) analysis schematized in (17) in a straightforward manner. In particular, we highlight two key verb classes discussed therein, which will be pertinent to our reframing of *take*- and *give*-series in Section 4.

3.3 Decomposing V

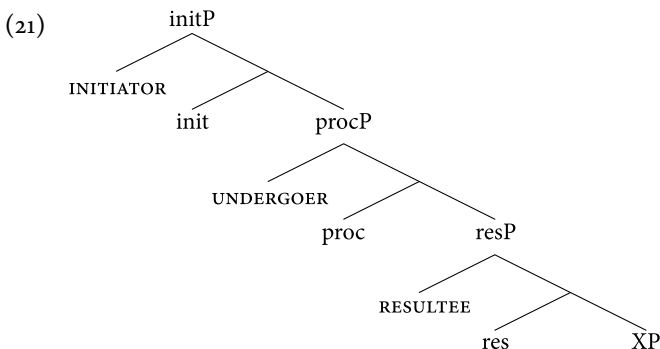
Ramchand (2008) formulates her account of functional sequence of eventive features in V assuming that any verbal event includes an initiating subevent linked to the notion of causality. This subevent involves a specific DP argument (i.e., the INITIATOR). In Ramchand's terms, this participant fulfils the function of what is traditionally characterised as an external argument. The thematic role commonly associated with the external subject is that of agent. Ramchand (2015) asserts that agenthood is a 'crude' general concept covering a diverse array of semantic roles (i.e., canonical agent, inanimate cause, instrument, and moving object). Ramchand argues that the INITIATOR, the participant that initiates or causes the event expressed by the verb, thus encapsulates all of the traditional thematic roles an external argument can take on. Here, one can draw parallels between Ramchand's notion of initiation with the analyses of V₁ in Hale and Keyser (2002) or in Aboh (2009) who proposes that V₁ is the functional element that introduces the external argument in some causative SVCs.

Ramchand further proposes that what is labelled as the internal argument can be divided into two different thematic roles associated with two different subevents. After the initiating subevent, the second subevent (traditionally asso-

ciated with the internal argument functioning as object) measures out the action caused by the INITIATOR. The semantic role that Ramchand gives to this participant (usually denoted by a DP) is UNDERGOER.³ A key trait of the UNDERGOER is that it relates to a non-telic event (i.e., one that does not have an end point). Ramchand proposes a third subevent that is associated with a telic event (i.e., one that has an end point) and whose participant, the RESULTEE, experiences or undergoes a change of state.

3.3.1 Subevents in the functional sequence

The splitting up of V itself into V and little *v* has been well-established in the literature since Larson (1988); Chomsky (1995), and much related work. The motivation for a little *v* projection stems from the need for a functional head that assigns a theta-role to the external argument. Ramchand (2008: 64) characterises little *v* as an analogue to her *init* projection in that both function as an introducer of an external argument-like DP. As discussed above, the decomposition of syntactic categories follows a long trend in the cartographic literature. Under these approaches, categories previously believed to be monolithic entities in the syntax are reanalysed as having a more complex and finely grained structure. As discussed below the little *v* + V sequence does not encapsulate the semantic differences between the verb types discussed in Section 3.4.1. Ramchand unifies the three semantic subevents and participants discussed above into the structure illustrated in (21). We adopt Ramchand's structure as an alternative to the traditional little *v* + V sequence on the grounds that the little *v* + V structure only introduces two arguments, whilst the SVC data clearly illustrate the occurrence of more than two argument positions within a single verbal event.



(Ramchand 2008: 46)

3. This is different from the notion of undergoer as used in functional grammars (e.g., Role and Reference Grammar).

In the structure given in (21), the *init[iation]P* initiates/causes a sub-event and licenses the *INITIATOR DP*. This sub-event may introduce a process, *proc[ess]P*, which specifies the nature of the change or process involved and licenses the *UNDERGOER DP*. The process may further relate to a result, *res[ult]P*, which provides telicity to the whole sequence of sub-events and licenses the *RESULTEE DP*. An important theoretical note to make at this point is that Ramchand (2015) argues for non-terminal lexicalization in which a verb or DP participant is not inserted under a single terminal node but can spell out multiple eventive features (in the case of verbs) or multiple participant projections (in the case of nouns). We adopt Ramchand's framework and terminology throughout our reframing of the Kwa data in Section 4.

3.4 Two verb classes

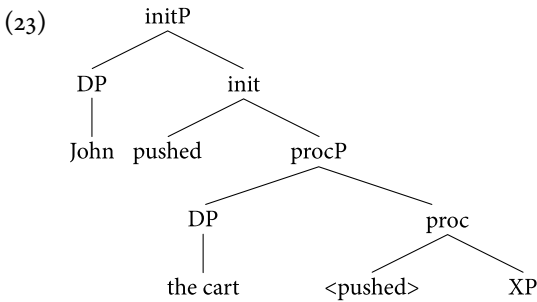
Ramchand proposes a series of verb classes to account for traditional verb classifications such as transitive, intransitive, and causatives. In this section, we review two verb classes that we will argue account for the *take-* and *give-* series discussed in Section 2, namely: *INITIATION-PROCESS* and *INITIATION-PROCESS-RESULT* verbs. In the following subsections, we discuss each verb class in turn.

3.5 Initiation-process verbs

Ramchand divides *INITIATION-PROCESS* verbs into two subcategories where, in one, the DPs expressing the role of *INITIATOR* and *UNDERGOER* are distinct. In the other, however, these two roles are encoded by one and the same DP. Consider the two sentences given in (21) taken from Ramchand (2008: 73–74).

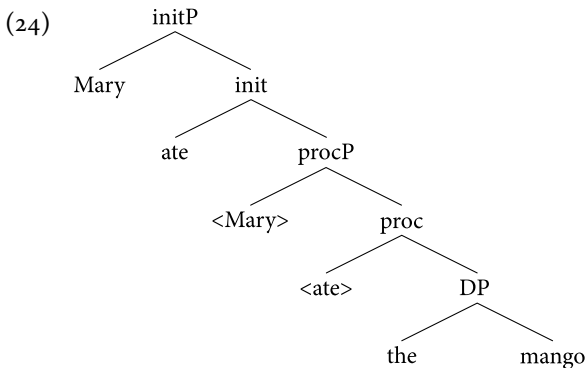
- (22) a. John pushed the cart.
Mary ate the mango.

As both sentences are transitive and require two arguments, the *init* and *proc* features must be present in the structure. However, the roles the DPs play in the eventive structure differ. In the case of (22a), a distinct *INITIATOR* (i.e., *John*) instigates a process undergone by another participants (i.e., *the cart*). As such, each participant projection of the two eventive features are filled by distinct DPs and both eventive features are identified by the verb *pushed* as illustrated in (23). The semantics implied by this structure is that *John* initiated a process that caused a cart to undergo movement or to be pushed.



(Ramchand 2008: 73)

The semantics for (22b) is different because, in this case, *Mary* initiates the act of eating and thus acts as the INITIATOR of the event. As *Mary* is a sentient agent, she simultaneously experiences the process of eating and is therefore also the UNDERGOER of the event. Ramchand proposes that the *the mango* is a rhematic path within *procP*, thus yielding the structure in (24). The semantics that this structure implies is that *Mary* initiates putting herself in an eating process that involves a mango.



(Ramchand 2008: 74)

Consider a case with the verb *eat* in which the UNDERGOER is identified by a distinct DP such as in (25).

(25) *Mary lets John eat the mango.*

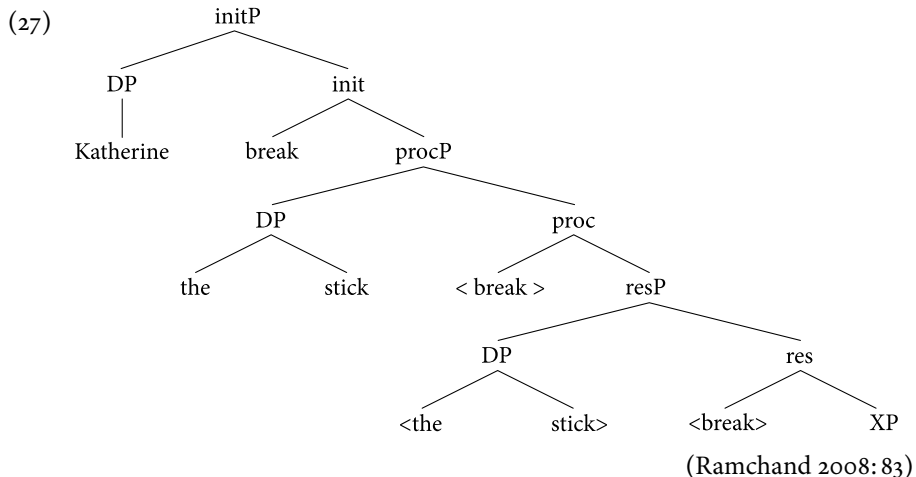
The interpretation of this sentence is not too different from a *take-SVC* in that *let* does not introduce a distinct event of letting much the same as *take* does not introduce a separate event in taking. Rather, the verb serves to introduce *Mary* as a participant who allows *John* to experience the process of eating a mango.

3.5.1 *Initiation-process-result verbs*

Ramchand proposes that the INITIATOR-PROCESS-RESULT verb class accounts for transitive verbs such as *break*, *throw*, *find*, and *enter* as well as double object and to dative constructions (amongst other verb categories that are not relevant to our discussion here). Let us take the example given in (26) from Ramchand (2008: 83).

(26) Katherine broke the stick.

In this example, the verb *break* encodes an initiating subevent, caused by the external argument DP (i.e., *Katherine*), and a final result state whereby the internal argument DP (i.e., *the stick*) becomes broken. Ramchand states that for this sort of verbs, the internal argument DP identifies both UNDERGOER and RESULTEE and that the verb identifies all three eventive features thus yielding the structure in (27)

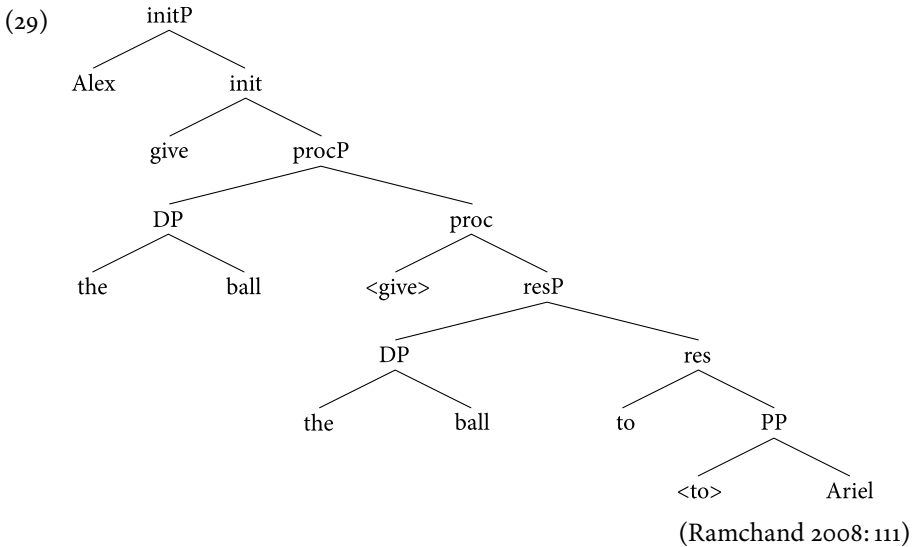


The semantics implied by this structure is that *Katherine* has initiated a breaking process that is undergone by *the stick* and which results in a change of state (i.e., *the stick* being broken). *The stick* would not be a rhematic path because the process of breaking directly involves the stick as a participant (i.e., it is *the stick* that is breaking) whereas in (22b) the action of eating is caused and experienced directly by *Mary* (i.e., it is *Mary* who is eating).

Ramchand uses the same INITIATOR-PROCESS-RESULT verb class to account for *to*-dative and double object constructions. Consider the *to*-dative construction given in (28) from Ramchand (2008: 111).

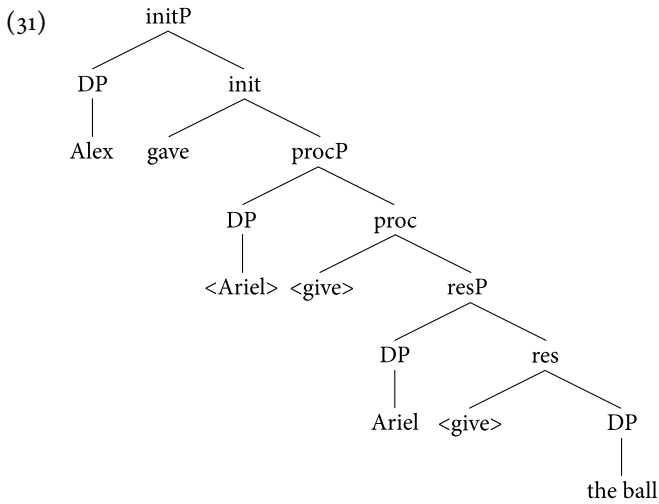
(28) Alex gave the ball to Ariel.

In this example, the verb *gave* still identifies *init* and *proc*. However, in Ramchand's structure *res* is spelled out by the preposition *to*. Ramchand proposes that the lexical entry for *give* has a *res* feature and that the preposition *to* expresses this feature via AGREE, thus yielding the structure in (29).



The semantics that this structure suggests is that *Alex* initiated a process that caused a ball to 'be at' *Ariel* with the preposition *to* expressing this result state. In the case of the double object construction in (30), from Ramchand (2008: 112), the author argues that *give* itself identifies the *res* feature thus yielding the structure in (31).

(30) Alex gave Ariel the ball.



(Ramchand 2008: 112)

The structures in (29) and (31) are similar to the structure proposed by Hale and Keyser (2002) in which the verb *give* involves a causative structure in which the external argument causes another argument to have or come into possession of another object. Here, *initP* corresponds to the causative upper V and the spelling out of the entire eventive structure by *give* can be linked to the head movement from *V*₃ to *V*₁ along the lines of Hale & Keyser (2002). The semantics of the double-object construction in (30) suggests that *Alex* has initiated a process that results in *Ariel* having possession of *the ball*.

In adopting Ramchand's structure one can account for the two issues raised in Section 2.1. First, the issue of multiple DP-arguments appearing in an SVC is resolved because each eventive feature licenses a separate participant expressed by a DP. Second, the difficulty in reconciling the possibility of both *V*₁ and *V*₂ housing a functional verb can be resolved. Given that the semantics of verbs series indicate a single verbal event, it is reasonable to assume that there are not multiple Vs in the syntax. Under Ramchand's approach, events (e.g., transitives) are complex by definition, involving three featural heads (i.e., *initP*, *procP*, and *resP*). In SVCs, the verbal roots express these heads within the eventive function sequence. In comparison to English which exhibits a combination of a verb and an adposition in (29) or a single verb in (31), data from Gungbe show that this language can use a single verb root to express the whole eventive functional sequence in some constructions, while a combination of verb serves this function in SVCs. In the following section, we apply this rationale to the data presented in Section 2 and argue that verbal series instantiate Ramchand's (2008, 2015) two verb classes (i.e., INITIATION-PROCESS and INITIATION-PROCESS-RESULT verbs).

4. Reframing the Kwa data

In Section 3.1.1, we provided a general introduction to the eventive functional sequence proposed by Ramchand (2008, 2015) without relating it to Kwa SVCs. In this section, we tease out the details of her analysis and how it can account for the data in Section 2. Our overarching claims are: (i) *take*- and *give*-SVCs are manifestations of the two verb classes discussed above and (ii) the Kwa languages, permitting serialization, use different verb roots to identify different sub-stretches of the eventive functional sequence. This contrasts with so-called non-serialising languages, such as English, in which a single verb can spell-out the entire eventive sequence. In Section 4.1, we address *take*-series and in Section 4.2 we address *give* series.

4.1 Spelling out *Take*-series

The *take*-series discussed in Section 2 can be classified into three sub-types:

- i. Object sharing (such as the example in (9b)).
- ii. Instrumental (such as the examples in (8a) and (8c)).
- iii. Lative (such as the example in (8b)).

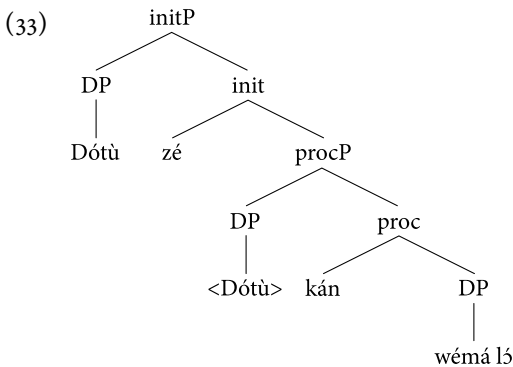
We argue that (i) is a manifestation of the INITIATION-PROCESS verb class where the INITIATOR and UNDERGOER are identified by the same DP and that (ii) and (iii) are manifestations of the INITIATOR-PROCESS-RESULTS verb class. Let us consider the semantics of the sentence in (9a) and the object-sharing *take*-SVC in (9b), both repeated below as (32a) and (32b), respectively.

- (32) a. *Dótù kàn wémá lǎ.* [Gungbe]
 Dotu write paper DET
 ‘Dote wrote the letter.’
- b. *Dótù zé wémá lǎ kàn.*
 Dotu take paper DET write
 ‘Dotu took it upon himself to write the letter.’

In adopting a fine-grained eventive structure, we predict that some languages can use a verbal root to individually identify the *init* feature. The above examples bear out this prediction. Whilst both examples express a single event of writing, the semantics of (32b) is more nuanced (i.e., *Dotu* may not be the originally intended writer of the letter). In the case of (32a), it is ambiguous as to whether *Dotu* took the initiative to write the letter or if he was otherwise coerced. Because the underlying syntax allows for the possibility of individually spelling out the *init* feature,

the Kwa languages are able to place emphasis on the initiating subevent by using an SVC.

By individually spelling out *init* with *zé*, the semantics of (32b) implies that *Dotu* took the initiative to put himself into the process of writing of a letter. It would be inappropriate to analyze *zé* as introducing an additional event of taking. Instead, *zé* must identify a substretch of the eventive functional sequence. Given that the event of writing is transitive and requires an external and internal arguments, we can translate this in terms of Ramchand's structure as requiring an initiating subevent (i.e., *initP*) and a process subevent (i.e., *procP*). We propose that *zé* spells out the *init* feature since it introduces the participant that initiates the main event of writing (i.e., *Dotu*). This leaves the verb *kán* 'write' to spell out the *proc* feature. Since *wémá ló* 'the letter' is not a sentient DP, carrying out the action of writing (i.e., it is *Dotu* who is writing), we adopt Ramchand's analysis that the INITIATOR also identifies UNDERGOER leaving *wémá ló* as a rhematic path thus yielding the structure in (33).⁴



The semantics that is implied by this structure is that *Dotu* initiated a writing process that involved a letter. If *wémá ló* identified UNDERGOER, then the semantics would be strange (i.e., *Dotu* puts the letter into the process of writing).

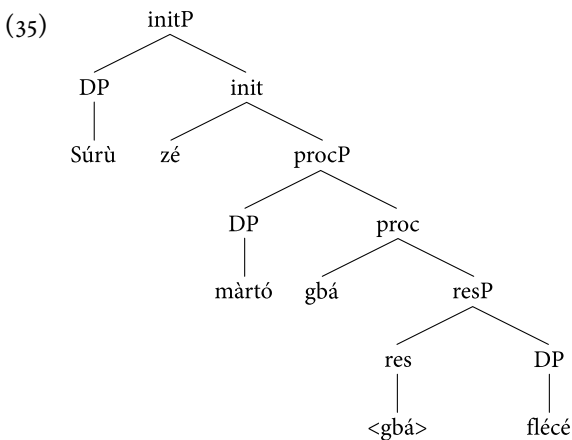
Let us turn to the instrumental SVC in (8a), repeated below as (34), which introduces a third DP participant into the verbal event.

4. In Section 3.3, we briefly mentioned two possible approaches for deriving the final structure within the eventive functional sequence (i.e., head movement or nonterminal lexicalization). Readers will notice that the structures given in this section do not necessarily conform to the surface structure given in the glosses. As discussed at length in Aboh 2004, 2009) and references therein, the Kwa languages are notorious for displaying OV order in some aspectual and light verb constructions. In order to keep our discussion manageable we refrain from reproducing these detailed discussions here, and we refer the interested reader to these references.

- (34) *Súrù zé màrtó gbà flécé ló.* [Gungbe]
 Suru take hammer break window DET
 ‘Suru broke the window with a hammer (by means of a hammer).’

As evidenced by the presence of three DP participants, we claim that such a SVC is a manifestation of the INITIATOR-PROCESS-RESULT verb class. As such, all three eventive features should be present in the structure. The semantics of (34) also bears out this classification. There is an initiating participant (i.e., *Suru*), a participant involved in the main action (i.e., *màrtó* ‘hammer’), and a participant that changes state (i.e., *flécé* ‘window’).

The difficulty in this case is that (i) two verbs must be used to identify three eventive features, and (ii) there is an additional DP serving as an instrument. If we assume that *zé* is indeed an element in the eventive functional sequence, as opposed to an adpositional element marking an instrument, it must identify the *init* feature much the same as in (32b). Given that there are only two elements that can spell-out the stretch of features, *proc* must be spelled out in a stretch with one of the other features. If the stretch of features [*proc*, *res*] is spelled out by *gbà* ‘break’, that would suggest that the hammer (i.e., the DP participant projected by *proc*) is the UNDERGOER of the breaking event, that is to say it is the ‘breaker’. This is intuitively correct as one DP participant initiates the event, another discharges it, and the last one changes state due to this combination of sub-events. Therefore, we conclude that in instrumental SVCs, *zé* expresses [*init*] and the lexical verbal *gbà* realizes [*proc*, *res*] thus yielding the structure in (35).



The semantics that this structure implies is that *Suru* takes the initiative to engage a hammer into a process that results in the breaking of a window. Because the Kwa languages permit serialization, they are able to more finely articulate the eventive structure and thus can place emphasis on the individual subevents or partic-

ipants. This is the case for (35) as the hammer becomes ingrained with the event itself unlike in the English example (25), *Mary lets John eat the mango*, where the mango is relegated to a rhematic path outside of the main event. Therefore, the Kwa languages can precisely articulate each participant in the verbal event where English can only articulate who initiated the event and what was affected by the event. The means or instrument is therefore relegated to an PP adjunct outside of the eventive structure.⁵

Let us now turn to the lative *take-SVC* in (8b), repeated below as (36).

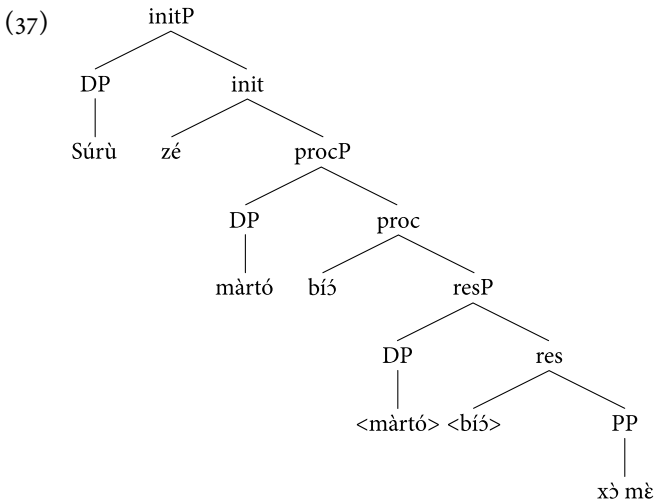
- (36) *Súrù [zè màrtó bíś xò mèn].* [Gungbe]
 Suru take hammer enter room INSIDE
 ‘Suru took a hammer into the room (entered the room with a hammer).’

As with the previous two examples, the unity of the two verbs in a single event is maintained. In this case, the event involves the entering of a room. Similar to the previous example, there is a resulting state but the difference in this latter case involves a change of location. We therefore argue that (36) is an INITIATOR-PROCESS-RESULT verb in which *zè* identifies [*init*] and *bíś* ‘enter’ identifies [*proc, res*] thus yielding the structure in (37).

5. It is noteworthy that the Kwa languages, like many SVC languages, also involve adpositions which can be used to introduce adjuncts or additional arguments. In the following example, the complex adposition *kpó...kpó* introduces the instrument.

- (i) *Súrù bíś xò mèn kpó màrtó kpó.* [Gungbe]
 Suru enter room INSIDE ADP hammer ADP
 ‘Suru entered the room with a hammer.’

Compared to Example (35), this sentence is ambiguous because it could either mean that Suru entered the room with a hammer accidentally, or that he intentionally did so. Example (35), on the other hand, implies he did so intentionally. Accordingly, SVCs and similar constructions involving adpositions do not have the same meaning, as predicted by Ramchand’s theory.



The semantics that is implied by this structure is that *Suru* has taken the initiative to put a hammer in a process whereby it changes location inside another room. As a reviewer observed, the semantics described here could suggest that the hammer entered the room by itself. Indeed, the view developed here is similar to a discussion in Aboh (2009) where it is shown that a causative construction like “The police chased the thief into the room” could be felicitous in a situation where (i) both the police and the thief ended up in the room due to the action of chasing, or (ii) only the thief ended up in the room. The semantics in (37) would correspond to this latter case, while the situation in (i) is left unspecified by syntax. In this regard, it is particularly interesting to observe that Gungbe does allow this ambiguity since the reading in which the hammer entered the room by itself would be perfectly adequate in a context of a magician. What is interesting here is that the bracketed string in (36) would be exactly the same. Consider the following dialogue:

- (38) a. *Ét́é ẁè b̀òkóǹǹ ĺ b́áí?*
 what FOC voodoo.priest DET do
 ‘What did the voodoo priest do?’
- b. *É s̀à àm̀àgb̀è b̀ò [z̀é màrtó bí's x̀ò m̀è].*
 3SG say magic.word COORD take hammer enter room in
- i. ‘He said an incantation and made the hammer enter the room.’
- ii. ‘He said an incantation and entered the room with a hammer.’

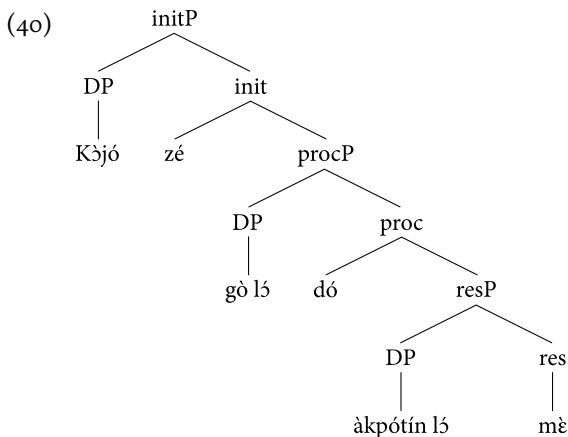
In this context of performing a magical act, the reading provided here in (i) is the most natural (or probable one) although that in (ii) is also possible. Given this

persistent ambiguity, our claim is that syntactic structure only accounts for the reading in (i), while (ii) derives from context.

At this point, it is also worth mentioning Aboh's (2010) discussion on complex adposition structures of the form P1-DP-P2 often found in the Kwa languages. The example in (39) illustrates this construction.

- (39) *K̀j̀j̀ó zé gò ĺ d́ òkpótín ĺ m̀.*
 Kojo take bottle DET P1 box DET P2
 'Kojo put the bottle inside the box.' [Gungbe, Aboh 2010: 225]

Aboh (2010) states that P1 expresses source, direction, or goal, and that P2 expresses location and that, moreover, P1 often derives from verbs via SVCs. One question that arises from a complex structure with verbal origins, such as that in (39), is: Are P1 and P2 truly adpositional elements or are they associated with the eventive functional sequence? Aboh claims that P1 functions as an argument introducer and assigns case to the constituent DP-P2. If we analyzed the verb *zé* in (39) as identifying all three eventive features this would mean that the P1-DP-P2 structure lies outside the verbal event structure. The semantics that are borne out in this case would suggest that *Kojo* initiates a taking process involving a bottle that results in something unspecified. Since the event in (39) involves a change of location, much the same with (36) and considering that P1 can be analyzed as having a verbal origin, one possible analysis is that P1 identifies [*proc*] and P2 expresses the resulting state [*res*], that is, the location thus yielding the structure in (40).



The semantics that this structure suggests is that *Kojo* initiated a process involving a bottle which in turn resulted in the bottle being inside a box. Essentially, this is tantamount to suggesting that adpositions can identify features within the eventive functional sequence. This would account for Aboh's observation that P1 inter-

sects with elements that would be labelled as prepositions or verbs in English. In the following Section 4.2, we turn to *give*-series and expand further on the notion of the intersection of adpositions and verbs within the eventive structure.

4.2 Spelling out *Give*-series

As discussed in Section 2.2, *give* is ambiguous as to whether it expresses the donation of an object to someone or whether it introduces a recipient or benefactive DP. Let us consider again Example (11) above, repeated here as (41) for convenience.

- (41) *Fífà zé távò ló ná Dóná.* [Gungbe]
 Fífa take table DET give Dona
 a. ‘Fífa took/carried the table for Dona.’
 b. ‘Fífa gave the table to Dona.’

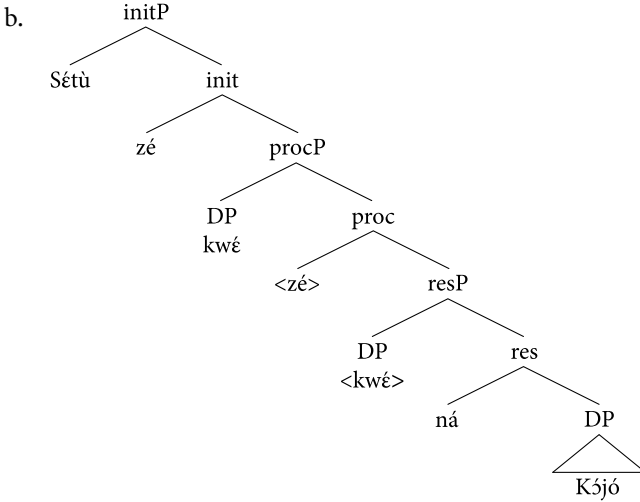
As indicated by the two translations in (41a)–(b), such SVCs involving *give* in V2 position are typically ambiguous between a dative reading (i.e., an indirect object, 41a) and a beneficiary reading, as in (41b). We proposed that such constructions are vague as to whether the indirect object is the direct beneficiary of the event expressed by the verb. This seems reasonable in light for examples such as (42) in which the ambiguity disappears and one can even argue that the semantic beneficiary of the event encoded by the verb is the subject rather than the indirect object.

- (42) *Dóná kplón wé tàùn ná jrékpón ló.*
 Dona learn letter really give exam DET
 ‘Dona studied a lot for the exam.’

Ná translated here as ‘give’ can obviously not be understood as the offering of something to someone. Instead, the meaning encoded by this morpheme here is similar to English ‘for’ in the translation, in that the goal/objective/purpose of Dona’s studying a lot is expressed by *ná*. Based on this, let us further make the assumption that V2-*ná* only expresses this meaning (i.e., 41a, 42). If true, we can reformulate (41b) as having the meaning of X transferring Y to Z. Whether Z is the *beneficiary* is left to be determined upon context. Under this description, the examples in (41) and (42) can be analysed along the lines of Ramchand’s (2008) approach to English *dative*-to constructions discussed above.

In this perspective, a sentence such as (43a) can be analysed similarly to English *to-dative* examples: *Setu* initiated a process that resulted in the money being located with *Kojo*. Here, *ná* glossed as ‘give’ expresses the resulting final state, while *zé* ‘take’ encodes both initiation and process, hence the structure in (43b).

- (43) a. *Sétù zé kwé ná Kòjò.*
 Setu take money give Kojo
 ‘Setu gave money to Kojo.’



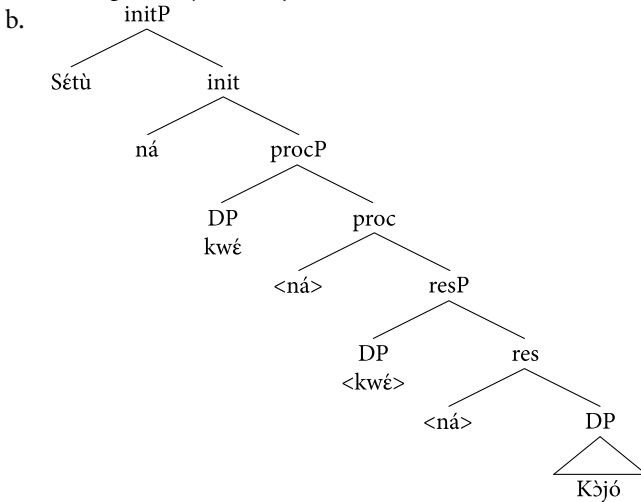
According to this representation, *kwé* identifies both the UNDERGOER and RESULTEE since it is subjected to the action of being ‘transferred’, which led to the result of it being with Kojo or more precisely in Kojo’s possession. As such, the latter is the recipient of the money, but not necessarily its beneficiary.

This analysis indicates that English and Gungbe exhibit similar underlying structures with the only difference being related to their spell-out choices. While *res* is expressed by the adposition *to* in English, the same function is carried out by the verbal root *ná* in Gungbe. We therefore reach the following lexical contrast in English and Gungbe.

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| (44) | English | Gungbe |
| | <i>give</i> : Init; Proc | <i>zé</i> : Init, Proc |
| | <i>to</i> : Res | <i>ná</i> : Res |

The variation just observed, sheds further light on double object constructions in Gungbe. Indeed, if we adopt Hale & Keyser’s (2002) rationale, further formalized in Ramchand (2008), that dative-to constructions are the source of double object constructions, we can derive the Gungbe Example (45a) in a straightforward manner as in (45b). Starting with representation (43b), we can derive (45a) by assuming that *ná*, just as in English, spells out the whole stretch of eventive structure, that is, *init*, *proc*, and *res* as in (45b).

- (45) a. *Sétù ná kwé Kòjò.* [Gungbe]
 Setu give money Kojo
 ‘Setu gave Kojo money.’



This analysis further indicates that English and Gungbe display the following lexical choices for the eventive functional sequence: It seems as if English speakers extend the spell-out of *init*, *proc*, to *res*, downward, while the Gungbe speakers extend the spell-out of *res* upward to *proc*, and *init*.

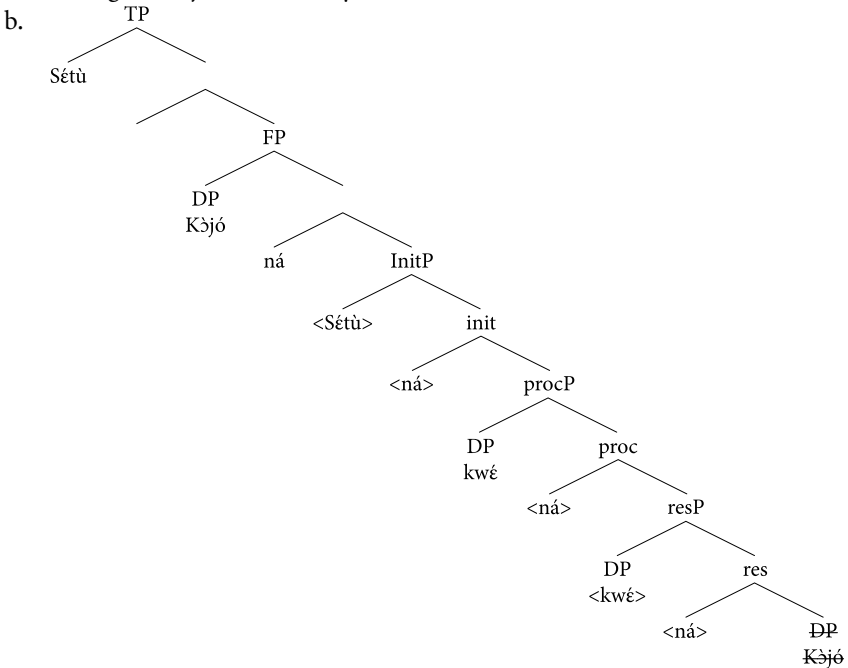
- (46)
- | | |
|--|--|
| English | Gungbe |
| i. <i>give</i> : <i>init</i> ; <i>proc</i> | <i>zé</i> : <i>init</i> , <i>proc</i> |
| <i>to</i> : <i>res</i> | <i>ná</i> : <i>res</i> |
| ii. <i>give</i> : <i>init</i> ; <i>proc</i> ; <i>res</i> | <i>ná</i> : <i>init</i> ; <i>proc</i> ; <i>res</i> |

Interestingly, the Gbe languages (and many Kwa) exhibit an additional GOAL-THEME order in double object constructions. While the order THEME-GOAL appears the most basic or default order for Enoch Aboh (speaker of Gungbe), the mirror image GOAL-THEME in (47a) seems less so. In his idiolect, this order appears somehow emphatic.⁶ We take this to be indication that the order in (47a) is derived as in (47b) by subsequent movement of the GOAL to some intermediary position left to the THEME. This is in line with Hale and Keyser’s (2003) analysis, with the only difference that we are postulating an internal A-bar type movement

6. James Essegbey, who is a speaker of Ewegbe, observes a similar asymmetry in Ewegbe, even though the goal-theme order does not seem any more emphatic to him (James Essegbey p.c. 24-02-2023). See also Essegbey (2010) for a detailed discussion on double object constructions.

of the GOAL, to some discourse-related IP-internal position.⁷ Because this is an A-bar movement, there is no minimality effect from the intervening THEME which occupies an A position. We make the further assumption that this discourse-related position labelled FP here, represents the edge of the eventive structure, from where it can attract relevant constituents. The details of such a displacement rule are not relevant to our discussion here but the interested reader is referred to Belletti (2001, 2002, 2009) for some possible analyses of clause-internal focus position. Under the traditional hypothesis that the subject occurs in [spec TP] in surface structure, and Aboh's (2004) analysis that lexical verbs move to Aspect position in Gbe, we conclude that the subject-give-GOAL-THEME order observed in (47a) displays the structure in (47b) minimally.

- (47) a. *Sétù ná Kòjò kwé.* [Gungbe]
 Setu give Kojo money
 'Setu gave Kojo some money.'



7. Here we differ from Ramchand (2008: Chapter 4) in which the order GOAL-THEME represents a situation in which the GOAL is a resultee and the THEME is introduced by a functional category P_{have} that expresses a predicative relation between the GOAL and the THEME.

What matters in our discussion here is that, in structures such as 47b, *ná* ‘give’, expresses the whole stretch of eventive structure minimally, and presumably outer functional projections that are part of the aspectual domain.

The identification of *ná* with the entire stretch of features in the eventive structure implies that *Setu* has initiated a process that results in the money being in *Kojo*’s possession. Similarly to our analysis of Example (45a), this analysis suggests that *kwé* identifies both the UNDERGOER and RESULTEE participants.

5. Coda

In adopting Ramchand’s functional sequence of eventive features, we have been able to address the two research questions posed in the beginning of the paper, to wit:

- i. What structure make-up underlies SVCs?
- ii. What possible grammars can arise out of this underlying structure?






The structural complexity and the semantic nuances of *take*- and *give*-series motivate the necessity of a finely articulated eventive structure in which the traditional node V consists of several layers involving the initiation of a process leading to a result state. The examples discussed herein demonstrate how the Gbe languages (and Kwa more generally) are able to employ SVCs to encode specific details about the nature of this eventive structure that is commonly expressed by a single verb in a non-serializing language such as English. Given the semantic richness afforded by SVCs and the fact that past literature addressing SVC syntax seem to converge on the need for some sort of functional layer within V, the adoption of Ramchand’s structure to account for SVCs provides the necessary functional structure to account for the existence of SVCs and the conceptualization of the notion of ‘predication’ cross-linguistically. Ramchand’s theory predicts the existence of both serializing grammars (which use multiple verbal roots to express the eventive functional sequence) and non-serializing grammars (which use a single verbal root to express the entire eventive functional sequence), with no additional structural parameter. The languages differ only with regard to lexical properties of their roots and spell-out choices. Moreover, the proposed structure sheds light on elements which were classified in the Kwa literature as ‘verbid’ (cf. Ansre 1966) for their ambiguous status between adpositions and lexical verbs. In the proposed analysis this ambiguity reduces to the nature of roots and their functions in Gbe languages: the same root can occupy different grammatical functions. In this respect, the described contrast and similarities between English *give* and *to* versus Gungbe *zé* and *ná* are telling. These facts suggest that learners of the Gbe










languages (and presumably Kwa in general) may interpret the proposed underlying functional sequence in different ways leading to different surface analyses. This in turn may lead to the emergence of a variety of grammars in which a single element can fulfil a purely lexical and a more composite role (such as encoding adpositional features, cf. Aboh 2010). Such a multifunctionality has implications for the often-described grammaticalization path from lexical verbs in SVCs (e.g., *ná*, give) into an adposition.

Abbreviations

ADP	Adposition	HAB	Habitual
CL	Classifier	P1/P2	Pre/Post-position
COMPL	Completive	PL	Plural
COORD	Coordinator	POSS	Possessive
DEF	Definite	PRF	Perfective
DET	Determiner	SG	Singular
FOC	Focus	TMA	Tense Mood Aspect

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