The Phasal Verb Construction in Seri

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1. Introduction

In this paper I describe the properties of a construction in the Seri language in which two inflected verbs occur in close-knit sequence, the second of which is a verb that is interpreted as a phasal verb. I refer to this construction here descriptively as the Phasal Verb Construction (PVC).¹

The PVC is compared and contrasted with other constructions in the language and its various characteristics are described in detail. In particular, it is important to consider how it is different from three superficially similar constructions — the ubiquitous “chained clause” construction, the Indirect Discourse Construction and the Situational Construction.

It is proposed that the PVC has resulted from the reanalysis of a chained clause construction and is now a finite clause embedded under raising verbs that indicate phasal

¹ Seri is a language isolate spoken in Sonora, Mexico. Data for this paper have come from many sources, including published and unpublished texts (see References), unpublished field notes, sentences from the 2005 dictionary (DS2005, Moser and Marlett (2005)), the translation of the New Testament (NTT), and work currently in progress supported by NEH grant FN-50007-06 for Documenting Endangered Languages. All examples have been checked, re-checked and recorded during the past year. Key consultants for this paper have been Lorenzo Herrera Casanova, René Montaño Herrera and Francisco Xavier Moreno Herrera. I thank Cheryl Black and Cindy Williams for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper. Responsibility for all errors and deficiencies is of course my own.

¹ Abbreviations: AON=Action/Oblique Nominalizer; AUX=Auxiliary; AW=Away; CM=Compact orientation; DCL=Declarative; DDP=Plural (or mass or abstract) Distal Demonstrative pronoun; DDS=Singular Distal Demonstrative pronoun; DL=Delimiting adverb; DS=Different Subject; DT=Distal Realis; Dt-Pl=Distal Plural demonstrative adjective; Hz=Horizontal orientation; Ir.Dp=Dependent Irrealis; Ir.Id=Independent Irrealis; INTNS=Intensifier; LC=Location; Md-Aw=Medial moving Away demonstrative adjective, Md-Cm=Medial Compact demonstrative adjective, Md-Pl=Medial Plural demonstrative adjective, Mult=Multiple action; ON=Object Nominalizer; Pl=Plural (of noun or of subject); Pv=Passive; Px=Proximal realis; Px-Lc=Proximal Locative demonstrative adjective, Rl=Realis (interrogative or dependent); Sr=Soft, out of view, or default; SN=Subject Nominalizer; UO=Unspecified Object; UT=Unspecified Time; Vt=Vertical orientation; 1s:S. In=INTRANSITIVE first person singular Subject; 1s:St=TRANSITIVE first person singular Subject; 2P=second person Possessor; 2s:S=second person singular subject; 3:3=third person subject acting on third person direct object; 3IO=third person Indirect Object; 3P=third person possessor. Symbols: √=root/stem boundary, *=ungrammatical, %=awkward or marginally acceptable, ?=uneven acceptability judgments.
The newly formed phasal verbs are identical in form to the verbs that gave origin to them. However, the syntax of these phasal verbs no longer matches their morphology in that those which are etymologically and morphologically transitive are functioning as intransitive phasal verbs.

2. The Phasal Verb Construction contrasted with others

The chained clause construction is one of the most common types of sentences in Seri. The typical pattern is schematized in (1) — a series of dependent clauses followed by an independent clause.

(1) Dependent, Independent.

While sentences in narratives may have many dependent clauses, a simple example with only three is given in (2). As is typical, none of the dependent clauses in (2) has a subordinator. The verbs of the dependent clauses are underscored in (2).

(2) a. **Ox tpaça ma,**
   thus **Rl-be DS**

   b. **cmaax taax iti tiij,**
   now **DDP 3P-on Rl-sit**

   c. **hapx taalx ma x,**
   outside **Rl-release-MULT DS UT**

   d. **imóoctam, comcáac coi,**
   3:3-Px-look.at-Pt person.Pt. the.Pt.

   ‘Entonces, sentada allí, demostró su poder mágico, y la gente la miraba.’
   ‘Then, sitting there, she demonstrated her magical powers, and the people watched her.’

In sentences with chained clauses, the grammatical subject may vary from one clause to the next. When the referent of the subject changes, an overt marker appears near the end of the dependent clause. This happens twice in example (2) — between clauses (2a) and (2b) and between (2c) and (2d) — and so the Different Subject marker **ma** appears at the end of (2a) and near the end of (2c). When the referent of the subject does not change, as between (2b) and (2c), no overt marker appears.

Embedded indirect discourse is superficially quite similar to the dependent clauses illustrated above except that no Different Subject marking occurs before the speech verb.

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2 This construction shares some properties with the serial verb construction (see Dixon and Aikhenvald (2006) and the work cited there) but does not match the prototype of that construction.

3 Longacre (1972) introduces the term “clause chaining” and characterizes it based on languages of Papua New Guinea. Longacre (1985) demonstrates that this is a type of structure found in other parts of the world also. See also Hale (1991) for a discussion of similar facts in Misumalpan languages of Central America.


5 In irrealis clauses, the Different Subject marker is **ta**. The extremely common enclitic **x** in (2c) is the only word which may appear after the Different Subject marker; in many cases it seems to indicate a lack of specific time, but its precise meaning is unclear.
when there is a change in subject. Therefore the morpheme *ma* is ungrammatical between the (a) and (b) clauses of the following sentences.  

(3) a. *Tmoquépe* (*ma*),  
    Rl-sick DS 3:3-Px-tell.Pl.  
    ‘Le(s) dijeron que estaba enfermo/a.’  
    ‘They told him/her/them that s/he was sick.’  

b. *imii*.

(4) a. *Intmoquépe* (*ma*),  
    2sS-Rl-sick DS 2sDO Px-tell  
    ‘Te dijo que estabas enfermo/a.’  
    ‘S/he told you that you were sick.’  

b. *ma miih*.

(5) a. *Intmoquépe* (*ma*),  
    2sS-Rl-sick DS 1sDO Px-tell  
    ‘Me dijo que estabas enfermo/a.’  
    ‘S/he told me that you were sick.’  

b. *him miih*.

(6) a. *Ihtmoquépe* (*ma*),  
    1sS.Rl-Rl-sick DS 2sDO Px-tell.Pl.  
    ‘Me dijeron que yo estaba enfermo/a.’  
    ‘They told me that I was sick.’  

b. *him miih*.

The phrase *comcáac himcoi* in examples (7i-ii) is the subject of the second verb — the speech verb — and must appear initially or finally in these examples. Example (7iii) shows that it cannot occur between the two verbs of the sentence.

(7) i. *Comcáac* *himcoi* *trooqui zo htcooz* (*ma*),  
    person.Pl. Dr-Pl. vehicle a 1sS.Tr-Rl-steal DS 2sDO Px-tell.Pl.  

ii. *Trooqui zo htcooz* (*ma*),  
    person.Pl. Dr-Pl. vehicle a 1sS.Tr-Rl-steal 2sDO Px-tell.Pl.  

iii. *Trocöpi (*ma*),  
    vehicle a 1sS.Tr-Rl-steal person.Pl. Dr-Pl. 2sDO Px-tell.Pl.  

‘Esas personas me acusaron de haber robado un carro.’  
‘Those people accused me of having stolen a car.’

What I call the Situational Construction has two clauses with coreferential subjects. The first clause looks just like any ordinary dependent clause and contains the major information about what is actually happening. The second clause follows a formula, using one of the following phrases (although the verb may be in a tense other than that shown in these examples): *toc cótii* (there 3IO-Rl-sit), *toc cótap* (there 3IO-Rl-stand), *toc cotom* (there 3IO-Rl- lie), *toc cótii* (there 3IO-Rl-be.Pl.). This is illustrated by the examples that follow. Sometimes it seems inappropriate to render the second clause literally in the tran-

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* For the same reason, Different Subject marking does not appear at the end of clause (8b) preceding *yoque*, a form of the verb for saying that now usually functions as an evidential indicating that the preceding information is what the ancestors have said — most commonly used in traditional stories and historical narratives.
In (10), the construction occurs twice: in clauses (10b-c) and in clauses (10d-e).

(8) a. ... coléequi teetol  
b.  toc cótap,  
c.  yoque.  
upwards  Rl-push  there  3IO-Rl-stand  Dr-US-say
‘… estaba allí parado empujando hacia arriba [en el techo de la cueva], se dice.’
‘… he was standing there pushing upwards [on the roof of the cave], it is said.’
(Conejo_Coyote 17-18)

(9) a. listox theemloj  
b.  toc cótoii ma, ...  
3P-spirit-Pl.  Rl.-stink-Pl.  there  3IO-Rl-be.Pt.  DS
‘Estaban enojados, …’
‘They were angry, …’ (Dos_Hermanos 4.1)

(10) a. Hant z iti tiij,  
place a on  Rl-sit
b. tooizj  
c.  toc cótiij ma,  
Rl-UO-grind  there  3IO-Rl-sit  DS
d.  ziix hast iizx ano coom com mos cmiique quih thaa x,  
chuckwalla the.Hz also person the.Sf Rl-be UT
e.  toc cóquij iha.  
there  3IO-SN-sit  DCL

‘Ella estaba sentada en un lugar, estaba moliendo [fruta], la iguana también era una persona.’
‘She was sitting in a place, she was grinding [fruit], the chuckwalla also was a person.’ (ES2007 acaam_ccaa 13)

What is noticeable in this construction is first, the two clauses are generally spoken in fairly quick succession with a lowered intonation contour on the second clause, and second, the second clause adds little to the propositional meaning. Notice that the information that the woman was sitting has already been expressed in clause (10a).

The topic of this paper, the Phasal Verb Construction, has two verbs in it, which I refer to as V1 and V2. So far as I have been able to determine, only three verbs in the language may appear as V2 in this construction. One of the verbs is √axi, a transitive accomplishment verb meaning ‘make, create (an object)’ — always with the idea of completion — when it is used in many simpler sentences (Moser and Marlett 2005); it is not used for ‘make’ when the creation is incomplete. But in the construction considered here it has been grammaticalized to mean ‘finish, complete (an action)’.7 It is not used for anything like a causative construction. As demonstrated below, the subject in the PVC

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7 This verb also has the meaning of ‘finish’ in the following sentence which is different structurally from the other sentences in this paper. The first clause is headed by a deverbal noun, typical of most complement clauses.

(i) ¿Inyáhitim intáxi?
2P-AON-UO-eat-MULT  2SS-Rl-finish
‘¿Has terminado de comer?’
‘Have you finished eating?’
may or may not be agentive. When the verb is used in its concrete sense, however, the subject must be agentive.

Another verb that may appear as V2 is ‘√acatx, a transitive verb that means ‘release, set free, let go, let loose, abandon (a person or object)’ in other contexts. In the PVC it has been grammaticalized to mean ‘stop (doing an action)’. As with the verb ‘√axi, the subject of ‘√acatx in the PVC is not necessarily agentive.\(^8\)

The third verb that may appear as V2 is ‘√ajöc, an intransitive verb which is not used alone at all.\(^9\) The construction with this verb means ‘continually be or do’, commonly translated with ‘always’, and typically takes the enclitic “delimiting” adverb ‘oo (no clear meaning) as well as third person indirect object marking (the prefix ‘co- or its allomorph ‘cö-, for no obvious reason), as seen in the examples below. The subject is not necessarily agentive. This verb is glossed ‘continually’ in the examples that follow.

Consider (11)-(15), which are three sentence fragments that contain the PVC. One sequence of words which I label S1 has been bracketed in each example. Although in each case the bracketed part could be a complete dependent clause, I am not claiming that at this point that it is a constituent. Likewise, the verb of finishing, stopping or continuing has also been bracketed and labeled S2. The discussion which follows looks at the properties of these sequences and the verbs in them (V1 and V2, respectively).

(11) [… \(\text{tiix iht\(\text{íp}\)}\) S1 [iht\(\text{áxi}\), ] S2 … DDS 1sS.Tr-Rl-straighten 1sS.Tr-Rl-finish ‘… cuando terminé de enderezarla, …’ ‘… when I finished straightening that one, …’ (DS2005, quiip)

(12) [\(\text{Ox tee}\) S1 [iht\(\text{áxi}\), ] S2 … thus Rl-say 3:3-Rl-finish ‘Cuando terminó de decir así, …’ ‘When he finished saying thus, …’ (Conejo_Puma 11.1)

(13) [\(\text{Zo hpoohit}\) S1 [ihp\(\text{áoxi}\), ] S2… alone 1sS.Tr-Ir.Dr-eat 1sS.Tr-Ir.Dr- finish ‘Cuando terminó de comer una [cabeza], …’ ‘When I finish eating one [head], …’ (Conejo_Puma 13.1)

(14) [\(\text{Tapca}\) S1 [ít\(\text{ácatx}\) ma \(\text{x}\), ] S2 xepe com xiimj. Rl-rain 3:3-Rl-release DS UT sea the.Hz EM-clear ‘Cuando deja de llover, el mar está claro.’ ‘When the rain stops, the sea is clear.’ (DS2005, quiimj)

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\(^8\) This verb is also commonly used with a complement headed by a deverbal noun.

\(^9\) This verb may also occur with a complement headed by a deverbal noun.
3. Properties of the PVC

The following properties hold for the PVC:

3.1. Property 1: The verb in S1 is always in medial morphology.

Medial morphology is the finite verb morphology that is typical of dependent clauses of the chained clause construction in the language, as in (2), of embedded indirect discourse, as in (3), and of the first clause of the Situational Construction, as in (8). The verb in S1 in the PVC is always in medial morphology. Therefore the verb of S1 is either conjugated with *t*- (realis), as in (11) above, or *po*- (dependent irrealis, with the allomorphs *p*- and *poo*- in certain other situations), as in (15) above. More examples are given immediately below.

Examples with √axi:

(16) [Taax hapafítlam ]$_{S1}$ [ hapóox, ]$_{S2}$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DDP</th>
<th>1rS-Ir.Dp-cause.stand-Pl</th>
<th>1rS-Ir.Dp-finish.Pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cmáax hasáaitoj aha.</td>
<td>NOW 1P-Sr.Ir-Dp-fish.Pl</td>
<td>AUX-DCL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Cuando terminamos de jalarlos, iremos de pesca.’

‘When we finish pulling them in, then we will go fishing.’ (unpublished text)

(17) [Xiica quipxa hoéenec tacoi hatáxoj ]$_{S1}$ [ hatáx, ]$_{S2}$ ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>things SN-few</th>
<th>1P-ON-carry.Pl</th>
<th>Md-Pl</th>
<th>1rS-Rl-eat-Pl</th>
<th>1rS-Rl-finish.Pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ‘Cuando terminamos de comer las pocas cosas que habíamos llevado, …’

‘When we had finished eating the few things that we had taken along, …’ (unpublished text)

(18) [Ihpásaquim ]$_{S1}$ [ ihpóoxi, ]$_{S2}$ ....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1sS-Ir.Dr-comb.hair</th>
<th>1sS.Tr-Ir.Dr-finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ‘Cuando termine de cepillarme el cabello, …’

‘When I finish combing my hair, …’ (DS2005, casaquim)

(19) [Iscám com itáacöim ]$_{S1}$ [ ítáxi, ]$_{S2}$ ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3P-reed.boat the.Hz</th>
<th>3:3-Rl-make.ready 3:3-Rl-finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ‘Terminó de preparar su balsa, …’

‘S/he finished readying his/her reed boat, …’ (DS2005, caacöim)

(20) [Mooin quij impóom ]$_{S1}$ [ impóoxi, ]$_{S2}$ ....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2P-ON-have.in.mouth the.Cm</th>
<th>2sS-Ir.Dr-swallow 2sS-Ir.Dr-finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ‘Cuando terminas de tragarse ese bocado, …’

‘When you finish swallowing that mouthful, …’ (DS2005, quijin)
Examples with √acatx:

(21) … [ quihéhe caacoj quiq itzáxö ] S1 [ itácax ma, ] S2 …
   SN-rule SN-big the.CM 3:3-Rl-talk 3:3-Rl-release DS
   ‘… cuando dejó de hablar el rey, …’
   ‘… when the king stopped speaking, …’ (Mt 2:9, NTT)

(22) ¿Zó tpacta ma [ taaitom x ] S1 [ itcmácatx, ] S2 ctam tiquij?
   how? Rl-be DS Rl-speak UT 3:3-Rl-N-release man that.CM
   ‘¿Por qué no deja de hablar ese hombre?’
   ‘Why doesn’t that man stop talking?’

Examples with √ajöc:

(23) [ Taax taa oo cópopácta ] S1 [ cópoojöc oo x ] S2
    DDP DDP Dl 3IO-IR-Dr-be 3IO-IR-Dr-continually Dl UT
    toc cósooi caha.
   there 3IO-IR-Id-be.Pl AUX-DCL
   ‘Así serán siempre.’
   ‘They will forever be like that.’ 10 (He 10:14, NTT)

(24) [ He hptiim ] S1 [ cohptájöc oo ] S2 toc cöhamom.
    1Pro 1sS-IN-Rl-sleep 3IO-1SS-IN-Rl-continually Dl there 3IO-1SS-IN-Px-lie
    ‘Yo estaba allí durmiendo todo el tiempo.’
    ‘I was there sleeping all the time.’ 11

(25) [ Tooha ] S1 [ cötajöc oo, ] S2 hant com iti quihtim iha.
    Rl-cry 3IO-Rl-continually Dl land the.Hz 3P-on SN-be-MULT DCL
    ‘Siempre anda llorando.’
    ‘She is continually going around crying.’ (ES2007, acaam ccaa 10)

(26) [ Hant hizac tecomca ] S1 [ cöcajöc oo ha. ] S2
    place this.Lc Rl-noisy 3IO-SN-continually Dl DCL
    ‘Este lugar siempre está ruidoso.’
    ‘This place is always noisy.’

(27) [ Hamiihe com tool ] S1 [ cöcajöc oo ha. ] S2
    sky the.Hz Rl-blue 3IO-SN-continually Dl DCL
    ‘El cielo siempre es azul.’
    ‘The sky is always blue.’

3.2. Property 2: The verb in S2 may be in either medial morphology or it may be in final morphology.

Independent clauses have a few more options for tense/mood than do dependent clauses. Independent reals may be inflected for yo- Distal, mi- Proximal, xo-

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10 The third clause of this example would qualify the example as a Situational Construction as well.
11 The third clause of this example would qualify the example as a Situational Construction as well.
Emphatic, or a denominal verb form. Independent irrealis clauses are typically inflected only for si- or (much more uncommonly) tm- Permissive. The preceding group of examples illustrates the verbs √axi, √acatx and √ajöc in non-final clauses (where they are found most commonly in texts, it seems), but the following group shows that they may be in independent clauses and have final morphology.

(28) [Haptco toos] S₁ [iyóoxi.] S₂
already Rl-sing 3:3-Dt-finished
‘Ya ha terminado de cantar.’
‘S/he has already finished singing.’

(29) [Ihtahit] S₁ [ihyóoxi.] S₂
1s:S-Tr-Rl-eat 1s:S-Tr-Dt-finished
‘Terminé de comerlo.’
‘I finished eating it.’

(30) [Haptco toos] S₁ [iyóocatx.] S₂
already Rl-sing 3:3-Dt-release
‘Ya ha dejado de cantar.’
‘S/he has already stopped singing.’

(31) [Tiix toos] S₁ [cöyoajöc oo.] S₂
DDS Rl-sing 3IO-Dt-continually Dl
‘Siempre estaba cantando.’
‘S/he was always singing.’

(32) [Miicot oo piij] S₁ [cösiijöc oo caha.] S₂
2P-with Dl Ir.Dpisa 3IO-Ir.Id-continually Dl AUX-Dcl
‘Estará con ustedes siempre.’
‘He will always be with you.’ (Jn 14:17, NTT)

3.3. **Property 3:** The tense/moods of the two clauses are typically harmonized:
both either realis or both irrealis.

It is a general fact about chained clauses that the tense/mood of the series of clauses is harmonized except in very special situations. In (2) and (3), the clauses harmonize in this way; all are in the realis mood. Likewise in the PVC it is not generally possible to have one clause be in realis tense/mood and the other clause be in irrealis tense/mood.

(33) a. Realis (medial) Irrealis
* t-... ipóoxi, ... / ipóocatx, ... / poojöc oo, ...

b. Irrealis (medial) Realis
* po-... itáxi, ... / itácatx, ... / tajöc oo, ...

c. Realis (final) Irrealis
* t-... isíixi aha. / isíicatx aha. / siijöc oo aha.

d. Irrealis (final) Realis
* po-... iyóoxi. / iyóocatx. / yoojöc oo.
One of the situations in which a “disharmony” occurs is when the irrealis is required in S1 when the phasal verb √ajöc is negated.

(34) a. [ Cmaam tiquij paha ] S1 [ cöyomajöc oo. ] S2
    woman that.CM Ir.DP-cry 3IO-DT-N-continually DI
    ‘Esa mujer no está siempre llorando.’
    ‘That woman isn’t always crying.’

b. * Cmaam tiquij tooha cöyomajöc oo.

(35) a. [ Adolfo quih pas ] S1 [ cöyomajöc oo. ] S2
    the.SF Ir.DP-sing 3IO-DT-N-continually DI
    ‘Adolfo no siempre cantaba.’
    ‘Adolfo wasn’t always singing.’

b. * Adolfo quih toos cöyomajöc oo.

Irrealis morphology is not used if the other phasal verbs are negated.

(36) [ Ihptásaquim ] S1 [ ihtcmáxi ipi ma ] S2
    1sS.IN-RL-comb.hair 1sS.TR-RL-N-finish still DS
    zaah quij ánó yoozquim.
    sun the.CM 3P-in DI-enter
    ‘No terminé de peinarme antes de que se pusiera el sol.’
    I didn’t finish combing my hair before the sun set.

(37) a. [ Adolfo quih toos x ] S1 [ iyomácatx. ] S2
    the.SF RL-sing UT 3:3-DT-N-release
    ‘Adolfo no dejó de cantar.’
    ‘Adolfo didn’t stop singing.’

b. * Adolfo quih pas x, iyomácatx.

3.4. Property 4: The subjects of the two clauses are always precisely coreferential if S1 is active.

Subject person is overtly marked on finite verbs, except third person, which is usually unmarked. When third person subject is acting on third person direct object, however, the prefix i- occurs.

In the case of the PVC, both verbs have appropriate person morphology and in almost all examples the subjects of the two clauses are always precisely coreferential. As a

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12 The only exceptions that I have found to the coref erentiality generalization is in the case of passive clauses. All three versions of the construction in the following example are grammatical, but each has a slight twist on the presentation.
result, both are either marked for first person singular (h- on transitive verbs, hp- on intransitive verbs, and phonologically-conditioned allomorphs ih- and ihp-, respectively), second person singular (m-, phonologically-conditioned allomorphs n-, im-, and in-), first person plural (ha-), second person plural (ma-), i- (third acting on third), or unmarked (for other situations with third person subject). As noted above, the verbs √axi and √acatx are morphologically transitive but √ajöc is morphologically intransitive.

3.5. Property 5: V2 usually immediately follows V1.

V1 and V2 are adjacent in all of the examples cited so far, and this is true of most
examples that have been found or elicited. No pronoun (38) or noun phrase (39) may occur between them.

(38) * Toos, \textit{tiix} cöyoojöc oo.
\hspace{1cm} RL-sing DDS 3IO-Dt-continually Dt.
\hspace{1cm} ('Siempre estaba cantando.')
\hspace{1cm} ('S/he was always singing.')

(39) * Toos, Pedro \textit{quij} cöyoojöc oo.
\hspace{1cm} RL-sing the.CM 3IO-Dt-continually Dt.
\hspace{1cm} ('Pedro siempre estaba cantando.')
\hspace{1cm} ('Pedro was always singing.')

In this regard, the PVC is similar to the Indirect Discourse Construction. That construction also disallows a noun phrase between the two relevant verbs. Compare the examples in (41) and (43) with ungrammatical (44)-(45).

(40) * Haptco toos María \textit{quij} iyóoxi.
\hspace{1cm} already RL-sing the.CM 3:3-Dt-finished
\hspace{1cm} ('Ya María ha terminado de cantar.')
\hspace{1cm} ('María has already finished singing.'

In this regard, the PVC is similar to the Indirect Discourse Construction. That construction also disallows a noun phrase between the two relevant verbs. Compare the examples in (41) and (43) with ungrammatical (44)-(45).

(41) Pedro \textit{quih} tmoquépe, imíih.
\hspace{1cm} the.Sf RL-sick 3:3-Px-tell
\hspace{1cm} 'Le(s) dijo que estaba Pedro estaba enfermo.'
\hspace{1cm} 'S/he told him/her/them that Pedro was sick.'

13 If the verb of saying has an explicit subject, that subject appears either before the embedded quotation (sometimes with a focal resumptive pronoun), as in (vi) and (vii), or it is postposed to follow the verb of saying, as in (viii).

\hspace{1cm} the.Sf woman DDS RL-sick 3:3-Px-tell
\hspace{1cm} 'Pedro le(s) dijo que ESA MUJER está/estaba enferma.'
\hspace{1cm} 'Pedro told him/her/them that THAT WOMAN is/was sick.'

(vii) [ Cmaam, \textit{tiix} [ Pedro \textit{quih} tmoquépe, ] imíih
\hspace{1cm} woman DDS the.Sf RL-sick 3:3-Px-tell
\hspace{1cm} 'ESA MUJER le(s) dijo que Pedro está/estaba enfermo.'
\hspace{1cm} 'THAT WOMAN told him/her/them that Pedro is/was sick.'

(viii) [ Cmaam, \textit{tiix} tmoquépe, ] imíih, Pedro \textit{quih}.
\hspace{1cm} woman DDS RL-sick 3:3-Px-tell the.Sf
\hspace{1cm} 'Pedro le(s) dijo que ESA MUJER está/estaba enferma.'
\hspace{1cm} 'Pedro told him/her/them that THAT WOMAN is/was sick.'

The subject of the embedded indirect discourse may also be postposed following the verb of saying, as in (ix).

(ix) [ Tmoquépe, ] imíih, [ cmaam ticom.
\hspace{1cm} RL-sick 3:3-Px-tell woman the.Hz
\hspace{1cm} 'Le(s) dijo que esa mujer estaba enferma.'
\hspace{1cm} 'S/he told him/her/them that that woman was sick.' [Some other readings also possible here.]
(42) Pedro quih Juana quih tmoquépe, imíih.
    the.SF the.SF Rl.sick 3:3-Px-tell
    ‘Pedro le(s) dijo que Juana estaba enferma.’
    ‘Pedro told him/her/them that Juana was sick.’
    (no ambiguity: *Juana le(s) dijo que Pedro estaba enfermo/a.)

(43) Tmoquépe, imíih, Pedro quih.
    Rl.sick 3:3-Px-tell the.SF
    ‘Pedro le(s) dijo que estaba enfermo/a.’
    ‘Pedro told him/her/them that s/he was sick.’

(44) * Tmoquépe, Pedro quih imíih.
    Rl.sick the.SF 3:3-Px-tell
    (‘Pedro le(s) dijo que estaba enfermo/a.’)
    (‘Pedro told him/her/them that s/he was sick.’)

(45) * Cmaam, tiix tmoquépe, Pedro quih imíih.
    woman DDS Rl.sick the.SF 3:3-Px-tell
    (‘Pedro le(s) dijo que ESA MUJER estaba enferma.’)
    (‘Pedro told him/her/them that THAT WOMAN was sick.’)

The general situation in Seri discourse is for a nominal to be introduced as early as possible in the sentence; such is the case in all of the texts that have been studied. Elicited examples such as (46) are judged awkwardly acceptable at best, however, and even then the interpretation is limited.

(46) %/* Ø Inol cop itípjc, Pedro cop imafítot.
    3P-hand the.VT 3:3-Rl-grab the.VT 3:3-Px-help.stand
    Highly problematic or impossible reading: ‘Tomándole la mano, Pedro le ayudó ponerse de pie.’
    ‘Taking his/her hand, Pedro helped him/her stand up.’

    More possible reading (except for incongruity with the article cop which indicates that Pedro is already standing): ‘Tomándole la mano, le ayudó a Pedro ponerse de pie.’ ‘Taking his hand, s/he helped Pedro stand up.’

    The same marginal judgments are obtained for the Situational Construction. Elicited examples with the subject included in the second clause rather than the first are stylistically very odd but not impossible. (They have not been found in unelicited data. The reactions from consultants are much less severely negative than with those marked with asterisk above.)

(47) % Toos, cmaam quij toc cōquij iha.
    Rl-sing woman the.CM there 3IO-SN-sit Dcl.
    ‘La mujer estaba allí cantando.’
    ‘The woman was there singing.’
Nevertheless, apparently at least some adverbs may appear before the phasal verb in the PVC, and the enclitic “Unspecified Time” x may appear at the end of S1. The following examples are all elicited; the examples from texts of the PVC do not have adverbs in them. Some consultants found the presence of certain adverbs odd enough to give less-than-acceptable judgments.

3.6. Property 6: V1 and V2 are typically pronounced with no pause between them and usually with V1 shortened.

With regard to the prosodic aspects of this construction, it is important to consider examples that occur in spontaneous discourse since I have observed marked differences between such examples and those which are read, even by very competent readers. I suspect that there may in fact be structural ambiguity for at least some examples — as common chained clauses and as the PVC per se. The PVC is more likely than typical
chained clauses to be pronounced with no pause between S1 and S2, and the words of S1 are spoken at a slightly faster rate in the PVC. This subtle fact distinguishes the PVC from all of the other constructions described above.

### 3.7. Property 7: V1 and V2 occur in only one order.

A sentence with clause chaining allows a clause to be postposed to final position, as shown in the following examples. Such examples are not considered at all deviant although they are very occasionally found in texts.

(55) Hax ihmáa cah itixö ma x, toc cócahca ha, just other the.SF-FOC 3:3-Rl-jump DS UT there 3IO-SN-be.located DCL

    iizax quiq toc cötiij ma x.
    moon the.CM there 3IO-Rl-sit DS UT

    ‘Uno por uno estaban saltando la luna.’
    ‘They were jumping over the moon one by one.’

The PVC, however, does not permit any such permutation.

(56) ..., cmaax xica quih cmam xah ziix quih spahit ca
    now stuff the.Sr SN-cooked and thing the.Sr Ir.Id-Pv-eaten AUX
    tintica tcooo, ihit tactim, yoque,
    Md-Aw Rt-all 3P-base Rt-be.cut Dr-US-say
    Baríil quiq coox itáhit ma.
    the.CM all 3:3-Rt-eat DS

    ‘…se terminó todo la comida preparada que se iba comer, se dice — Barril la había comido toda.’
    ‘…then all of the prepared food that was going to be eaten was gone, it is said — Barril had eaten all of it.’

(57) a. [ Tiix toos ]s1 [ cóyoojöc ]s1 oo.
    DDS Rt-sing 3IO-Dr-continually Dl
    ‘Siempre estaba cantando.’
    ‘S/he was always singing.’

    b. * Tiix cóyoojöc oo, toos.

In this regard the order of clauses in the presentation of indirect discourse is similarly inflexible.

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14 A recent event reinforced to me the difference between the PVC and the common chained clause construction. A person who had been a consultant for the recently published Seri dictionary (Moser and Marlett 2005) had looked at some texts that another person had written in the language. Without any prompting and without having discussed this construction with me at all, he zeroed in on one of the sentences which happened to be the sentence in example (25) above. He asked me to listen to it and notice how short the word tooha (Rl-cry) ‘s/he cries’ is pronounced. He then asked me whether it should be written differently to indicate the necessary quickness with which it is pronounced in this particular context.
(58) * Cmaam tiquij imíih, (Pedro com) tmoquépe.
woman Md-CM 3:3-Px-tell the.Hz Rl-Sick
(‘Esa mujer le(s) dijo que (Pedro) estaba enfermo.’)
(‘That woman told him/her/them that he (Pedro) was sick.’)

3.8. Property 8: The subject of the V2 may be non-agentive and it may be non-referential

It has been mentioned that the subject of the phasal verb may be non-agentive. This is an important fact to understand since the transitive verbs ˈvaxi ‘finish’ and ˈvactx ‘abandon’ must have agentive subjects when they do not occur in the PVC. (Recall that ˈajöc ‘be/do continually’ does not occur outside of the PVC.) In the PVC the subject of V2 may be non-agentive, as in the following examples.

(59) [ Hant hizac tcomca ]₁ [ cócajöc oo ha. ]₂
place Px-Lc RL-noisy 3IO-SN-continually Dl. Dcl.
‘Este lugar siempre es ruidoso.’
‘This place is always noisy.’ = (26)

(60) [ Hamúime com tooil ]₁ [ cócajöc oo ha. ]₂
sky the.Hz Rl-blue 3IO-SN-continually Dl. Dcl.
‘El cielo siempre es azul.’
‘The sky is always blue.’ = (27)

(61) [ Xepe com íti toom x ]₁ [ cócajöc oo ha. ]₂
sea the.Hz 3P-on Rl-lie UT 3IO-SN-continually Dl. Dcl.
‘El mar siempre está encima de él.’
‘The sea is always over [covering] it.’ (ES2007, satoj_hasaiitaj 15)

(62) [ … hoocala com cótaanim ]₁ [ cócajöc oo ha. ]₂
cloud(s) the.Hz 3IO-RL-cause.be.covered
[ cótaanim oo ]₂ toc cómiihca.
3IO-RL-continually there 3IO-Px-be.located
‘… siempre estaba nublado.’
‘… it was always cloudy.’

(63) [ He hptooxniij ]₁ [ cohtájöc oo ]₂ toc cóhamom.
1Pro 1SS.In-Rl-snore 3IO-1SS.In-Rl-continue there 3IO-1SS.In-Px-lie
‘Yo estaba allí roncando todo el tiempo.’
‘I was there snoring the whole time.’

Moreover, the subject of V2 in the ASV may be nonreferential.

(64) [ Tapca ]₁ [ itácatx ma x₆ ]₂ xepe com xiimj.
Rl-rain 3:3-Rl-release DS UT sea the.Hz Em-clear
‘Cuando deja de llover, el mar está muy claro.’
‘When the rain stops, the sea is clear.’ (DS2005, quimji) = (14)
4. An analysis

The question remains as to what kind of syntactic structure the PVC actually is. It must be something other than simple clause chaining if the distinctions between clause chaining and the PVC are going to be explained. Moreover, the fact just noted above that the PVC may have a nonreferential subject in S1 demonstrates that the null hypothesis is not viable.

The chained clause construction may have an analysis similar to that shown in Figure 1, which is a slightly simplified version of that presented in Hale (1991) for Misumalpan.

I suggest that the most straightforward proposal is that the PVC is a simple case of embedding, similar to the Indirect Discourse

Figure 1: Chained clause structure
Construction. The sharp judgments about word order facts discussed in 3.5 suggest that the Indirect Discourse Construction and also the PVC are not clause chaining but rather embedding, despite the lack of distinctive morphology. (Proto-typical embedded clauses in Seri are always headed by deverbal nouns or infinitives, however, which means that these constructions are not the ordinary type of embedding.) This analysis is presented informally in Figure 2 for indirect discourse. This part of the analysis is almost trivially obvious. The DP subject of the verb of saying (V) cannot appear between the embedded clause (S) and the verb of saying since the embedded S cannot be fronted.

One might think that the same kind of analysis is appropriate for the PVC. Figure 3 uses this analysis for example (37). But this simple analysis is not at all adequate for the PVC, of course, because it does not account for the fact that the subject of the phasal verb always matches the subject of S1. A complete analysis must provide an account for this fact. Moreover, the analysis must account for the fact that the phasal verb may have a nonagentive and even a nonreferential subject.

It is therefore proposed here that these phasal verbs are intransitive raising verbs in the PVC. The grammaticalization of these predicates would include, on this view, a change in the basic structure from one of clause-chaining to one of embedding plus raising. It must be a copy-raising analysis since both clauses are inflected for the same person. A non-derivational account of these examples is shown in Figures 4 and 5 for examples (15) and (16) respectively, using the framework of Culicover and Jackendoff (2005).

The copy-raising analysis accounts for, or provides the basis for an account of, most of the facts. However, the fact that two of the phasal verbs are morphologically transitive under this analysis is not accounted for directly.

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15 It is obvious from Figure 2 that I am not positing a verb phrase that includes the direct object. Convincing evidence for such a phrase has not been found in the language.
16 Another, far-more-obvious copy-raising construction exists in the language, but the complement clauses from which this raising occurs are headed by deverbal nouns. That construction requires a quantifier predicate as the raising verb (Marlett 1984).
It remains to be seen how these facts fit into a typology of raising constructions (Davies and Dubinsky 2004).

5. References


Published texts used in this paper:


Conejo Coyote, Conejo Puma, Dos Hermanos, Hombre Barril, and Saltar Luna have been published most recently in Stephen A. Marlett (compiler) (2007) *Ziix haptc iiha comcaac quih ocoaaj quih ano yaii*. [http://www.lengamer.org/admin/language_folders/seri/user_uploaded_files/links/File/Acervo_de_Textos/acervo_de_textos.htm]. References are given there for earlier editions.


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