Ditransitive constructions in Vietnamese:
How to integrate serial verb constructions in
a typology of alignment patterns

Theresa Hanske, University of Cologne
theresahanske@yahoo.de
Ditransitive Constructions

- *Ditransitive constructions* consist of a conceptually ditransitive predicate, an **Agent**, a **Theme** and a **Recipient-like** argument.

- Different strategies can be employed to encode A, T and R.

Focus on ditransitive constructions with transfer verbs (cho 'give', đưa 'hand over' etc.).
Alignment Patterns

Indirective

Secundative

Neutral

Tripartite

Malchukov/Haspelmath/Comrie (MS:4)
Ditransitive Strategies in Vietnamese

- **Non-serial construction**
  - AVRT
  - SVCs
    - A V₁ T choᵥ₂ R
    - A V₁ choᵥ₂ RT
    - A lấyᵥ₁ TV₂ R
    - A V₁ RV₂ T
    - A V₁ TRV₂

- Ditransitives
  - Con chuột đưa con voi cái chảo.
    - CL mouse hand.over CL elephant CL pan
  - Con chuột đưa cái chảo cho con voi.
    - CL mouse hand.over CL pan give CL elephant CL cho con voi.
  - Con chuột lấy cái chảo đưa con voi.
    - CL mouse take CL pan hand.over CL elephant CL cho con voi.
  - Con chuột dùng con voi cầm cái chảo.
    - CL mouse hand.over CL elephant CL cầm cái chảo.
How do SVCs relate to the alignment typology of ditransitives?
Some characteristics of SVCs

i. Shared TAM and negation
ii. Argument-sharing (at least one, possibly more)
iii. Only one subject / external argument
iv. No verb is a complement of the other
v. One clause
vi. Argument configurations in SVCs correspond closely to argument + adjunct configurations in non-SVC-languages
vii. Tend strongly to grammaticalize or lexicalize

(cf. Durie 1997)
Two Lines of Reasoning...

SVCs and ditransitive alignment

SVs introduce (peripheral) semantic arguments
and mark them as oblique

SVs contribute their own semantic (core) arguments
arguments of SVs are syntactic core arguments of the SVC as a whole
(cf. Foley/Van Valin 1984)
Pursuing the Oblique Argument Hypothesis

SVCs and ditransitive alignment

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(cf. Foley/Van Valin 1984)
Oblique Argument Hypothesis: empirical evidence

SVCs and ditransitive alignment
SVs introduce (peripheral) semantic arguments
and mark them as oblique

Nó đưa cái chảo cho con voi.
'It hands over the pan to the elephant.'

Cô ấy đang cắt tóc cho ông ta.
'She is cutting his hair.'
Oblique Argument Hypothesis: empirical challenge

SVCs and ditransitive alignment  
SVs introduce (peripheral) semantic arguments

and mark them as oblique

Nó đưa cái chảo cho con voi.
3sg hand.over CL pan give CL elephant
'It hands over the pan to the elephant.'

Nó đưa con voi cái chảo
3sg hand.over CL elephant CL pan
'It hands over the pan to the elephant.'
Oblique Argument Hypothesis: evidence

SVCs and ditransitive alignment

SVs introduce (peripheral) semantic arguments and mark them as oblique

Kuhn's (1990) study on verbiness of serial verb in SVCs seems to support the Oblique Argument Hypothesis: *cho* 'give' ($V_2$) is a coverb or preposition.

Features of verbiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Questioning $V_2$</th>
<th>NEG $V_2$</th>
<th>TAM-marking $V_2$</th>
<th>có-Emphasizing $V_2$</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>cho 'RECIPIENT, BENEFACTIVE'</em></td>
<td>+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Oblique Argument Hypothesis: marking of a Theme or a Recipient?

SVCs and ditransitive alignment

SVs introduce (peripheral) semantic arguments and mark them as oblique

Asymmetrical Analysis

Ông ấy lấy tiền đưa bà ấy.
He take money hand.over she

Ông ấy lấy tiền đưa bà ấy.
He take money hand.over she

'He gives her money.'
Oblique Argument Hypothesis: How to integrate symmetrical SVCs?

Symmetrical Analysis

SVCs and ditransitive alignment

SVs introduce (peripheral) semantic arguments and mark them as oblique

Bi-headed

Ông ấy lấy tiền đưa bà ấy.

'He gives her money.'
Oblique Argument Hypothesis: How to integrate symmetrical SVCs?

SVCs and ditransitive alignment

SVs introduce (peripheral) semantic arguments

and mark them as oblique

again symmetrical SVC(s)

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
A & V_1 & R \\
&V_2 & T \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
A & V_1 & T \\
R & V_2 & \\
\end{array}
\]

Bi-headed

Nó đưa con voi cầm cái chảo.

3sg hand.over CL elephant hold CL pan

'It gives the elephant a pan to hold.'
Behavior of Theme and Recipient

with non-serial constructions

Được-Construction

T
Đóa hoa được anh ấy tặng người yêu.

CL  flower được he present person love

'The flower was given to his lover by him.'

R
Người yêu được anh ấy tặng đóa hoa.

person love được he present CL  flower

'His lover was given the flower by him.'

Relativization

T
Đóa hoa mà anh ấy tặng chị ấy.

CL  flower REL he present she

'The flower that he gives her...'  

R
Chị ấy mà anh ấy tặng đóa hoa...

she REL he present CL  flower

'She, to whom he gave a flower...'
Core Argument Hypothesis: Behavior of Theme and Recipient

with $\text{cho}_{v2}$-SVC

**Được-Construction**

$T$

Cái chảo được nó đưa $\text{cho}$ con voi.

CL pan được it give give CL elephant

'The pan was given to the elephant by it.'

$R$

Con voi được nó đưa $\text{cho}$ cái chảo.

CL elephant được it give give CL pan

'The elephant was given a pan by it.'

**Relativization**

$T$

Cái chảo mà nó đưa $\text{cho}$ con voi...

CL pan REL it give give CL elephant

'The pan that it gives to the elephant'

$R$

Con voi mà nó đưa $\text{cho}$ cái chảo

CL elephant REL it give give CL pan

'The elephant that it gives the pan to.'
Core Argument Hypothesis: Behavior of Theme and Recipient

with \( lây_1 \)-SVC

**ĐƯỢC-Construction**

T

Tiền  được ông ấy lấy  đưa         bà ấy.

money  đưc he  take hand.over she

'The money was given her by him.'

R

Bà ấy được ông ấy lấy      tiền         đưa.

she  đưc he  take money give

'She was given the money by him.'

**Relativization**

T

Tiền mà ông ấy lấy     đưa         bà ấy.

money  mà  he  take hand.over she

'The money that he gives her'

R

Bà ấy mà ông ấy lấy      tiền         đưa.

she mà  he  take money give

'She, to whom he gives the money'
Core Argument Hypothesis: Behavior of Theme and Recipient

with $V_1$-$V_2$-SVC

Được-Construction

T

Cái chảo được nó đưa con voi cầm.

CL pan được it hand.over CL elephant hold

'The pan was given to the elephant to hold by it.'

R

Con voi được nó đưa cầm cái chảo.

CL elephant được it hand.over hold CL pan

Con voi được nó đưa cái chảo cầm.

CL elephant được it hand.over CL pan hold

'The elephant was given a pan to hold by it.'

Relativization

T

Cái chảo mà nó đưa con voi cầm

CL pan REL it hand.over CL eleph. hold

'The pan which it gives the elephant to hold'

R

Con voi mà nó đưa cầm cái chảo

CL elephant REL it give hold CL pan

Con voi mà nó đưa cái chảo cầm

CL elephant REL it give CL pan hold

'The elephant to which it gives a pan to hold'
Conclusion

- In Vietnamese, serial verbs do not necessarily *introduce* arguments; not all SVCs are valency-increasing devices – especially in ditransitive constructions
- Some SVCs in Vietnamese operate over core arguments
- Symmetrical ditransitive SVCs in Vietnamese cannot be integrated into the alignment typology, if argument introduction as main function of SVC is taken as basis of classification
- T and R in ditransitive constructions in Vietnamese both behave like P in monotransitive clauses
SVCs and ditransitive alignment

SVs introduce (peripheral) semantic arguments and mark them as oblique (cf. Margetts/Austin 2007, Clark 1978, Li/Thompson 1981)

SVs contribute their semantic (core) arguments

Arguments of SVs are syntactic core arguments of the SVC as a whole (cf. Foley/Van Valin 1984)
Thank you