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## **A grammar of Tafi**

Bobuafor, M.

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**Author:** Bobuafor, Mercy

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## 10 SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS

Serial verb constructions (SVCs) are widespread in the languages of West Africa and they have been the subject of various studies (e.g. Christaller 1875, Stewart 1963, Osam 2004 on Akan; Westermann 1907, Agbedor 1994, Collins 1997, Ameka 2006 on Ewe; Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002 for Fongbe; Lewis 1993 on Gengbe, Carlson 1994 on Supyire; Bodomo 2002 on Dagaare). There are, nonetheless, difficulties in identifying SVCs which are common to these languages since even within the same language there may be different types (Lord 1993). For instance, it has been suggested that the types of SVCs found in Kwa languages constitute an areal type, however, some variations still exist with regard to the constraints on features of the verbs that combine in these constructions (Ameka 2003, 2005). The goal of this chapter is to examine the properties of serial verb constructions in Tafi. I will explore the constraints on argument sharing among the verbs, and the marking of various categories such as tense-aspect-mood and negation in these constructions. I will also discuss some functional types of SVCs including the benefactive, directional, comparative and instrumental. See Aikhenvald (2006) and Durie (1997) for general overviews of SVCs beyond West Africa.

### 10.1 Serial Verb Constructions in Tafi

SVCs in Tafi are constructions comprising two or more verbs without any overt marker of coordination or subordination. They share at least one argument and same tense and mood. SVCs in the language can function in various sentence types with different illocutionary forces such as:

#### I. Imperatives

- 1a. Yíkɔ kesisín ómínā!  
**yíkɔ ke-sisí ní ó-mínā**  
take CM-mortar DEF 2SG-bring  
'Bring the mortar!'
- 1b. Botsiré úló ní 'kĩ ...  
**bá o-tsiré buló ní ɪ-kĩ**  
come 2SG-tell 1PL LOC CM-here  
'Come and tell us here ...'

#### II. Declaratives

- 2a. Kofi áɖɔ kibúín étsirém.  
**Kofi á-ɖɔ ki-búí ní é-tsiré mí**  
Kofi SM-say CM-matter DEF SM-tell 1SG  
'Kofi narrated the matter to me.'

- 2b. Édzí 'íkū ámínā.

**é-dzí      kí-kū      á-mínā**

3SG-buy CM-yam SM-bring

'He bought yam (and) brought it.'

III. Questions.

- 3a. Ezin es'édékpú xāā?

**e-zi      ní      e-sí      é-dé-kpú      xāā**

CM-thief DEF SM-run SM-ITIVE-hide UFP

'Did the thief run and hid?'

- 3b. Akú ábatɔ ɛdɔ áŋa xāā?

**Akú      á-ba-tɔ      kí-dɔ      á-ŋa      xāā**

Akú SM-FUT-cook CM-thing SM-eat UFP

'Will Aku cook and eat?'

## 10.2 Characteristics of Tafi SVCs

The characteristics of SVCs in Tafi are as follows:

- 4a. They consist of a series of verbs that function as a single predicate.
- 4b. They occur without any overt marker of dependency, i.e., co-ordination or subordination.
- 4c. They constitute a single clause.
- 4d. The verbs cannot be independently negated.
- 4e. They share the same tense and mood, marked only once on the first verb.
- 4f. They share at least one argument.
- 4g. Each of the verbs can occur independently in a monoverbal clause.
- 4h. The verbs can be marked for the same aspect and modality or for different but compatible aspect, modal or directional values.
- 4i. The verbs can be independently focused or questioned.

I now elaborate on these characteristics.

SVCs consist of a series of verbs that function as a single predicate as shown in (5c).

They occur without any overt marker of dependency, i.e., co-ordination or subordination. Verbs that occur in SVCs do not occur with any individual conjunction. Thus, if any conjunction should occur between the verbs the construction can no longer be considered as an SVC. Consider the following examples.

- 5a. Fol' átá ból' ehú Folitsě.  
**Folí á-tá bólú é-hú Folitsě**  
 Folí SM-strike ball SM-hit Folitsě  
 'Folí struck the ball and hit Folitsě.'
- 5b. Fol' átá bólú kulí ehú Folitsě.  
**Folí á-tá bólú kulí é-hú Folitsě**  
 Folí SM-strike ball CONJ 3SG-hit Folitsě  
 'Folí struck the ball and it hit Folitsě.'
- 5c. Ésí és'étsokú 'uvuním.  
**Ésí é-sí é-tsokú bú-vū ní kum**  
 Ésí SM-run SM-enter CM-house DEF inside  
 'Esi ran into the room.'
- 5d. Ésí ésí kulí étsokú 'uvuním.  
**Ésí é-sí kulí é-tsokú bú-vū ní kum**  
 Ésí SM-run CONJ 3SG-enter CM-house DEF inside  
 'Esi ran and entered the room.'

The sentences in (5a) and (5c) are SVCs whereas those in (5b) and (5d) both consist of two clauses which are conjoined by **kulí** 'CONJ'.

SVCs constitute a single clause. They can function in a place where a clause can function. For instance, one part of a complex sentence which is a clause can be realised as an SVC. Moreover, since they have the properties of a single verb clause, there cannot be a sentence pause between the component verbs. For example,

6. Kulí y'áv'edékpú ní kidzoń 'útó gú badzĩn abáága aflá av'iením.  
**kulí [yí á-ví é-dé-kpú ní ki-dzo ní**  
 CONJ 3SG.IND SM-go SM-ITIVE-hide LOC CM-road DEF  
**bu.tʃ] [gú ba-dzĩ ní bá-bá-á-ga**  
 edge REL CM.PL-woman DEF SM-VENT-PRSPROG-walk  
**bá-flá bá-ví ke-ní kum]**  
 SM-pass SM-go CM-river inside  
 'Then he went and hid himself beside the road where the women usually pass to the riverside.' (Sáhwĩ)

The verbs in an SVC cannot be independently negated as shown in (7). The negative marker occurs once per SVC.

7. Agbahlgbá átísa adzĩ ohui ákó án5?  
**a-gbahlgbá á-tí-sa a-dzĩ o-hui á-kó**  
 CM-bachelor SM-NEG1-tie CM-woman CM-charm SM-give

**a-n5**

CM-person

‘A bachelor does not make a credible seller of love charms.’ (Proverb #14)

In example (7) the negative marker is expressed with VP<sub>1</sub> however, it has scope over the whole clause. Thus this sentence can be interpreted as a bachelor does not make love charms and does not give love charms to people.

SVCs share the same tense and mood and they are marked only once on the first verb. That is the verbs in the series have the same temporal frame and are in the scope of the same temporal operators. It is thus not possible, for example, for the verbs to take different temporal operators as shown in (8b). Thus while (8a) is an SVC, (8b) where there are different operators is not. By sharing the same tense entails that they express one macro-event (see Bohnemeyer et al. 2007 on Macro-Event Property (MEP)).

8a. Kòkú ábatò ’ed5 áṅa.

**Kòkú á-ba-t5 kí-d5 á-ṅa**  
 Kòkú SM-FUT-cook CM-thing SM-eat  
 ‘Kòkú will cook and eat.’

8b. \*Kofí áto ’ed5 obón ábaṅa ’evū.

**Kofí á-t5 kí-d5 o-bón á-ba-ṅa kí-vū**  
 Kofí SM-cook CM-thing CM-today SM-FUT-eat CM-tomorrow  
 \*‘Kofí cooked today and will eat tomorrow.’

The verbs in an SVC share their subject argument which is expressed on each verb as in (9a) (except when it is the 1SG/PL pronoun or a noun from any of the **bu**-classes as in (9b)).

9a. Lólun es’ ékú osíním.

**lólun ní é-sí é-kú o-sí ní kímí**  
 lorry DEF SM-run SM-reach CM-tree DEF inside  
 ‘The car ran into the tree.’

9b. Búvū ní tri dí Ofolí úyín.

**bú-vū ní tri dí Ofolí bu-yí ní**  
 CM-house DEF be.big surpass Ofolí AM-POSSD DEF  
 ‘The house is bigger than Ofoli’s own.’

9c. Ɔtsrí kòkul5 ɔl’5vɔ aput5 otiti ɔdzyudzyɔn.

**ɔ-tsrí kòkul5 ɔl’ 5-vɔ a-put5**  
 CM-foot crooked 3SG.IND SM-besmeared.with CM.PL-mud  
**o-titi ɔ-dzyudzyɔ ní**  
 SM-smear CM-straight DEF

‘It is the crooked leg that besmears the straight one with mud.’ (Proverb #1)

In example (9a), the lexical subject **lɛlɛ** ‘car’ of the SVC is cross-referenced on the two verbs in the SVC by the subject marker **e-**. However, in (9b), the two verbs are unmarked as the lexical subject **búvū ní** ‘the house’ belongs to the **bu<sup>1</sup>-** class. Example (9c) shows that the subject cross-reference on the subsequent verbs in an SVC is a subject marker (SM) as opposed to a subject pronoun form. Here, the subject of the SVC belongs to the **o-** class where the SM and subject pronoun forms are distinguished. If it were the subject pronoun form the cross-reference marker would have been **lo-**.

Also, shared objects are expressed once with the first verb. As illustrated in (10), all the four verbs share the same object which is **kulí** ‘3SG’ expressed only once with the first verb **yukɔ** ‘take’.

10. ... kulí áákɔ ’elɛ pétée áákɔ ábal’akpí ketsukpúním.  
**kulí á-yíko kulí pétée á-yíko á-balɛ a-kpí**  
 CONJ 3SG-take 3SG all SM-take SM-pour SM-put.into  
**ke-tsukpú ní kum**  
 CM-pot DEF inside  
 ‘... and then she put it all into the pot.’ (Kásālā)

Each verb in an SVC can occur with its own complement (when it is not shared) as in (11). These are multiple object SVCs.

11. Shui ’uní óplǔ āmɛ.  
**Shui bu-ní o-plǔ ā-mɛ**  
 Fetch CM-water 2SG-wash CM-face  
 ‘Fetch water and wash your face.’

Another feature of SVCs in Tafi is that each of the verbs can occur independently in a mono-verbal clause as shown in (12b) and (12c).

- 12a. És’ekóéyí.  
**é-sí e-kóéyí**  
 3SG-run SM-exit  
 ‘S/he ran out.’
- 12b. Ésí.  
**é-sí**  
 3SG-run  
 ‘S/he ran.’

- 12c. Ekóéyĩ.  
**e-kóéyĩ**  
 SM-exit  
 ‘S/he went/came out.’

The example in (12a) and similar utterances satisfy all other conditions for SVC that the verbs should be able to occur in a mono-verbal clause.

Moreover, the verbs can be marked for the same aspect and modality or for different but compatible aspect, modal or directional values as shown in (13a) – (13c).

- 13a. Kalí y’áákò avínò átísó ’éd5 n5.  
**kalí yí á-yíko a-vi-no á-tí-só kí-d5**  
 3SG.IND 3SG.IND SM-take SM-go-COM SM-PERF-weed CM-thing  
**n5**  
 COM  
 ‘That (= cutlass) he took along to do the weeding/to weed with.’
- 13b. Kofĩ ésí édékpú.  
**Kofĩ é-sí é-dé-kpú**  
 Kofĩ SM-run SM-ITIVE-hide  
 ‘Kofi ran away to hide.’
- 13c. Ányínúv5ēn áásh’āv’uyem.  
**á-nyínúv5ē ní á-á-shĩ á-vi bu-ya kum**  
 CM-boy DEF SM-PRSPROG-leave SM-go CM-farm inside  
 ‘The boy is leaving for the farm.’

In (13a), the first two verbs are in the aorist and the third verb is marked for the perfective whereas in (13b), the first verb is in the aorist and the second verb is modified by the itive. In (13c), the first verb is marked for the progressive and the second verb is in the aorist. In example (12a) above, the first and second verbs are both in the aorist.

One of the verbs in an SVC can be independently focused or questioned, as illustrated in (14a) – (14c).

- 14a. Boshĩ y’áshĩ āv’uyem.  
**bu-shĩ yí á-shĩ a-vi bu-ya kum**  
 CM-leave 3SG.IND SM-leave SM-go CM-farm inside  
 ‘LEAVE s/he DID leave for the farm.’



- 14b. Kídē Ámā ébhui 'ipótí ábhítí nɔ?  
**kídē Ámā é-bhui kɪ-pótí ní á-bhítí nɔ**  
 What Ama SM-cut CM-cloth DEF SM-do COM  
 'What did Ama do with the cloth she bought?' (Lit.: 'What did Ama buy the cloth and do (with it)?')
- 14c. Ébhui 'ipótí áákɔ abhítí 'ídē nɔ?  
**é-bhui kɪ-pótí á-yɪkɔ a-bhítí kídē nɔ**  
 3SG-cut CM-cloth SM-take SM-do what COM  
 'She bought the cloth and did what with it?'

In (14a), the first verb in the SVC is focused. In Tafi, VP focus is done by preposing a copy of the verb which is prefixed with **bu-/bu-** depending on the ATR value of the stem vowel. The verb remains in its normal position and any other relevant marking of focus such as the use of the independent pronoun form if the subject of the clause is realised as a pronominal (see Chapter 6 on topic and focus). In (14b) and (14c) the second VP in each of the SVCs is questioned. In the former, the question word complement of the 'do' verb is fronted for focus while in the latter the question word remains in situ.

Subjects as well as objects of SVCs can also be focused or questioned as the following question-answer pairs illustrate:

- 15a. Ánī y'ésí édékpû?  
**á-nī yí é-sí é-dé-kpú**  
 AM-who 3SG.IND SM-run SM-ITIVE-hide  
 'Who ran and hid?'
- 15b. Ámā y'ésí édékpú.  
**Ámā yí é-sí é-dé-kpú**  
 Ama 3SG.IND SM-run SM-ITIVE-hide  
 'AMA ran and hid.'
- 15c. Kídē Ámā ákámī ákpí?  
**kídē Ámā á-kámī á-kpí**  
 What Ama SM-sew SM-wear  
 'What did Ama sew to wear?'
- 15d. Awí y'ákámī ákpí.  
**a-wí yí á-kámī á-kpí**  
 CM-dress 3SG.IND SM-sew SM-wear  
 'A dress she sewed and wore.'

(15a) and (15c) are examples in which the subject and object arguments have been questioned respectively whereas (15b) and (15d) illustrate focusing of subject and

object arguments respectively. (15b) and (15d) can be given as answers to the questions in (15a) and (15c).

### 10.3 Some functional types of SVCs in Tafi

In this section, I look at some functional types of SVCs that occur in Tafi. They include manipulative/handling, directional, dative, comparative, resultative and posture SVCs.

#### 10.3.1 Manipulative/handling SVCs

Manipulative/handling SVCs involve the handling verb **yíkɔ** ‘take’ as VP<sub>1</sub>.<sup>64</sup> Most often, in this type of SVC, VP<sub>1</sub> describes the means by which the state of affairs expressed by VP<sub>2</sub> is carried out. The NP complement of the verb ‘take’, usually the first verb in the series, could be an instrument as in (16a) and (16b) or a theme which undergoes a change of location as in the two SVCs in (16c) and in (16d). For example,

16a. Áyíkɔ kawí adzyá osín.

**á-yíkɔ ka-wí a-dzyá o-sí ní**  
3SG-take CM-axe SM-hack CM-tree DEF  
‘He used an axe and hacked the tree.’

16b. Aní ’tɕsá láytko ’epú ɔwɪsí nɔ.

**aní kɪ-tsá lá-yíkɔ be-pú ɔ-wɪsí nɔ**  
NEG.FOC CM-needle 3PL-take 3PL-punch CM-axe.handle COM  
‘It is not a needle that one uses to punch a hole in the handle of an axe.’  
(Proverb #17)

16c. ...kulí áákɔ ’elɪ pétée áákɔ abal’akpí ketsukpú gbugblä tielí ’mɪ kulí ayíkɔ  
’édɔ ada.

**kulí á-yíkɔ kulí pétée á-yíkɔ a-bal a-kpí**  
CONJ 3SG-take 3SG all SM-take SM-pour SM-put.into

<sup>64</sup> The ‘take’ SVCs involving instrument have two structures, one in which there is a comitative preposition **nɔ** optionally at the end of the sentence as in (16b) and another where there is no preposition as in (16a), for example. The exact conditions under which the preposition appears in such SVCs is not clear at this stage. A tendency that is observed in the Tafi case is that if the internal argument of the ‘take’ verb is in focus, and therefore extracted from its object position, the **nɔ** comitative preposition appears at the end. A similar phenomenon has been observed by Lefebvre and Brousseau (2002:308) for Fon. There too, there is inconclusive evidence for the appearance or not of a preposition at the end of such SVCs. Further research might reveal the motivation.

**ke-tsukpú gbugblā tie-lí kumi kulí á-yíko kí-d5**  
 CM-pot big AM-INDEF inside CONJ SM-take CM-thing  
**á-da**  
 SM-cover  
 ‘... and then she put it all into a big bowl and covered it.’ (Kásālā)

- 16d. Gɪ áŋa békēŋ kulí y’ayíko aklōn afi.  
**gɪ á-ŋa békē ní kulí yí a-yíko a-kl5**  
 REL 3SG-eat COMPL TOP CONJ 3SG.IND 3SG-take CM.PL-peel  
**ní a-ŋi**  
 DEF SM-throw  
 ‘When he finishes eating he throws the peels away.’

In (16a), the verb **yík5** ‘take’ takes as object an instrument, **kawí** ‘axe’, which is used to perform the action expressed by VP<sub>2</sub>. In (16b), the instrument, **kutsá** ‘needle’ is in focus and the comitative preposition **no** occurs at the end of the sentence. In examples (16a) and (16b), the subject argument is shared by both VP<sub>1</sub> and VP<sub>2</sub>. Example (16c) consists of conjoined SVCs in which the first SVC contains four verbs two of which are ‘take’ and all the verbs share the same subject and object which are expressed only once with the first verb. The object argument **kulí** ‘3SG’ which is the Theme undergoes a change of location. The second SVC, however, is a multiple object SVC. The object of VP<sub>1</sub> **yík5** ‘take’ is **kíd5** ‘thing’ which is a Theme also undergoes a change of location whereas the object of VP<sub>2</sub> **da** ‘cover’ is **ketsukpú** ‘pot’. This object has been elided in the sentence because reference has been made to it earlier on in the conversation so it is recoverable from context. In (16d), the object of the ‘take’ verb, **akl5** ‘peels’, undergoes a change of location.

### 10.3.2. Directional SVCs

In directional SVCs, the last verb in the series is a motion verb used to denote the direction of the movement or more generally, the state of affairs being carried out as represented in the rest of the clause. In example (17a), VP<sub>1</sub> expresses manner, VP<sub>2</sub> and VP<sub>3</sub> indicate path and the final verb indicates direction. In (17b), VP<sub>1</sub> expresses manner and VP<sub>2</sub> is a ‘reach’ verb which indicates that the car has reached an end goal. The example in (17c) consists of two SVCs and in both, VP<sub>1</sub> expresses manner of motion and VP<sub>2</sub> expresses direction. In the second SVC, the object argument of V<sub>1</sub> which is an instrument is in focus so the comitative **no** occurs at the end of the sentence. Example (9a) is repeated here as (17b).

- 17a. Bonóv5ē káa bhulín ág’ akana étsódzi ábá y’ózakó.  
**bu-nóv5ē káa bhulí ní á-ga á-kana é-tsódzi**  
 CM.PL-child car small DEF SM-walk SM-go.round SM-return

**á-bá yí ɔ-zakó**  
 SM-come 3SG.IND CM-dwelling.place  
 ‘The toy car went round and came back to its place.’

- 17b. Lólun es’ ékú osíním.  
**lólú ní é-sí é-kú o-sí ní kumí**  
 lorry DEF SM-run SM-reach CM-tree DEF inside  
 ‘The car ran into the tree.’

- 17c. Kof’ adig’avi sukú, gasó y’edo ávì nò?  
**[Kofi a-di-ga a-vi sukú ] [gasó yí e-do**  
 Kofi SM-NEG2-walk SM-go school bicycle 3SG.IND SM-ride  
**á-vi nò ]**  
 SM-go COM  
 ‘Kofi did not walk to school, a bicycle he rode.’

### 10.3.3 Dative SVCs

Like in other serialising languages, dative SVCs in Tafi are used to indicate that a state of affairs occurs with respect to an intended target either for their benefit or their sake (see e.g., Margetts and Austin 2007). The last verb in the series in a dative SVC is always **kó** ‘give’. The verb ‘give’ is used to introduce the role of recipient or beneficiary. VP<sub>1</sub> could be any verb including **yíkó** ‘take’, in that case, the SVC codes a transfer situation. As shown in (18a) and (18b), the state of affairs expressed by VP<sub>1</sub> and VP<sub>2</sub> are performed for the sake/benefit of the object argument of the verb **kó** ‘give’.

- 18a. Agoé ébhui ’ipotí ákám’ ákó y’eyíálí.  
**Agoé é-bhui kú-potí á-kámí á-kó yí é-yí-álí**  
 Agoé SM-cut CM-cloth SM-sew SM-give 3SG.IND CM-child-PL  
 Agoe bought cloth and sewed for her children.’
- 18b. Agoéxwě édz’ásí ám’ákó banóvǝń.  
**Agoéxwě é-dzí á-sí á-má á-kó ba-nóvǝ ní**  
 Agoéxwě SM-buy SM-rice SM-divide SM-give CM.PL-child DEF  
 ‘Agoexwě bought rice and shared for the kids.’

### 10.3.4 Comparative SVCs

Comparative constructions also involve SVCs. The verb **di** ‘surpass’ is used to express comparison and it occurs as VP<sub>2</sub> as shown in the following examples.

- 19a. Adıqama adım?

**a-dɪ-ɖama**      **a-dɪ**      **mí**  
 3SG-NEG-be.tall    SM-surpass    1SG  
 ‘S/he is not taller than me.’

- 19b. Ányínúvɔ̃ɛ́n ési adɪ Kofɪ nɪ Ésí.  
**á-nyínúvɔ̃ɛ́n**   **ní**    **é-sí**      **a-dɪ**      **Kofɪ**   **nɪ**    **Ésí**  
 CM-boy      DEF    SM-run    SM-surpass    Kofɪ   COM   Esi  
 ‘The boy runs faster than Kofi and Esi.’ (i.e., the boy is the fastest in running.)

In these comparative SVCs,  $V_1$  denotes the property with respect to which the entities are being compared. The standard of comparison is the object of  $V_2$ . The comparee functions as the subject of the SVC. A superlative reading is derived when the standard of comparison contains more than one entity as in (19b).

The verb **sɔ̃** ‘be equal’ is used in SVCs to express equality. It occurs as  $VP_2$ . The verb **sɔ̃** is adapted from Ewe **so** ‘be equal’. In my corpus, all the examples of **sɔ̃** equality comparison involve plural subjects where two or more entities being equated occur together. Consider the following examples.

- 20a. Bésh’asɔ̃.  
**bé-she**      **bá-sɔ̃**  
 3PL-grow    SM-be.equal  
 ‘They are of the same age.’
- 20b. Bétri asɔ̃.  
**bé-tri**      **bá-sɔ̃**  
 3PL-become.big    SM-be.equal  
 ‘They are of the same size’

### 10.3.5 Aspectual SVCs

Some verbs are used in SVCs to convey aspectual meanings. Such verbs occur as the final verb in the series. For instance, the form **dí** ‘look’ can be used as a final verb in an SVC as in (21a) to signal that a situation has existed before or will have happened prior to the time of speech or as an adverbial particle as in (21b). It thus marks experiential aspect.

- 21a. Ámā ádí lgɛ́ edí.  
**Ámā**   **á-dí**      **l-gɛ́**      **e-dí**  
 Ama   SM-go    CM-Accra    SM-look  
 ‘Ama has (ever) been to Accra.’

- 21b. Kibúúín ídi kabá dí.

**ki-búí**      **ı-ní**      **kí-dí**      **ká-bá**      **dí**  
 CM-matter   AM-PROX   CM-type   NEG.PERF-come   EXP  
 ‘This has never happened.’

In (21a), **dí** ‘look’ is used to express a situation that has occurred before the moment of speech and it can be interpreted as ‘ever’ or ‘once’ whereas in (21b), it can be interpreted as ‘never’ or ‘never as yet’ because of the negative perfective marker. In this sentence, **dí** ‘look’ is used to indicate that a situation has never occurred and may never occur. The example in (21b), however, is not an SVC because **dí** ‘look’ has fully grammaticalised so it is not marked for subject. The difference between (21a) and (21b) shows the stages of grammaticalisation of the verb **dí** ‘look’.

### 10.3.6 Resultative SVCs

Resultative SVCs involve situations where the state of affairs expressed by VP<sub>1</sub> involves a kind of causation which results in the state of affairs denoted by VP<sub>2</sub>. The resultative SVCs involve same subjects. Here, the object expressed with VP<sub>1</sub> is shared as an object with VP<sub>2</sub>.

- 22a. Doxwě éfi Kókú éhúíésí.

**Doxwě**   **é-fi**      **Kókú**   **é-hú**      **ke-sí**  
 Doxwě   SM-push   Kókú   SM-hit      CM-downpart  
 ‘Doxwě pushed Koku down.’

- 22b. Adzĩn étũ prítũ áyě nı háma.

**adzĩ**      **ní**      **é-tũ**      **prítũ**   **ní**      **a-yě**      **nı**      **háma**  
 CM-woman   DEF   SM-beat   plate   DEF   SM-break COM   hammer  
 ‘The woman smashed the plate with a hammer.’ (Cut & Break 40)

The actions expressed in examples (22a) and (22b) by VP<sub>1</sub> result in the falling down of **Kókú** (22a) and the plate being smashed (22b).

### 10.3.7 Posture SVCs

Some SVCs are used to describe the position of entities. For instance, an upside down position of an entity like a pot is expressed by the verbs ‘turn’ and ‘cover’ as in (23a).

- 23a. Ketsukpúń étsyínē ékúmũ kesukpogunu.

**ke-tsukpú**   **ní**      **ke-tsyínā**   **ke-kúmũ**   **ke-sukpogunu**  
 CM-pot   DEF   SM-turn   SM-cover   CM-tree.stump  
 ‘The pot is (turned) upside down on the tree stump’. (PSPV. 12)

- 23b. Tompán ákp'elí kashóníñ.

**tompá ní á-kpa é-lí ka-shó ní kumu**  
 bottle DEF SM-tilt SM-be.positioned CM-basket DEF inside  
 'The bottle is lying in the basket.' (PSPV. 22)

### 10.3.8 Causative multiverb constructions

Clauses containing multiple verbs in which the first verb is **kó** 'give, let, cause, make' resemble SVCs in a number of ways: the verbs in such a clause share the same tense; they may share one argument; they do not have an overt marker of coordination or subordination. However, the verbs do not have the same subject and as such, such structures are not mono-clausal. In such clauses, the verb **kó** 'give, let, cause, make' always precedes VP<sub>2</sub> which refers to its effect or result. The sentences below illustrate how the object of the causative verb is understood as the subject of VP<sub>2</sub>. This is clearly visible in example (24a) where the subject and object NPs of VP<sub>1</sub> belong to different classes. Observe that the SM on VP<sub>2</sub> refers to the object of VP<sub>1</sub> which belongs to the **ka-** class.

- 24a. Ekpén ákó kenín 'ébhui.

**e-kpé ní á-kó ke-ní ní ké-bhui**  
 CM-dry.weather DEF SM-cause CM-river DEF SM-cut  
 'The dry weather caused the river to stop flowing.'

- 24b. Ámā ákó Kofí ánáwǝ abá.

**Ámā á-kó Kofí á-náwǝ a-bá**  
 Ama SM-cause Kofi SM-hasten SM-come  
 'Ama made Kofi come in a rush.'

- 24c. Ákó lapóŭ kɔdzyań.

**á-kó la-póŭ kɔ-dzya ní**  
 3SG-cause 3PL.DEF-roast CM-meat DEF  
 'S/he made them roast the meat.'

Where the shared argument is realised as a pronoun, it is expressed only once and its form is the dependent form of the pronoun, overtly signalling dependence. This further shows the difference between these clauses and SVCs as the dependent form of the pronoun does not occur on the VP<sub>2</sub> in SVCs. It is possible to paraphrase such a clause as a complex sentence in which the matrix clause predicate is **kó** and it takes a dependent complement clause introduced by **sí** 'COMP' as shown in (24d).

- 24d. Ákó sí lapóŭ kɔdzyań.

**á-kó sí la-póŭ kɔ-dzya ní**  
 3SG-cause COMP 3PL.DEF-roast CM-meat DEF

‘S/he caused them to roast the meat.’

These causative verb constructions are thus treated as multiverb constructions (see Ameka 2005 on multiverb constructions).

#### 10.4 SVCs and grammaticalisation

A number of verbs in Tafī have grammaticalised or are in the process of grammaticalising into aspectual, modal and directional markers. When these verbs are fully grammaticalised they are not marked for subject or any other verbal markers. For instance, the adverbial particles **békē** ‘completive’, **dí** ‘experiential’, **kó** ‘dative’, and **kú** ‘allative’ have grammaticalised from the verbs ‘finish’, ‘look’, ‘give’ and ‘reach’ respectively (see Chapter 5 on allative and dative). Consider the following examples. In the sentences in (25a) and (26a), the verbs function as full verbs and are therefore marked for subject but in (25b) and (26b), because they are fully grammaticalised they are not marked for subject.

- 25a. Oḡutsún óbékē.

**o-ḡutsú ní o-békē**  
CM-stew DEF SM-finish  
‘The stew got finished.’

- 25b. Ámā átó ’édōń békē.

**Ámā á-tó kí-dō ní békē**  
Ámā SM-cook CM-thing DEF COMPL  
‘Ama has finished cooking.’

- 26a. Anóvōń éwu ekú kitrekpúníábhā.

**a-nóvō ní é-wu é-kú ki-trekpú ní kábhā**  
CM-child DEF SM-climb SM-reach CM-anthill DEF top  
‘The child climbed onto the anthill.’ (FS)

- 26b. Anóvōń áwólī kú kením.

**a-nóvō ní á-wólī kú ke-ní kum**  
CM-child DEF SM-fall ALL CM-river inside  
‘The child fell into a river.’ (FS)

It is well known that SVCs are an important channel for the development of grammatical markers from verbs (see Lord 1993).