

**Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates in two Caribbean
French-based creoles: Martinican and Haitian**

*Predicados bivalentes left-adjoined em
duas línguas crioulas de base francesa no
Caribe: Martinicano e Haitiano*

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a class of Serial Verb Constructions which includes the so-called ‘take’ SVC-type and is shown to be productively attested in both Martinican (MQ) and Haitian (HC)—contrary to the information on these two creoles available in the APICS on-line atlas (MICHAELIS *et al.*, 2013) and to a prediction made by Déchaine (1993) regarding HC. A comparative survey of MQ and HC data reveals that the construction under scrutiny has a broader extension in MQ than in HC. Although Déchaine’s (1993) approach to complex predicates provides us with a convenient formalism to represent the structure of this type of SVC, our descriptive results lead us to revise her theory in two important respects: (i) (French-based) Creole Tense systems cannot be regarded as incompatible with Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates; (ii) MQ evidence shows that the two components of Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates do not necessarily share the same external argument.

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Keywords: complex predicates, creole, serial verb constructions.

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Este artigo apresenta uma classe de construções verbais seriais que inclui o chamado ‘*take*’ SVC-*type*, e mostra ser este produtivo tanto em martinicano (MQ) quanto em haitiano (HC)—ao invés do que consta desses crioulos no atlas on-line APICS (MICHAELIS *et al.*, 2013) e da predição feita por Déchaine (1993) sobre o HC. Um estudo comparado dos dados do MQ e do HC revela que a construção em causa é mais extensa em MQ que em HC. Embora o tratamento dos predicados complexos por Déchaine (1993) proporcione um formalismo conveniente para a representação da estrutura desse tipo de SVC, os resultados do nosso exame dos dados implica rever a sua teoria em dois aspectos importantes: (i) os sistemas temporais dos crioulos (de base francesa) não podem ser considerados incompatíveis com predicados bivalentes *left-adjoined*; (ii) os dados do MQ mostram que os dois componentes desses predicados não partilham necessariamente o mesmo argumento externo.

Palavras-chave: predicados complexos, línguas crioulas, construções verbais seriais.

1. Introduction

This article bears on one type of syntactic constructions which qualify as *Serial Verb Constructions* (SVCs), as instantiated in two Caribbean French-based creoles: Martinican (MQ), exemplified in (1), and Haitian (HC)¹, exemplified in (2a, b):

- (1)
- a. [MQ] I tjuyi flè poté ba manman'y.²
3sg pick flower carry to mum -3sg
'(S)he picked some flowers and brought (them) to his mum.'

1 Our Creole data are made up and assessed with the help of two main consultants (co-signers of this article), respectively native speakers of MQ and HC, and two groups of occasional consultants, to whom we express our thanks: for MQ : L. Paulin, E., A., L. and F. Jean-Louis, T. Fibleuil, C. Rémy, A. Barclais, L. and T. Milcent, G. Birba. For HC : J. M. Georges, H. Glaude, R. Govain, and the 2018 graduate syntax group of the Faculté de Linguistique Appliquée in Port-au-Prince : K. Africot, K. Brutus, D. Carrénard, S. Dulcio, F. Felix, J.-M. Govain, R. G. Jean Noel, G. Joseph, J. E. Métélus, S. Metellus, M. Moreau, T. Samedi, W. Tannisma, M. Télémaque, K. Zidor. Further thanks to the audience of the 2018 WFL linguistics in Curitiba, Brazil, for their fruitful comments. We abbreviate *Martinican Creole* as MQ since the acronym MC is commonly used for Mauritian Creole.

2 Abbreviations used in Creole (and French) glosses: ANT = anterior; DET = (definite) determiner; IMP = (French) imparfait; INF = (French) infinitive; IPF = imperfective; IRR = (French) irrealis; LOC = locative; PL = plural; SG = singular; 1, 2, 3 = person.

- b. [MQ] I pran loto ay Fòdfrans.
 3SG take car go Fort-de-France
 ‘He took (a) car and went to Fort-de-France (with it).’
- c. [MQ] I pran lèt -la jété.
 3SG take milk-DET throw.out
 ‘(S)he took the milk and threw (it) out.’
- d. [MQ] Avion-an pati Fòdfrans rivé a -Wòm a-dézè.
 plane-DET depart Fort-de-France arrive LOC-Rome at-two
 ‘The plane left Fort-de-France and arrived (from there)
 in Rome at two.’
- e. [MQ] I prété mwen an chapo mété an tèt mwen.
 3SG lend 1SG a hat put LOC head 1SG
 ‘(S)he lent me a hat and I put (it) on my head.’

(2)

- a. [HC] Li keyi flè pote bay manman l.³
 3SG pick flower carry to mum 3SG
 ‘(S)he picked some flowers and brought (them) to his mum.’
- b. [HC] Li pran vwati ale Gonayiv.⁴
 3SG take car go Gonaïves
 ‘(S)he took (a) car and went to Gonaïves (with it).’
- c. [HC] *Li pran lèt la jete.
 3SG take milk DET throw.out
- d. [HC] *Avyon an sot Pòtoprens rive Wòm a dezè.
 plane DET exit Port-au-Prince arrive Rome at two
- e. [HC] *Li prete mwen yon chapo mete nan tèt mwen.
 3SG lend 1SG a hat put LOC head 1SG

A few Creole examples similar to (1a)/(2a) or (1b)/(2b) are mentioned in the linguistic literature (e.g. DEGRAFF, 1992, 2007; LAW; VEENSTRA, 1992; VEENSTRA, 1996; GLAUDE, 2012; VALDMAN, 2015 on HC) but the set of examples formed of (1a,b-2a,b) and (1c,d,e) is either ignored (BERNABÉ, 1983) or claimed to be unattested in such languages as HC and MQ (DÉCHAINED, 1993; COLLOT; LUDWIG, 2013; FATTIER, 2013), or illustrated by the single type of examples in (1a,b)/(2a,b) without the paradigm in (1)+(2) being identified as a syntactic class as we propose to do below.

An informal definition of SVCs is quoted in (3) and completed in (4) by a list of cross-linguistic characterising properties taken from the specialised linguistic literature (cf. VEENSTRA; MUYSKEN, 2006/2017; for a general survey):

3 Spelling conventions are different for MQ and HC: in particular, hyphens and the accute accent are not in use in HC. The conventions applied for HC are those officially acknowledged in Haiti. For MQ we globally follow the “GEREC-1” protocol (BERNABÉ, 1977a, 1977b), with some adaptations which we explicitly justify in Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis (2017).

4 Ex. (2b) from Veenstra (1996).

- (3) Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs): informal definition
A serial verb construction is a monoclausal construction consisting of multiple independent verbs with no element linking them and with no predicate-argument relation between the verbs.
(HASPELMATH, 2016, definition (11))
- (4) SVCs: cross-linguistic characterising properties (cf. AIKHENVALD; DIXON, 2006)
- a. *construction* (implies: productivity) (HASPELMATH, 2016)
 - b. lexical constraints on V1/V2 combinations (DURIE, 1997)
 - c. 2 or several « Vs » are combined
 - d. a single event is denoted (OSAM, 2003; BOHNEMEYER *et al.*, 2007)
 - e. one overt subject
 - f. one TMA specification
(surfacing on V1, V2, or both with agreement)
 - g. one polarity specification
(with possible repetition of negative marking)
 - h. no overt coordination or subordination marker between V1 and V2
 - i. no prosodic break between the Vs
 - j. the two Vs share an internal argument
- (BAKER, 1989; COLLINS, 1997; VEENSTRA, 1993)

The random cross-linguistic examples in (5) suggest that from a typological viewpoint, SVCs might form a heterogeneous set of data comprising combinations or contiguous and noncontiguous Vs or VPs, along various structural patterns, and triggering an array of semantic effects:

- (5) a. ò dà sɛ́ lá néne ǎ̀.
3sg pst roast foc meat eat
'He roasted meat and ate it.'
(Dagaare, Gur family; ex. from HIRAIWA; BODOMO, 2008, p. 796, quoted by HASPELMATH, 2016, p. 1)
- b. I **fuk** **ulep** daxi ni fwaa-mwa.
3SG fly cross.threshold up.away in hole-house
'It flies into the house.'
(Nêlêmwa , Oceanic lge; ex. from BRIL, 2004, p. 176, quoted by HASPELMATH, 2016, p. 1)
- c. lei5 **gan1** jan4 dei6 **hok6** -gwo3 Zunglman2
you follow people learn-exp Chinese
'You have learnt Chinese from someone.'
(Cantonese, from MATTHEWS, 2006, p. 76)

- d. *Àlúkú zé àwá-jìjẹ yì jónòn lé.*
 Aluku take joy receive guest pl
 ‘Aluku received the guests with joy.’
 (Gungbe (Kwa), from ABOH, 2015, p. 284)

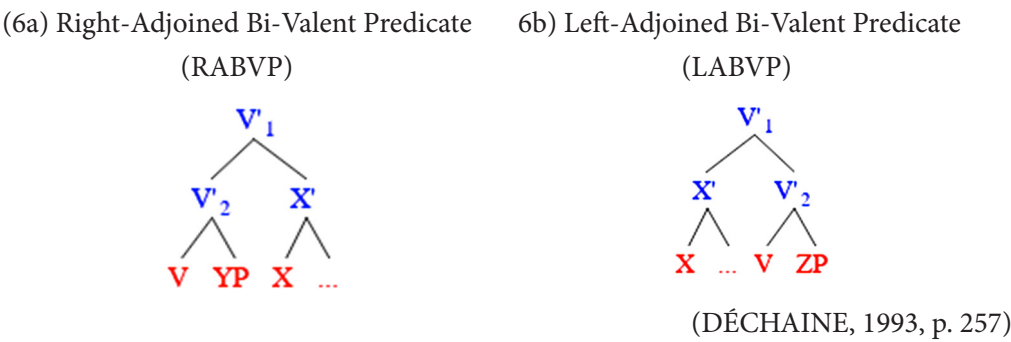
This study focuses on two languages (MQ and HC) and on examples such as (1) and (2a,b), which, we claim, form a syntactic class analysable as what Déchaine (1993) calls Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates (hereunder: LABVPs). Our primary goal is of a descriptive nature: we present in some detail a set of productive syntactic patterns which, we argue, instantiate LABVPs, showing that this class of SVCs is attested in both MQ and HC, and how it has a broader distribution in MQ than in HC. Our investigation leads us to both adopt Déchaine’s (1993) structural representation of complex predicates as a convenient descriptive tool, and to revise two components of her theory: (i) the assumption that LABVPs cannot occur in such languages as HC (or MQ), due to the “weak” status of their Tense marker; (ii) the assumption that the two predicates forming an LABVP should always share their *external* argument.

We start (section 2) with a summary of Déchaine’s (1993) theory of complex predicates, focusing on LABVPs, then turn (section 3) to LABVPs in MQ and HC. We first consider (section 3.1) syntactic patterns common to both grammars and provide (section 3.2) empirical evidence that the patterns under discussion instantiate LABVPs. We then (section 3.3) present three types of constructions also qualifying as LABVPs which are acknowledged in MQ but not in HC. One such construction leads us (section 3.4) to revise Déchaine’s (1993) structural representation of LABVBs by substituting the Internal Subject Hypothesis (first proposed by Larson (1988)) to her own approach to predication. Section 4 recapitulates our main results, leaving various issues open for future research.

2. Déchaine’s theory of Bi-Valent Predicates

Following Awòyalé (1988), Déchaine (1993) proposes to analyse so-called Serial Verb Constructions as sentences containing complex predicates (which she calls *bi-valent*) formed of two combined predicates one of which is *adjoined* either to the left or to the right of the other (labelled *head* predicate). Adjunction is conceived as an asymmetrical, cross-categorial, syntactic relation between two constituents (the head and the adjunct), distinct, e.g., from such relations as “complement-of” or “subject-of”. Adjunction is typically relevant to formalise the syntactic relation between a “modifier” and the expression it “modifies”. Predicates are not necessarily headed by a V (they may be headed by, e.g., an adjective, a participle, a preposition); in the structures in (6), the head predicate is a V’ and the categorial status of the adjoined predicate is left open (X’). Predicates are represented in X-bar format as comprising a head and a possible complement, hence as V’ (or X’), since

in Déchaine’s framework they do not contain an external argument (the subject-predicate relation, called \mathfrak{g} , is handled separately):⁵



In (6a) a predicate left unspecified as to its category (X') is right-adjoined to the head predicate (V'), while (6b) represents the left-adjunction pattern. Déchaine illustrates these two structures by the English examples reproduced in (7) and (8):

Right-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates (RABVPs)

- (7)
- a. John twisted the wire straight.

b. John left the meeting angry.
- (DÉCHAINED, 1993, p. 181)

Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates (LABVPs)

- (8)
- a. I went to the store and bought some whisky.

b. George took the axe and chopped down the cherry tree.
- (DÉCHAINED, 1993, p. 41)

Our focus throughout this article is on the subtype illustrated in (8): LABVPs.

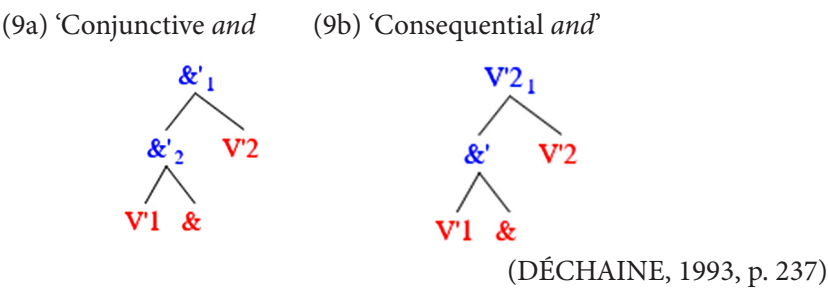
The English sentences given in (8) are instances of what is sometimes called “asymmetrical coördination”, or “fake coordination”: Déchaine calls it “consequential” (9b), distinct from “conjunctive” coördination (9a): in consequential coördination, the two verbal predicates linearly linked by *and* are shown not to denote two separate events (as they do in conjunctive coördination) but a single complex event qualifying as a *Macro-Event* under Bohnemeyer *et al.*’s (2007) theory.⁶ This single-event semantics is consistent with the list of properties in (4).

5

Déchaine’s theory crucially does not include the Subject-Internal Hypothesis, introduced by Larson (1988). We return to this issue below.

6

The reference to Bohnemeyer *et al.*’s (2007) theory of Macro-Events is of course absent from Déchaine (1993), but it provides a semantic complement to any syntactic theory of SVCs.



According to Déchaine (1993), Right- and Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates contrast in (at least) two crucial respects:

- (i) In the Right-Adjunction pattern, the two predicates linked by adjunction do not necessarily share the same external argument (they do in (7a) but not in (7b)); in the Left-Adjunction pattern, Déchaine claims that the external argument of VP1 is also necessarily the external argument of VP2.
- (ii) In the Right-Adjunction pattern, negation (or question) may take wide scope over the entire complex predicate, or narrow scope over the adjunct only (10). Contrastively, the Left-Adjunction pattern only allows wide-scope readings (11):

- (10)

 - a. John didn't twist the wire straight.
 - b. Did John twist the wire straight?
 - (i) WIDE SCOPE: He went swimming instead.
 - (ii) NARROW SCOPE: He twisted it CROOKED.
- (11) John didn't go to the store and buy some whiskey.

 - (i) WIDE SCOPE: He went swimming instead.
 - (ii) NARROW SCOPE: #HE WENT ON LINE and bought it.

Déchaine (1993) proposes to analyse Serial Verb Constructions in general (hence, those of, e.g., (1), (2) or (5)) as Bi-Valent Predicates, whose adjunct component may be positioned to the right or left of its head. She claims both types to be attested in Yoruba, as in (12) and (13):

- (12)

 - a. Jímò ọ **ra ẹ̀wù** b̀n m̀.
 - Jim AGR buy garment present 1sg
 - 'Jim bought me [a] garment.'
 - b. Jímò ọ **m̀ àpótí** f̀n m̀.
 - Jim AGR take box give 1sg
 - 'Jim gave me [a] box.'

(Yoruba examples from DÉCHAINED, 1993, p. 261)

- (13)
- a. Jímò ọ́ fi ọmọ rè **rán** iṣẹ́.
Jim AGR use son 3s.GEN send job
'Jim sent a message via his son.'
- b. Jímò ọ́ fi sùúrù **yanú ọrọ** náà.
Jim AGR use patience sort word DEF
'Jim patiently sorted out the affair.'
- (Yoruba examples from DÉCHAINED, 1993, p. 261)

According to Déchainé, the head predicate in boldface precedes the adjunct in (12) and follows it in (13). She claims that the two types are available in Yoruba (cf. (12)-(13)), while Igbo only has the Left-Adjunction pattern (similar to (13)) and Haitian only has the Right-Adjunction pattern, illustrated below in (14b) (and (14a) for MQ), sometimes called "Directional SVCs":⁷

- (14)
- a. [MQ] Pòl pòté pannié lédjim -lan désann (kay manman'y).
b. [HC] Pòl poté panye legim nan desann (kay manman l).
Paul carry basket veggies DET move.down house mum 3sg
'Paul carried the basket of veggies down to his mum's.'

What Déchainé means to say is that HC fails to have the comitative/manner/instrumental type of SVC illustrated in (13). She derives this restriction from the assumption that in HC, "Tense never has morphological content" (DÉCHAINED, 1993, p. 314): more specifically, she assumes that the Anterior marker *te* of HC, identified as the overt Tense marker of this language, is left-adjoined to the head V rather than positioned in the T head. She correlatively assumes the Tense head to be phonologically empty (hence "weak") in HC. This weakness makes it necessary for the Tense marker to be linearly adjacent to the head V, which results in a ban on Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates in this language.⁸ Since the Tense marker *te* is common to HC and MQ and has the same distribution and semantics in the two creoles,⁹ Déchainé's theory also predicts that LABVPs should go unattested in MQ. We argue below that this prediction is violated in both MQ and HC: LABVPs are

7 The term *directional* is for instance used by DeGraff (2007) in reference to examples similar to (14), but this semantic label fails to capture the syntactic contrast between such SVCs as (14) (which respond to Déchainé's tests as *Right-Adjoined Bivalent Predicates*) and examples such as (42)-(45) below, whose interpretation is also "directional" but whose syntax qualify them as LABVPs.

8 Déchainé (1993, fn. 27) mentions that Michel DeGraff (p.c.) submitted to her HC examples intantiating, he thought, the Left-Adjunction pattern, e.g.

(i) [HC] Bouki achte yon tike ale Nouyòk.
Bouki buy a ticket go New York
'Bouki bought a ticket to New York.' [Déchainé's English translation]
'He bought a ticket and went off to NY.' [our own English translation]

She however analyses this example as a case of right adjunction (RABVP), with the ticket argument construed as the subject of V2 'go'. According to us, however, her English translation is inadequate and DeGraff's example indeed qualifies as a case of LABVP: the HC sentence in (i) does not mean that Bouki simply bought a ticket to New York, but that he bought a ticket and used it to go to New York.

9 It differs only in spelling: HC *te*, MQ *té*.

productively licensed in both languages, albeit with a more restricted distribution in HC than in MQ.

3. Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates in MQ and HC

3.1 Patterns common to MQ and HC

A first subclass of SVCs illustrated in (15) through (20) are acknowledged in both MQ and HC.

- (15)
- a. [MQ] I tjuyi flè pòté ba madanm li.
b. [HC] Li keyi flè pote bay madanm li.
3SG pick flower carry to wife 3SG
'He picked some flowers and took (them) to his wife.'¹⁰

- (16)
- a. [MQ] I pran chèz -la mété bò tab -la.
b. [HC] Li pran chèz la mete bò tab la.
3SG take chair DET put near table DET
'(S)he_k took the chair_z and put (it_z) near the table.'

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- (17)
- a. [MQ] I pran rad -la ay o -marché.¹¹
3SG take clothes -DET go LOC market
b. [HC] Li pran rad yo al nan mache -a.
3SG take clothes pl go LOC market -DET
'(S)he took the clothes_z and went to the market (with them_k).'

- (18)
- a. [MQ] I pran taksi ay Fòdfrans.
b. [HC] Li pran taksi al Pòtoprens.
3SG take cab go Fort-de-France/Port-au-Prince
'(S)he took a cab_z and went to Fort-de-France/Port-au-Prince (with it_z).'

10 Zero Tense has different semantic values in MQ and HC: in MQ it is only open (with dynamic predicates) to a past reading; in HC it may also be construed as a generic or habitual present. In this series of examples our translations only acknowledge the past reading, common to the two grammars.

11 In MQ *rad* 'clothes' is treated as a collective nonplural, in HC it is treated as a count noun and pluralised. In MQ (17a), the Locative Phrase contains a bare noun construed as functional ('the market': the type of place one goes to for trade), in HC (17b) the Locative Phrase contains a definite DP identifying an anchored portion of space ('the market': 'that market place where (s)he goes to sell clothes').

- (19)
- a. [MQ] I travèsé kannal -la najé (rivé) jis Dòminik.
3SG CROSS channel DET swim arrive over.to Dominica
Lit. ‘(S)he crossed the channel_z and swam over to Dominica
(through it_z).’
- b. [HC] Li naje nan kanal la rive jis Ladominik.
3SG swim LOC channel DET arrive over.to Dominica
Lit. ‘(S)he swam in the channel_z and arrived in Dominica
(through it_z).’
((S)e swam across the channel over to Dominica.)’

- (20)
- a. [MQ] I glisé-désann an labou -a travèsé razié -a.
3SG crawl.down LOC mud DET CROSS thicket DET
Lit. ‘He crawled down in the mud_z and crossed the thicket
(through it_z).’
- b. [HC] Li glise desann nan labou a rive jis anba pon an.
3SG crawl.down LOC mud DET arrive over.to under bridge DET
‘(S)he crawled down in the mud and arrived under the bridge.’

These examples have parallel structures and contents in MQ and HC. Each sentence contains two VPs (hereunder: VP1 and VP2, from left to right) and verify the list of properties in (4) taken as characteristic of Serial Verb Constructions: in particular, both VPs fall under a single TMA and polarity specification spelt out, if overt, on the left of VP1. The five couple of examples in (15)-(20) do not easily lend themselves to a causative analysis such as that proposed by Aboh (2009, 2015) for Gungbe SVCs: in (17), (19) and (20), for instance, the expression which linearly follows V1 is not construed as an internal argument of V2 in the narrow sense, but as an oblique extended argument of VP2. Furthermore, V1 cannot be globally characterised as a “light” or “causative” verb. V1 is indeed instantiated by *pran* ‘take’ in three examples, but in the other three the V1 slot is filled by lexemes meaning ‘pick’, ‘cross’, ‘swim’ and ‘crawl down’, each of which has its full lexical content. Furthermore, even V1=*pran* appears to have semantic content in the MQ minimal pair in (21):

- (21)
- a. [MQ] I pousé chéz-la bò tab-la. [±volitional]¹²
3SG push chair-DET near table-DET
‘S/he pushed the chair near the table.’
- b. [MQ] I **pran chéz-la** pousé bò tab-la. [+volitional]
3SG take chair-DET push near table-DET
‘S/he took the chair and pushed (it) near the table.’

12 The minimal pair in (21) is only acknowledged in MQ— the HC counterpart of (21b) is rejected: is is only accepted with V2=*mété* ‘put’, which (unlike ‘push’) is only open to a volitional reading.

(21a) contains a simplex predicate headed by *pousé* ‘push’, which occurs as VP2 in (21b). The semantic contrast between (21a) and (21b) reveals a semantic impact of *V1=pran*: (21a) is consistent with a situation where the agent unwillingly displaces the chair in his sleep, while (21b) is only understood as volitional, hence inconsistent with this situation.

The examples in (15) through (20) satisfy the argument-sharing property (4k). The two VPs actually share two arguments (cf. BAKER, 1989; VEENSTRA, 1993; COLLINS, 1997): they have the same external argument, which surfaces in subject position (to the left of VP1); and the internal argument of V1 is also understood as an argument of V2— and represented by a bracketed pronoun in our English translations. This second shared argument may be construed as an “internal argument” of V2 in the narrow sense (e.g. a direct object as in (15)-(16)), or as an extended (Oblique) internal argument, as in (17)-(20). The shared internal argument may bear the same thematic role with respect to the two verbs, as in (15) (Theme/Theme), (16) (Theme/Theme), (19b)-(20) (Locative/Locative), or a different thematic role with respect to V1 and V2, as in (17) (Theme/Comitative), (18) (Theme/Instrumental) or (19a) (Theme/Locative). This sharing of two arguments crucially contributes to trigger the single-event reading characteristic of SVCs: thus, if the clothes were not construed as an implicit (comitative) argument of VP2 (‘go to the market’), (17) could be construed as denoting two separate events and mean ‘he took the clothes (from someone) and then went to the market (without the clothes)’. This interpretation is clearly excluded in (17). The Double Argument Sharing constraint is confirmed by the minimal pairs in (22)/(23) and (24)/(25), which show that in order for two VPs to form a licit Serial Verb Construction of the type under scrutiny, it is not enough for them to share one (e.g. external) argument and denote sub-events adjacent in space and time: they must further be joined by yet another common argument:

(22)

- a. [MQ] I janbé pa lapòt chanm -lan rive bò malad-la.
 - b. [HC] Li janbe pa pòt chanm nan rive bò malad la.
- 3SG step.over doorstep bedroom DET arrive near patient DET
 ‘(S)he walked through the door_z and went up to the patient’s
 bedside (through it_z).’

(23)

- a. [MQ] *I étenn sigarèt -li apwoché bò malad -la.
 - b. [HC] *Li etenn sigarèt li pwoche bò malad la.
- 3SG put.out cigarette 3SG walk.over near patient DET
 ‘(S)he put out his/her cigarette_z and went up to the patient’s
 bedside (#with it_z).’

- (24)
- a. [MQ] I glise desann an labou a rive (jis) anba pon an.
b. [HC] Li glise desann nan labou a rive jis anba pon an.
3SG crawl.down LOC mud DET arrive over.to under bridge DET
'(S)he crawled down in the mud and arrived under the bridge (in it).'
- (25)
- a. [MQ] *I mete malèt li atè rive (jis) anba pon an.
b. [HC] *Li mete valiz li atè rive jis anba pon an.
3SG put suitcase 3SG on.the.ground arrive over.to under bridge
DET
'(S)he put down her/his suitcase and arrived under the bridge
(#wit it).'

We assume (in line with BAKER, 1989; VEENSTRA, 1993; and COLLINS, 1997) that what makes the sentences in (23) and (25) deviant is the fact that the internal argument of V1 cannot also be construed as an argument of V2.

3.2 The SVCs in (15)-(20) are Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates

We now provide evidence that in the Serial Verb Constructions illustrated in (15) through (20), VP2 is the head predicate while VP1 acts as a modifier on VP2: in other words, these Serial Verb Constructions instantiate LABVPs, in Déchaine's (1993) framework.

In each of the sentences in (15) through (20), VP2 contributes to the matrix information: thus (17) is only true if (s)he actually went to the market, not if (s)he took the clothes but then decided to stay home. Truth conditions are different if VP2 ('go to the market') is placed in a right-adjoined clausal constituent, as in (26):

- (26)
- a. [MQ] I pran rad -la pou i ay o -marché. [compare (17a)]
b. [HC] Li pran rad yo pou l al nan mache a. [compare (16b)]
3SG take clothes DET/PL for.to 3SG go LOC market DET
'(S)he took the clothes in order to go to the market.'

Unlike (17a,b), these sentences are true even if (s)he took the clothes but eventually didn't go to the market.¹³

That VP2 is the head predicate in (15)-(20) is confirmed by the question diagnostic: in simplex clauses, both VP1 and VP2 may be equally questioned as matrix predicates by (MQ) *Kisa i fè?*/(HC) *Sa l fè?* 'What did (s)he do?', as shown by (27a) and (27b), and the complex predicates (SVCs) in (19) may similarly be

13 Further note that such sentences do not verify the Double Argument Sharing constraint observed above: (28) is true whether or not (s)he intends to take the clothes to the market with him/her—(s) he might have needed to take the clothes (and put them away) in order to be free to go to the market. This reading is not available in (17).

questioned as single matrix complex predicates (27c). However, within the VP1+VP2 combination forming the SVC, VP1 cannot be questioned as a matrix predicate: if questioned, it is treated as an adverbial modifier, cf. (28b):

- (27) [MQ] Kisa i fè ?
 [HC] Sa l fè ?
 what 3SG do
 ‘What did (s)he do?’
 a. [MQ] — I travèsé kannal-la
 3SG cross channel DET
 ‘(S)he crossed the channel.’
 a’. [HC] — Li naje nan kanal la.
 3SG swim LOC channel DET
 ‘(S)he swam in the channel.’
 b. [MQ] — I najé (rivé) (jis) Dominik.
 3SG swim arrive over.to Dominica
 ‘(S)he swam over to Dominica.’
 b’. [HC] — Li rivé jis Ladominik.
 3SG arrive over.to Dominica
 ‘(S)he arrived in Dominica.’
 c. [MQ] — I travèsé kannal-la najé (rivé) jis Dominik. [= (19a)]
 c’. [HC] — Li naje nan kanal la rive jis Ladominik. [= (19b)]
 ‘(S)he swam across the channel over to Dominica.’

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- (28)
 a. [MQ] *Kisa i fè najé rivé (jis) Dominik?
 a’. [HC] *Sa l fè rive jis Ladominik?
 b. [MQ] Kouman i najé jis Dominik? — I travèsé kannal-la!
 how 3SG swim over.to Dominica? — 3SG cross channel-DET
 ‘How did (s)he swim over to Dominica? — (S)he crossed the channel.’
 b’. [HC] Kòman li rive jis Ladominik? — Li naje nan kanal la!
 how 3SG arrive over.to Dominica? — 3SG swim LOC channel DET
 ‘How did (s)he arrive in Dominica? — (S)he swam in the channel!’

The ill-formedness of (28a,a’) crucially contrasts with the acceptability of (29) below, which (by (4)) does not qualify as a Serial Verb Construction: in (29), VP2 (MQ *najé jis Dòminik* ‘swim over to Dominica’/HC *rive jis Ladominik* ‘arrive in Dominica’) is placed in a right-adjoined finite adverbial clause while the question ‘What did (s)he do?’ bears on the matrix predicate only:

- (29)
 a. [MQ] Kisa i fè pou i najé jis Dòminik?

- b. [HC] Sa l fè pou l rive jis Ladominik?
what 3SG do for.to 3SG swim/arrive over.to Dominica
'What did (s)he_z do in order (for him_z/her_z) to {swim over to/arrive
in} Dominica?'

In the SVCs of the type illustrated in (15-20), the information conveyed by VP1 is backgrounded rather than focused: thus in (19)=(27c,c'), 'crossing the channel' is a likely way to swim from Martinique to Dominica, 'swim in the channel' is a likely way to reach Dominica. Note that the same backgrounding effect occurs in so-called "fake"/"consequential" coördinations, analysed by Déchaine as parangons of LABVPs: *Since we were out of liquor, he went to the store and bought some whisky* (going to the store is a likely way to get whisky).

Another relevant piece of evidence supporting an LABVP analysis of the SVCs in (15)-(20) is a tendential restriction on sentence negation observed in this type of examples. Sentence negation is not blocked, but globally constrained. Thus, the negated counterpart of (19) (repeated in (30a,a')) was first assessed as "strange" out of context in both MQ and HC (30b), but upon second thought validated as a modalised statement negating a previous assertion rather than the event itself (30c):

- (30)
a. [MQ] I travèsé kannal-la najé jis Dòminik. [= (19a)]
a'. [HC] Li naje nan kanal la rive jis Ladominik. [= (19b)]
'(S)he swam over to Dominica across the channel.'
b. [MQ] ??I pa travèsé kannal-la najé jis Dòminik.
b'. [HC] ??Li pa naje nan kanal la rive jis Ladominik.
'(S)he didn't cross the channel and swim over to Dominica.'
c. [MQ] OKI pa travèsé kannal-la najé jis Dòminik!!!!
c'. [HC] OKLi pa naje nan kanal la rive jis Ladominik!!!!
'You don't mean she actually crossed the channel and swam
over to Dominica?!?'

This restriction is consistent with Déchaine's (1993) assumption that with LABVPs, sentence negation can only take wide scope over the entire complex predicate. Since the core information is conveyed by VP2 and the content of VP1 is backgrounded (kept out of focus), the occurrence of VP1 in the negative sentence may be perceived as unmotivated— the easiest way to negate the core content of the predicate is to refrain from inserting VP1 (viz., to refrain from using an SVC). In order to make a negated SVC such as (30b,b') acceptable, one needs a context allowing us to pre-construe the complex predicate (VP1+VP2) as a type of macro-event. This seems difficult in (30b,b') because the VP1/VP2 combination appears as a one-time individual creation rather than one pertaining to the common ground. Contrastively, complex predicates of the form *pran taksi+alé*-Locative 'take (a) cab and go (somewhere)' are naturally pre-construed as denoting a type of macro-event

(to take a cab by definition entails to go somewhere with it): correlatively, sentence negation is felt as less problematic than in (27):

(31)

- a. [MQ] I pa pran taksi ay Fòdfrans: manman'y malad.
 3SG NEG take cab go Fort-de-France mum-3SG sick
 '(S)he didn't take a cab and go to Fort-de-France, for his/her mum is sick.'
- b. [HC] Kòm manman l malad, li pa pran avyon al Pòtoprens.
 since mum 3SG sick 3SG NEG take plane go Port-au-Prince
 'Since his/her mum is sick, (s)he didn't take a plane and go to Port-au-Prince.'

We assume that the varying acceptability of sentence negation observed in (30) and (31) is but an effect of the general scopal restrictions on LABVPs pointed out by Déchaine (1993).

A last piece of evidence supporting the existence of LABVPs in MQ and HC is the productive availability, in both creoles, of the pattern illustrated in (32), where a d-linked, backgrounded predicate is left-adjoined to a VP headed by *fè* 'do' in a type of rhetoric question:

- Context: [MQ] I achté liv -la.
 [HC] L(i) achte liv la.
 3SG buy book DET.
 '(S)he bought the book.'

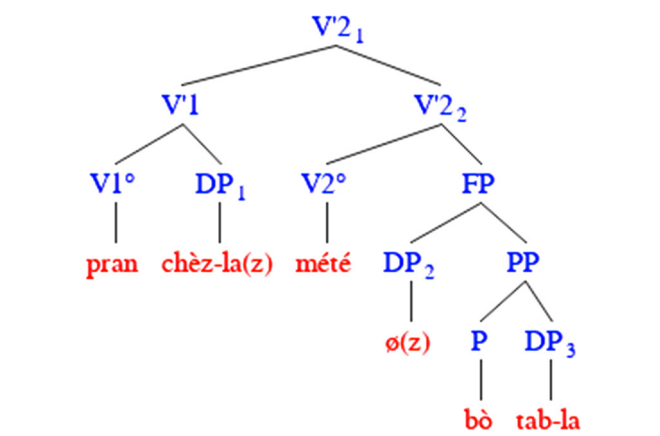
(32)

- a. [MQ] Kisa i achté liv -la fè?
 b. [HC] Sa l achte liv la fè?
 what 3SG buy book DET do
 Lit. 'What did (s)he buy the book_z and do (with it_z)?'
 = 'Whatever did she buy the book for?'

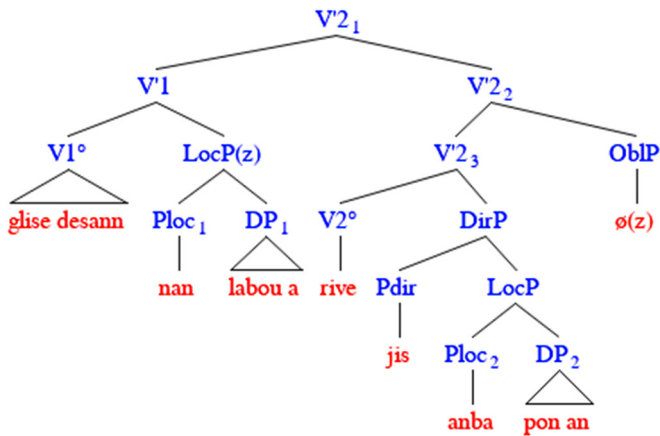
Like the examples in (15) through (20), those in (32a,b) verify all the properties listed in (4). In (32), V2 is the functional (pro-)V *fè* 'do', whose internal *wh*-argument (MQ *kisa*/HC *sa* 'what') has been raised to CP. VP1 is crucially discourse-linked. The global semantic effect is conveyed by our English translation. This freely productive syntactic pattern confirms the syntactic availability of LABVPs in the two creole grammars under scrutiny.

The properties of such SVCs as those illustrated above in (15)-(20), (22) and (24) in MQ and HC are accounted for under the structural representations proposed by Déchaine (1993) for LABVPs, e.g.:

(33) [MQ] *I pran ch  z-la m  t   b   tab-la.* [= (16a)]



(34) [HC] *Li glise desann nan labou a rive jis anba pon an.* [= (24b)]



Our own contribution to these D  chaine-inspired structural representations is the insertion, within the head predicate, of a covert argument, which we propose to regard as an empty resumptive pronoun. We assume that the left-adjoined predicate (VP1) has topic-like scope over the head predicate in the same way as a dislocated topic has scope over the tensed clause below, or as the left-adjoined conditional clause in the French example (35) has topic-like scope over the matrix clause:

(35) **Si** Bilal **savait** nager, il traverse-**r-ait** la Manche.
if Bilal know.IMP swim.INF 3MSG.NOM cross -IRR-IMP the Channel
'If Bilal knew how to swim, he would cross the Channel.'

Although the conditional tense (*ach  terait*) pertains to the matrix clause, it needs to be licensed under the scope of a left-adjoined conditional clause.

The data presented so far shows a parallelism between MQ and HC. It however turns out that the class of SVCs under consideration has a broader distribution in MQ than in HC. A subclass of the contrastive data presented in section 3.3 will lead us to propose two revisions of D  chaine's theory of LABVPs.

3.3 Contrasts between MQ and HC

In a first subset of contrastive examples, MQ, unlike HC, licenses LABVPs with types of lexical VP2s whose HC counterparts fail to be acknowledged, e.g. *jété* ‘throw away’, *koupé zèb* ‘cut grass’, *fè moun pè* ‘scare people’, *respiré tibren lè* ‘breathe a little air’, *lévé Léa* ‘wake up Lea’.

(36)

- a. [MQ] I pran lèt -la jété.
 - b. [HC] *Li pran lèt la jete.
- 3sg take milk DET throw.away
‘(S)he took the milk_z and threw (it_z) away.’

(37)

- a. [MQ] I pran/ay chèché koutla koupé zèb.
 - b. [HC] *Li pran/al chèche manchèt la koupe zèb.
- 3sg take/go get machete DET cut grass
‘(S)he took/got (a/the) machete_z and cut some grass (with it_z).’

(38)

- a. [MQ] I achte zanm fè moun pè.
 - b. [HC] *Li achte zam fè moun pè.
- 3sg buy gun make people scared
‘(S)he bought guns_z and got people scared (with them_z).’

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(39)

- a. [MQ] Ouvè finèt -la respiré tibren lè !
 - b. [HC] *Ouvè fenèt la pran yon ti lè !
- open window DET breathe a.little air
‘Open the window_z and breathe a little air (through it_z).’

(40)

- a. [MQ] Ay soukwé kabann-nan lévé Léa !
 - b. [HC] *Al souke kabann nan leve Lea!
- go shake bed DET wake.up Lea
‘Go shake the bed_z and wake up Lea (in it_z)!’

The MQ examples in (36a) through (40a) exhibit the same characterising properties as those in (15)-(20) above: they verify all the conditions listed in (4) (hence qualify as SVCs), VP2 behaves as the head predicate and VP1 as a modifier on VP2 (thus the instruction in (39a) will not be carried out if the addressee shakes the bed without waking up Lea), and sentence negation globally tends to be constrained (as above in (30)): we therefore propose to analyse these examples as LABVPs. However, in

contrast with (15)-20) above, HC counterparts of (36a)-(40a) are not acknowledged as well-formed.¹⁴

A second type of LABVPs acknowledged in MQ but not in HC involves two directional VPs combined to express a complex path:

- (41)
- a. [MQ] I té ka **soti** lafak -la (**r**)**antré** bò kay li touléjou a-dézè.
b. [HC] *Li te konn soti nan fak la antre lakay li chak jou a dezè.
3SG ANT IPF come.out LOC university DET return LOC home 3SG
every day at-2
'(S)he used to go home from the university every day at two.'

- (42)
- a. [MQ] I **soti** Tirki **rivé** bonmaten-an.
b. [HC] *Li sot Tiki rive maten an.
3SG exit Turkey arrive morning DET
'(S)he arrived from Turkey this morning.'

- (43)
- a. [MQ] Avion -an **pati** Fòdfrans **rivé** a-Wòm a-dézè.
b. [HC] *Avyon an sot Potoprens rive Wòm a dezè.
plane DET depart/exit Fort-de-France arrive LOC Rome at-two
Port-au-Prince
'The plane arrived in Rome from Fort-de-France at two.'

- (44)
- a. [MQ] I **soté-désann** an piébwa-a **kouri antré** lakay -li.
b. [HC] *Li sote desann¹⁵ pyebwa a kouri antre lakay li.
3SG jump-off LOC tree DET run go.in home 3SG
Lit. '(S)he ran straight home from up in the tree.'

The MQ examples in (41)-(44) qualify as SVCs wrt. (4) and show the reluctance to sentence negation characteristic of LABVPs. That VP2 stands as the head predicate in these examples is confirmed by the behaviour of time adverbials such as *a-dezè* 'at two o'clock': in clause-final position, as in (43a), *a-dézè* only informs us about the time of arrival of the plane. Placing the adverb in sentence-initial position, as

14 HC consultants can only come up with bi-clausal rephrasings of (36a)-(40a), which of course no longer qualify as SVCs, e.g.:

(i) a. [HC] Li pran lèt la, li jete l.
3SG take milk DET 3SG throw.away 3SG
'(S)he took the milk and (s)he threw it away.'
b. [HC] Li {pran/al chèche} manchèt la pou l koupe zèb.
3SG take/go get machete DET for.to 3SG cut grass
'(S)he took/got the machete in order to cut some grass.'

15 The verb *désann* (HC *desann*) 'move down' calls for a locative syntax for the 'tree' argument in MQ but is used transitively here in HC (*desann pyebwa a* 'climb.down the tree', *desann li* lit. 'climb it down').

in (45), triggers pragmatic deviance, for it would need to scope over both departure and arrival — the two sub-events forming the bi-valent predicate:

- (45) [MQ] ?*A-dézè, avion-an pati Fòdfrans rivé a-Wòm.
 at-two plane- DET depart Fort-de-France arrive LOC Rome
 Lit. 'At two o'clock, the plane left Fort-de-France and arrived in Rome.'

Like those of (36)-(40), the HC counterparts of (41)-(44) are rejected by our HC consultants, whose proposed acceptable rephrasings fail to qualify as SVCs (cf. fn. 14).

In a third remarkable subclass of LABVPs licensed in MQ but not in HC, VP1 and VP2 do not share the same external argument, although the construction contains a single overt subject (hence verifies property (4e)). In such examples as (46)-(48), V1 is a double-object verb and the external argument of VP2 must be bound by the Recipient argument of V1:

- (46)
 a. [MQ] I prété mwen an chapo mété an tèt mwen.
 b. [HC] *Li prete mwen yon chapo mete nan tèt mwen.
 3SG lend 1SG a hat put LOC head 1SG
 '(S)he lent me_k a hat_z and (I_k) put (it_z) on my head.'
- (47)
 a. [MQ] I ba mwen savon lavé lanmen mwen.
 b. [HC] *Li bay mwen savon lave men mwen.
 3SG give 1SG soap wash hand 1SG
 '(S)he gave me_k (some) soap_z and (I_k) washed my hands (with it_z).'
- (48)
 a. [MQ] I ofè Léa flè anbéli kay li.
 3SG give Lea flower smarten.up house 3SG
 b. [HC] *Li ofri Lea flè fè kay li bèl.
 3SG give Lea flower make house 3SG pretty
 '(S)he gave Lea_k (some) flowers_z and (she_k) smartened up her house (with them_z).'

As for those of (36)-(40) and (41)-(44), the HC counterparts of MQ examples such as (46)-(48) are rejected by our HC consultants, whose proposed acceptable rephrasings fail to qualify as SVCs, e.g.:

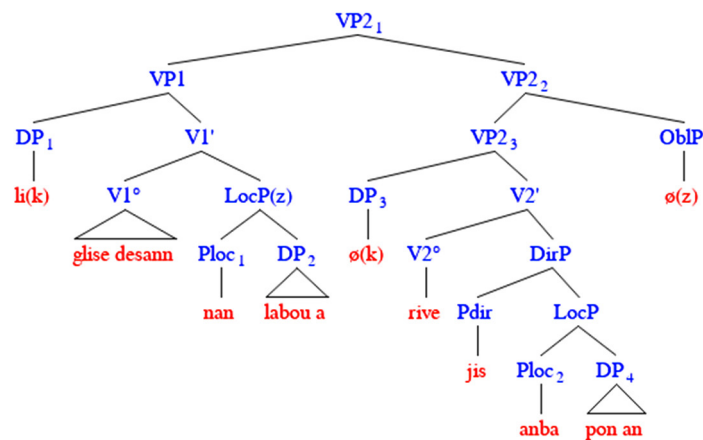
- (49) [HC] Li ofri Lea_k flè **pou** li_k fè kay li_k bèl.
 3SG give Lea flower for.to 3SG make house 3SG pretty
 'He gave Lea_k some flowers for her_k to smarten up her_k house.'

At this point we have no explanation to offer for the cross-Creole contrasts reviewed in this section, which show that LABVPs are globally more restricted in HC than in MQ. The MQ examples in (46) through (48) are of particular theoretical interest because they are counter-evidence to Déchaine’s (1993) assumption that in LABVPs (contrasting in this respect with RABVPs) the two predicates joined by adjunction must share the same external argument.

3.4 Structural assumptions

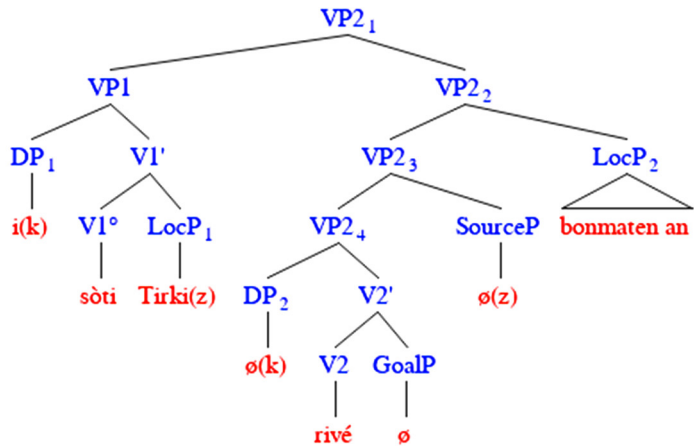
In order to formally represent the pattern illustrated in (46)-(48), we propose to combine the Internal Subject Hypothesis (LARSON, 1988) with Déchaine’s (1993) theory of LABVPs. This revision allows us to account for the variable construal of the external argument of VP2, depending on the type of V1.

(50) [HC] *Li glise desann nan labou a rive jis anba pon an.*
(revision of (35) with VP-Internal Subjects)

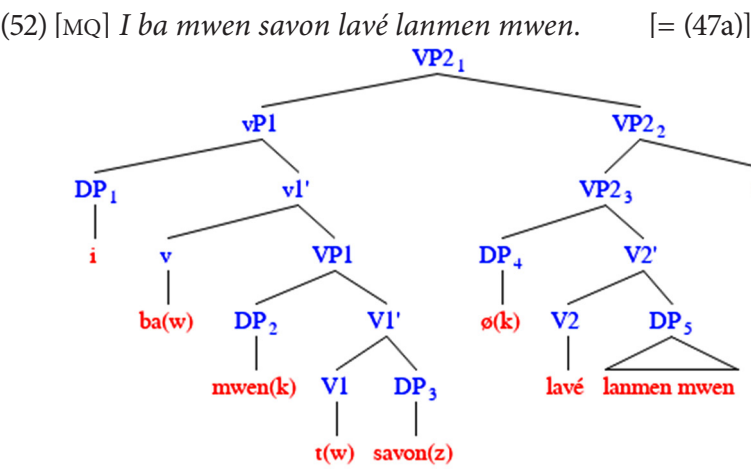


The structure in (50) captures the assumption that the two VP components of the LABVPs under discussion crucially share two arguments, both of them covert in VP2 and bound by overt arguments in VP1: in (50), the external argument of VP2 is bound by the external argument of VP1, while the Oblique argument of VP2 (construed as locative) is bound by the locative argument in VP1. The general pattern in (50) also accounts for examples such as (36)-(40) and (41)-(44), acknowledged as well-formed in MQ only.

(51) [MQ] *I sòti Tirki rivé bonmaten-an.* [= (42a)]



Finally, the Internal Subject assumption combined with Déchaine’s theory allows us to represent along the same line the structure of (MQ) LABVPs such as (46)-(48):



In each of these structures, two covert arguments of VP2 — one of which its external argument — are bound by arguments of VP1, hence, “shared” by VP1 and VP2. In various cases including those represented in (50), (51) and (52), the other shared argument is construed as Oblique with respect to VP2.¹⁶ Adjunction of VP1 to VP2 is assumed here (as in Déchaine 1993) to occur within the lexical domain: this assumption straightforwardly accounts for several of the properties listed in (4) as characteristic of SVCs: one TMA, one Polarity, hence a single (macro-)event is denoted, and there is only one slot in clause structure for an *overt* subject (property (4e)). The type of LABVP represented in (52) interestingly reveals, however, that the overt subject of the clause (the one which ends up in the specifier of the top functional projection) may not semantically correspond to the external argument of the matrix predicate. In (52), the argument which has raised up to subject position in the syntax is the external argument of VP1, while the external argument of the head predicate is bound by the *Recipient* argument of V1 in a Double-Object construction (the Recipient a secondary external argument within VP1?). This restriction surely deserves further pondering.

4. Recapitulation

We have provided evidence that Serial Verb Constructions analysable as what Déchaine (1993) calls Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates (LABVPs) are attested in both Haitian and Martinican, albeit with a more restricted range of options in HC than in MQ. This finding calls for a revision of Déchaine’s theory, which is contrived to predict that LABVPs should not occur in Haitian due to the syntactic “weakness” of its Tense marker—hence neither in MQ, which has the same

¹⁶ This property is in line with Franco’s (2008) approach to Serial Verb Constructions, describing them as strategies of Oblique marking, but is is not a necessary property of SVCs in general, or of LABVPs in particular, as witnessed by, e.g., (34).

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Martinican
and Haitian*

Tense marker. It remains on the other hand possible to assume (as suggested by VEENSTRA; MUYSKEN, 2006/2017, with a different phrasing) that there might be a correlation between the noninflectional nature of creole morphology and the possibility of forming certain types of complex predicates within the lexical domain. The remarkable subclass of cases illustrated in (46)-(48) and tentatively analysed in (52) further leads us to relax Déchaine's (1993) claim that LABVPs always share the same external argument.

The contrasts brought out between MQ and HC with respect to the Serial Verb Constructions under discussion obviously need to be explained, synchronically and/or diachronically: we thus leave several issues for future research.

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