

Philipp Weisser  
**Derived Coordination**

# **Linguistische Arbeiten**

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## **Volume 561**

Philipp Weisser

# Derived Coordination

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A Minimalist Perspective on Clause Chains, Converbs  
and Asymmetric Coordination

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# Contents

Abbreviations — IX

Abstract — XI

## Part I: Clause Chains, Medials, and Converbs

- 1      Introducing Clause Chains — 3**
- 2      Properties of Medial Constructions — 7**
  - 2.1      The Morphological Form of Medial Clauses — 7
  - 2.2      The Syntactic Properties of Medial Clauses — 8
  - 2.3      Summary — 15
- 3      Previous Analyses — 19**
  - 3.1      Subordination Approaches — 19
  - 3.2      Coordination Approaches — 23
- 4      A Derived Coordination Approach to Medial Clauses — 31**
  - 4.1      Theoretical Background — 31
    - 4.1.1      The Dichotomy of Coordination and Subordination — 31
    - 4.1.2      The Derived Coordination Account — 34
  - 4.2      A Derived Coordination Account of Medial Constructions — 36
    - 4.2.1      The Category of Medial Clauses — 36
    - 4.2.2      Applying the Theory — 39
  - 4.3      Deriving the Properties of Medial Constructions — 41
    - 4.3.1      Morphological Dependence — 41
    - 4.3.2      Extraposition and Center Embedding — 43
    - 4.3.3      Backward Pronominalization — 45
    - 4.3.4      Extraction — 46
  - 4.4      Summary — 53
- 5      Multiple Medial Clauses — 55**
- 6      Medials Remaining in Situ: Converbs — 69**
  - 6.1      General Properties of Converb Clauses — 69
  - 6.2      Applying Clausal Relation Tests — 72

6.3	Deriving the Syntactic Properties of Converb Clauses — 77
<b>7</b>	<b>Two Case Studies: Tsakhur and Korean — 81</b>
7.1	Two Types of Converbs in Tsakhur — 81
7.2	Converbs and Chaining in Korean — 86
<b>8</b>	<b>Crosslinguistic Variation of Clause Chaining Constructions — 95</b>
8.1	Parametrizing the Derived Coordination Approach — 95
8.2	Variation of Scopal Properties — 97
8.3	Extraction — 102
8.4	More Parameters — 104
8.5	Summary — 107
<b>9</b>	<b>A New Perspective on Switch-Reference — 109</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Summary of Part I — 115</b>

## Part II: Asymmetric Coordination

<b>1</b>	<b>Introducing Asymmetric Coordination — 121</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Scene-Setting Coordination — 127</b>
2.1	The properties of Scene-Setting Coordination — 127
2.2	Previous Analyses of SceCo — 133
2.2.1	A subordination analysis: Wiklund (1996,2007) — 134
2.2.2	A coordination analysis: De Vos (2009) — 136
2.3	A Derived Coordination Account of Scene-Setting Coordination — 140
2.3.1	The Category of SceCo conjuncts — 140
2.3.2	The Analysis of SceCo constructions — 141
2.4	SceCo with Multiple Conjuncts — 148
<b>3</b>	<b>Consecutive Coordination — 155</b>
3.1	Integrating ConsecCo Constructions into the Theory of SceCo — 155
3.2	Mixed Cases of SceCo and ConsecCo — 158
<b>4</b>	<b>Conditional Coordination — 163</b>
4.1	Some Syntactic Properties of CondCo — 163

4.2	Previous Analyses —	<b>166</b>
4.2.1	Culicover & Jackendoff (1997) —	<b>166</b>
4.2.2	Keshet (2013) —	<b>170</b>
4.3	A Derived Coordination Account to CondCo —	<b>172</b>
4.3.1	The Analysis of CondCo —	<b>176</b>
4.3.2	Deriving the Properties of CondCo —	<b>178</b>
4.4	Combining Different Cases of Asymmetric Coordination —	<b>186</b>
4.5	Summary —	<b>187</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Summary of Part II —</b>	<b>189</b>

### **Part III: Theoretical Discussion and Open Issues**

<b>1</b>	<b>Movement to Spec&amp;P and its trigger —</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>The Coordinate Structure Constraint as a Derivational Principle —</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>The Merge over Move-Principle —</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Transparent Adjuncts, Opaque Adjuncts —</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Constraining the Mechanism: Avoiding Overgeneration —</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Syntactic Evidence for Asymmetric Coordination Phrases —</b>	<b>213</b>

**Conclusion — 217**

**Bibliography — 221**

**Index — 231**



# Abbreviations

1/2/3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person	ILL	Illative
ABS	Absolutive	IMP	Imperative
ACC	Accusative	INCON	Inconsequential
ADD	Additive Focus	IND	Indicative
ADESS	Adessive	INDEF	Indefinite
ANT	Anterior	INF	Infinitive
AOR	Aorist	INS	Instrumental
APASS	Antipassive	INTR	Intransitive
ASP	Aspect	IPFV	Imperfective
ATTR	Attributive	IRR	Irrealis
AUX	Auxiliary	LOC	Locative
BQN	Brusqueness	MASC	Masculine
CIRC	Circumstantial	MED	Medial
CL	Noun Class	NAR	Narrative
COM	Comitative	NEG	Negation
COMP	Complement	NEUT	Neuter
CONF	Confirmative	NMLZ	Nominalizer
CONJ	not given by MacDonald	NOM	Nominative
COP	Copula	NON.PROX	Non-proximative
CVB	Converb	OBL	Oblique
DAT	Dative	PASS	Passive
DECL	Declarative	PAST	Past Tense
DEM	Demonstrative	PFV	Perfective
DO	Direct Object	PL	Plural
DS	Different Subject	POSS	Possessive
DUR	Durative	POST	Posterior
ELAT	Elative	POT	Potentialis
ERG	Ergative	PRED	Predicate Marker
EVID	Evidential	PROG	Progressive
FACT	Factual	PROX	Proximative
FEM	Feminine	PRS	Present Tense
FIN	Finite	PRT	Particle
FOC	Focus	PTCP	Participle
FUT	Future Tense	PURP	Purpose
GEN	Genitive	Q	Question Particle
HORT	Hortative	REDUP	Reduplication Morpheme
HYP.FUT	Hypothetical Future	REFL	Reflexive

**X** — Abbreviations

REL	Relative Marker	SUP	Superessive
REM.PAST	Remnant Past	TERM	Terminative
REP	Reportative	TOD.PAST	Today's Past
SEQ	Sequential	TOP	Topic
SG	Singular	TR	Transitive
SIM	Simultaneous	UNSP.TIME	Unspecified Time
SS	Same Subject	VERBLZ	Verbalizer
STAT	Stative	WIT.PAST	Witnessed Past
SUBJ	Subject		

## Abstract

This book explores the different types of clausal relations in the world's languages. Traditionally, the assumption is that there are only two ways how clauses can be combined. Either one clause is predominant and contains the other, or none of the clauses is predominant and both are merged with equal properties. The former is called *a subordinate relation*, the latter *a coordinate relation*. In the course of the discussion about this dichotomy of clausal relations, certain characteristics have been identified to distinguish the two. However, as more and more languages have been studied in this respect, the assumption of the strict subordination-coordination dichotomy did not remain unchallenged. A number of different constructions in the world's languages were claimed to resist this classification. According to the established tests, these constructions are neither fully subordinate nor fully coordinate.

In this dissertation, I will examine some of these constructions in detail, review the evidence for these claims, and discuss whether the assumption of the strict subordination-coordination dichotomy can be maintained. The main discussion in this work is divided into two parts: The first part is concerned with the phenomenon of clause chaining. Clause chaining constructions are long sequences of incompletely inflected verbs and verb phrases followed by one fully specified verb. These constructions are found in a wide range of different languages in almost all parts of the world; the sole exception maybe being major parts of Europe. A typical example is given in (1). It consists of eight different clauses. Only the final verb, however, is marked for indicative mood.

- (1) mai-pa   ʔufei-mene-pa yene nen-ou-pa   nen-ou-pa   tefe-pa  
come.up-SS watch-STAT-SS bird 3PL-shoot-SS 3PL-shoot-SS put-SS  
mene-a-te wai ʔoʔaisa-a-te   wai ʔai   pau-a-ʔa.  
stay-3SG-DS again afternoon-3SG-DS again rustle erupt-3SG-IND

'He came up and watched and he shot birds and put them and he stayed.  
Again it was afternoon, and again there was a rustling sound.'

*Tauya*: MacDonald (1990, p.367)

This construction has gained increased attention in the recent discussion about clausal relations because the different syntactic tests established in the literature yield contradictory results for this construction. According to some tests, clauses in a clause chain seem to be in a coordinate relation and according to others, they seem to be in a subordinate one. For example, we find that clauses in a clause chain are morphosyntactically dependent on the final clause of the chain. In (1),

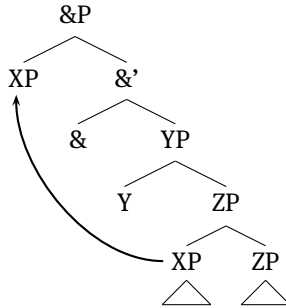
only the final verb of the chain is specified for indicative mood. Nevertheless, the other verbs are interpreted as if they were marked for indicative as well. They depend on the indicative marker of the final verb in the chain. Also, as we will see, clause chaining constructions allow for asymmetric extraction. Both of these properties are usually taken to be characteristics of subordinate constructions. On the other hand, however, clause chaining constructions cannot undergo center embedding, extraposition or backward pronominalization. These properties suggest a coordinate relation between the clauses in a chain.

Following the standard assumptions of many theoretical frameworks, this is a problematic finding. Generally, it is assumed that the relation between two clauses is either a subordinate one or a coordinate one. These categories are thought to be discrete and exhaustive. In other words, constructions that seem to be in between subordinate and coordinate ones are unexpected and cannot be derived.

The main claim of this work is this: There are indeed constructions that violate the widely assumed dichotomy of clausal relations. However, this does not necessarily mean that the complete theory of clausal relations must be rejected. In this book, I show that recent findings about the syntactic structure of coordination make it possible to derive cases of clausal relations that look like coordinate relations on the surface but exhibit certain syntactic properties of subordinate ones.

Recent analyses in the syntactic framework of the Minimalist Program have suggested that coordination structures are syntactically represented by a coordination head selecting the two conjuncts as arguments. One major advantage of this assumption is that coordination structures are no longer represented by odd syntactic structures. Coordination heads are regular syntactic heads with regular syntactic properties. This means, however, that, in principle, we might expect regular syntactic movement to the specifier of a coordination phrase. I argue that it is exactly this kind of movement step that derives the mixed properties of clause chaining constructions. More concretely, I propose a structure like (2).

## (2) Movement to Spec&amp;P:



Some syntactic category XP may be base-generated as an adjunct to another category but in the course of the derivation, XP can be moved to the specifier of a coordination phrase. The result is a structure that looks like a coordinate structure on the surface but which has certain syntactic properties of a subordinate construction because there was some stage of the derivation where the two clauses were in a subordinate relation. The mixed properties of clause chaining constructions sketched above can be shown to follow immediately from this derivation. Syntactic operations that are responsible for morphological dependency and for asymmetric extraction (i.e. agreement and movement) can apply *before* the crucial movement step in (2). Hence, these operations lead to the impression that the relation between these two clauses is a subordinate one. Other processes or operations such as linearization apply at a later stage in the derivation. These operations thus indicate a coordinate relation.

Further evidence for the derivation in (2) comes from a number of different observations. Most importantly, I show that the adjoined base position in (2) in which the first conjunct is generated is not just a mere stipulation to derive the observed facts. In many languages, medial clauses can surface in that position. Then, however, they are not called medial clauses but converb clauses. Converb clauses share most morphosyntactic properties with medial clauses. However, when the clausal relation tests are applied, one finds that converbs are uncontroversially subordinate as predicted by their syntactic context.

Also, I show that as soon as more complex cases of clause chaining are taken into account, we find that the complex dependency relations between all clauses in a chain can only be accounted for if these clauses are treated as subordinate *and* coordinate at the same time. I identify two strategies of clause chaining in the world's languages: Recursive clause chaining and iterative clause chaining. Alternative approaches, especially those that treat clause chaining as an instance of regular coordination cannot derive both strategies at the same time.

Furthermore, the derivation in (2) is supported by two case studies where the account that I propose is applied to two unrelated languages: Korean and Tsakhur. In both languages, we find medial and converb constructions and what we see is that these constructions are morphologically identical. Looking at the data from Tsakhur or Korean, it becomes evident that an approach which just assumes different base positions for these two types of clauses misses an important generalization.

Since clause chaining constructions are found in virtually all major linguistic areas, it is not surprising that we find an incredibly great amount of crosslinguistic variation with respect to this construction. I argue that the derivation in (2) is flexible enough to account for the vast majority of the attested variation. I illustrate how the approach can be parametrized and adapted to specific properties of certain languages. While the categories that are conjoined and the syntactic features of the heads in question may vary, the abstract underlying derivation remains the same: Medial constructions are derived by movement to the specifier of a coordination phrase.

Finally, I take a look at switch-reference marking, which is found in many clause chaining languages as well. I argue that switch-reference marking can occur in coordinate contexts and subordinate ones. However, we find that switch-reference marking has different properties depending on its syntactic context. Switch-reference marking in subordinate constructions has different properties than switch-reference in coordinate constructions. And since switch-reference marking in clause chaining constructions varies with respect to its properties, we need a derivation for clause chains that involves both a subordinate relation and a coordinate one.

The second part of this work shows that similar constructions are also found in more familiar languages such as English. I argue that so-called asymmetric coordination constructions are also derived by means of movement to the specifier of a coordination phrase. In the second part of this book, I investigate three different types of asymmetric coordination constructions in English. First, scene-setting coordination as in (3a). Second, consecutive coordination as in (3b). And third, conditional coordination as in (3c).

(3) a. *Scene-Setting Coordination:*

Here's the whiskey that he went to the store and bought.

Ross (1967, p.168)

b. *Consecutive Coordination:*

How much can you drink and still stay sober?

Lakoff (1986, p.152)

c. *Conditional Coordination:*

You drink another can of beer and I'm leaving.

Culicover and Jackendoff (1997, p.197)

All three constructions look like cases of regular coordination on the surface. Also, the order of conjuncts is fixed, which is another indicator of a coordinate structure. However, these three constructions also show some properties of subordinate constructions. Most notably, they all allow for asymmetric extraction out of only one of the conjuncts. Other tests show the same thing. Cases of conditional conjunction, for example, also allow for an element in the second conjunct to bind a variable in the first one. This is usually taken as a robust criterion for a c-command relation and, hence, for subordination.

The argumentation that cases of asymmetric coordination should be derived in basically the same way as clause chains is based on an old observation in the literature about the semantics of these constructions. A number of people have argued that what distinguishes asymmetric from symmetric coordination is that, in case of the former, the two conjuncts are semantically unbalanced. One of the conjuncts expresses background information in basically the same way as a clausal adjunct would. In the case of scene-setting coordination, the first conjunct gives additional temporal or locational background information. In other words, it sets the scene for the second conjunct. In the case of consecutive coordination, the event described in the second conjunct is a consequence of the event described in first conjunct. In the case of conditional coordination, the first conjunct expresses the same meaning as a regular conditional adjunct clause. I take this semantic asymmetry as an indicator for the fact that the semantically foregrounded conjunct is base-generated as the matrix clause to which the backgrounded conjunct is adjoined. The coordinate surface structure is then derived by movement of the adjunct to the specifier of a coordination phrase.

I show that this derives all the properties of the asymmetric coordination constructions, the coordinate ones as well as the subordinate ones. Also, the differences between the different types of asymmetric coordination constructions are accounted for. I show that scene-setting coordination and consecutive coordination are syntactically completely identical. They are distinguished only in terms of their semantics as well as their linearization properties. In the case of scene-setting coordination, the backgrounded conjunct is linearized to the left of the foregrounded one and in the case of consecutive coordination, the order is reversed. But since linearization is usually taken to be a postsyntactical process, we can state that ultimately, scene-setting coordination and consecutive coordination are syntactically identical. Thus, we also find complex cases of more than two conjuncts in which both types of coordination are combined. These cases can

be derived elegantly under the account I argue for. Also, the approach allows to account for maximally complex cases where extraction applies to a proper subset of the conjuncts as in (4).

- (4) What did he go to the store, buy, load in his car, drive home and unload?  
Lakoff (1986, p.153)

In (4), we have extraction from the second, third and fifth of five conjuncts. Complex examples like this one have not been addressed by any kind of syntactic theory that I know of. Moreover, these examples have even been claimed to be undervivable in a syntactic framework (see Lakoff (1986, p.157f)). I show that under the assumption of nested &Ps, examples like this one nicely follow from the analysis that I propose in this work.

Conditional coordination, however, differs from the two other types of asymmetric coordination. As we can see, for example, from the fact that the two conjuncts in conditional conjunction constructions have their own subjects, this construction is derived by conjoining a different category. I argue that while scene-setting coordination and consecutive coordination are conjoined vPs, conditional coordination is coordination of TPs. I show that, under this assumption, the approach that conditional conjunction is also derived by means of movement to Spec&P can be combined with the semantic analysis of conditional conjunction put forward in Keshet (2013). The combination of these two approaches can derive the puzzling semantic properties of this construction and, in addition, accounts for the syntactic asymmetries between the conjuncts.

Finally, in the third part of this work, I discuss a number of theoretically relevant questions. I revisit the crucial assumption of this book, namely that if one assumes the coordination head to be a regular syntactic head, then we in fact expect movement of elements to the specifier of coordination heads. I show that, syntactically, there is nothing special about this movement step. It is a simple case of movement of an adjunct to a specifier higher up in the tree.

I also discuss another assumption that I (more or less) implicitly adopt throughout this work, namely that the Coordinate Structure Constraint is to be understood as a derivational principle. Cases of asymmetric extraction from Scene-Setting Coordination, for example, are uncontroversially violations of a representational version of the Coordinate Structure Constraint. But under a derivational version, they can be explained elegantly.

Furthermore, I sketch how a version of Müller's (2010,2011) theory of locality can be applied to derive why certain nonfinite adjuncts are transparent for extraction whereas others are not. Also, I show how the approach I put forward in this

work can be constrained in order to avoid overgeneration. Finally, I argue that the approach that I pursue should be taken as direct syntactic evidence for an asymmetric structure of coordination phrases.





## **Part I: Clause Chains, Medials, and Converbs**



# 1 Introducing Clause Chains

Clause chaining constructions are long sequences of a potentially infinite number of clauses within the same sentence. These constructions are attested in languages all over the world but they are especially widespread in East and Southeast Asia, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The individual clauses in clause chaining constructions are usually quite small consisting of a verb and its arguments. Since the arguments (especially subjects) are usually dropped if they can be inferred from discourse, many clauses consist of nothing but a verb. Morphologically, the major characteristic of clauses within a clause chain is that all verbs but the final one bear incomplete marking. That is, they are not inflected for categories usually associated with finiteness such as tense or mood. This is illustrated in (1).

- (1) [ra fisi-pie                   ] [fahare-râ   ] [yâpe?-yopa-pie                   ] ]  
[go arrive-SEQ.3PL.DS ] [rise-SEQ.SS ] [chase.away-3PL.DO-SEQ.3PL.DS ]  
[mafa-yenî?   behe-râ                   ] [wise-pie           ] [fiu?  
[stuff-3PL.POSS throw.away-SEQ.SS ] [flee-SEQ.3PL.DS ] [illicitly  
ro=fâre-mbin                   ] ].  
take=all-3PL.REM.PAST ]

'When they<sub>i</sub> (the foreigners) arrived, they<sub>j</sub> (the villagers) got up and chased them away. They<sub>i</sub> threw away their stuff and fled. Then, they<sub>j</sub> stole their stuff.'

Kâte (Trans-New-Guinea); Pilhofer (1933) as cited in Bickel (2011)

Example (1) consists of six distinct clauses, but only the verb of the final clause is marked for absolute tense. In the case above, it is marked for REMNANT PAST, indicating that the action described took place a while ago. The first five verbs can be marked for other categories such as relative tense but, crucially, they do not bear the full specification. Interestingly, however, even though these verbs are not marked for REMNANT PAST as well, they are obligatorily interpreted as if they were. The events they describe happened at the same time as the events described in the final clause.

Clauses within a clause chain are juxtaposed *asyndetically*, without coordinating or subordinating conjunctions. Instead, the verbs within a clause chain are marked for *switch-reference*, which is often taken to be a characteristic for these constructions.

There are two different types of clauses usually contained in a clause chaining construction: Medial clauses and converb clauses. They can be distinguished on the basis of the function they fulfill. The main function of converb clauses is to mark adverbial subordination.<sup>1</sup> This contrasts medial clauses whose main function is to provide additional foreground information. In other words, medial clauses “provide mainline information to move the discourse forward”.<sup>2</sup> These kinds of definitions are, of course, very vague, and often a definite decision of individual cases seems problematic. Hence, in this work, the definitions above are not taken to be the final criteria to decide whether a clause is a converb or a medial clause. Rather, these statements serve as a rough point of orientation. The decisive criteria, however, will be given in the following chapters. As the first part of this work will show, medial clauses differ from converb clauses with respect to certain syntactic tests. Accordingly, both *medial clause* and *converb clause* can be defined on the basis of their syntactic behavior rather than on the basis of their function. A converb clause is syntactically subordinate to another clause, whereas a medial clause is, according to various syntactic tests, in between subordination and coordination.

These definitions are clear and discrete and thus, the terms are much more concrete. However, one should be careful to transfer these terms to other works. In the literature about clause chains, medial constructions and converbs, these terms are often used in completely different ways. To a certain extent, these terms are also used interchangeably. The same construction often has different names in different languages. The major reasons for this confusion are different terminological traditions in different language families. The term *converb* was originally used for verb forms in Turkic and Mongolic languages, whereas the term *medial* comes from Papuan linguistics.

The term *clause chaining* refers to the whole construction which can include medial clauses and/or converb clauses. Thus, the term is neutral with respect to the question of clausal relations.

In the course of the following chapters, I discuss the phenomenon of clause chaining constructions in detail. I give an overview of the morphosyntactic properties of this construction from a typological, theory-neutral perspective. Then, I dis-

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<sup>1</sup> See Haspelmath (1995) for this definition.

<sup>2</sup> See Dooley (2010a) for a definition of the term *medial clause*. Note however, that Dooley uses the term *clause chaining construction* to refer to medial clause constructions without considering converb clauses at all. This, of course, contributes to the terminological confusion discussed below.

Discuss the implications of the previous findings for syntactic theories and propose a novel theory couched in the framework of the Minimalist Program.

More concretely, the discussion of clause chaining constructions will proceed as follows: In the next chapter, I will illustrate the syntactic behavior of medial clauses with respect to the standard tests of clausal relations. As was hinted at in the introduction above, the results will be inconclusive. Medial clauses are neither fully subordinate nor fully coordinate. Hence, they pose a challenge for syntactic theories. In Chapter 3, I will discuss how this challenge was tackled by previous analyses and why these analyses are problematic. In Chapter 4, I present my own analysis and show how it can derive the inconclusive syntactic properties of medial clauses. Chapter 5 shows how the analysis can handle long sequences of medial clauses. The empirical facts about the dependency relations in these long sequences will serve as further strong arguments for my theory. In Chapter 6, I discuss the syntactic properties of converb clauses and how the theory of Chapter 4 can account for their behavior as well. Chapter 7 is concerned with two case studies of clause chains in Tsakhur and Korean. In Chapter 8, I show how the present approach can be parametrized to account for the attested empirical variation we find with clause chaining constructions. Finally, Chapter 9 will briefly discuss what the present theory predicts for another topic that is closely related to the topic of clause chaining constructions, namely switch-reference marking.



## 2 Properties of Medial Constructions

In this chapter, I introduce the general morphosyntactic properties of medial constructions. Then, I will focus on the question whether these constructions are structurally coordinate or subordinate. For this purpose, I will apply the standard tests which distinguish coordinate and subordinate structures to medial constructions in different languages. These tests yield, as we will see, contradictory results and hence support the claim that clause chaining constructions are neither canonically subordinate nor canonically coordinate.

### 2.1 The Morphological Form of Medial Clauses

We have seen a prototypical example of a medial clause chain from Kâte above. A similar example from Tauya, another clause chaining language, is given below. The following sentence consists of nine distinct clauses and, again, only the final verb is fully specified (for indicative mood). In Tauya, all non-final verbs bear nothing but a marker glossed as *medial*, which also encodes the category of switch-reference. Again, the first eight verbs cannot be inflected for tense or mood but nevertheless they are all interpreted as if they bore the indicative mood marker located at the final verb.

- (1) [Nono imai-te-pa ] [mai mena-a-te ] [pai a<sup>2</sup>-ate-pa  
[child 3.SG.carry-get-MED.SS] [come.up stay-3.SG.-MED.DS] [pig hit-MED.SS  
] [nono wi nen-fe-pa ] [yene wawi wi nen-fe-pa ]  
] [child show 3.PL-TR-MED.SS] [sacred flute show 3.PL-TR-MED.SS]  
[mene-pa ] [pai a<sup>2</sup>-ate-ti tefe-pa ] [ʔe<sup>2</sup>eri-pa ] [toto-i<sup>2</sup>-a ]  
[stay-MED.SS] [pig hit-CONJ put-MED.SS] [dance-MED.SS] [cut-3.PL-IND]

'She carried the child and came up and stayed; and they killed the pigs and showed them to the children and they showed them the sacred flutes and stayed and they killed the pigs and put them and they danced and cut (the pigs).'

*Tauya*: MacDonald (1990, p.361)

The previous examples showed that medial clauses are (usually) inflected. Often, they are inflected for relative tense as in the Kâte example above (1). These markers encode whether the event described by the medial clause and the event in the following medial clause (or the final, finite verb) happen simultaneously or successively. In many languages, medial verbs are also inflected for person and num-