

Taking stock of Greek support-verb constructions: synchronic and diachronic variability in the documentary papyri

Abstract

Support-verb constructions are combinations of a verb and a noun that act as the predicate, as ‘made the suggestion’ in *I made the suggestion that she join*. They are frequent, variable and ambiguous across texts. E.g. *he took a picture* does not involve a physical frame or *he took heart* barbaric behaviour. Understood correctly, support-verb constructions inform about the speakers’ background (e.g. *US to take a shower* vs *Britain to have a shower*) or communicative settings (e.g. *written to make a contribution* vs *spoken to make a comment*). The chapter assesses the synchronic and diachronic variability of support-verb constructions in the documentary papyri, focusing on the early Byzantine period (4th to 8th c. AD). The synchronic perspective relates to their applicability as dependant on the communicative setting (register), text type (genre) and writer (style) along with their fit in the lexicon-grammar of the papyri. The diachronic perspective relates to the transition from an analytic syntagma (a noun-verb structure) through a non-analytic syntagma (a lexical unit) to a word, as dependant on the processes of grammaticalisation and lexicalisation. Focusing on support-verb constructions with *χρεία* ‘need’ and *φροντίδα* ‘concern’, the chapter shows that support-verb constructions form a heterogenous group of constructions regarding their synchronic distribution and diachronic developments.

Keywords: support-verb construction, variability, sociolinguistics, lexicalisation, grammaticalisation

1 Introduction: Support-verb constructions

Support-verb constructions (SVCs henceforth) are combinations of a verb and a noun that act as the predicate, as ‘made the suggestion’ in *I made the suggestion that she join*. They are frequent, variable and ambiguous across texts, thus creating difficulties for translation and analysis (applications).

For example, *he took a picture* does not involve a physical frame (i.e. *he picked up a picture frame from the mantel*) or *he took heart* barbaric behaviour (i.e. *he ripped the blood-pumping organ out of someone’s chest*). Rather, the former refers to photographing and the latter to being courageous. Misunderstanding the former is non-critical, unlike misunderstanding the latter. In less studied or newly discovered texts, we lack contextual knowledge resolving such ambiguity. Understood correctly, SVCs can inform about the speaker background (e.g. concerning dialect, compare US *to take a shower* vs Britain *to have a shower*) or communicative settings (e.g. *to make a contribution* replaces *spoken to make a comment* in writing).

SVCs trouble corpus builders and lexicographers not only due to their ambiguity but also due to their discontinuous structure (e.g. *she made a very interesting suggestion*) and their variability (i.e. are ‘a’ or ‘very interesting’ compulsory?). Their discontinuous structure is problematic in languages such as English and French with syntax-driven word-order patterns (e.g. Pasquer et al. 2018; Nagy, Vincze & Farkas 2013), but even more so in languages like Greek with information-structure-driven word-order patterns (e.g. Dik 1995). For example, in (1) from classical Attic oratory, the noun of the SVC is fronted.

(1) Antiphon 5.73 **δίκην** μὲν γὰρ εἰκός ἐστι **διδόναι** τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας, ἐλεεῖσθαι δὲ τοὺς ἀδίκως κινδυνεύοντας.

‘For it is right that those who wrong **are paying the price for their actions**, but those who are unjustly accused are pardoned.’¹

In (1), fronting is for reasons of contrastive focus (μὲν – δέ). Multiple components that do not belong to the SVC intervene between the predicative noun and the support verb in what we call the SVC field.

¹ All the translations are my own. The text is quoted as in the editions, i.e. words that the original editors did not consider correct or correctly inflected are unaccentuated. While these are not considered incorrect here, accentuation has not been added. This pertains especially to accusative objects with support-verb constructions.

SVCs allow for lexical and morphosyntactic modification. Lexically, the support verb can be interchanged e.g. for reasons of aspect (e.g. terminative *he **lost** faith* vs stative *he **had** faith*) (Vivès 1984) or voice (e.g. *he **had** mercy on them* active vs recipient-passive *they **received** mercy*) (Keenan & Dryer 2007: 337–338). Morpho-syntactically, the support verb can be modified by adverbial phrases and the predicative noun by determiner phrases and attributive phrases (e.g. *he really **lost** faith* vs *I left **a lasting** impression*) (Didakowski & Radtke 2020). However, SVCs are not freely variable nor fully productive (e.g. *I gave / left / had an impression* but not *?I **took** an impression* or *?he took **great** heart*). Furthermore, they mostly retain the morpho-syntactic shape of a verb-object structure, thus not allowing for direct objects. Entities functioning as the object semantically are morpho-syntactically marked as adverbial or attributive (e.g. *he took a photograph **of** the tree*). SVCs form a heterogeneous group of structures with some more variable and/or productive than others (Kamber 2008).

SVCs have received limited scholarly interest in classical literary Greek (Jiménez López 2016; Marini 2010; Pompei 2006; Jiménez López 2021) and even less in post-classical non-literary Greek (Zilliacus 1956; Fendel 2021; Jiménez López 2017), primarily due to issues surrounding data collection (e.g. Sag et al. 2002; Savary et al. 2018). This chapter assesses the synchronic and diachronic variability of SVCs in the documentary papyri, focusing on the early Byzantine period (4th to 8th c. AD). Section 2 introduces the mechanisms of synchronic and diachronic variation affecting SVCs. Section 3 considers synchronic variants from a sociolinguistic perspective. Section 4 considers diachronic variation at the lexical and morpho-syntactic levels. Section 5 summarises the results and offers conclusions.

2 Variability two-faced: synchrony and diachrony

The basic idea of the sociolinguistic framework is that language users' social and linguistic realities are interdependent. Their language choices are influenced by and modelled towards the communicative setting, including other language users.

Situation-related language varieties are called lects. A dialect is a variety used by a group of people that share a geographical setting; a sociolect is a variety used by a group of people that share a social setting; an idiolect is an individual's personal language choices. SVCs vary by lect. For example, BE *to have a shower* would become AE *to take a shower* (Leech 2009); spoken *to make a comment* would become written *to make a contribution* (Özbay 2020); instead of standard *to take a step*, *to make a step* can appear, especially in second-language learner's output (possibly modelled on their first language) (Langer 2004).

Sociolectally conditioned variants can be viewed from the perspective of register. Register-related language choices are made due to the communicative setting (Biber & Conrad 2009: 6). These choices are pervasive throughout an interaction, such as the choice of formal vs informal forms of address in German (*du/Sie*) or French (*tu/vous*). In written exchanges, such as the documentary papyri, register-related language choices are accompanied and/or framed by genre- and style-related language choices. The latter are idiolectal. The former are culturally determined norms (Biber & Conrad 2009: 19). Relevant features usually appear at the beginning and end of a text, such as *Dear X* and *Best wishes* in letters.

Idiolectal variants can be intended or unintended, the former we call markers, i.e. features the language user is aware of and can manipulate, the latter we call indicators, i.e. features the language user is unaware of and cannot manipulate (Eckert 2008: 463). If an indicator feature has negative connotations in a communicative setting, it is a stereotype. SVCs seem to appear in all three categories, depending on their state of grammaticalisation, lexicalisation and pragmaticalisation.

Grammaticalisation, lexicalisation and pragmaticalisation are diachronic processes. Grammaticalisation is the process by which an item moves from the lexical to the grammatical sphere (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 52–64), e.g. English *will* is a future marker in modern English but derived from a verb of volition. Lexicalisation is the process by which a lexical unit acquires a specific, non-compositional meaning (Lipka 1981: 120), e.g. *to take heart* has nothing to do with violence. Pragmaticalisation is the process by which an item adopts discourse functions thus acting outside the sentence grammar (Patard 2014), e.g. English *you know* acts as an emphasiser (Erman 2001: 1356).

SVCs seem to undergo all three processes in Greek. Grammaticalisation is apparent from their acceptance of an inanimate subject (Sanroman Vilas 2009) and a direct object (Rosén 2020; Creissels 2016). Neither is regularly permissible. The grammaticalized and the non-grammaticalised structures co-exist for while. E.g. δύναμις ἔχω ‘to have power’ / ‘to be able to’ appears with an inanimate subject already in Pl. R. 346a3, Th. 2.48.3, Isoc. 2.12 and with an infinitival object in Th. 5.44.1. However, the non-grammaticalised pattern is still found in CPR 7.40 ll. 3–7 (Hermopolites, AD 492–493, contract) ἰσχὺν καὶ δύναμιν ἔχοντος ‘to have strength and power’, here clarified by the co-ordinated second noun. An example of a lexicalised SVC is δίκην δίδωμι ‘to get punished / to pay the price for one’s actions’, in which the contribution of each component is no longer clearly demarcated and which forms a unique form-function pairing. δίκην δίδωμι survives into the papyri e.g. in P.Berl.Frisk. 4, ll. 8–11 (unknown, AD 301–500, petition). Pragmaticalisation seems to affect βοηθείας τυγχάνω ‘to

receive help’, which is used as the closing of Ptolemaic petitions, e.g. SB.20.14708, ll. 5–8 (Theadelphia, 151–150 BC, petition). While the writer is requesting help, the phrase appears to have become the default ending of a petition. A modern example of a pragmatized SVC would be *Pay attention!* used to make people aware of danger.

Once SVCs lose their syntagma character due to any or all of the above processes, they can univerbate (Rosén 2020; Creissels 2016), e.g. νόμον τίθημι to νομοθετέω ‘to legislate’ (Schutzzeichel 2014). However, the non-univerbated and the univerbated options often co-exist for a while, e.g. BGU.1.4 (Arsinoites, AD 177–178, petition), ll. 9–15 ἐλο[γ]οποιούμην next to λόγον πεποιήται ‘to report’. This is because SVCs offer options of adjustment that simplex verbs do not due to their variability and options of linking parts of phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs which simplex verbs do not due to their discontinuity (Storrer 2009). Univerbation can free up the direct-object slot, e.g. Pl.R.456b12 ἐνομοθετοῦμεν with a direct object next to ἐτίθεμεν τὸν νόμον without one ‘to legislate’ or German *gewährleisten* ‘to guarantee’.

3 Synchronic variability: lects and variants

In the documentary papyri, SVCs appear across genres, registers and lects. We can distinguish broadly between a lower register that is closer to colloquial language usage (e.g. Koch & Oesterreicher 1986) and a higher register that is closer to official contexts (Heylighen & Dewaele 1999; Palme 2009: 361–363). In the data, personal letters represent the lower register; contracts, wills, petitions, and the like represent the higher register.² These text types are non-literary and the senders and/or writers usually have an interest in being known. Thus, we expect idiolectal variation. Finally, there may have been an Egyptian Greek variety, a dialect. Dialectally conditioned SVCs exist, e.g. χάριν ὁμολογέω (Fendel 2021). Below, the focus is however on socially conditioned variation.

Genre markers in lower registers include greeting formulae, such as P.Lond.6.1916 (Herakleopolites, AD 330–340; letter), ll. 8–14 τὴν προσ[κύνησιν ὑμῶν] ποιούμενοι ‘greeting you’ and P.Oxy. 59.3997 (Oxyrhynchos, AD 201–400; letter), ll. 8–14 προσκύνημα ποιέω ‘to greet’. Genre markers in higher registers include expressions of origin, e.g. P.Grenf.2.78 (Kysis, AD 307–308, petition), l. 15 τὴν ὀρμὴν ποιούμενος ‘coming from’ (Zilliacus 1956), along with standardised formulae in wills, e.g. P.Wisc.1.13, l. 13 (Oxyrhynchos, AD 101–125,

² The distinction is adopted from Palme (2009: 361–363), who considers links to the government the distinguishing criterion. In personal letters, the government is neither illocutor nor onlooker.

will) ἐφ' ὄν μὲν περιέμι χρόνον ἔχειν με τὴν τῶν ἰδίων ἐξουσίαν, ὃ ἐὰν βούλωμαι, ἐπιτελεῖν καὶ μεταδιατίθεσθαι ‘for whom I am here now, such that I have the power over the personal belongings, whatever I want, to enforce and arrange’, and later contracts, e.g. P.Dubl.32, l. 10 (Arsinoiton Polis, AD 512–513, contract) ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν διοικεῖν / χρᾶσθαι καὶ οἰκονομεῖν ‘to have the power to farm/use and to manage’.³ The featuring of SVCs in these culturally grown formulae shows that they have been an integral part of the language for some time. Formulaic language often preserves older patterns vis-à-vis colloquial usage (Wood 2015: 35–51).

SVCs outside of genre-marking formulae appear regularly in the documentary papyri. The families around the predicative nouns φροντίς (accusative φροντίδα) ‘concern’ and χρεία (accusative χρείαν) ‘need’ are shown in Tables (2) and (3). Both combine primarily with the ποιέομαι / ποιέω ‘to do’⁴ and ἔχω ‘to have’. The data collection is based on the data of the Papyrus Navigator (papy.info) (September 2022), which was queried for the accusative case of each noun. Literary and excessively fragmentary passages were discarded for homogeneity and robustness of the data.

(2) SVCs with φροντίδα

	ποιέομαι / ποιέω ‘to do’	ἔχω ‘to have’	τίθημι ‘to put’	Verb of realisation
300 BC – AD 0	1 (H = 1 – 100%)	–	–	–
AD 1– AD 399	22 (H = 15 – 68%)	6 (H = 4 – 66%)	–	6
AD 400 – AD 700	6 (H = 4 – 66%)	2 (H = 1 – 50%)	2 (H = 2 – 100 %)	6
Total	29	8	2	12

* H = high register

(3) SVCs with χρεία

³ An anonymous reviewer raised the question of the exact semantic difference between the support-verb-construction and simplex-verb options. Regular differences between the two options, if they co-exist like here, would be the duration of the event described (Wittenberg & Levy 2017) and the constellation of event participants (Wittenberg & Snedeker 2014).

⁴ In the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, ‘transitivity alternations without voice change’ increase (Lavidas 2009: 118).

	ἔχω ‘to have’	ποιέω/ποιέομαι ‘to do’	παρέχομαι ‘to give’	Verb of realisation
300 BC – AD 0	112 (H = 10 – 9%)	–	7 (H = 2 – 29%)	4
AD 1– AD 399	166 (H = 15 – 9 %)	1 (H = 0 – 0%)	1 (H = 1 – 100%)	20
AD 400 – AD 700	37 (H = 4 – 11%)	15 (H = 10 – 66%)	–	6
Total	315	16	8	30

*H = high register

Tables (2) and (3) show that the two select nouns prefer one of the two support verbs, which does not change diachronically. The respective other support verb joins the family in the Roman period and gains in frequency in the early Byzantine period, yet never equalling the prevalent support verb. This behaviour is linked to lexical affinity existing between the support verb and the noun, which prevents full productiveness of the pattern.

What changes diachronically, however, is the register-applicability of the SVCs. The percentages of higher-register use calculated in tables (2) and (3) show that while φροντίδα ποιέω / ποιέομαι spreads from the higher into the lower registers, χρείαν ἔχω spreads from the lower into the higher registers. Both developments, top-down and bottom-up changes, are commonly attested (Hall & Hornsby 2015). This situation shows that SVCs are not as a pattern marked for a specific register but must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Tables (2) and (3) also include verbs of realisation. These are ‘des verbes collocationnels qui ont le comportement syntaxique des V_{supp} , mais qui, à la différence de ceux-ci, sont sémantiquement pleins’ (Mel’čuk 2004: 208), e.g. French *infliger* (official) or *filer* (colloquial) *une amende* instead of *donner une amende* ‘to give a fine’. Verbs of realisation can replace support verbs across registers. In the papyri, we find e.g. P.Vind.Worp. 14, ll. 6–8 ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ φροντίδα ἐνδείξασθαι ‘to care and show concern’ instead of ποιέομαι, SB.5.8029, ll. 9–11 χρείαν ἐκτελέσαι ‘to fulfil a need’ instead of ποιέομαι and P. Kell. 1.65, ll. 10–14 πληρώσω σοι τὴν χάριν ‘I will thank you’ instead of ἀποδίδωμι. Many verbs of realisation seem to be idiolectal as they are one-offs in the data.

The SVCs assessed differ as regards their relationship with their respective simplex verb, if one exists. They fall into Aerts' three categories of periphrasis.⁵ Suppletive periphrasis means that a multi-word unit comes to 'replace a non-, or no longer extant, monolectic form', e.g. γεγραμμένοι εἰσίν for γεγράφται (Aerts 1965: 3). This seems to be the case for χρείαν ἔχω 'to have need', replacing earlier δέομαι (+ genitive), which tends towards a meaning 'to beg / to ask' in the papyri. Substitute periphrasis means that a multi-word unit 'replaces a monolectic form without any, or scarcely any distinguishable change in meaning', e.g. γεγραμμένον ἦν for ἐγγράπτο (Aerts 1965: 3). This seems to pertain to προσκύνημα / προσκύνησιν ποιέομαι in greeting sections, as the simplex verbs προσαγορεύω and ἀσπάζομαι usually appear, προσκυνέω being rare by the early Byzantine period (Fendel 2022).⁶ Expressive periphrasis refers to the situation when the 'periphrasis appears to be used with a special purport', e.g. S. OT 747 δεινῶς ἀθυμῶ μὴ βλέπων ὁ μάντις ἦ 'I am terribly afraid that the seer can indeed see' (Aerts 1965: 3). This seems to apply to verbs of realisation when replacing support verbs.⁷ It shows that SVCs in Greek form far from a homogenous group of structures.

4 Diachronic variability: reanalysis and univerbation

SVCs are phrasal expressions in the predicate slot. While syntagmatic to begin with, the syntagma character can gradually fade with common co-occurrence, i.e. collocational strength of the syntagm (Hollós 2010), facilitating developments such as grammaticalisation and/or lexicalisation. While losing analyticity, the structure in question usually shows (i) enhanced contiguity, (ii) an increasingly fixed word order, and (iii) signs of acting as a word rather than a syntactic structure (Lehmann 2020: 232–235).

We observe these aspects with χρείαν ἔχω⁸ in the papyri in the form of (i) constraints placed on the number and type of items permissible in the SVC field, (ii) an increasingly fixed word order favouring the order noun-verb, and (iii) direct objects in the accusative case,

⁵ Haspelmath (2000), Ledgeway and Vincent (2022), and Smith (2022) consider periphrasis more in-depth from the perspective of the morphological paradigm and its limits.

⁶ An anonymous reviewer pointed out the differing usage of the προσκύνημα formula in earlier periods. By the later Roman and early Byzantine periods, προσκυνέω seems to have lost its earlier usage pattern (e.g. Nachtergaele 2016: 154–158) and seems to have become an infrequent alternative to other verbs of greeting. In the early Byzantine archive of Dioscoros of Aphrodito, co-ordination with a verb of greeting appears regularly, e.g. P. Cair. Masp. 1.67064, ll. 11–12 (6th c. AD) and P. Cair. Masp. 1.67068, ll. 1 (6th c. AD).

⁷ Verbs of realisation can supply nuances that support verbs cannot supply, e.g. terminative and inchoative structures with παύομαι and ἄρχομαι respectively.

⁸ χρείαν ἔχω is singled out because (i) it is highly frequent in the documentary papyri, (ii) it does not have an obvious simplex counterpart, and (iii) it changes meaning between the classical and postclassical periods (classical 'to have a use / an application', e.g. Arist. Pol. 1257a37).

indicating that the predicative noun has vacated the object slot. Tables (4) to (6) summarise the data for *χρείαν ἔχω* in the papyri, split by period of time.

Only unambiguous instances of direct objects are considered. Undeclared terminology (e.g. measures, titles, and names of months), accusatives due to relative attraction (e.g. P.Zen.Pestm.50, ll. 3–5 (257–256 BC)), seeming datives and accusatives due to misspellings (esp. weak final -n and -s, e.g. P.Cair.Isid.135v, ll. 4–6 (AD 301–325)), pronominal dative/accusative forms instead of genitives (e.g. P.Mich.8.516, ll. 4–9 (AD 276–300)), undeclared numerals (e.g. P.Petr.Kleon.60, l. 10 (260–249 BC), P.Neph.4, ll. 33–34 (AD 301–400), P.Oxy.16.1837, ll. 4–5 (AD 501–525)), and indefinite *τι*, which can be read adverbially (e.g. O.Claud.2.408, ll. 14–16 (AD 101–150), P.Iand.6.103, l. 11 (AD 501–600)) are not considered (Fendel 2022: Ch. 4).

(4) Ptolemaic period (300 BC – AD 0)

<i>χρείαν ἔχω</i>	SVC =	SVC = 0	SVC = 1	SVC = 2
	n/a			
Items	–	–	PRN (GEN), ADJ, VP, PRT	DP, PRN (GEN), (OBJ)
Word order	–	NV	NV	NV, VN (1)
Total	–	96 86%	13 12%	3 2%
Average number of items in the SVC field: 0.17				
Direct objects: P.Lond.7.2054 (letter, 275–226 BC, unknown), ll. 4–11 <i>χρείαν ἔχεις χαλικά</i> εἰς τὰ κατὰ Μέμφιν ἔργα ‘you need gravel for the (building) works in Memphis’				

*for abbreviations, please see Appendix

In the Ptolemaic period, Table (4), word-order variation vis-à-vis the preferred order of noun-verb appears once (P.Cair.Zen.2.59235 ll. 7–8)⁹, yet the passage is damaged and *χρείαν* is an editorial addition. In the only instance in which a nominal object seems to appear in the SVC field (P.Col.3.9 ll. 6–7)¹⁰, bespoke object is an editorial addition. In the only instance in which a verb phrase intervenes, the verb is *τυγχάνω* which acts as a qualifier to the participle *ἔχων* of

⁹ P.Cair.Zen.2.59235, ll. 7–8 *γέγραφεν δὲ Τι]μόθεος ἔχειν τινὸς[ς] χρείαν.*

¹⁰ P.Col.3.9, ll. 6–7 *ἐάν τινά σου χρει[αν τὰ πράγμα]τα ἔχητι συναντιλάβητι (...)* ‘if you need the objects, you shall receive (them)’

the SVC (PSI.4.341 ll. 2–3, letter).¹¹ It thus appears that *χρείαν ἔχω* in the Ptolemaic data shows a clear and almost exclusive preference for the noun-verb ordering, allows for very few items in the SVC field, and imposes constraints on the type of items, that is function words (e.g. particles) and extensions of the predicative noun (e.g. determiner phrases).

(5) Roman period (AD 1 – 399)

<i>χρείαν ἔχω</i>	SVC =	SVC =	SVC = 1	SVC = 2	SVC = 5
	n/a	0			
Items	–	–	PRN(GEN), NEG, PRN (DAT), PRN (ACC), PRT, VP	PRN(GEN), NEG, ATT (GEN), DP, PRT	PRT, PRN(GEN), ADV
Word order	–	NV, VN (3)	NV	NV	NV
Total	–	128 77%	31 19%	6 4%	1 0%

Average number of items in the SVC field: 0.29 (without outlier: 0.26)

Direct objects:

P.Alex.Inv.89 (letter, AD 1–400, unknown), l. 1 *ἐὰν χρίαν ἔχῃς **χάρτου** ἐπὶ το. . . .* ‘if you need paper for ...’

P.Oxy.14.1683 (letter, AD 376–400, Oxyrhynchos), ll. 17–18 *χρίαν **αὐτα** <ἔχει> ὁ υἱός μου* ‘my son needs them’

P.Euphrates.16 (letter, AD 239, Syria Coele), ll. 5–7 *ἐὰν χρείαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ποιμένες **κερμα*** ‘if the herdsmen require a coin (sc. payment)’

P.Rein.2.117 (letter, AD 276–300, unknown), ll. 5–7 *ἐὰν χρείαν ἔχῃς **κερμα*** ‘if you require a coin (sc. payment)’

*for abbreviations, please see Appendix

In the Roman period, Table (5), word-order variation is limited, yet appears three times with no items in the SVC field (Chr.Mitt.39, ll. 34–35 (*χρείαν* editorial addition), Chr.Wilck.202 (letter), ll. 28–33, P.Lond.2.356 (letter), ll. 3–10). Thus, word-order variation does not seem to be permissible anymore without contiguity of the SVC. In the only instance in which an item

¹¹ PSI.4.341, ll. 2–3 *εἰ οὖν δοκεῖ σοι καὶ χρείαν **τυγχάνεις** ἔχων, ἔτοιμοί ἐσμεν (...)* ‘if it seems right to you and you happen to have a need, we are ready to (...)’.

that is neither a function word nor an extension of the predicative noun appears in the SVC field, the item is a superordinate verb with the SVC filling its infinitive slot (BGU.2.450 (letter), ll. 17–20 *περὶ τῶν λίνων, ὧν χρεῖαν ἔλεγεσ ἔχειν* ‘concerning the linen which you say to need’). There is one outlier in this period, SB.28.17215 (letter, AD 151–250, Arsinoites), ll. 6–9 *χρεῖαν γὰρ αὐτῶν εἰς τὰς ἀποδημίας ἔχω* ‘for I need them for my travels’. The particle *γὰρ* and the pronominal objective genitive *αὐτῶν* are in their fixed positions (being enclitic); the adverbial phrase *εἰς τὰς ἀποδημίας* appears in the SVC field. The structure can be remedied by considering the adverbial phrase, which is an adjunct rather than an argument, parenthetical and thus outside the sentence grammar (Schneider 2007; Koev 2022: 18).¹² Parenthetical expressions could always intervene even in highly fused SVCs (e.g. classical Is. 7.4 *ποιήσομαι δ’ ὡς ἂν κἀγὼ δύνωμαι διὰ βραχυτάτων* τοὺς λόγους (...)) ‘I will report – as briefly as I possibly can – (...)’ because they are outside the sentence grammar. Direct objects become more common in the Roman vis-à-vis the Ptolemaic period. It thus appears that *χρεῖαν ἔχω* in the Roman data maintains the clear and almost exclusive preference for the noun-verb ordering, allows for very few items in the SVC field and imposes constraints on the type of items, that is function words and extensions of the predicative noun. The increase in the number of direct objects points to increasing fusion of the SVC, thus freeing up the direct-object slot.

(6) Early Byzantine period (AD 400–700)

<i>χρεῖαν ἔχω</i>	SVC = n/a	SVC = 0	SVC = 1	SVC = 2
Items	–	–	PRN(GEN), PRT	PRN(GEN), PRT, DP, ATT
Word order	–	NV	NV	NV
Total	–	26 72%	8 22%	2 6%
Average number of items in the SVC field: 0.32				
Direct objects: P.Oxy.16.1929 (letter, AD 501–550, Oxyrhynchos), ll. 1–2 <i>χρεῖαν ἔχομεν τὰ πλοῖα</i> ‘we need ships’				

¹² Parentheticals are have their own illocutionary force (Koev 2022: 18), yet are pragmatically dependent (Kaltenböck 2019: 187–189). A type of parenthetical that appears at times in the support-verb-construction field are non-restrictive relative clauses. The hypothesis here is that *εἰς τὰς ἀποδημίας* acts similarly to a non-restrictive relative clause.

SB.16.12475 (letter, AD 501–700, unknown), ll. 11–13 ἐὰν χρείαν ἔχεις ἀποκρισιν τῶν ἐνταῦθα ‘if you need an answer regarding those over there’

*for abbreviations, please see Appendix

In the Early Byzantine period, Table (6), word-order variation has disappeared and items in the SVC field are limited to function words and extensions of the predicative noun. Direct objects appear relatively more frequently (2% of instances in the Roman period vis-à-vis 6% of instances in the early Byzantine period).

Overall, the following tendencies can be observed regarding the development of χρείαν ἔχω in the papyri: Firstly, SVC fields are small with a clear preference for contiguity; in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, the occasional verb phrase or argument (object) appears in the SVC field, whereas in the early Byzantine period only function words with a forced word order and extensions of the predicative noun appear. Secondly, occasional word-order variation is still visible in the Roman period, but disappears in the early Byzantine period, the order noun-verb becomes the standard. Thirdly, unambiguous instances of direct objects are rare throughout in the papyri, a slight increase is seen over time (below 1% of instances in the Ptolemaic period, 2% of instances in the Roman period, 6% of instances in the Early Byzantine period). These objects, both nominal and pronominal, always appear outside the SVC. Finally, outlier SVC fields, word-order patterns and direct objects are limited to the lower registers, thus potentially showcasing either writers taking liberties (e.g. in the form of parentheticals) or a development of a pattern in the lower registers (e.g. objects), whereas the classical pattern (i.e. the objective genitive) kept prevailing in the higher registers. The development of χρείαν ἔχω does not eventually lead to univerbation, but χρείαν ἔχω remains at the point of e.g. modern English *to take heart*, i.e. lexicalised and morpho-syntactically inflexible.

Conversely, developments tending towards tighter fusion of the support verb and the predicative noun can also be driven by grammaticalisation, e.g. the modern French verb formative *-fier* (from Latin *-ificare*) (e.g. Marini 2018). Unlike in lexicalising SVCs, a small number of univerbates that offer the option of reanalysing the former support verb as a suffix are sufficient to set this process in motion. This resembles the development of the modern French adverb formative *-ment* (from Latin *mens*, ablative *mente*) described by Booij (2014: 173). Over time, the source and outcome of the process are no longer identifiable with each other, which results in modern French in the co-existence of the suffix and *faire* ‘to do’ SVCs (Rainer & Buridant 2015: 1980; Rosén 2020: 266–267). Schutzeichel (2014: 136–138) observes a comparable incipient development with τίθημι ‘to put’ in Homeric Greek, rendering

e.g. νομοθετέω ‘to legislate’ and νουθετέω ‘to warn, advise’. *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* statistics indicate that these formations gain in frequency in the post-classical and medieval periods. ὀνοματοθετέω is derived from a highly flexible classical SVC but attested as one word from the early Byzantine period.

In this scenario, the low degree of lexical affinity between the noun and the verb in many ποιέομαι ‘to do’ SVCs is unproblematic, as the few instances that show strong lexical affinity (e.g. classical λόγον ποιέομαι ‘to report’, σπονδᾶς ποιέομαι ‘to make a truce’, πόλεμον ποιέομαι ‘to battle’) suffice to set the process in motion (λόγοποιέομαι and πολεμοποιέομαι are classical, σπονδοποιέομαι is attested from Ptolemaic times). The reanalysis of the former unverbated support verb ‘to do’ into a suffix would explain the proliferation of relevant verbs in later centuries, e.g. μαρτυροποιέομαι (1st c. AD), δυναμοποιέομαι (9th to 14th c. AD), πραγματοποιέομαι (13th c. AD), ἐργοποιέω (14th c. AD), τροποποιέω (16th to 18th c. AD). None of these form strong collocates as SVCs. None of them appear frequently, thus indicating a productive suffix rather than a phenomenon driven by lexical affinity.¹³

5 Summary and conclusion

SVCs are variable, ambiguous and discontinuous verb phrases consisting of a verb and a noun, as in ‘to make a suggestion’. The chapter assessed their lexical, morpho-syntactic and pragmatic variability in the documentary papyri from the synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

The synchronic perspective focused on the applicability of SVCs as dependant on the communicative setting (register), text type (genre) and writer (style) along with their fit in the lexicon-grammar of the Greek papyri. SVCs are part of genre-specific formulaic language, e.g. προσκύνησιν ποιέομαι in letters and ἐξουσίαν ἔχω in wills/contracts. Some SVCs are favoured in one or the other register, e.g. χρείαν ἔχω in the lower registers but φροντίδα ποιέομαι in the higher registers. While the former gradually spreads into the higher registers and the latter into the lower registers, these are tendencies rather than shifts. SVCs also lend themselves, to an extent, to idiolectal manipulation, e.g. ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ φροντίδα ἐνδείξασθαι instead of ποιέομαι. These so-called verbs of realisation are semantically heavier than support verbs. Thus, SVCs supply much information about the communicative setting and the speaker

¹³ This analysis differs from Pompei’s (2006) hypothesis of noun incorporation. The only shared example is λόγον ποιέομαι / λογοποιέομαι. Noun incorporation suggests that the verb is the semantic head and the noun has modifying function. Conversely, in SVCs, the noun is the semantic head, with the verb having modifying function (Nagy et al. 2013: 329).

background. As regards the fit into the system synchronically, Aerts' three categories of periphrasis seem to apply to SVCs: *χρείαν ἔχω* is suppletive, *προσκύνησιν ποιέομαι* is substitutive, and verbs of realisation are expressive. This reflects how heterogeneous a group of constructions SVCs are, not just structurally but also in their synchronic distribution and diachronic potential.

The diachronic perspective focused on the transition from an analytic syntagma (a noun-verb structure) through a non-analytic syntagma (a lexical unit) to one word, as dependant on the processes of grammaticalisation and lexicalisation. As SVCs lose their syntagma character, they show (i) increasing contiguity, (ii) an increasingly fixed word order, favouring the order noun-verb, and (iii) the freeing up of the direct-object slot, formerly filled by the predicative noun. This is visible for *χρείαν ἔχω*, which by the early Byzantine period is almost always contiguous, standardises the order noun-verb and allows for nominal direct objects. *χρείαν ἔχω* never univerbates in the papyri but seems to stay at the stage of e.g. English *to take heart*. Conversely, univerbates with *ποιέομαι* increase over time. By the early medieval period, it seems that *ποιέομαι* had been reinterpreted as a suffix and could thus freely combine with items. The preceding development of reanalysis based on a few univerbated SVCs may be similar to that observed for modern French *-ment* (from Latin *mente*) and seems to be based on grammaticalisation rather than lexicalisation. SVCs while stable as a pattern throughout the history of Greek are highly variable in form when it comes to the individual SVC.

In conclusion, the chapter showed that SVCs form a heterogeneous group of constructions regarding their synchronic and diachronic behaviours. Each SVC must be assessed individually for its degree of ambiguity, variability and contiguity. While we can establish families of SVCs around predicative nouns, see Sections 3 and 4, these are not predictable from the range of support verbs available (cf. Finkbeiner 2008: 401–404; Kamber 2008). SVCs are lexically speaking semi-productive, that is 'there is a limited or occasional creativity, as when a PREFIX such as *un-* is sometimes, but not universally, applied to words to form their opposites, e.g. *happy => unhappy* but not *sad => *unsad*' (Crystal 2008: 390). This is why *to take an impression* is uncommon in modern English or *ἐξουσίαν λαμβάνω* in classical and post-classical Greek.

Abbreviations:

ADJ adjective

ADV adverbial phrase

ATT	attributive phrase
DP	determiner phrase
H	High register
NEG	negative
NV	noun-verb order
OBJ	object
PRN	pronoun
PRT	particle
SVC	support-verb construction
VN	verb-noun order
VP	verb phrase

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