

## 2. Constituent order in the clause

A basic clause consists of a series of nominal phrases followed by a verb phrase or predicate complement; see Figure 2.1. The nominal phrases are not marked for case. (The choice of definite article usually depends on the shape or position of the referent; see chapter 21.) Two simple examples with finite verbs are given in (1-2).

- |     |                                      |                   |                        |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| (1) | Nominal Phrase                       | Nominal Phrase    | Verb Phrase            |
|     | <b>Haxz cop</b>                      | <b>zixcám com</b> | <b>haptco iyoohit.</b> |
|     | dog the.VT                           | fish the.HZ       | already 3:3-DT-eat     |
|     | ‘El perro ya comió el pescado.’      |                   |                        |
|     | <i>The dog already ate the fish.</i> |                   |                        |
| (2) | <b>Zixcám com</b>                    | <b>haxz cop</b>   | <b>iyooho.</b>         |
|     | fish the.HZ                          | dog the.VT        | 3:3-DT-see             |
|     | ‘El pez vio el perro.’               |                   |                        |
|     | <i>The fish saw the dog.</i>         |                   |                        |

The nominals are often not overt, as illustrated in (3) and discussed in detail in chapter 4. This is an important point since the presentation of information is usually structured so that multiple nominals do not typically co-occur in a sentence in normal discourse.

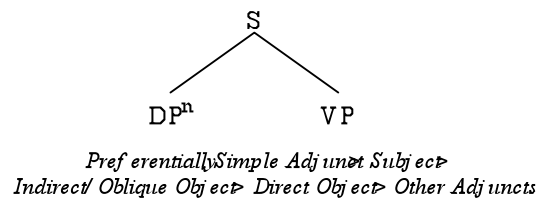
- |     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| (3) | <b>Haptco iyoohit.</b>         |
|     | already 3:3-DT-eat             |
|     | ‘Ya lo/la comió.’              |
|     | <i>S/he/it already ate it.</i> |

The verb may occur with zero, one, two or three arguments (see chapter 18 as well as the sections that follow in this chapter) and adjuncts (see §2.7). The simple transitive verb in (1) and (3) expects a subject that is an agent and a direct object that is a patient.

The basic clause may also have predicate nominal phrase with a modal element (see §10.1) instead of a typical verb phrase, as shown in (4). Of course, the subject of such a clause may also

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Figure 2.1: Basic clause structure



be non-overt, as in (5).

- (4) **Ac**            **quij**        **xepe ziic**        **iha.**  
 canvasback the.CM sea bird DCL  
 ‘El pato coacoxtle es una ave marina.’  
*The canvasback is a sea bird.* (ES2007, ac)
- (5) **¿Xepe ziic**    **-ya?**  
 sea bird QM  
 ‘¿Es una ave marina?’  
*Is it a sea bird?*

The order of constituents in the clause is the same in simple independent sentences, dependent clauses and embedded clauses, as discussed in §§2.1-2.5 of this chapter. Nominal phrases may appear in other positions than the basic ones indicated in Figure 2.1. Simple variations are discussed briefly in §2.6. Some of these alternate positions are best viewed as relating to the sentence rather than to the clause; they are discussed in §3.10 and §3.12.

The diagram in Figure 2.1 is obviously much simpler than trees that are commonly drawn for clauses in other languages. Perhaps compelling motivation exists in Seri for a more articulated structure, including a verb phrase that includes at least the direct object, but such motivation has not been found yet.<sup>1</sup>

Discussion of the verb phrase itself is reserved for chapter 5. The verb phrase essentially includes the verb and some tightly associated adverbs and nominals including the reflexive pronouns.

## 2.1 Subjects

In the absence of a simple adjunct (see §2.7.1), basic word order places an overt subject first in the clause. It therefore precedes the verb phrase, as in (6)-(8), or the predicate nominal, as in (4). This word order is the same whether the sentence is a statement or a yes-no question, as in (9).<sup>2</sup>

- (6) **Maal**        **quih**        **yaanpx.**  
 2P-spouse the.FL DT-go.home  
 ‘Tu esposo/a ha regresado a casa.’  
*Your spouse has gone home.*

<sup>1</sup> Until that time, an appropriate strategy is to work without such a structure. On the order of the various nominal phrases, see Culicover and Jackendoff (2005:130) where it is argued that it is possible to appeal simply to linear order, with arguments preferably occurring in a particular order, but with that preference being “defeasible” by other factors.

<sup>2</sup> Content questions are discussed in §6.2. Word order is somewhat less flexible in questions (see chapter 6).

- (7) **Maal quih taanpx, hant yoom.**  
 2P-spouse the.FL RL-go.home land DT-lie  
 ‘Tu esposo/a regresó a casa y se acostó.’  
*Your spouse went home and lay down.*
- (8) **Maal quih taanpx ma, iicto° coi max íiqui imiht.**  
 2P-spouse the.FL RL-go.home DS her.children the.PL even even 3:3-PX-see-PL  
 ‘Tu esposa regresó a casa y hasta sus hijos la vieron.’  
*Your spouse went home, even her children saw her.*
- (9) **¿Maal quih taanpx?**  
 2P-spouse the.FL RL-go.home  
 ‘Regresó a casa tu esposo/a?’  
*Did your spouse go home?*

## 2.2 Direct objects

Verbs subcategorize for up to two syntactic arguments other than the subject.<sup>3</sup> In the unmarked word order, direct objects occur between the subject and the verb.

- (10) **¿Hataai° quih hast quij itaaplim?**  
 cloth the.FL stone the.CM 3:3-RL-cover.(passively)  
 ‘¿Está la tela cubriendo la piedra?’  
*Is the cloth covering the stone?*
- (11) **Manuel quih itrooqui quij itacaatax, ...**  
 the.FL 3P-vehicle the.CM 3:3-RL-drive  
 ‘Manuel estaba manejando su carro, ...’  
*Manuel was driving his vehicle ... (DS2005, cacáatax)*
- (12) **... quisil quij ctam ovaci quij ox itai, yoque: ...**  
 SN-small the.CM man 3P-ON-call.sibling the.CM thus 3:3-RL-tell DT-US-say  
 ‘... el menor le dijo a su hermano (mayor), se dice: ...’  
*... the younger one said to his (older) brother, it is said: ...*<sup>4</sup> (Dos\_Hermanos\_2.1)
- (13) **Hapxa ticom oot cop itaho, ...**  
 cottontail MD-HZ coyote the.VT 3:3-RL-see  
 ‘Ese conejo vio al coyote, ...’  
*That rabbit saw the coyote, ... (Conejo\_Coyote\_10a)*

<sup>3</sup> See chapter 18 for a discussion of complications which arise when the semantic arguments do not match the syntactic arguments.

<sup>4</sup> The addressee is the direct object of the verb *vai say to* (see §18.5.9).

- (14) **Ziic tiquih hax quih mos quisi ha, ...**  
 bird MD-FL water the.FL also SN-TR-drink DCL  
 ‘Ese pájaro toma agua también, ...’  
*That bird drinks water also, ...* (ES2007, acaam\_ccaa\_9a)

### 2.3 Indirect objects

Indirect objects commonly precede direct objects. Examples (15)-(17) have causative verbs for which the syntactic properties are well known; the causee is the indirect object and the patient of the action is the direct object (see §19.5).<sup>5</sup> These examples are not considered to be ambiguous. In some cases the lack of ambiguity is undoubtedly due to pragmatics or subtle clues in the choice of vocabulary, but in some cases, at least, it is not. (The indirect object determines indirect object inflection on the verb; for third person this is **co-/cö-**, which is also underscored in these examples.)

- (15) **¿Hataai° quih hast quij contaaplim?**  
 cloth the.FL stone the.CM 3IO-2SGS-RL-cause.cover.(passively)  
 ‘Cubriste la piedra con la tela?’  
*Did you make the cloth cover the stone?*
- (16) **Juan cop Pedro quih hipi ihipon° cop cöyaaqueecotol.**  
 the.VT the.FL INTNS his/her.voice the.VT 3IO-3:3-DT-cause.listen  
 ‘Juan<sub>i</sub> hizo que Pedro<sub>j</sub> escuchara su<sub>\*i,j</sub> voz.’  
*Juan<sub>i</sub> made Pedro<sub>j</sub> hear his<sub>\*i,j</sub> voice.*
- (17) **¿Eenim cosi° com hataai° quih consaaipj haa -ya?**  
 needle the.Hz cloth the.FL 3IO-2SGS-IR.ID-make.transverse AUX QM  
 ‘¿Vas a pasar la aguja por la tela?’  
*Are you going to put the needle into (cause the needle to pass through) the cloth?*  
 (DS2005, caaipj)

Examples of indirect objects that are recipients or addressees that demonstrate the same order (indirect object preceding direct object) include the following:

- (18) **Juan quih asaac quih caamiz cöyaaamx.**  
 the.FL 3P-son.ME the.FL shirt 3IO-3:3-DT-say+IO  
 ‘Juan le prometió una camisa a su hijo.’  
*John promised a shirt to his son.*

<sup>5</sup> The examples here all have third person indirect objects. First and second person indirect objects are indicated only with inflection on the verb (see §17.1.2.4) and therefore those examples would not be relevant to the discussion of word order.

- (19) **María quih Juan quih tom coi cöiyeesxö.**  
 the.FL the.FL money the.PL 3IO-3:3-DT-hide+IO  
 ‘María le escondió el dinero a Juan.’  
*Mary hid the money from Juan.*

Other indirect objects for which a verb subcategorizes are unlike what one might expect from studying Indo-European languages. The derived intransitive verbs  $\sqrt{\text{apii}}$  *taste like* and  $\sqrt{\text{asii}}$  *smell like* subcategorize for an object of comparison (see §19.4.1); that is, these verbs *must* have an object of this type. This nominal may be either an indirect object or it may be a nominal that does not determine inflection (see §2.5). The difference in syntax corresponds to a difference in semantics as well. The former reflects a more attenuated relationship between the subject and the object of comparison — either less obvious or reflecting some choice.

- (20) **Hax hoosi hizcap panaal ih cömapii.**  
 water 1P-ON-drink PX.VT honey FOC 3IO-PX-taste.like  
 ‘Esta agua que bebo tiene sabor a miel.’  
*This water that I am drinking tastes a bit like honey.* (DS2005, capii)
- (21) **¿Zó hamcaaxat -ya cötasii?**  
 which? smoke QM 3IO-RL-smell.like  
 ‘¿Huele a qué clase de humo?’  
*What kind of smoke does it smell of?*
- (22) **Icaaisx° quih cöcasii ha.**  
 soap the.FL 3IO-SN-smell.like DCL  
 ‘Huele un poco a jabón.’  
*It smells a bit like soap.*

The expressions meaning *have the form of* — the verbs of which vary depending on the profile of the item— subcategorize for an object of comparison that determines indirect object inflection.

- (23) **Zixcám caanj hapáh com °hant cocom° iha.**  
 fish Gulf.grouper SN-PV-say the.HZ land 3IO-SN-lie DCL  
 ‘Tiene la forma del pez llamado “caanj” (baya).’  
*It has the shape of the fish called “caanj” (Gulf grouper).* (ES2007, oot\_icaanj\_2)

## 2.4 Cross-referenced oblique objects

Up to this point we have seen examples of verbs that require one or more nominals (which may be implicit) to be used appropriately. These nominals determine person inflection on the verb. A few examples of verbs that subcategorize for two nominals but inflect for only one are given in §2.5. Discussion of the various classes of verbs is presented in chapter 18.

The examples discussed in this section are different from the previous ones in an important way: they all contain a nominal — an oblique object — that presents an additional piece of information about the situation. In each of the examples, the verb has the same basic meaning and is perfectly grammatical if the oblique object and its (indirect object) cross-referencing morphology (§17.1.2.4) are removed. This “optionality” is the most important criterion for distinguishing these nominals from indirect objects, although the inflectional morphology is identical.

Oblique objects have a wide variety of semantic roles including means and instrument, reason and cause, name, destination, location, goal, source, manner, exchange item, topic, object of activity and object of comparison. (Benefactive is not one of these, and there is generally no way to express a simple benefactive in the language.) In each case the interpretation of the oblique object is determined by context in combination with the meaning of the verb itself.

Most of the examples below illustrate the presence of a third person nominal cross-referenced with the appropriate morphology (**co-**, **cö-**) drawn from the indirect object inflection paradigm. The absence of first and second person examples for most of these should not be allowed to obscure the fact that these are examples of agreement-type inflection and not simply “registration” of the presence of an oblique object.

Unlike in many other more familiar languages, these notions are expressed in Seri usually in only this kind of syntactic configuration. For example, there is no instrumental postposition that may alternatively express the notion of instrumentality. There are no paraphrases or near paraphrases that one can present for these sentences.

The examples below document both the type of oblique object and also its relative order in the clause. It is significant to note that these oblique objects sometimes occur closer to the verb than does the direct object. Thus, while it seems to be the unmarked location for an instrument (for example) to precede the direct object, various factors can easily override the default order. One of these factors is definiteness: definite nominals tend to precede indefinite ones since universally established information tends to precede new information.<sup>6</sup> A case where this may be relevant is example (85) below. Interpretation of what may seem to be potentially ambiguous examples is affected by the article that is present; the article **com** (the.Hz) may imply that one item is prone and therefore is being acted on. This fact reinforces the default order (instrument precedes direct object) interpretation in the case of (29) since the article **com** is appropriate for a stick that is lying down but not for one that is being used to hit something else. In another situation the verb may affect the interpretation because some verbs require an argument that

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<sup>6</sup> See Comrie (1989:127) for discussion of natural information flow and different kinds of nominals.

refers to an item of a certain shape.

### 2.4.1 Means and Instrument

The means or instrument is presented as an oblique object.

- (24) **Hahoot hac ah contita, cömiizquim.**  
 ABS-entrance the.LC FOC 3IO-AW-RL-move 3IO-PX-enter  
 ‘Entró por la puerta.’  
*S/he entered by the door.* (DS2005, ah)
- (25) **°Eenm haacni° h oo cöitáh, imiicö.**  
 rifle FOC DL 3IO-3:3-RL-do 3:3-PX-kill  
 ‘Lo hizo con un rifle, lo mató.’  
*S/he did it with a rifle, s/he killed it.*
- (26) **Paala zo cöcaticpan iha.**  
 shovel a 3IO-SN-work DCL  
 ‘Está trabajando con una pala.’  
*S/he is working with a shovel.*
- (27) **Hinaail com hax tmasol oo ma, coopol quih cömoospoj.**  
 1P-skin the.HZ INTNS RL-yellow DL DS SN-black the.FL 3IO-PX-spotted  
 ‘Mi piel es muy amarilla y es manchada con negro.’  
*My skin is very yellow and spotted with black.* (Lagartijas 14)

The following examples show the instrument before the direct object. (See §2.6 for other positions in which it occurs.)

- (28) **José quih °eenm icaati° quij hast quij cöimaafc.**  
 the.FL hammer the.CM stone the.CM 3IO-3:3-PX-pound  
 ‘José golpeó la piedra con el martillo.’  
*José pounded the rock with the hammer.*<sup>7</sup>
- (29) **Cmaam quij hast quij hehe com cöimáafajquim.**  
 woman the stone the stick the.HZ 3IO-3:3-PX-pound-IMPF  
 ‘La mujer está golpeando el palo con la piedra.’  
*The woman is pounding the stick with the stone.*
- (30) **Icocozyax° yaai com icaaspoj° hipcom**  
 scissors 3P-side the.HZ pencil Px.HZ

<sup>7</sup> This is the preferred interpretation of this sentence although for some speakers, at least, it is ambiguous. For some speakers, if the article **com** is used with the expression for *hammer* (which other speakers disallow), the interpretation would be that the hammer is the object being pounded, since that article would imply (for them) that the hammer is lying on the table or somewhere and thus is not being used as the instrument.

**cohsahita** **ha.**  
3IO-1SGS.TR-IR.ID-make.sharp AUX-DCL

‘Voy a sacar punta a este lápiz con el filo de la tijera.’  
*I am going to sharpen this pencil with the scissor blade.* (DS2005, icocózyax, modified)

### 2.4.2 Reason and Cause

The oblique object may indicate the reason or the cause.

- (31) **Ihaapl** **cop** **cōyaxyat.**  
3P-AON-cold the.VT 3IO-DT-die.PL  
‘Murieron por causa del frío.’  
*They died from the cold (weather).* (Offered)

- (32) **Zaah quij** **cocmatj** **iha.**  
sun the.CM 3IO-SN-hot DCL  
‘Está caliente por causa del sol.’  
*It (e.g. pail of water) is hot because of the sun.*

### 2.4.3 Name

The verb  $\sqrt{\text{ataasitot}}$  *give name to (someone)* may take an oblique object that is the name that is given.

- (33) **Pedro quij** **cmaam yaazi°** **ii** **zo** **toc cōtíij** **ma,**  
the.CM woman his.child first a there 3:3-RL-sit DS  
**Juana hac** **cōimataasitot.**  
the.LC 3IO-3:3-PX-give.name

‘Pedro dio el nombre Juana a su primera hija.’  
*Pedro named his first daughter Juana.*

### 2.4.4 Destination

A destination in a clause with a motion verb such as  $\sqrt{\text{afp}}$  *arrive*,  $\sqrt{\text{intica}}$  *go*,  $\sqrt{\text{iin}}$  *go*, or  $\sqrt{\text{amjc}}$  *take* is expressed with an oblique object.

- (34) **Caahit quih** **hant zo** **contita** **x,** **...**  
SN-fish the.FL place a 3IO-AW-RL-move UT  
‘Cuando un pescador va a su lugar para pescar, ...’  
*When a fisherman goes to his fishing spot, ...* (DS2005, caapjōquij)
- (35) **Cmaam tintica** **haat** **quij** **cōtafp,** **...**  
woman MD-AW limberbush the.CM 3IO-RL-arrive  
‘La mujer llegó al torote ...’  
*The woman went over to the limberbush, ...* (DS2005, catóozi)

- (36) **¡Miime hac cöhiin!** (37) ... **hant hac cöiyoomlajc.**  
 2P-home the.LC 3IO-IM-go place the.LC 3IO-3:3-DT-bring-PL  
 ‘Vete a tu casa!’ ‘... lo trajeron al lugar.’  
*Go home!* (Mk 2:11) ... *they brought him to the place.* (Mk 2:3)
- (38) **Ihij hac cötiin,** ...  
 3P-AON-sit the.LC 3IO-RL-go  
 ‘Regresó al lugar en que estaba sentado, ...’  
*S/he returned to the place where s/he had been sitting,* ... (Apostador\_331)
- (39) **Me hpmiifp.** (40) **Hoox he moya.**  
 2IO 1SGS.IN-PX-arrive INTNS 1IO TWD-DT-move  
 ‘He llegado a ti.’ ‘Vino directamente hacia mí/nosotros.’  
*I have arrived to you (sg.).*<sup>8</sup> *S/he/it came straight toward me/us.*

### 2.4.5 Location or situation

A general location in a clause with a stative verb such as  $\sqrt{\text{ahca}}$  *be located*,  $\sqrt{\text{iij}}$  *be seated*,  $\sqrt{\text{ap}}$  *be standing* or  $\sqrt{\text{oom}}$  *be lying* is expressed as an oblique object.<sup>9</sup>

- (41) **Hamác zo cohpscniij aha.**<sup>10</sup>  
 fire a 3IO-1SGS.IN-IR.ID-N-sit AUX-DCL  
 ‘No voy a sentarme cerca de la lumbre.’  
*I’m not going to sit by a fire.*
- (42) **°Iistox theemloj° toc cötoi,** ...  
 3P-?-PL RL-stink-PL there 3IO-RL-be.FL/stand-PL  
 ‘Estaban allí enojados, ...’  
*They were there angry,* ... (Dos\_Hermanos\_4.1)
- (43) **Heezitim Betánia hapáh quij heezitim Jerosalém hapáh quij**  
 city SN-PV-say the.CM city SN-PV-say the.CM  
**hantaxal xah cöquij iha.**  
 near+MOD ATTEN 3IO-SN-sit DCL  
 ‘Betania está cerca de Jerusalén.’  
*Bethany is near Jerusalem.* (Jn 11:18)

<sup>8</sup> This example cannot mean *...to you (pl.)* because with this verb a plural goal must be represented with an inflected postposition: **Mino hpmiifp.** *I have arrived to you (pl.).* See §22.3.3.

<sup>9</sup> Location with other verbs is not generally possible in this way. See, for example, **\*Socáaix hac cöcaticpan iha** (‘Está trabajando en Punta Chueca’ *She is working in Punta Chueca*). A postposition is required for this situation.

<sup>10</sup> This construction can be used only with an inanimate object. Although one can personify the fire and say *I’m not going to sit near you*, if the referent is a person, a locational noun (**mihíin** *place near you*, in this case) must be used. See §13.4.

With the verb *intica go* the oblique object may indicate a general location rather than a destination.

- (44) ..., °hehe án° com contita x, ...  
 countryside the.HZ 3IO-AW-RL-move UT  
 ‘..., andaba en el monte, ...’  
*... he went around in the countryside, ...* (Gigante\_Comelon\_149)

The indirect object inflection on the final verb in the following example is required because of the use of *taax iti* (DDP 3P-on), referring to the general situation.

- (45) °Ox tpacta ma°, hant ihmaa z iiqui tiin,  
 then place other a 3P-toward RL-go  
taax iti Leví Alféo quih yaazi° quij cöiyooho.  
 DDP 3P-on the.FL his.child the.CM 3IO-3:3-DT-see  
 ‘Entonces fue a otro lugar y en esa ocasión vio a Leví, hijo de Alfeo.’  
*Then he went somewhere else, and on that occasion he saw Leví, son of Alphaeus.*  
 (Mk 2:14)

Whereas time adjuncts usually occur as simple adjuncts without cross-referencing morphology on the verb (see §2.7.1.1), an expression such as *zaah quih coox cah every day* does require such morphology.

- (46) Zaah quih coox cah caaytaj coi coccaa ha.  
 sun/day the.FL all the.FL-FOC horse-PL the.PL 3IO-SN-TR-look.for DCL  
 ‘Viene todos los días a buscar los caballos.’  
*S/he comes every day to look for the horses.* (ALIM 134)

## 2.4.6 Goal and recipient

An oblique object is possible with some verbs such as *√amjc bring* (plural *√amlajc*) and *√iin go* (plural *√itooij*) to indicate the goal or recipient.

- (47) Cmoqueepe com °ziix hapsx caaitim° quih cöimiimlajc, ...  
 SN-sick the.HZ doctor the.FL 3IO-3:3-PX-bring-PL  
 ‘Llevaron el enfermo al médico ...’  
*They took the sick person to the doctor ...*, (DS2005, cmoqueepe)
- (48) ¡Juan quij cöhitooij!  
 the.CM 3IO-IM-go.PL  
 ‘¡Vayan a Juan!’  
*Go (pl.) to John!* (Lk 7:22)
- (49) ¡Zixcám zo he camjc!  
 fish a IIO IM-bring  
 ‘Tráeme un pescado.’  
*Bring me a fish!*

### 2.4.7 Source

With certain verbs, the oblique object may indicate the person from whom something is obtained.

- (50) **Juan quih hita eenim zo cöiyocooz.**  
 the.FL 1P-mother knife a 3IO-3:3-DT-steal  
 ‘Juan robó un cuchillo de mi madre.’  
*Juan stole a knife from my mother.*

- (51) **Juan quih eenim zo he iyocooz.**  
 the.FL knife a 1IO-3:3-DT-steal  
 ‘Juan me/nos robó un cuchillo.’  
*Juan stole a knife from me/us.*

### 2.4.8 Object of comparison

The oblique object may indicate an object of comparison.

- (52) **¡Hohra cootax!**  
 donkey 3IO-IM-go  
 ‘¡Anda como burro!’  
*Go like a donkey!*
- (53) **¡Me xopanx!**  
 2IO EM-run  
 ‘¡Corre como tú!’  
*S/he runs like you!*
- (54) **Haxaaza tintica yamtö cöcatax iha.**  
 ABS-arrow MD-AW 3P-AON-straight 3IO-SN-go DCL  
 ‘La flecha va derecho.’  
*The arrow is going straight ahead.* (DS2005, catax)
- (55) **Me hpyaaco.**  
 2IO 1SGS.IN-DT-HAVE.house  
 ‘Tengo una casa como la tuya.’  
*I have a house like yours.*
- (56) **..., tahac oo compacta.**  
 that.LOC DL 3IO-PX-be.in.appearance  
 ‘..., era así.’  
*... he was like that.* (Gigante\_Comelon\_145)
- (57) **Juan quih Pedro quih cöxaaco.**  
 the.FL the.FL 3IO-EM-HAVE.house  
 ‘Juan tiene una casa como la de Pedro.’  
*Juan has a house like Pedro’s.*
- (58) **Ziix zo contmaaiaxaj iho.**  
 thing a 3IO-2SGS-RL-N-strong DCL  
 ‘No eres fuerte con respecto a nada.’  
*You aren’t strong with respect to anything.*

### 2.4.9 Exchange item

With some verbs the oblique object indicates the item that is exchanged for another.

- (59) **¿Caamiz zo cōitexl?**  
 shirt a 3IO-3:3-RL-take  
 ‘¿Lo/la cambió por una camisa?’ o ‘¿Cambió una camisa por él/ella?’  
*Did s/he trade it for a shirt? or Did s/he trade a shirt for it?*
- (60) **Xapij cooil hapáh quih toc cōtoii ma x,**  
 reed SN-blue/green SN-PV-say the.FL there 3IO-RL-stand-PL DS UT  
**taax ah cōtpexl, teeme, taci.**  
 DDP FOC 3:3-RL-PV-take PX-say DT-PL  
 ‘Lo que se llama carrizo verde estaba allí y fue cambiado por esos, dijo.’  
*What is called green reed was there and it was traded for them, s/he said.* (Hast\_Quita)

### 2.4.10 Topic of discussion, etc.

A topic of the discussion or the act of singing may be included as an oblique object.

- (61) **¿Áz cōssol quee -ya?** (62) **Ziix zo cōiyozaxö.**  
 what? 3IO-IR.ID-argue AUX.SN QM thing a 3IO-3.3-DT-discuss  
 ‘¿Acerca de qué va a discutir?’ ‘Le habló de una cosa.’  
*What is s/he going to argue about? S/he spoke to him about something.* (DS2005, czaxö)
- (63) **Comcaii tiquij mosnipol cōcoos iha.**  
 old.woman MD-CM leatherback.turtle 3IO-SN-sing DCL  
 ‘Esa anciana tiene poder de la caguama de siete filos.’  
*That old woman has power of the leatherback sea turtle.*
- (64) **Ctam ticop iiqui me yas.**  
 man MD-VT 3P-toward 2IO DT-sing  
 ‘Ese hombre cantaba acerca de ti.’  
*That man sang about you.*

### 2.4.11 Object of activity

The oblique object may be the object of an activity described by an intransitive verb.

- (65) **Tiix mos zamt quih cōcaticpan iha.**  
 DDS also crab the.FL 3IO-SN-work DCL  
 ‘Él/ella también trabaja con la jaiba.’  
*She also works with crabs (for a living).*

### 2.4.12 Miscellaneous

Some other oblique objects are illustrated by the following examples.

- (66) ... **cohptás**, ...  
 3IO-1SGS.IN-RL-err  
 ‘..., estaba equivocado con respecto a él/ella, ...’  
 ... *I was mistaken about it*, ... (DS2005, cas)

### 2.4.13 Special expressions

Some oblique objects are nominal expressions used adverbially. For example, an important expression for *again* is based on the noun **itacl** *its surface*, often modified by **mos** *also*. This noun phrase requires third person indirect object inflection on the verb.

- (67) ¿**°Mos itacl oo°** **cõsonaaaj** **quee** **-ya?**  
 again 3IO-IR.ID-return AUX.SN QM  
 ‘¿Regresará otra vez?’  
*Will she return again?*
- (68) **Imaaitom** **quih xox itaai** **ma x,** **°mos itacl oo°** **cõyooitom.**  
 SN-N-speak the.FL even 3:3-RL-make DS UT again 3IO-DT-speak  
 ‘Hace que hasta los mudos hablen otra vez.’  
*He even makes the mute to speak again.*<sup>11</sup> (MK 7:37)

An expression to indicate a great degree of something is **iisax quihiih cah** (3P-? SN-stay.behind the.FL / the.FL-FOC). This expression also requires indirect object inflection on the verb.

- (69) **Minl** **coi** **°iisax quihiih cah°** **zixcám** **cõxasii.**  
 2P-finger-PL the.PL great.degree fish 3IO-EM-smell.like  
 ‘Tus manos huelen muchísimo a pescado.’  
*Your hands really smell like fish!*
- (70) **Hax°** **cop** **°iisax quihiih cah°** **cõcaapl** **iha.**  
 water the.VT great.degree 3IO-SN-cold DCL  
 ‘El agua está bastante fría.’  
*The water is really cold.* (ALIM 80)

The expression **iisax quih coox com** (3P-? the.FL all the.Hz) *with all his/her heart*, which inflects for person as indicated by the context, also determines third person indirect object inflection on the verb.

<sup>11</sup> The Seri rendering here does not seem to be the equivalent of the Spanish and English. Furthermore, this version is slightly revised from the published version due to input from consultants on the grammar. The adverb **mos** was moved from sentence-initial position to precede **itacl**.

- (71) Hiisax quih coox com cohtamsisiin, ...  
 1P-? the.FL all the.Hz 3IO-1SGS.TR-RL-love  
 ‘Le amé con todo mi ser, ...’  
*I loved him with all my heart, ... (Mt 12:18)*

## 2.5 Other subcategorized nominals

A few verbs subcategorize semantically for two non-subject nominals but only inflect for one of them (see §18.6). Two such verbs are  $\sqrt{\text{eCe}}$  *give (food)* and (irregular) **iique** *give (gift)*. The unmarked order of the nominals in these cases is unclear as they occur together so rarely. Consultants gave both orders and did not agree on a preference.

- (72)            Subject                      Other argument                      Direct Object    Verb Phrase  
 a. **Zixquisiil° cop** ziix ipxasi quih haxz cop **iyoe.**  
 child            the.VT    thing    3P-flesh    the.FL    dog    the.VT    3:3-DT-give.food  
 ‘El niño / La niña dio carne al perro.’  
*The child gave the dog meat.*
- Subject                      Direct Object    Other argument                      Verb Phrase  
 b. **Zixquisiil° cop** haxz cop ziix ipxasi quih **iyoe.**  
 child            the.VT    dog    the.VT    thing    3P-flesh    the.FL    3:3-DT-give.food  
 ‘El niño / La niña dio carne al perro.’  
*The child gave the dog meat.*
- (73)    a. **Quihehe° quij** haaco zo cmaam ticop **iiye.**  
 ruler            the.CM    ABS.house    a    woman    MD-VT    3:3-DT-give.gift  
 b. **Quihehe quij** cmaam ticop haaco z **iiye.**  
 ‘El gobernador regaló una casa a esa mujer.’  
*The governor gave that woman a house.*

The derived intransitive verbs  $\sqrt{\text{asii}}$  *smell like* and  $\sqrt{\text{apii}}$  *taste like* subcategorize for a nominal that is an object of comparison. This nominal may be an indirect object, as illustrated by examples (20)-(22) or it may be a bare nominal without inflection on the verb, as illustrated below. In both cases the clauses fail the tests of transitivity (see Appendix C). Note that the finite verb in (74) does not begin with 3:3 **i-** (§17.1.2.1) which would be required if these were transitive clauses. The nominal that is the object of comparison occurs between the subject and the verb.

- (74) **¡Minl**            **coi**            zixcám    **xasii!**  
 2P-finger-PL    the.PL    fish            EM-smell.of  
 ‘¡Tus manos huelen a pescado!’  
*Your hands smell like fish! (Offered)*

- (75) **Xapoo ipxasi quih hap ipxasi quih imapii ha.**  
 sea.lion 3P-flesh the.FL mule.deer 3P-flesh the.FL SN-N-taste.of DCL  
 ‘La carne de lobo del mar no tiene el mismo sabor que la carne de venado bura.’  
*Sea lion meat does not have the same flavor as mule deer meat.* (DS2005, capi)

The intransitive verb √**poct** (*be*) *full* commonly occurs with or without a nominal phrase that indicates the contents of the subject. It is proposed in §18.2.4 that this verb subcategorizes for this argument. This nominal occurs after the subject.

- (76) °**Hehe an icaaij° quij hax quih cpoct iha.**  
 water.drum the.CM water the.FL SN-full DCL  
 ‘El tambo está lleno de agua.’  
*It is full of water.*
- (77) **Haaco cop hamcaaxat quih impoct.**  
 ABS.house the.VT smoke the.FL PX-full  
 ‘La casa se llenó de humo.’  
*The house filled with smoke.*

## 2.6 Minor variation in word order

Variation in word order of the arguments is possible although this variation does not seem to be such that one would describe as “scrambling” nor describe Seri as a free word order language. Probably the lack of case marking on the nominal phrases is one reason for a somewhat more rigid word order. While some cases of fronting and postposing are discussed in §3.10 and §3.12, a few examples of non-basic word order are included here as well.

### *Direct object precedes subject*

- (78) **Tootjöc quij °zaxt quisil° quih itcommactim iho.**  
 cholla.fruit the.CM child the.FL 3:3-RL-N-handle DCL  
 ‘Un niño no debe tocar la fruta de la choya.’  
*A child doesn’t (shouldn’t) touch a cholla cactus fruit.* (Consejos\_choya\_6)

### *Direct object precedes indirect object*

- (79) **Juan quih caamiz tiquih asaac quih cöiyaamx.**  
 the.FL shirt MD-FL 3P-son.ME the.FL 3IO-3:3-DT-say+IO  
 ‘Juan le prometió esa camisa a su hijo.’  
*John promised that shirt to his son.*
- (80) **Ihyaazi°, ;°hanzajipi quiipa° hipcop mamaz cohqueetx!**  
 my.child.ME frying.pan PX-VT 2P-father’s.mother 3IO-IM-return  
 ‘Mi hijo/hija, devuelve este sartén a tu abuela.’  
*My son/daughter, take this frying pan back to your grandmother.* (DS2005, cqueetx)

- (81) **María quih tom coi Juan quih cöiyeesxö.**  
 the.FL money the.PL the.FL 3IO-3:3-DT-hide+IO  
 ‘María escondió el dinero de Juan.’  
*Mary hid the money from Juan.* (compare with (19) above)

*Direct object precedes oblique object*

- (82) **Hasahcapjö cop mos iif com cöitníp x, imiisi.**  
 senita.cactus the.VT also 3P-nose the.HZ 3IO-3:3-RL-hit UT 3:3-PX-drink  
 ‘Picando el cacto sina con su pico, la toma.’  
*It stabs the senita cactus with its beak and drinks it.* (ES2007, acaam\_ccaa\_8)
- (83) **Hast quij hehe zo cohyoáxazim.**  
 stone the.CM stick a 3IO-1SGS.TR-DT-beat.HZ.IMPF  
 ‘Golpeé a la piedra con un palo.’  
*I beat the stone with a stick.*<sup>12</sup>
- (84) **José quih inol cop °enm icaatj° quih cöimaafc.**  
 the.FL 3P-finger/hand the.VT hammer the.FL 3IO-3:3-PX-pound  
 ‘José se pegó en el dedo con el martillo.’  
*José, hit his, finger with the hammer.*<sup>13</sup> (DS2005, caafc)
- (85) **Xapoo hooxi quih °pazaatoj ihanaxz° zo**  
 sea.lion 1P-ON-finish the.FL shoe.polish a  
**cohsnaxz aha.**  
 3IO-1SGS.TR-IR.ID-rub AUX-DCL  
 ‘Voy a aplicar cera de zapatos al lobo marino que hice.’  
*I am going to apply shoe wax to the sea lion that I carved.* (DS2005, cnaxz)
- (86) **Coyote Iguana quij Lola Casanova quij am quij**  
 the.CM the.CM 3P-father.FE the.CM  
**cöitcazit, caay z iti itcaaix, hant z iiqui iyoqueetx.**  
 3IO-3:3-RL-grab horse a 3P-on 3:3-RL-take place a 3P-toward 3:3-DT-take  
 ‘Coyote Iguana raptó a Lola Casanova de su padre, y la llevó a otro lugar en un caballo.’  
*Coyote Iguana abducted Lola Casanova from her father and took her somewhere on a horse.* (Offered)

<sup>12</sup> The verb used here implies that a long instrument is used, so the sentence is not ambiguous. The word order preference is quite strong in this case, with the definite nominal preceding the indefinite.

<sup>13</sup> The word order in this case (direct object preceding oblique object) is expected because of the identity between the subject and the possessor of the direct object.

## 2.7 Adjuncts

Two kinds of adjuncts are attested: simple adjuncts and postposition-linked adjuncts. Both of these adjuncts commonly have the form of a noun phrase that appears somewhere before the VP. The simple adjuncts (§2.7.1) have no morphology linking them to the verb. Postposition-linked adjuncts (see §2.7.2) require a postposition (which occurs in the VP — see chapter 5).<sup>14</sup>

One kind of nominal that is not easily classified is the phrase, headed by a deverbal noun, describing an event that extends for a length of time described by the rest of the clause. The length of time of the event is expressed by N V, where N is a unit (e.g. *day, month, year*) and V is a number predicate.<sup>15</sup>

- (87) **Hant tahac iti cöihij hac iiztox miipxa.**  
 place MD-LC 3P-on 3IO-3P-AON-sit the.LC 3P-moon/month-PL PX-three  
 ‘Estuvo allí por tres meses.’  
*He was there for three months.* (Ac 20:3)
- (88) **Hita quih imoqueepe quih ixaap° inzoöc.**  
 1P-mother the.FL 3P-AON-sick the.FL days PX-four  
 ‘Mi madre estaba enferma por cuatro días.’  
*My mother was sick for four days.*
- (89) **Hameen tahac °ziix quih iic cöhiqeepe° quih zaah quih miitxo.**  
 family MD-LC my.helping.it the.FL sun/day the.FL PX-many  
 ‘He ayudado a esa familia por mucho tiempo.’  
*I have helped that family for a long time.* (DS2005, cqueepe)
- (90) **Haa himazcam quih zaah quih miitxo.**  
 there 1P-AON-N-arrive.PL the.FL sun/day the.FL PX-many  
 ‘No llegamos allí por muchos días.’  
*We didn’t arrive there for many days.* (DS2005, cabxo)

### 2.7.1 Simple adjuncts

Simple adjuncts are those adjuncts that appear with no postposition linking them to the verb. There appear to be three types: nominal phrases indicating time, nominal phrases indicating place, and stage-setting phrases headed by deverbal nouns.

<sup>14</sup> It is possible that some of these postposition-linked nominals are actually oblique objects in some cases. The best candidates for these are those which occur with verbs of speaking. See chapter 18.

<sup>15</sup> This construction has interesting details. The expression for *hour* is not used with it, for example. (One says instead the equivalent of *Three hours passed, ...*) Also note that with the verb for *much, many* in (89) the singular noun **zaah** *day* is used while with the number verbs the plural noun **ixáap** *days* is used, as in (88).

### 2.7.1.1 Time adjuncts

Many of the simple adjuncts are expressions of time.<sup>16</sup> Some examples are given in (91):

- (91) a. **moxima (quih)**<sup>17</sup> ‘ayer’, *yesterday* (yesterday (the))  
 b. **moxima quih ipac moxima** ‘anteayer’, *day before yesterday*  
 c. **moxhamt (quih)**<sup>18</sup> ‘el año pasado’, *last year* (last.year (the))  
 d. **zaah hipcop/hipcap** ‘hoy’, *today* (sun/day this)  
 e. **zaah ipac hac cöcaap cop** ‘el próximo día’, *the next day*  
 (sun/day 3P-behind the.LC 3IO-SN-stand the.VT)  
 f. **zaah tacoyolca** ‘durante esos días’, *during those days* (sun/day MD-VT.PL)<sup>19</sup>  
 g. **ihamoc quih** ‘anoche’, *last night* (3P-AON-be.night the.FL)<sup>20</sup>  
 h. **ihamoc hipcop** ‘esta noche’, *tonight* (3P-AON-be.night PX-VT)

These adjuncts most commonly appear clause-initially and they are quite freely added to any clause.

- (92) **Moxima ctam hiyal quih colx maahit.**  
 yesterday man 1P-spouse the.FL high PX-fish  
 ‘Ayer mi esposo fue a pescar en alta mar.’  
*Yesterday my husband went fishing far out to sea.* (DS2005.aal)

<sup>16</sup> Many other expressions of time, including those meaning *tomorrow*, *tonight*, and *this afternoon* are idioms and/or are clausal in nature; see chapter 7. Yet other expressions of time require a verb of some sort to accompany the verb. One example:

- (i) **Ixáap° czooxolcam °iti tòofin° ma, ...**  
 days SN-eight they.passed DS  
 ‘Ocho días después, ...’ / *Eight days later, ...* (Lk 1:59)

<sup>17</sup> This expression may occur with or without the determiner **quih**.

<sup>18</sup> This expression may occur with or without the determiner **quih**.

<sup>19</sup> This phrase is used in Mk 8:1.

- (ii) ... **zaah tacoyolca °mos itácl oo° °xiica quih quiistox° quih tatxo,**  
 sun/day MD-VT-PL again people the.FL RL-many  
**ptiti toii, toc cömoii.**  
 together.on RL-be.PL there 3IO-PX-be.FL/stand.PL

‘... en esos días otra vez mucha gente se reunió.’  
*... once again in those days many people had gathered together.* (Mk 8:1)

<sup>20</sup> This is not the most common way to say *last night*. The completely verbal expression **thamoc ma, ...** (RL-night *when it was night ...*, in the realis form) is heard more frequently.

- (93) **Moxhamt hant tsijim ma, ....**  
 last year land RL-move DS  
 ‘Cuando hubo el terremoto el año pasado, ....’  
*When there was an earthquake last year, ....* (DS2005, csijim)
- (94) **Ihamoc quih comcaii tintica hast z itatni, ...**  
 3P-AON-be.night the.FL woman MD-AW rock a 3:3-RL-make.contact  
 ‘Anoche la mujer tropezó con una piedra ....’  
*Last night the woman tripped on a rock ....* (DS2005, quitni)
- (95) **Zaah hipcap haxöl pac ihpanamj ta, hasiiitoj aha.**  
 day PX-VT clam(s) some 1SGS.TR-IR.DP-hurry DS 1PLS-IR.ID-eat-PL AUX-DCL  
 ‘Hoy, si me apuro en juntar algunas almejas, las comeremos.’  
*Today if I quickly collect some clams, we will eat them.* (DS2005, canámj)

The following example uses a phrase headed by a deverbal noun as a simple adjunct of time.

- (96) **He hicmiiquet cah °hant ihyomaamac°.**  
 1PRO 1P-AON-be.person the.FL-FOC I.have.not.cooked.century.plant  
 ‘En toda mi vida no he cocinado maguey.’  
*In all my life I have not cooked century plant.* (DS2005, caamac)

The word **cmaax** *now, then* has distributional properties similar to these simple adjuncts in that it commonly occurs sentence-initially.

- (97) **Cmaax himcac iti coii ha.**  
 now/then PX-LC 3P-on SN-be.FL.PL DCL  
 ‘Ahora están allí.’  
*Now they are there.* (HE 8)
- (98) **Cmaax Hataamati hapx miip.**  
 now/then outside PX-stand  
 ‘Entonces [el cerro] Hatáamati se pudo ver.’  
*Then [the mountain] Hatáamati came into view.* (DS2005, caap)

### 2.7.1.2 Location adjuncts

In some kinds of clauses, a simple adjunct may refer to a location.

- (99) **Hizaax ah oo cötpacta ma,**  
 DPP FOC DL 3IO-RL-be.in.appearance DS  
**Tahejöc quij hap quih tatxo, iti moii.**  
 Tiburon.Island the mule.deer the.FL RL-many 3P-on PX-be.FL.PL  
 ‘Por esta razón, hay muchos venados bura en la isla Tiburón.’  
*For this reason there are many mule deer on Tiburon Island.* (ES2007, Hapj 15)

- (100) **Hant tahac hax quih catxo ha.**  
 place MD-LC water the.FL SN-much/many DCL  
 ‘Hay mucha agua en ese lugar.’  
*There is a lot of water in that place.* (Jn 3:23)
- (101) **Xnapofc inoohcö° qui hai quih xooixaj.**  
 3P-AON-concave the.CM wind the.FL EM-strong  
 ‘El viento es fuerte en la bahía de Xnapofc.’  
*The wind is strong at Xnapofc Bay.*
- (102) **Socaaix hac xocozim.**  
 Punta.Chueca the.LC EM-hot.(weather)  
 ‘Hace calor en Punta Chueca.’  
*It’s very hot in Punta Chueca.*

However, such adjuncts cannot be added to just any clause.<sup>21</sup>

- (103) \* **Socaaix hac caticpan iha.**  
 Punta.Chueca the.LC SN-work DCL  
 (‘Está trabajando en Punta Chueca.’) (*S/he is working in Punta Chueca.*)
- (104) \* **¿Socaaix hac tiih?**  
 Punta.Chueca the.LC RL-be.FL  
 (‘¿Reside en Punta Chueca?’) (*Does s/he reside in Punta Chueca?*)

### 2.7.1.3 Stage-setting information

A phrase headed by a deverbal noun may precede a finite clause — often in sentence-initial position — to set the stage for the rest of the sentence.<sup>22</sup>

- (105) **Toc cömiiha cah, Hajháx hant taax °ano toofin°, ...**  
 there 3IO-TWD-3P-AON-move the.FL-FOC Tecomate place DPP s/he.was.passing  
 ‘Venía allí, pasaba Tecomate, ...’  
*S/he was coming there, he was passing by Tecomate, ...* (Hipocampo\_10.1-2)

<sup>21</sup> These would have to be expressed using a postposition. See §2.7.2.

<sup>22</sup> It is perhaps more common for such a phrase to be followed by a postposition (see §3.5). In addition, such phrases may be sandwiched between finite clauses:

- (iii) **Tiimotoj, toc cötoi ma, toc cöiváii cah,**  
 RL-gamble-PL there 3IO-RL-be.FL.PL DS there 3IO-3P-AON-be.FL.PL the.FL-FOC  
**toc cöiváii cah, tpezi, yoque.**  
 there 3IO-3P-AON-be.FL.PL the.FL-FOC RL-PV-defeat DT-US-say

‘Estaban allí apostando, estaban allí mucho tiempo, él fue vencido, se dice.’

*They were there gambling, they were there a long time, he was defeated, it is said.* (Apostador\_15)

- (106) °Xiica quih quiistox° coi iitxo cah, ...  
 people the.PL 3P-AON-many/much the.FL-FOC  
 ‘Había tantas personas, ...’  
*There were so many people, ...* (Mk 2:4)
- (107) **Taax ah oo cötpacta ma,**  
 DDP FOC DL 3IO-RL-be.in.appearance DS  
hoox cöiha hizac max, hant tahac  
 INTNS 3IO-3P-AON-be PX-LC even place MD-L  
**Hant Haait Quih It Iihca hapáh iha.**  
 place ABS.blood the.FL 3P-on 3P-AON-be.located SN-PV-say DCL  
 ‘Por eso, aquel terreno se llama hasta el día de hoy Campo de Sangre.’  
*For that reason, to this very day that place is called Field of Blood.* (Mt 27:8)
- (108) **Taax oo cöihapacta hac** ...  
 DDP DL 3IO-3P-AON-cause.be.in.appearance the.Lc  
 ‘Habiendo hecho eso, ...’  
*Having done that, ...* (Mk 7:34)
- (109) **Ihvatpan quih ano cömiha caha,**  
 1P-AON-work the.FL 3P.in 3IO-TWD-3P-AON-move the.FL-Foc  
 °psaac cöhimooxi° ha.  
 hunger(?) 3IO-1P-AON-N-die DCL  
 ‘Desde que he trabajado, no he tenido hambre.’  
*Since the time I have worked, I have not been hungry.* (DS2005, miha)

### 2.7.2 Postposition-linked adjuncts

Postposition-linked adjuncts are adjuncts that appear somewhere in the clause while at the same time a postposition appears before the verb. The meanings of the postpositions (of which five are commonly used — see chapter 22) give a good idea of the range of meaning of the adjuncts that they link to: **ano** *in, from, to*; **iicx** *near*, **iihax** *with* (comitative and also interlocutor), **iiqui** *toward, against*, and **iti** *on*. The adjunct and the postposition may coincidentally be juxtaposed, but there is no evidence that they form a syntactic constituent.

The postposition must be in preverbal position; the complement may be — and often is — in clause-initial position. As this topic is discussed in much more detail in §21.3.3, only a few examples are given here.

- (110) **Ctam tintica canoaa com ano siij ta ityaai, ...**  
 man MD-AW boat the.Hz 3P.in IR.ID-sit AUX.RL 3:3-RL-go.to  
 ‘El hombre estaba por subir a su panga, ...’  
*As the man was about to get into the boat ...* [DS2005, cahjit, improved]
- (111) **Iteen hac haait quih ano moma.**  
 3P-mouth the.LC ABS.blood the.FL 3P.in/from TWD-PX-move  
 ‘Salió sangre de su boca.’  
*Blood came from his/her/its mouth.*
- (112) **..., hizac iti yij.**  
 PX-LOC 3P-on DT-sit  
 ‘..., estaba aquí.’  
*..., it was here.* (Hipocampo\_13.3)
- (113) **Hant iti hihih zo °ziix hapahit° z iti tmüh, ...**  
 place 3P-on 1P-AON-be.FL a food a 3P-on RL-not.be.FL  
 ‘No hay comida en mi casa, ...’  
*There isn’t any food at my house ...* (Burgos\_41)