

15. Names

A (proper) name is an expression which conventionally refers to a particular entity.¹ This chapter examines the form and the syntax of names for places, individuals, legendary and historical figures, spirits, months, constellations, stars, etc. in recent and modern Seri culture.² It is in this context that ethnonyms are discussed, although these are actually common nouns in Seri. In §15.1 it is shown how common nouns are distinguished from names. In §15.2 the structure of names is presented. The ethnonyms are presented in §15.3 even though they are not strictly “names”. The names of individuals are discussed in §15.4, and the embellishments that occur with them in §15.5. Their use as appositive modifiers is presented in §15.6. The use of names as vocatives is presented in §15.7. Expressions that replace names in contexts where indirect reference is appropriate are discussed in §15.8.

15.1 Distinguishing common nouns from names

It is appropriate to consider how names are distinguished from common nouns and common noun phrases, especially since they are so similar both in form and in usage.

Common nouns can be distinguished from names in Seri by the verbless predicate nominal construction (§10.1). Names are not used predicatively and cannot appear as in this construction just as definite nominals cannot.

- (1) a. * **Hipíix Juan (quih) iha.**
 DPS the.FL DCL
 (‘Éste es Juan.’) (*This is John.*)
- b. * **Hant himquij Tahéjöc (quij) iha.**
 land DT-CM Tiburón.Island the.CM DCL
 (‘Ese lugar ese la isla Tiburón.’)
 (*That land/place over there is Tiburon Island.*)

Names may occur as the complement in the copula construction (§18.2.1) just as common nominals may. Note that names are followed by a definite article, which is true of most contexts in Seri (excluding vocatives and in sentences with verbs of naming, discussed below).³

¹ This chapter is based on Marlett (2008). See the discussion of the problems with the term ‘name’ in Anderson (2004:436) and additional discussion of these facts from a broader perspective in Anderson (2008).

² See also M. Moser & Marlett (2001b).

³ The use of definite articles with names (including place names) in Seri should be noted, since Longobardi (2001:589) states that “Except for Greek ..., at least a subset of proper names, especially place names and names of months and days, seem to be allowed to make arguments without any determiner in all the best-analyzed

- (2) a. **Hipíix Juan quih haa ha.**
 DPS the.FL SN.EQ DCL
 ‘Éste es Juan.’
This is Juan. RRR
- b. **Hant himquij Tahéjöc quij haa ha.**
 land DT-CM Tiburón.Island the.CM SN.EQ DCL
 ‘Ese lugar la isla Tiburón.’
That land/place is Tiburon Island. RRR

The typical common noun may modified by a relative clause (§8.4), unlike names in their typical usage. Count nouns also often have a plural form, unlike most names. However, the examples in (3) with a modified or quantified name are appropriate if more than one person named Juan were being discussed. The definite article in (3a) needs to be the focus form **cah** (see §24.2.2); otherwise, with the simple article **quih**, the sentence is anomalous unless the person’s name is “Big Juan”.

- (3) a. **Juan caacoj cah hyooho.**
 SN-big the.FL-FOC 1SS.TR-DT-see
 ‘Vi al Juan grande.’
I saw the big Juan.
- b. **Juan quih coocj coi hyooho.**
 the.FL SN-two the.PL 1SS.TR-DT-see
 ‘Vi a los dos (personajes que se llaman) “Juan”.’
I saw the two “Juans”.

As a matter of fact, there is a culturally standardized way to refer to one of two individuals with the same name: **Juan quisil** (Juan SN-small) *the younger Juan*, **Juan cmaacoj** (Juan old.man) *the older Juan*; **María quisil** (María SN-small) *the younger María*, **María comcáii** (María old.woman) *the older María*. Despite the words involved (e.g., **comcáii** *old.woman*), only the relative ages of the people indicated are relevant.⁴ The opposite word order is used to refer to an elderly person named Juan; see §15.5.

Names modified with nonrestrictive adjectival modifiers that would parallel examples like “crotchety Plato”,⁵ “haughty Virginia”,⁶ “huge pugnacious Colonel Daniel Morgan”,⁷ “the

modern languages...” Otomian languages also regularly use articles with proper names (Hess 1968, Echegoyen 1979, as do some varieties of Nahuatl).

⁴ The word **quisil** is the subject-oriented deverbal noun formed on the root $\sqrt{\text{isil}}$ *be small*, while **cmaacoj** and **comcáii** are nouns.

⁵ Victor Davis Hanson (1999), “The glory that was Greece,” in *What If?* ed. Robert Cowley (New York, Berkley Books), p. 33.

Both common nouns and names may occur as complements of the verb $\sqrt{\text{ah}}$ *say, call*. The passive form **impáh** (PX-PV-say) *s/he/it is called* (**mpah** after vowels) appears in the following sentences.

- (6) a. **Himt ipxási quih isnáap impáh.**
 1P-breast 3P-flesh the.FL PX-PV-say
 ‘La carne de mi pecho se llama “isnáap”.’
The flesh on my breast is called “isnáap”. (DS2005 isnáap)
- b. **Tiix ah cahínata mpah.**
 DDS FOC PX-PV-say
 ‘Ése [tipo de venado] se llama “cahínata”.’
That one [kind of deer] is called “cahínata”. (DS2005 cahínata)
- c. **Pancho mpah.**
 PX-PV-say
 ‘Se llama Pancho.’
His name is Pancho. (Lit., *He is called Pancho.*) (DS2005, quih)
- d. **Taax ah oo cōtpacta ma,**
 DDP FOC DL 3IO-RL-be.in.appearance DS
Hant Ihítij impáh, hast ticap.
 PX-PV-say mountain MD-VT
 ‘Por eso se llama Hast Ihítij.’
That’s why that mountain is called Hant Ihítij. (DS2005, quiitij)
- e. **Hastojícöla mpah.**
 PX-PV-say
 ‘Se llama Hastojícöla.’
It is called Hastojícöla. (Muerte_Côquimaxp_36)

The preceding examples illustrate that when they are used with verbs of naming, names are not used with definite articles in Seri, just as in other languages.¹¹

The facts are even a bit more interesting with the verb $\sqrt{\text{atáasitot}}$ *to name*. The name itself does in fact occur with a definite article, but an article (**hac**) which is appropriate for the explicit or implied head noun **hatáasi** (ABS-name) *name*:

- (7) **(Hatáasi) Priscila hapáh hac, taax consatáasitot aha.**
 ABS-name SN-PV-say the.LC DDP 3IO-2sS-Ir.ID-give.name AUX-DCL
 ‘Debes darle el nombre Priscila.’
You should name her Priscila.

¹¹ Anderson (2004:441).

- (8) **Pedro quij cmaam yaazi° ii¹² zo toc cõtij ma,**
 the.CM woman his.child first a there 3IO-RL-sit DS

Juana hac cõimatáasitot.
 the.LC 3IO-3:3-PX-give.name

‘Pedro dio el nombre Juana a su primera hija.’

Pedro named his first daughter Juana.

Descriptive phrases may have three uses. First, they may be simple descriptive phrases like **hast cacõsxaj cop** (mountain SN-tall/long the.VT) *the tall mountain*, which denotes any number of entities in the world. Second, they may be hyponymic designations (classes, types, subspecies, ethnospecies, species or genera and the like), much like *barn swallow* in English refers to a specific subset of kinds of swallows. An example is **xiica cooxp** (thing.PL SN-white) *white things* which refers to two species of the genus *Olivella* of olive shell. Third, they may be the names of particular entities, like *Big Lake* in English. An example is **Xepe Coosot** (sea SN-narrow) which is the Infiernillo Channel between Tiburon Island and the mainland. In Seri, however, there is no salient phonetic difference between a common noun phrase analogous to *big lake* and a name analogous to *Big Lake*, if there is any at all. The word **itáasi** (3P-name) applies to both of the last two types in Seri (although most saliently to proper names), as in English: a hyponym and the name of an individual. This word **itáasi** is therefore helpful when trying to determine if a rather complicated expression is just a description of an insect (for example) or whether it is actually the designation for the species of insect. But the word **itáasi** does not help to determine if a particular expression is a “proper” name or only a hyponym.¹³

15.2 The form of names

As indicated in §8.1, names are typically used with definite articles in Seri, and so they are generally presented with them here.¹⁴ It is less common, but possible, for a demonstrative to be

¹² This is pronounced as if it were **yazíi**.

¹³ The distinction between the two senses of “name” is even more obscured in Seri culture since a certain personage in history gave each of the beings their individual “names” (presumably proper names) when they were still people. The coming of the flood turned them into the creatures that they are today, and the species still have those “names”. Despite some indeterminacy in formally distinguishing names from common nouns, one should not have the impression that Seri speakers somehow are confused between these two notions; they definitely are not.

¹⁴ The names of people are not presented with articles, however, because humans and large animals present the greatest variety of options in choice of article, determined primarily on the basis of their physical orientation. For some nouns there is a small amount of variability in the choice of article and for others there is no such variability. The question of which article appears with a given name of a person is generally ignored here, but see §21.2.

used with a name: **Coftécöl hipcap** *this San Esteban Island* (see Muerte_Cöquimaxp_4.1), **Tahéjüc himquij** *that Tiburon Island* (see Gigante_Comelon_02), **Juan hipquij** *this John*. It is not very clear what this combination indicates or means. Names are therefore typically “weak” in Seri,¹⁵ but they are “strong” (do not take determiners) when used as vocatives (see §15.7), when the complement of the verb $\sqrt{\text{ah}}$ *say, call* (§15.1), sometimes when conjoined (see chapter 25), and in some other contexts. The article **hac**, which is used most commonly for names of locations as opposed to geographical entities, is omitted in some situations where other articles are not.

15.2.1 Simple names

The examples in (9) are names of the simplest sort as they consist of a single word (apart from the article) which is used only as a name.

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|-----|----|---------------------|--|
| (9) | a. | Tahéjüc quij | ‘Isla Tiburón’, <i>Tiburon Island</i> |
| | b. | Socáaix hac | <i>Punta Chueca</i> (a Seri town) |
| | c. | Queeto quih | ‘Aldebarán’, <i>Aldebaran</i> (the star) |
| | d. | Saps hac | <i>Campo Dos Amigos</i> (a camp name) |
| | e. | Soosni cop | ‘Isla Alcatraz’, <i>Alcatraz Island</i> |
| | f. | Hoona hac | <i>Campo Hoona</i> (a camp name) ¹⁶ |
| | g. | Sana hac | (un campamento en la isla Tiburón) (a camp on Tiburon Island) |
| | h. | Xepeta hac | (un campamento en la isla Tiburón) (a camp on Tiburon Island) |
| | i. | Xana hac | <i>Campo Álmon</i> ¹⁷ |
| | j. | Xnit hac | <i>Campo Español</i> (on Tiburon Island) |
| | k. | Cmaamc coi | (la constelación de las siete mujeres) (the constellation of the seven women) |
| | l. | Hapj coi | (la constelación de los tres animales) |

¹⁵ The terminology “strong” vs. “weak” is used in Huddleston and Pullum (2002). The chapter on nouns and noun phrases in this book (including the discussion of proper names) was written by John Payne and Rodney Huddleston. Their presentation was helpful to me in drafting the presentation of the Seri facts.

¹⁶ **Hoona** may be the only Seri place name which has been borrowed into regional Spanish, by at least a few people. (It was incorrectly written in the 2005 dictionary as **Hona**.) Typically pronounced [ˈoːna] by outsiders, the Seri name is [ˈʔoːna]. The phonetic lengthening on the post-tonic syllable typical of *native* Seri words and not of recent loanwords in Seri (see §28.5.1). This is an appropriate place to make it explicit that hardly ever is there an overlap in meaning between a Seri place name and a Spanish place name. One case is the name for the Colorado River: Río Colorado in Spanish and **Hasoj Cheel** (river SN-red) *Red River* in Seri. It is coincidental (although not surprising) that both languages name the river similarly. (The Seri name does appear to be an old name and not a modern translation of the Spanish name.)

¹⁷ This name is a corruption of Hammond, the surname of an early fish buyer from Tucson (Mary B. Moser, p.c.).

- | | | |
|----|------------------|---|
| m. | Coén quih | (the constellation of the three animals) (un espíritu con la apariencia de una anciana que hace daño a los niños) (a spirit with the appearance of an old woman that harms a child) |
| n. | Icor quih | (el espíritu de la vida botánica, poder que creó vida y el espíritu de las plantas) (the spirit of plant life, power that created life and the the spirit of plants) |

Some simple names have an element that hints at an etymology (sometimes indicated in the Seri dictionary) relating them to some common noun or verb, but the expressions have given rise to a the use as a name. For example, the constellation name **Cmaame** is almost identical in form to the word for *woman*, **cmaam** (modern plural, **cmajjic**), and in fact it is said to be several women who have stepped away from the place where other women are giving birth.¹⁸ This etymology provides the reason for why the plural article **coi** is used with this name. Similarly, the constellation **Hapj** contains three stars, **Hap Mule Deer** (the middle star), **Haamoja Antelope**,¹⁹ and **Mojet Bighorn Sheep**; the plural article **coi** is also used with the name of this constellation. The word **izáayo Saturday** is a loanword from Spanish *sábado*, probably via O’odham. Other names, such as **Tahéjoc**, **Saps**, and **Xnit**, do not have known etymologies.

15.2.2 Names derived from simple noun phrases

A name may also be composed of a simple noun phrase. Of course, that phrase may be simply the common noun: **Hacosáa quih Cactus Fruit Gathering Pole** (the Big Dipper constellation); **Hast cap Mountain** (a special name for San Esteban Island); **Zaaj hac Cave** (a certain place in the sea); **Xatj hac Reef** (a camp name); **Xapij hac Reedgrass** (a camp name); **Haamoja quih Antelope** (a star in the constellation **Hapj** mentioned above); **Xtaasi hac, Estuary** (a name for a camp on Tiburon Island); **Paaza hac, Gila monster** or the tree *Sideroxylon occidentale* (a location).

The head of the noun phrase may be modified by a relativized possessor noun phrase.

¹⁸ Kroeber was told that this constellation is “a woman [...] with her children, who came outdoors to urinate” (Kroeber 1931, p. 12). This was generally confirmed to Edward Moser and more recently clarified by René Montaña Herrera.

¹⁹ Kroeber (1931:12) identified this star is Betelgeuse. This does not agree with information that is provided in the text “Hapj” (Montaña Herrera, ES2007), however.

- (10) a. **Comcáii Ilít Cooxp**
 old.woman 3P-head/hair SN-white
 ‘Anciana con Cabello Blanco’
White-haired Old Woman (a certain Seri woman, now deceased)
- b. **Zaaj An Cooxp hac**
 cave 3P.interior SN-white the.Lc
 ‘Cueva con Interior Blanco’
Cave Whose Interior Is White (on San Esteban Island)

Another type of name is a head noun modified by a relative clause (§8.4).

- (11) a. **Xepe Coosot tintica**
 sea SN-narrow MD-AW
 ‘Mar Estrecho’ (Canal del Infiernillo)
Narrow Sea (the Infiernillo channel)²⁰
- b. **Xepe Heeque tintica**
 sea small MD-AW
 ‘Mar Pequeño’ (Canal del Infiernillo)
Small Sea (El Infiernillo Channel) (alternate name)
- c. **Hant Cooxp hac**
 land/place SN-white the.Lc
 ‘Tierra Blanca’
White Land (a camp on Tiburon Island)
- d. **Ziix Anxō Coohit**
 thing INTNS SN-UO-eat
 ‘Cosa que Comió Mucho’
Thing that Ate a Lot (a legendary giant who lived with the Seris for a while)
- e. **Cmaacoj Cmasol**
 old.man SN-yellow
 ‘Anciano Amarillo’
Yellow Old Man (the person who named the animals)
- f. **Iimox Impáfc**
 purple-lip.rock.oyster SN-N-PV-pound
 (el más fuerte de los gigantes)
 (the strongest of the giants)²¹

²⁰ This is the channel located between Tiburon Island and the mainland.

²¹ He was also known simply as **Iimox**, compared to the rock oyster *Spondylus calcifer* because of his imperviousness to blows; he was a renowned gambler.

- g. **Hast Ctam cop**
 mountain man/male the.VT
 ‘Cerro Macho’
Male Mountain (Cabeza de Caballo, on San Esteban Island)²²
- h. **Hast Cmaam cop**
 mountain woman/female the.VT
 ‘Cerro Hembra’
Female Mountain (a peak on San Esteban Island)
- i. °**Azoj Canoj**° °**Hant Ifii**° **Caa** **quij**
 star morning SN-UO.pass.by the.CM
 ‘Estrella que Pasa en la Mañana’
Star that Passes in the Morning (Venus)
- j. °**Azoj Canoj**° **Imátax** **quij**
 star SN-N-go the.CM
 ‘Estrella que No Se Mueve’
Star that Doesn’t Move [North Star, Polaris]
- k. **Azoj Yeen oo Caap** **quij**
 star 3P-face DL SN-stand the.CM
 ‘Estrella que Va Primero’
Star that Goes First [Aldebaran, the first to appear in the morning]

There may be no overt head noun in the name, and so the deverbal noun that is head of the relative clause may in essence be the head of the construction (see §4.3.4). This deverbal noun may be the subject-oriented form (§14.1) and the noun which precedes it (if any) may be the direct object of that verb.

- (12) a. **Hant Caai** **quij**
 land/world SN-TR-make the.CM
 ‘Creador del Mundo’
Maker of the World (the Creator in the traditional Seri belief system)
- b. **Cozáctim** **quih**
 SN-UO-intercept the.FL
 ‘El que Corta el Paso’
Interceptor (the star Canopus)

²² The designations **ctam** *male* and **cmaam** *female* in these situations typically refers to the profile of the item; a taller item is “male” and a wider, less tall item is “female”.

- (14) a. **Haxöl** **Iihom** **hac**
 multicolored.clam(s) 3P-AON-lie the.LC
 ‘Donde Están las Almejas Piedreras’ [El Desemboque]
Where the Multicolored Clams Are [El Desemboque]
- b. **Ool** **Quih An Ihíp** **hac**
 organpipe.cactus the.FL 3P.in 3P-AON-stand the.LC
 ‘Donde Está La Pitaya’ [un lugar]
Where the Organpipe Cactus Is [a place]
- c. **Hant** **Coox Ipáho** **hac**
 land/world all 3P-AON-Pv-see the.LC
 ‘Lugar Donde Se Ve Todo’ [un lugar]
Place Where Everything is Seen [a place]
- d. **Miist Caal** **Quih An °Hacx Imíh°** **hac**
 cat companion²⁵ the.FL 3P.in apart 3P-AON-not.be.FL²⁶ the.LC
 ‘Donde Se Perdió el Gato Compañero’ [un lugar]
Where the Companion Cat Was Lost [a place]
- e. **Pnaacoj Cacösxaj** **Quih Hapx Ihíp** **hac**
 mangrove SN-tall/long the.FL outside 3P-AON-stand the.LC
 ‘Donde Aparece Pnaacoj Cacösxaj’ [cierto lugar en el mar que uno
 encuentra por ver cierta cosa en tierra firme]
Where Pnaacoj Cacösxaj Appears [a certain place in the sea which one
 locates by seeing a certain item on the mainland]
- f. **°Hant Caalajc°** **Ipápjö** **quih**
 who.are.giving.birth 3P-AON-Pv-illuminate the.FL
 ‘Con Que Se Iluminan Las que Dan a Luz’ [Aldebarán]
With Which Those Giving Birth Are Given Light [Aldebaran, said to be
 giving light to **Cmaamc** as the women in that constellation are giving
 birth]
- g. **Queeto** **yao** **cop**
 Aldebaran 3P-AON-UO.pass.by the.VT
 ‘Cuando Pasa Queeto’ [el mes que corresponde a octubre]
When Queeto Passes [referring to the visibility of the star Aldebaran;
 the month corresponding to October]

²⁵ More specifically, this is the youngest child of a pregnant woman who, in some sense, will be the companion of the child who is yet to be born.

²⁶ This expression, literally *not be somewhere* (with a reanalyzed negative), usually means *die*, but consultants indicated that here it means *to be lost*.

- h. **Hee yaao cop**
 3P-AON-UO.pass.by the.VT
 ‘Cuando Pasa Hee’ [el mes que corresponde a noviembre]
When Hee Passes [referring to the visibility of the star **Hee**, the antelope jackrabbit; the month corresponding to November]
- i. **Naapxa yaao cop**
 3P-AON-UO.pass.by the.VT
 ‘Cuando Pasa Naapxa’ [el mes que corresponde a diciembre]
When Naapxa Passes [referring to the visibility of the star **Naapxa**, the turkey vulture; the month corresponding to December]

The next group has a deverbal noun but there is no explicit subject/possessor present in the phrase.

- (15) a. **An Icatázatoj hac**
 3P.in 3P-AON-US-cut.into.strips.Pl the.LC
 ‘Donde Se Cortó (Carne) en Tiras’ [campamento en la isla Tiburón]
Where (Meat) Was Cut Into Strips [a camp on Tiburon Island]
- b. **Zaaj Tomcáçōatim An Iicom hac**
 cave RL-N-US-cover.up-IMPF 3P.in 3P-AON-US-lie the.LC
 ‘Cueva en que Uno Se Acuesta Sin Cobija’ [en la isla Tiburón]
Cave in which One Lies without a Blanket [on Tiburon Island]
- c. **icatóomec²⁷ caacoj cop** d. **icatóomec heequē cop**
 Sunday/week SN-big the.VT Sunday/week small the.VT
 ‘domingo’ ‘sábado’
Sunday Saturday²⁸

The head of the noun phrase may be a possessed noun. The possessor precedes this noun (see §8.3).

- (16) a. **Hast Yeen hac**
 mountain 3P-face the.LC
 ‘Cara de Cerro’
Mountain’s Face [a camp on Tiburon Island]

²⁷ The form **icatóomec** is the oblique-oriented deverbal noun of $\sqrt{\text{icatóomec}}$ *be Sunday*, which is a borrowing from Spanish *domingo* via the UtoAztecan language O’odham (David Shaul, p.c.). The form **icatóomec** itself is primarily used for the meaning *week* now, but may also mean *Sunday*. The expressions **icatóomec caacoj** and **icatóomec heequē** are both archaic.

²⁸ The other days of the week do not have Seri names.

- b. **Coftécöl lifa cop**
 3P-peninsula the.VT
 ‘Península de Coftécöl’
Coftécöl Peninsula [Playa el Escabel, Punta Baja (on San Esteban Island)]
- c. **Caiinim Iyat cop**
 3P-tip the.VT
 ‘Punta de Caiinim’
Caiinim Peak [**Caiinim** is a hill on Tiburon Island]
- d. **Caiinim Inóohcö quij**
 3P-AON-concave the.CM
 ‘Bahía de Caiinim’
Caiinim Bay
- e. **Hast Caacoj quih Iyat cop**
 mountain SN-big the.FL 3P-tip the.VT
 ‘Punta de Cerro Grande’ [Punta Narragansett en la isla Tiburón]
Tip [Peninsula] of Big Mountain [Narragansett Point on Tiburon Island]
- f. **Coníic Yataám hac**
 3P-mountain.pass the.LC
 ‘Paso de Coníic’ [Coníic es un campamento en la isla Tiburón]
Coníic Pass [Coníic is a camp on Tiburon Island]
- g. **Mosníctoj lime hac**
 “red”.sea.turtle 3P-home the.LC
 ‘Hogar de la Caguama Roja’ [cierto lugar en el mar]
Red Sea Turtle’s Home [a certain place in the sea]
- h. **Caay Itajc hac**
 horse 3P-bone-PL the.LC
 Huesos de Caballo [un lugar en la isla Tiburón]
Horse’s Bones [a place on Tiburon Island]
- i. **xnoois iháat iizax cop**²⁹
 eelgrass.see 3P-AON-mature 3P-moon the.VT
 ‘Mes cuando el Grano de Trigo De Mar Madura’ [el mes que corresponde a abril]
Month When the Eelgrass Grain Matures [the month corresponding to April]

²⁹ Some of the names of the months explicitly include the word **iizax** *moon, month*, but others do not.

- j. **iquéetmoj iizax cop**
 sitting.in.shade³⁰ 3P-moon the.VT
 ‘Mes para Sentarse en la Sombra’ [el mes que corresponde a mayo]
Month for Sitting in the Shade [the month corresponding to May]
- k. **imám imám iizax cop**
 3P-fruit 3P-AON-ripe 3P-moon the.VT
 ‘Mes Cuando la Fruta [del Cacto] Madura’ [el mes que corresponde a junio]
Month When the [Cactus] Fruit Is Ripe [the month corresponding to June]
- l. **icóozlajc iizax cop**
 3P-AON-US-UO-pile.up.PL 3P-moon the.VT
 ‘Mes Cuando Uno Amontona (Las Vainas de Mezquite)’ [el mes que
 corresponde a julio]
Month When One Piles Up (Mesquite Beans) [the month corresponding to
 July]
- m. **hant yaail iháat iizax cop**
 land 3P-AON-blue/green 3P-AON-mature 3P-moon the.VT
 ‘Mes Cuando la Vegetación Madura’ [el mes que corresponde a agosto]
Month When The Vegetation Matures [the month corresponding to August]

Some names have a syntactic structure which is unlike what is found in common noun phrases. First, there are examples where the head noun of the name is phrase-final and preceded by other phrases or words — often nouns. This is the most typical construction for names of water holes, camps, etc. which are related to other place names. The head nouns in this construction, underlined below, are unpossessed nouns.

- (17) a. **Caamajoj Zaaj cop**
 cave the.VT
 ‘Cueva Caamajoj’ [cerro con cuevas en la isla San Esteban]
Caamajoj Cave [a hill with caves in it on San Esteban Island]
- b. **Xaaxp Hax hac**
 water the.LC
 ‘Agua Xaaxp’
Xaaxp Water [a place where fresh water is found on Tiburon Island]
- c. **Cozit Hax hac**
 water the.LC
 ‘Agua Cozit’
Cozit Water [a camp and a source of water on Tiburon Island]

³⁰ This form is not readily explained in its relationship to the verb $\sqrt{\text{aquéetmoj}}$ *to sit in the shade*, but the meaning is clear.

- d. **Haas Poot Hax hac**
 mesquite medium-sized water the.LC
 ‘Agua Mezquite Mediano’
Young Mesquite Water [a place where drinking water was found]
- e. **Haat Hax hac**
 limberbush water the.LC
 ‘Agua Torote (*Jatropha cuneata*)’ [un lugar]
Limberbush (Jatropha cuneata)Water [a place]
- f. **Sapc Hax hac**
 water the.LC
 ‘Agua Sapc’
Sapc Water [a place where drinking water was found]
- g. **Naapxa lime Zaaj hac**
 turkey.vulture 3P-home cave the.LC
 ‘Cueva que es Hogar de Zopilote’ [lugar en la isla Tiburón]
Turkey Vulture’s Home Cave [a place on Tiburon Island]
- h. **Pajii Zaaj hac**
 obsidian cave the.LC
 ‘Cueva Pajii’ [una cueva en la isla San Esteban; **Pajii** es un campamento en esa isla]
Pajii Cave [a cave on San Esteban Island; **Pajii** is a camp on that island]
- i. **Pajii °Hant Ipzx° com**
 obsidian gulch the.Hz
 ‘Arroyo Pajii’
Pajii Gulch (Muerte_Côquimaxp_51)
- j. **Confic Xtaasi quij**
 estuary the.CM
 ‘Estero Confic’ [**Confic** es un campamento en la isla Tiburón]
Confic Estuary [**Confic** is a camp on Tiburon Island]
- k. **Hant licot Conttâca Toii Hant**
 land/place 3P-between 3IO-AW-RL-US-move elsewhere land/place
Cöicáap Hast cop
 3IO-3P-AON-US-stand mountain the.VT
 ‘Cerro en el Canal Donde Uno Pasa para Ir Más Allá’ [isla Las Ánimas]
Mountain at the Channel Where One Passes Through to Go Farther On
 [Las Ánimas Island]

- l. **Hastóxl Iix Icahéme hac**
 3P-water camp the.LC
 ‘Campamento Agua de Hastóxl’
Hastóxl Water Camp [an old camp near El Desemboque]
- m. **Xeecös Yaiij com**
 dune/shoal the.Hz
 ‘Bajo (Banco de Arena) Xeecös’ [cerca del lugar llamado **Xeecös**]
Xeecös Shoal [near the place named **Xeecös**]

Whereas the preceding examples have the head noun at the end of the name, the following represent a less common type which has the head noun at the beginning of the name. The second part sometimes has no known etymology; when it is a meaningful word, it may vaguely indicate something that was or is salient about the place.

- (18) a. **Hast Otiipa cop**
 mountain the.VT
 ‘Cerro Otiipa’
Mount Otiipa [Patos Island]
- b. **Hast Pizal cop**
 mountain the.VT
 ‘Cerro Pizal’
Mount Pizal [Puertecitos, B.C.]
- c. **Hast Xpos cop**
 mountain pack.rat the.VT
 ‘Cerro Rata Nopalera’
Pack Rat Mountain [a place where there are lots of pack rats]
- d. **Hast Moxet cop**
 mountain (a kind of soft white rock) the.VT
 ‘Cerro Moxet’
Mount Moxet [a place where this kind of white rock (unidentified) is found]
- e. **Caail° Hatni com**
 dry.lake.bed woodpecker the.Hz
 ‘Playa Carpintero del Desierto’
Woodpecker Dry Lake Bed
- f. **Azoj Cmique cop**
 star person/Seri the.VT
 ‘Estrella Persona’ [la constelación que es el cazador de los animales en la constelación **Hapj**’
Person Star [the constellation that is the hunter of the animals in the constellation **Hapj**]
- g. **Hast Haquim cop**
 mountain whale the.VT
 ‘Cerro Ballena’ [Punta Perro, en la isla Tiburón]
Whale Mountain [Perro Point, on Tiburon Island]

Extremely rarely, a name may be a juxtaposition of nouns or other words whose relationship is not readily explained, a meaningful translation is not forthcoming, and where neither is very obviously the head.

- (19) a. **Comítin Oot hac**
 ironwood.tree coyote the.LC
 (un lugar) (a place)
- b. **Hast Cmiique**
 mountain person/Seri
 (espíritu principal en las creencias de los habitantes de la isla San Esteban)
 (chief spirit in the beliefs of the inhabitants of San Esteban Island)
- c. **Hant Hasóoma**
 land shade.shelter
 (el ser que creó la primera persona seri y que era dueño de todos los animales)
 (the being who created the first Seri and who was owner of all the animals)³¹
- d. **azoj imal cmizj cop**
 star SN-TR-N-accompany SN-well.formed the.VT
 (el mes que corresponde a enero; no hay estrella que acompaña la luna)
 (the month that corresponds to January; there is no star accompanying the moon)
- e. **azoj imal icózim quih ano caap cop**
 star SN-TR-N-accompany 3P-AON-hot.weather the.FL 3P.in SN-stand the.VT
 (el mes que corresponde a septiembre; no hay estrella que acompaña la luna durante esta temporada de calor)
 [the month that corresponds to September; there is no star accompanying the moon during this time of hot weather]

Occasionally a Spanish word or phrase has been incorporated into a place name, either quite directly (through an overheard comment?) in the case of **Laletíro** below, or through a loanword that had already been taken into the language in the case of **Masána** below.

- (20) a. **Laletíro hac**
 < Spanish *Dale tiro*. ('Shoot it.')
- (un lugar al norte de Desemboque) [a place north of El Desemboque]

³¹ It is not known why this being has this name, except perhaps because it extended protection.

- b. **Masáanaj hac**
 < Spanish *damajuana* (demijohn, a kind of large bottle), pluralized with –j
 ‘Damijuanas’ [un lugar al oeste de Punta Sargento]
Demijohns [a place west of Punta Sargento]
- c. **Saráapitaj hac**
 < Spanish *sarape* (a blanket), pluralized with suffix –taj
 ‘Sarapes’ [un lugar en la isla Tiburón]
Blankets [a location on Tiburon Island]

Some names are obviously derived historically from combinations of common noun and modifiers, but some consonant or vowel has been lost or shortened.³²

- (21) a. **Hezitmísoj quij** < **heezitim** *settlement*, **isoj** *true*
 ‘Poblado Verdadero’ [Hermosillo]
True Settlement [Hermosillo]³³
- b. **Xpanoháx hac** < **xepe** *sea*, **ano** *in, from*, **hax** (*fresh*) *water*
 ‘Agua Dulce en Agua Salada’ [Puerto Libertad]
Fresh Water in Sea Water [Puerto Libertad]
- c. **cayajzáac cop** < **caayaj** *traveling (sea turtles)*, **zaac** *small*
 ‘Viajeros Pequeños’ [el mes que corresponde a febrero]
Small Travelers [the month that corresponds to February]
- d. **Xpatácl hac** < **xepe** *sea*, **itácl** 3P-surface
 ‘Superficie del Mar’ [un lugar]
Surface of the Sea [a place]
- e. **Yecmíhom hac** < **yequim** Yaqui, **iihom** 3P-AON-lie
 ‘Donde Está el Yaqui’ [un lugar en la Sierra Bacatete, cerca de Guaymas]
Where the Yaqui Is [a place in the Bacatete mountains, near Guaymas]

A name, like some common nouns themselves, may be composed of a noun and the combining form of an adjectival predicate. (These adjectival forms are not independent words and many times do not have the same vowel as the roots of the corresponding independent words (see §13.5.6).)

- (22) a. **Hastáacoj cop** < **hast** *mountain*, **-aacoj** *big*
 ‘Cerro Grande’
Big Mountain [Turner’s Island]
- b. **Hasíxp hac** < **haas** *mesquite*, **-ixp** *white*
 ‘Mezquite Blanco’
White Mesquite [a location]

³² The decisions to write some compounds as separate words and others as single words were not always based on clear phonological data. Phrases and compounds are not distinguished by stress patterns in Seri.

³³ The capital of the state of Sonora.

- c. **Hastíctoj hac** < **hast** mountain, **-ictoj** red
‘Cerro Rojo’ [un lugar]
Red Mountain [a location]
- d. **Hastísol hac** < **hast** mountain, **-isol** yellow
‘Cerro Amarillo’ [un lugar]
Yellow Mountain [a location]
- e. **Yaijíspoj hac** < **yaiij** shoal, **-ispoj** spotted
‘Bajo (Banco de Arena) Pintado’
Spotted Shoal [a shoal]
- f. **Ihamoquíxp com** < **ihámoc** its night, **-ixp** white
‘Noche Blanca’ [Vía Láctea]
White Night [Milky Way]
- g. **cayajáacoj cop** < **caayaj** traveling (sea turtles), **-aacoj** big
‘Viajeros Grandes’ [el mes que corresponde a marzo]
Large Travelers [the month that corresponds to March]
- h. **Caillipoláacoj com** < **caail**^o dry lake bed, **-ipol** black, **-aacoj** big
‘Playa Negra Grande’ [una playa en el desierto al norte de Puerto Peñasco]
Big Black Dry Lake Bed [a dry lake bed north of Puerto Peñasco]
- i. **Taijícösxaj hac** < **itáaij** shoreline, **-iicösxaj** long, tall
‘Línea de la Playa Larga’ [un lugar en la isla Tiburón]
Long Shoreline [a place on Tiburon Island]
- j. **Hastísel cop** < **hast** mountain, **-isel** gray
‘Cerro Gris’ [el cerro en la Punta Sargento]
Gray Mountain [the hill at Punta Sargento]

15.3 Excursus into ethnonyms and language names

Ethnonyms and the names of ancestral groups in Seri are common nouns or noun phrases based on common nouns; they pass all the tests for common nouns mentioned earlier.³⁴

- (23) a. **cmiique** (sg.), **comcáac**³⁵ (pl.) ‘seri, seris’
Seri, Seris
- b. **cocsar** (sg./pl.) ‘mexicano(s) no indígena(s)’
non-Indian Mexican(s)
- c. **hapats** (sg.), **hapatsoj** (pl.) ‘apache, apaches’
Apache, Apaches

³⁴ Following Spanish orthographic tradition, such names are written with lower case in Seri. It should be noted that these are all nouns referring to people; they are not adjectives.

³⁵ The word **comcáac** in some limited contexts may refer to just any people, but it is most commonly used and understood as referring only to the Seri people. When speaking generically about people today, the expression used is **xiica (quih) quiistox**^o *things that have life* (singular form, **ziix (quih) quiisax**). (The presence of the intervening definite article varies by context.)

- d. **yequim**³⁶ (sg.), **yectz** (pl.) ‘yaqui, yaquis’
Yaqui, Yaquis
- e. **hapáy** (sg.) ‘persona de la etnia o’odham’
O’odham person
- f. **maricáana** (sg.), **maricáanaj** (pl.) ‘norteamericano, norteamericanos’
*American, Americans*³⁷
- g. **†casópin**³⁸ (sg.) ‘español’
Spaniard
- h. **xnaamótat** (pl.) ‘los seris que vivían en el área de Guaymas en tiempos anteriores’
*the Seris who lived near Guaymas in earlier times*³⁹

Such nouns do not occur as simple modifiers in larger noun phrases in Seri; hence one cannot say *the American government*, *a Seri boat* or *the Punta Chueca road* except less directly, such as *a boat owned by a Seri person*, and *the road to leading to Punta Chueca*.⁴⁰

The names of various other bands, clans, or groups of people are phrases. The following example has a prepositional phrase preceding the nominal head, which is not common in ordinary noun phrases in Seri (see chapter 22).

- (24) [**Caail**^o **iti**]_{PP} **ctamcö**
San.Bartolo.Playa 3P-on man-PL
‘hombres de la playa San Bartolo’
San Bartolo Playa men

It is far more common for a postpositional phrase to be associated with a verb, including the

³⁶ See Appendix A.

³⁷ Another common expression for *American* is **ziix xepe iti quih** (thing sea 3P-on SN-be.FL), plural **xiica xepe iti coii**. It reportedly refers to the fact that the first Americans arrived to the Seri area by boat.

³⁸ See Appendix B.

³⁹ This was Band V as described first in E. Moser (1963). While the dictionary committee decided to write this as one word yet with a long vowel in the first syllable, it is quite obviously composed of the word **xnaa**, meaning *south* in various expressions, and the word **motat**, which is a plural conjugated form of the verb **moca** *come*. The word is a bit odd; whereas one would expect **mocat** *those who come from*, the form **motat** *they were coming from* appears instead.

⁴⁰ That having been said, I should also point out that the phrase **NACION COMCAAC** (‘Seri nation’, using the Spanish word for ‘nation’) occurs on the officially registered flag of the Seri nation. This flag was shown to me on November 22, 2005. I have also observed a slight amount of accommodation to the insistence by English- and Spanish-speakers to form such constructions when Seris are speaking Spanish.

Ethnonyms occur with a possessed noun (most commonly **iitom** *with which s/he speaks*, an action/oblique-oriented deverbal form of $\sqrt{\text{aaitom}}$ *speak*, see §14.4, but also sometimes **iimx** *with which s/he tells*, a parallel deverbal form of $\sqrt{\text{amx}}$ *tell*) to form the name of a language.⁴⁷

- | | | | | |
|------|----|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| (28) | a. | cocsar non-Indian Mexican | iitom 3P-AON-speak | ‘español, lengua española’ <i>Spanish (language)</i> |
| | b. | cmiique person/Seri | iitom 3P-AON-speak | ‘lengua seri’ <i>Seri (language)</i> |
| | c. | cmiique person/Seri | iimx 3P-AON-say | ‘lengua seri’ <i>Seri (language)</i> |
| | d. | maricáana American | iitom 3P-AON-speak | ‘inglés, lengua inglesa’ <i>English (language)</i> ⁴⁸ |

The preceding forms are common; it should be noted that the singular name of the group occurs with a nominalized form of the verb which goes with a singular subject. The construction is productive: the expression for French language is **fransés iitom**. When the name of the Seri dictionary was being proposed, however, the Seri editorial committee decided on **Comcáac quih Yaza quih Hant Ihíip Hac** *the meaning of the Seri people’s speech*, where **comcáac quih yaza** is composed of a plural noun (**comcáac**, *Seri people*), and a nominalized form of the suppletive plural form of the verb for speaking ($\sqrt{\text{ooza}}$), plus the intervening definite article **quih**.

Simply the word **cmiique** (person/Seri) typically occurs with the verb $\sqrt{\text{ii}}$ *to hear*, as in **¡Cmiique hxii!** *I really know the Seri language!* (literally, *I hear Seri!*), which usually is taken to mean speak it as well as understand it.

15.4 Names for individuals

Seri people today utilize official names that closely follow Mexican Spanish structure: first given name, second given name, first last name (from father), second last name (from mother). This topic is not explored here.⁴⁹

Seri children are generally given a baby name when they are very young, usually by their

⁴⁷ The last vowel of the ethnic group name is often elided; thus the expression for English is commonly heard as **maricáan iitom**. It should be noted that these expressions are noun phrases referring to the languages; they are not adjectives.

⁴⁸ In 2008 the phrase **ziix xepe iti quiih iitom** was also overheard in reference to English. See note 37 in this chapter.

⁴⁹ The transfer and use of surnames in Seri culture did not follow Mexican custom until relatively recently. In earlier times, surnames within a family did not follow any obvious rule.

parents. (The Seri name for this kind of name is **ihacáalim** what one plays with.) This name generally ceases to be used at about the time of puberty unless it is not embarrassing. Not everyone may address the child with this name, and certainly not later on in life. A spouse may not know the baby name of his or her partner. These names may be based on baby talk and they may be descriptive. They may be modified versions of the same, changing some sounds into the lateral fricative, for example, as a kind of baby talk. For the most part, they are not considered public information and so they are not presented in detail here. The structure of these names may be similar to that used for outsiders (see below) like *Who Walks Like a (certain animal)*, or *Whose Ears Are (certain characteristic)*. Such names are generally not used directly to a person. Some childhood names include:

- (29) a. **Inóosj** 3P-fingernail ('Uña', *Fingernail*)
 b. **Tzocoláate** (< Spanish chocolate; so named because of the color of his skin)
 c. **Hataáp Coha** ABS-mucus 3IO-SN-be_{Irreg} ('Quien Tiene Resfriado', *Who Has a Cold*)
 d. **Toohit Imcám** RL-UO-eat SN-N-full ('Come Pero No Está Lleno', *Eats But Isn't Full*)
 e. **Iyocáfz** 3:3-DT-bite ('Lo Mordió', *S/he Bit It*)
 f. **Lapisiim** (baby talk < **saráapi cazíim** *blanket* SN-pleasant)
 g. **Tosni Cöcatax** pelican 3IO-SN-go ('Quien Anda Como Pelicano', *Who Goes Like a Pelican*)
 h. **Isla Cöcahémej** 3P-outer.ear 3IO-SN-sail ('Quien Zarpa con su Oreja', *Who Sails With His/Her Ear*)
 i. **Yeen Captj** 3P-face SN-wide ('Cara Ancha', *Wide Face*)
 j. **Copas** ('Madreperla', *Pearl Oyster*; so named because the child's teeth appeared in the gums like little pearl oysters)⁵⁰
 k. **Papxoj** (related to the verb $\sqrt{\text{apxoj}}$ blow, as he reacted in a cute way when someone would blow in his ear).
 l. **Tiiso** (< Spanish mestizo)

Other nicknames may be coined later during one's youth. These are typically common nouns, verbs, or phrases. These may last for a lifetime, or they may be dropped in favor of the simple Spanish given name. The structure of names is discussed in more detail below.

⁵⁰ This example is from C. Marlett (2003).

Examples provided by Moser (2003)⁵¹ (where explanations for the nicknames are given) include most of those given in (30) (the translations are slightly less literal than others given in this section) which demonstrate the same variety of formations as described for place names shown above. Similar nicknames are given to pets. Of course, there is much more to write about the anthropological aspects of naming in Seri culture, including the role of taboo and resulting changes to the lexicon, although not here.⁵² Important or memorable figures in Seri history also have special names, and it is unlikely that they were their childhood nicknames, although in some cases that may be true.

- (30) a. **Cöquimáxp** ('Rosa Clara', *Light Pink*) [a small pink-skinned man killed in a famous attack by a sea monster on a group of people traveling on reed balsas]⁵³
- b. **Hapétlá** ('Impenetrable', *Who Was Impenetrable*) [an infamous man from Seri history]
- c. **Cmaam Quiscáma** ('Mujer que Tenía Balsa', *Woman Who Had a Reed Boat*) [a woman whose behavior was like a man's in some ways]
- d. **Coyote Iguana**⁵⁴ [a famous Seri leader, husband of the kidnapped Lola Casanova]⁵⁵
- e. **Juan Colovís** [a notorious killer from the past]⁵⁶
- f. **Hant Ihúisax** (Vida de la Tierra, *Earth's Life*) [a notorious killer from the past]⁵⁷
- g. **Ziix Coojoj** (Cosa Baja, *Short Thing*) [one of the notorious gang called **ctamcö catl** wild men]

The following names are names used for outsiders.⁵⁸ These names are more likely to be straightforward and descriptive. Like Seri nicknames, they may include Spanish words. They are

⁵¹ M. Moser (2003). Various examples in this chapter are cited from this unpublished work.

⁵² These topics were touched on in M. Moser (2003).

⁵³ See the Muerte_Cöquimáxp text.

⁵⁴ Coyote Iguana is from Spanish, of course. One consultant said that this name arose because he would turn himself into a coyote or an iguana as he was being shot at by Mexican soldiers.

⁵⁵ See Lowell (1970).

⁵⁶ Consultants suggested that the name Colovís was originally Galavís.

⁵⁷ The name is not easy to explain, but somehow this person was committing such atrocities that the life of the Earth itself was being affected, according to one consultant.

⁵⁸ Many of these examples are also from Moser (2003).

usually not meant to give offense, and they may be used directly.

- (31) Names related to a physical characteristic
- a. **Ilít Ctocnij** ('Cabeza Redonda', *Round Head*) [a certain American]
 - b. **Naapxa Iif** ('Nariz de Zopilote', *Turkey Vulture Nose*) [a certain Mexican]
 - c. **Yax Caacoj** ('Panza Grande', *Big Belly*) [a certain Mexican]
 - d. **Moosni Ilít** ('Cabeza de Caguama', *Turtle Head*) [Edward Moser; so named because of the buzz haircut with which he arrived in 1951]
 - e. **Itéen Csaamij** ('Boca Chueca', *Crooked Mouth*)
 - f. **Maricáana Cacösxaj** ('Norteamericano Alto', *Tall American*) [Alexander Russell]
 - g. **Ilít Cozázni** ('Cabello Enredado', *Tangled Hair*) [Scott Ryerson]
 - h. **Maricáana Quimáaxat** ('Norteamericano Gris Parduzco', *Gray/brown American*) [Some say this was the first American to visit the Seris, a person not yet identified with certainty historically; his skin — or his clothing — was neither very white nor very dark.]
 - i. **Ctam Inol Caaitic** ('Hombre con Dedos Blandos', *Man With Soft Fingers*) [a certain American who had no bones in his thumbs]
 - j. **Insítjc Cooxp** ('Escápula Blanca', *White Shoulder Blade*) [William Smith]
- (32) Name related to something the person did or had happen to him, or a behavior
- a. **Santiago Rocoö** ('Santiago Loco', *Crazy Jim*) [James Hills]
 - b. **Cmaam Coostim** ('Mujer que Canta/Cantaba', *Singing Woman*) [Mary Moser; she had memorized a Seri song before first visiting the area]
 - c. **Aal Cöhcázit** ('Cuya Esposa Le Fue Raptada', *Whose Wife Was Abducted from Him*) [David Burckhalter]⁵⁹
 - d. **Ctam Hehe Iyat Ctamtim** ('Hombre que Cortaba las Puntas de las Plantas', *Plant Tip Picker Man*) [botanist Richard S. Felger]
 - e. **Maricáana Coojöquim** (*Barking American*) [Edward H. Davis,⁶⁰ so named because he would bark like a dog as he threw pyrotechnic material into a campfire in order to impress the Seris]

⁵⁹ See the explanation for the name in Burckhalter (1999:10-11).

⁶⁰ Davis (1862-1951) collected material for American museums and visited the Seri people in the 1920s and 1930s. His field notes, papers, and photographs may be found at the Huntington Free Library (Cornell

- f. **Hant Coáaxoj** ('Camaleón Cornudo', *Horned Lizard*) [Gary Nabhan, researcher of reptiles]
 - g. **Luis Queenelim** ('Luis que Gritaba', *Luis the Yeller*) [a certain Mexican who spoke very loudly]
 - h. **Siip Imitóm** ('Joven Sin Dinero', *Young Man Without Money*) [Richard White, who first visited the area as a college student and didn't buy much]
 - i. **Cmaacoj Hap** ('Anciano Venado Bura', *Old Man Mule Deer*) [a certain American]
 - j. **Maricáana Tzampú** ('Norteamericano Champú', *American Shampoo*) [a certain American; the second word is not a loanword in Seri]
- (33) Name related to something the person said
- a. **Uno No Más** (*Just One*, from Spanish) [Kenneth Moorhead]
 - b. **Apaz Apaz** (*His Grandfather His Grandfather*) [Dr. Irving Davis; the name is a repetition of the word for his paternal grandfather; this person's grandfather was **Maricáana Coojõquim**.]
 - c. **Cmaacoj No Poom** (*Old Man "no bumps"*) [a certain American who drove carefully; note the inclusion of Spanish "no"]
 - d. **Ya Se Van** (*They Are Already Going*, from Spanish) [a Mexican store-keeper's assistant]

M. Moser (2003) also reports that "[o]ne of the former naming customs of the Seri people gives a clue to the ancestral area of a man and his family on his father's side. A male dog claimed by a man was usually given the name of a certain mountain or location in the ancestral area of the owner. The owner of such a dog is called 'the father of —' (dog's geography-based name)." Examples (with explanations from M. Moser 2003):

- (34) a. **Camota quih ai**
 the.FL 3P-father.ME
 'Padre de Camota' [Manuel Encinas]
 Camota's father [**Camota** was the name of Manuel Encinas' dog, named for a mountain near Pozo Peña, part of Encina's ancestral area.]

- b. **Hast Haquim quih ai**
 ‘Padre de Hast Haquim’ [Antonio Herrera]
Hast Haquim’s father [**Hast Haquim** was Antonio Herrera’s dog, named for a mountain on Tiburon Island.]
- c. **Xaasj Ihámoc quih ai**
 ‘Padre de Xaasj Ihámoc’ [Santiago Blanco]
Xaasj Ihámoc’s father [**Xaasj Ihámoc** was Santo Blanco’s dog, named for an area known by that name because of a large number of sahuoso cactus (**xaasj**) found there.]

This pattern also appears in the name of an American (David Yetman) who came to the area to visit with his very large and impressive dog: **Haxz Caacoj quih Ai** (dog SN-big the.FL 3P-father.ME).

15.5 Embellishment

In some cases, a common noun or noun phrase may precede the name and so “embellish” it.⁶¹ (The construction consisting of noun as embellishment plus name is not always easily distinguished from noun plus name used as integrated appositive; see §15.6 below.)

The use of **cmaacoj** *old man* before a name shows respect, as does **cmiique** *Seri person*, the latter being apparently more respectful than the former and also less indicative of age. The word **cmiique** is used with names of men; before names of women it is more common to use **cmiique cmaam** *Seri woman*. Some examples include the following:

- (35) a. **cmiique Roberto**
 person/Seri
Seri Roberto
- b. **comcáii Sara**
 old.woman
Doña Sara
- c. **cmaacoj Antonio**
 old.man
Don Antonio
- d. **cocsar Luis**
 non-Indian.Mexican
Luis the Mexican
- e. **heezitim caacoj Guadalajara quij**
 city the.CM
 ‘la ciudad de Guadalajara’
the city of Guadalajara

⁶¹ Some of these examples are from M. Moser (2003). The term “embellish” comes from Huddleston and Pullum (2002:520).

- f. **haxz Yoodli**
 dog
 ‘el perro **Yoodli**’
the dog Yoodli [or **Yoorli**, or **Yooli**, reportedly the first dog, a female, which lived on Tiburon Island; some say it was brought by **Maricána Quimáaxat**]⁶²

There are culturally important kinds of embellishments that require more explanation. These are expressions before a name to indicate that the person is deceased. The simplest type (but perhaps the least used) is the simple noun **ziix** before the name, with a demonstrative: **ziix Pedro ticom** (thing Pedro MD-Hz). If the person in question died a long time back in history, the expression is more elaborate:

- (36) a. **ziix cmiique caii ctam Andrés**
 thing person/Seri mature man
 ‘difunto Andrés (desde hace mucho tiempo)’
long ago deceased Seri male Andrés RRR
- b. **ziix cmiique caii cmaam Luisa**
 thing person/Seri mature woman
 ‘difunta Luisa (desde hace mucho tiempo)’
long ago deceased Seri female Luisa RRR

If the deceased was a very old and frail person at the time of death:

- (37) a. **ziix ctam Porfirio** b. **ziix cmaam María**
 thing man thing woman
 ‘difunto anciano Porfirio’ ‘difunta anciana María’
deceased old man Porfirio *deceased old woman María*

If the deceased was an adult, prototypically married and perhaps even a grandparent:

- (38) a. **ziix caaixaj Roberto**
 thing SN-strong
 ‘difunto Roberto’
deceased adult Roberto RRR
- b. **ziix caaixaj quipnáail Ramóna**
 thing SN-strong SN-HAVE-skirt
 ‘difunta Ramona’
deceased adult Ramona RRR

⁶² Edward Moser’s notes (n.d., probably in the 1960’s), corroborated and expanded by Efraín Estrella and María Luisa Astorga on November 23, 2005.

If the deceased was a child, a youth, a young person, a young adult in his or her prime, or even someone who was older but unmarried:

- (39) a. **ziix cmotómn Pedro**
 thing SN-weak
 ‘difunto joven Pedro’
deceased young person Pedro
- b. **ziix cmotómn quipnáail María**
 thing SN-weak SN-HAVE-skirt
 ‘difunta jovencita María’
deceased María

If the deceased was a newborn: **ziix quixpaj** (thing SN-soft [like gelatin]). In this case the child would not have received a name yet, and so no name would be used with the phrase.

The embellishment or the integrated appositive construction (see §15.6) may be the source for an emerging construction in which a common noun precedes a name as an “appellation”.⁶³

- (40) a. **Quihéhe Molina** ‘Gobernador Molina’, *Governor Molina* (where Molina is a last name)
- b. **Quihéhe Saúl** ‘Gobernador Saúl’, *Governor Saúl* (where Saúl is a first name)
- c. **hermáano Manuel** ‘hermano Manuel’, *brother Manuel* (referring to a male believer in the Christian faith)⁶⁴
- d. **hermáana María** ‘hermana María’, *sister María* (referring to a female believer in the Christian faith)

15.6 Names as appositive modifiers

Names may be used in a DP as integrated appositives⁶⁵ and may be either semantically restrictive or nonrestrictive. The name is intonationally not separate from the common noun. Each is contrasted below with a different construction—considered much more natural when two names are involved—in which the name comes first and is followed by an appositional noun phrase set off with a slight intonational break.

⁶³ Huddleston and Pullum (2002:519).

⁶⁴ This example and the following are, of course, borrowings from Spanish, used with great frequency in the church in the Seri villages. As shown above, the plural form **hermáanoj** is used for mixed groups as well as all male groups.

⁶⁵ On integrated appositives, see Huddleston and Pullum (2002:447).

- (46) a. **heezitim caacoj [Jericó hapáh] qui**
 city SN-big SN-PV-say the.CM
 ‘la ciudad de Jericó’
the city of Jericho (Lk 18:35)
- b. **cmiique caii [Oficj Cooil hapáh] quih**
 Seri mature 3P-ON-wear.shirt SN-blue/green SN-PV-say the.FL
 ‘el adulto seri llamado “Camisa Azul/Verde”’
the adult Seri man named “Blue/Green Shirt” (Muerte_Cöquimaxp_26.1)
- c. **hant [Galilea hapáh] hac**
 land/place SN-PV-say the.LC
 ‘el lugar llamado Galilea’
the land of Galilee (Mt 2:22)

This construction may also occur without the head noun, resulting in a construction where the name appears immediately followed by **hapáh**.

- (47) a. [**Coftécööl ifa hapáh] quih**
 San.Esteban.Island 3P-pensinsula SN-PV-say the.VT
 ‘el lugar llamado “Punta de Coftécööl”’
the (place) called “Coftécööl Peninsula” (Muerte_Cöquimaxp_31)
- b. [**Heesam Yapóticol hapáh] hac**
 seahorse 3P-AON-duck.a.blow-IMPV SN-PV-say the.LC
 ‘el lugar llamado “Donde el Hipocampo Eludió”’
the (place) called “Where Seahorse Ducked” (Hipocampo_10.3)

15.7 Nominals in vocative function

When a nominal is used in a vocative function, it is always presented without a definite article. In this way it is systematically different from a definite nominal when it occurs as a verb argument.⁶⁷ This will be illustrated in the examples below.

The kinds of nominals that are used in vocative function in Seri include:

- (48) PERSONAL NAMES: **María, Aurora, Pedro, Xavier, Alfredo.**
- (49) KIN TERMS: **hita** *my mother*, **hiiquet**^o *my child* (of woman), **hoyácalcam** *my brothers and sisters*, although the term may have wider reference to include non-relatives who are friends, **ihyáazi**^o *my child* (ME), **hii** *my father* (ME) [the expression is not commonly used now as a vocative; see **maacoj** below]; terms from Spanish like *apá*, *mamá*, and *nana* (‘grandma’) are also beginning to be used.

⁶⁷ Such a difference is claimed to be universal (Anderson 2004:458).

- (50) GENERAL TERMS: **ctamcö** *men*,⁶⁸ **cmajíc** *women*, **zixquisíil**^o or **quisíil**^o *boy/girl*, **xicaquízíil** *boys/girls*, **hermáanoj** *members of the Christian faith* (male or female).⁶⁹
- (51) OCCUPATIONAL TERMS: **quihéhe** (SN-HAVE-stick) or **quihéhe caacoj** (SN-HAVE-stick SN-big) *governor*; this is not a common type of vocative.⁷⁰
- (52) TERMS OF ENDEARMENT: **cmaacoj** *old man* (referring to husband—even if very young—or father), **comcáii** *old woman* (referring to wife even if very young; *not* used for mother); otherwise this is not a common type; some consultants do not even use the preceding terms in the way described. One person was overheard in 2004 referring to his wife as *mamá*.⁷¹
- (53) SECOND PERSON PRONOUN: Phrases like “you who are inside the house”, where some modifier occurs with the second person pronoun, sometimes occur as vocatives in elicited materials.
- (54) STATUS TERMS: Nothing equivalent to *Sir* or *Señor* exists. If one enters a room and sees a person that the speaker does not recognize, a respectful way to address that person would be **ziix quiisax cmaam hizac iti quiij** (thing SN-have.life female/woman PX-LC 3P-on SN-sit) or **ziix quiisax ctam hizac iti quiij** (thing SN-have.life male/man PX-LC 3P-on SN-sit).
- (55) DEROGATORY TERMS: Certainly there are ways to speak offensively to a person, but the use of terms like “idiot”, “fool”, or worse, etc. is not one of them. Offensive terms may be constructed following the pattern discussed in the following paragraph, but (apparently) they are not used in a vocative function.
- (56) PLAYFUL NAMES AND NICKNAMES: One might use a person’s **ihacáalim** (see §15.2) in a vocative function, if it is not offensive and if one has a proper relationship with the person. A person might also construct a name on the spot for speaking to someone playfully, such as **Iif Caacoj** *Big Nose* (3P-nose SN-big); however, the kin relationship must be a certain one and only women may speak to men this way. Men

⁶⁸ The singular form **ctam** *man* is not commonly used in a vocative function, nor is the singular form **cmaam** *woman*.

⁶⁹ This term usually has been limited to those who are perceived to be members of the particular denomination which exists in the Seri towns, namely the *Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús*.

⁷⁰ Another reported possibility is **ziix quih cōcacóaat** (thing the.FL 3IO-SN-cause.know or **ziix hapáspoj**^o **cōcacóaat** (thing paper 3IO-SN-cause.know) *teacher*, but these are not commonly used since school children are typically taught in Spanish and so use *maestro*, *maestra*. There are no terms in Seri for the occupations of pastor (of the local church), or elder (as in the *Consejo de Ancianos* ‘Council of Elders’); the Spanish terms are used.

⁷¹ The term **hamíigo** (from Spanish *amigo* ‘friend’) is used by Coyote in one story (Pinacate_Coyote 06) in a vocative function as well as referentially (by Coyote) to refer to the stinkbug that was the subject of interest and intended ingestion. The term is not generally used in Seri culture.

cannot speak in this way to men or to women, even in response to such a gesture. A grandfather may address a grandson with a special nickname. Such a nickname may refer to a physical characteristic, but it must not refer to any kind of physical defect. These names are not given or taken offensively. Nicknames for non-Seris may be more frequently used this way. It is reported that within a family, nicknames for the parents often arise through the initial attempts at speech by the eldest child. The nicknames then become used by the other children when speaking to their parents. Such nicknames are often simplifications of a Spanish given name or may simply be a lexification of part of the toddler's speech.

The most common position for vocatives is at the beginning of the sentence, although sentence-final position is quite acceptable. Sentence-medial position seems highly unnatural or ungrammatical to my consultants, however.

- (57) **Hinyáac, hant haa xoofp.**
 1P-older.brother.ME year there EM-arrive
 'Hermano mayor, el año ha terminado.'
Older brother, the year has ended. (Dos_Hermanos_106)
- (58) **Pedro, ¿áz intáho?**
 what? 2sS-RL-see
 'Pedro, ¿qué viste?'
Pedro, what did you see? RRR
- (59) * **¿Áz (-ya), Pedro, intáho?**
 what? QM 2sS-RL-see
 ('¿Qué viste, Pedro?') (*What, Pedro, did you see?*)
- (60) **? Hast hipquij, Lorenzo, ¡hoocta!**
 stone PX-CM IM-look.at
 '¡Mira, Lorenzo, esta piedra!'
*Look, Lorenzo, at this stone!*⁷²
- (61) **¡Moha, hiiquet°!**
 TWD-IM-move my.child
 '¡Ven, mi hijo/a!'
Come, my child! RRR

15.8 Indirect Reference

It is quite common for circumlocutions (or what appear to be such) to be used to refer to people. Circumlocutions are usually considered more respectful than directly mentioning the name of someone (more so when the person is deceased, as explained below, but also when the person is

⁷² This sentence, while not the most felicitous for consultants, was judged to be far better than example (59).

living). They also may replace the simple kinship term that would otherwise be applied.

- (62) a. **him quiiquet** **quij**
 1sDO SN-TR-pregnant.with the.CM
 ‘mi madre’
my mother
- b. **María quih ata** **quih iiquet°** **quij**
 the.FL 3P-mother the.FL her.child the.CM
 ‘el hermano/ la hermana de María’
María’s brother/sister (more literally, *María’s mother’s child*)
- c. **cmaacoj Montaña quih yaazi°** **quih imac** **caap** **cop**
 old.man the.FL his.child the.FL 3P-middle SN-stand the.VT
 ‘el hijo intermedio de Don Montaña’
Don Montaña’s middle child (Moser 2003)

Very specialized noun phrases are used to avoid mention of a name when one is talking about someone who has recently deceased, to show respect for that person as expected in Seri culture.

- (63) a. **ziix °iti miuha°** **cmaam com**
 thing his/her.parent female the.HZ
 ‘su madre fallecida’
her deceased mother (Moser 2003)
- b. **ziix °itléen oáah°** **com**
 thing 3P-palm 3P-ON-put.FL the.HZ
 ‘su hijo/a fallecido’
his/her deceased child (Moser 2003)
- c. **ziix cmotómn ctam com**
 thing SN-weak male the.HZ
 ‘el joven fallecido’
the deceased young man (Moser 2003)
- d. **ziix caaixaj** **com**
 thing SN-strong the.HZ
 ‘la persona fallecida’
the deceased person [person older than speaker] (Moser 2003)