

10. Predicative clauses

Two types of predicative constructions exist: those which have no finite verb and those which contain a copular verb. The verbless construction (§10.1) typically indicates membership in a class; a modal is required in this construction (§10.2). The copular construction (§10.3) has broader uses, both specifying and ascriptive. A basic difference between the verbless construction and the copular construction can be seen by comparing the following examples.

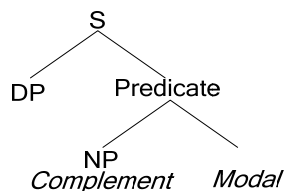
- (1) Verbless construction
Eenim iha.
 metal/knife DCL
 ‘Es un cuchillo.’ (*Es de metal.)
*It is a knife. (*It is metal.)* RMH_09-28-07_161a
- (2) Copular construction RMH_09-28-07_161b
Eenim quih chaa ha.
 metal/knife the.FL SN-EQ DCL
 ‘Es de metal.’ (*Es el/un cuchillo.)
*It is made of metal. (*It is the/a knife.)*
- (3) Copular construction
 ... **tiix hooro quih thaa, ...**
 DDS gold the.FL RL-EQ
 ‘[el anillo] era de oro, ...’
 ... *[the ring] was made of gold, ...*
 (Apostador_279) RMH_05-16-08_21

The verbless clauses are more frequent in the language than one might expect. Many clauses expressed with active verbs in English are commonly expressed in Seri with the verbless construction, with deverbal nouns and (certain) adjectives as the predicate complement (§10.4).

10.1 Verbless clauses

The simplest construction for predicate clauses as main clauses is shown in Figure 10.1 and illustrated by simple example (4).

Figure 10.1: Verbless construction



- (4) Subject Complement Modal
Ctam hipquij **cmiique** **ha.**
 man PX-CM person/Seri DCL
 ‘Este hombre es un seri.’
This man is a Seri. LHC_2-06-07_157

The constituents typically occur in the order shown although the subject can be right-dislocated just like any definite subject (see §3.12).

- (5) **Cmiique ha, ctam hipquij.**
 person/Seri DCL man PX-CM
 ‘Es un seri, este hombre.’
He is a Seri, this man. LHC_2-06-07_158

The modal, however, must follow the predicate complement. Unlike in the case of the complement with a copular verb (§10.3), the complement in the verbless construction cannot be left-dislocated (with or without a focal pronoun, see §16.2.4).

- (6) * **Cmiique, (tiix) ctam hipquij _____ iha.**
 person/Seri DDS man PX-CM DCL
 ‘Este hombre es seri.’ (*This man is a Seri.*)
- (7) * **Cmiique, (tiix) he _____ ha.**
 person/Seri DDS 1PRO DCL
 ‘Soy seri’ (*I am a Seri.*)

The verbless construction is used to discuss permanent, less permanent and even temporary predications (see various other examples below).

- (8) **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) LHC_2-06-07_165a
- (9) **Heesam timoca, tiix °hantx moca° isoj iha.**
 seahorse MD-TWD DDS ancestor 3P-self DCL
 ‘El hipocampo es un verdadero ancestro.’
The seahorse is a true ancestor. (Hipocampo_20)
- (10) °**Ziix cooha**° **cap, tiix °ziix ccam° hant quicáayot iha.**
 cow the.VT DDS animal land SN-go.on.four.feet DCL
 ‘Una vaca es un animal cuadrópedo.’
A cow is a quadruped animal. (Improved from HE 95) LHC_2-06-07_164a

- (11) °**Itléen oo moáah°** **ii** **quih** **ctam** **-ya?**
 your.deceased.child first the.FL male QM
 ‘¿Era hombre tu primogénito (ahora difunto)?’
Was your (now deceased) firstborn child a male? (DS2005, ctam) LHC_2-06-07_165b
- (12) Ø **Hasaj** **iihi.**
 flat.basket PAST
 ‘Era una corita.’
It was a flat basket. (DS2005, iih) LHC_2-06-07_166a
 (In answer to the question, ‘What did you find?’)
- (13) **He** °**ziix quuisax°** **hap** **quicotim** **isoj** **iihi.**
 1PRO person mule.deer SN-kill-IMPF 3P-self PAST
 ‘Yo era un experto cazador de venado bura.’
I used to be a expert mule deer hunter. (Adapted from an overheard claim) LHC_2-06-07_166b

This kind of predicative construction cannot be negated.¹ If negation is to be expressed, an overt copula is required (see §10.3 below).

10.1.1 Restrictions on the complement

There are no restrictions on the subject of the verbless construction: it may be a phrase or a pronoun, overt or not overt. The predicate complement, however, must be a noun phrase (NP, see §8.2); that is, it must be a nominal *without* a determiner. It may be singular or plural.

- (14) **Hipíix** **hast** **iha.**
 DPS stone DCL
 ‘Esta es una piedra.’
This is a stone. RMH_08-14-07_82a
- (15) ¿**Hipíix** **haxöl** **-ya?**
 DPS clam QM
 ‘¿Es éste un “haxöl”?’
Is this one an “haxöl”? LHC_2-06-07_164b
- (16) **Tiix** **cmaam** **iha.**
 DDS woman DCL
 ‘Ella (o, Aquélla) es una mujer.’
She (or, That one) is a woman.
 (HE, p. 3) RMH_08-14-07_82b
- (17) Ø **Zacáam** **iha.**
 young.woman DCL
 ‘Es una jovencita.’
She is a young woman. RMH_08-14-07_82e
- (18) **Juan** **quih** **ctam** **cacösxaj** **iha.**
 the.FL man SN-tall/long DCL
 ‘Juan es un hombre alto.’
Juan is a tall man. RMH_09-28-07_161c

¹ This fact actually follows trivially from the fact that the only way to do negation in the language is through an affix on a finite verb. Since the verbless construction does not have a finite verb, it cannot be negated.

- (19) **Hita** **quih** **cmaam quiipe** **ha.**
 IP-mother the.FL woman SN-good DCL
 ‘Mi madre es buena mujer.’
My mother is a good woman. RMH_09-28-07_161d
- (20) **Hizcoi** **cmajfic** **iha.**
 PX-PL woman/female.PL DCL
 ‘Éstas son hembras / mujeres.’
These are females / women. LHC_2-06-07_163a
- (21) **Hizcoi** **cmajfic** **poho.**
 PX-PL woman/female.PL DOUBT
 ‘Éstas posiblemente son hembras / mujeres.’
These may be females / women. LHC_2-06-07_163a

The complement cannot be a determiner phrase (DP, see §8.1) — neither a typical determiner phrase, nor a name, nor a pronoun. The following examples, well-formed semantically though they may be, are ungrammatical because they have DPs rather than NPs in the complement position.

- (22) * **Ctam hipquij** **cmiique zo** **ha.**
 man PX-CM person/Seri a DCL
 (‘Este hombre es un seri.’) (*This man is a Seri.*)
- (23) * **Hipiix** **hast zo** **ha.**
 DPS stone a DCL
 (‘Esto es una piedra.’) (*This is a stone.*)

The next examples are ill-formed in two ways. They have DPs in the complement position and they seem (through the use of the definite article in some cases) to be attempting to specify a particular individual. They are thus inappropriate for indicating membership in a class.

- (24) * **Hipiix** **hast quij** **iha.** (25) * **Tiix** **cmaam quij** **iha.**
 DPS stone the DCL DDS woman the DCL
 (‘Ésta es la piedra.’) (‘Es la mujer.’)
(This is the stone.) (She (or, That one) is the woman.)
- (26) * **Quihéhe°** **quih** **Pedro Mendoza quih** **ha.**
 ruler the.FL the.FL DCL
 (‘El gobernador (jefe) es Pedro Mendoza.’) /
(The governor (leader) is Pedro Mendoza.)
- (27) * **He** **Pedro Mendoza** **ha.**
 IPRO DCL
 (‘Soy Pedro Mendoza.’) (*I’m Pedro Mendoza.*)

- (28) * **Hant himcac Tahéjōc iha.**
 land DT.LC Tiburón.Island DCL
 ('Esa tierra es la isla Tiburón.) (*That land is Tiburon Island.*)
- (29) * **Tiix iha.** (30) * **¿Me -ya?**
 DDS DCL 2PRO QM
 ('Es aquél.) (*It is that one.*) ('¿Eres tú?) (*Is it you?*)

The class of items which is being predicated may be small, perhaps unique in relationship to another entity. In (31), for example, we do not know if Manuel has more than one child, and he may have only one.

- (31) **He Manuel hapáh quij vaazi° ha.**
 1PRO SN-PV-say the.CM his.child DCL
 'Soy (la) hija / (el) hijo de Manuel.'
I am Manuel's daughter / son. (ALIM 100) RMH_08-14-07_82c
- (32) **Alberto Suárez quih he °iti hmiiha° ctam iha.**
 the.FL 1PRO my.parent male DCL
 'Alberto Suárez es mi padre.'
Alberto Suárez es mi padre. LHC_2-06-07_176
- (33) **¿Cmaam himcop me mata -ya?**
 woman DT-VT 2PRO 2P-mother QM
 '¿Es aquélla tu madre?'
Is that one your mother? RMH_05-16-08_22
- (34) **Haxz cmaam himcac ano caap cop aal iha.**
 dog woman/female DT-LC 3P.in SN-stand the.VT 3P-spouse DCL
 'Es el macho de esa perra que está allí.'
It is the mate of that (female) dog over there. (DS2005, aal, improved) LHC_2-06-07_178
- (35) **Pedro Mendoza quih quihéhe° ha.**
 the.FL ruler DCL
 'Pedro Mendoza es (el) gobernador (jefe).'
Pedro Mendoza is (the) governor. LHC_2-06-07_159a
- (36) **Moxima quih "lunes" iihi.**
 yesterday the.FL Monday PAST
 'Ayer era lunes.'
Yesterday was Monday. (HE 108) LHC_2-06-07_166c

The predicate complement may contain the interrogative determiner **zó** (§6.2.1.5).

- (37) ¿Me zó cmiique -ya?
 2PRO which? person/Seri QM
 ‘Qué persona Seri eres?’
Which Seri person are you? (Who are you?) (Overheard) LHC_2-06-07_167c

Whatever accounts for the ungrammaticality of examples like (29) above must not rule out the grammaticality of the verbless construction with an interrogative pronoun (§16.4).

- (38) ¿Me quíih -ya?
 2PRO who? QM
 ‘¿Quién eres?’
Who are you? LHC_2-06-07_159b
- (39) ¿Tiix quíih -ya?
 DDS who? QM
 ‘¿Quién es ése?’
Who is s/he? LHC_2-06-07_159c

10.2 The modals

The modal function in Figure 10.1 may be filled by a small class of items, but the modal may be absent entirely under certain conditions (discussed in §10.2.2). The modals are those listed in (40). The basic modals are extremely commonly used; the “tensed” modals are much less commonly used. The modal **poho**, to express doubt, is not uncommon.

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| (40) | Basic Modals (§20.5) | Tensed Modals (§20.6) | Special Modal (§20.4.1) |
| | ha DECLARATIVE | iihi PAST | poho DOUBT |
| | -ya INTERROGATIVE | siih FUTURE | |

The (unstressed) declarative modal **ha** has the allomorph **iha** after consonants. The question modal **-ya** is written as suffix in the practical orthography. See the discussion of these basic modals in §20.5.

The modals **iihi**² and **siih** have a bit more phonological weight than the basic modals because of the long vowel in each, but they do not carry the intonational peak of the construction.

The common declarative intonation pattern for this construction puts high tone on the last stressed syllable of the predicate nominal. In the case of an example such as (10), repeated here, this syllable is **caa**, part of the stem $\sqrt{\text{icaayot}}$.

- (41)
- | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------|-------------|------|--------------------|------|
| | | | | | H | |
| | | | | | | |
| °Ziix cooha° | cap, | tiix | °ziix ccam° | hant | quicáayot | iha. |
| cow | the.VT | DDS | animal | land | SN-go.on.four.feet | DCL |
| ‘Una vaca es un animal cuadrópodo.’ | | | | | | |
| <i>A cow is a quadruped animal.</i> (Improved from HE 95) LHC_2-06-07_164a | | | | | | |

² This morpheme was written with an acute accent in the 2005 dictionary.

When **ha** is used, the predication is affirmed, while **-ya** questions the predication. A sentence using the modals **ha**, **ihi**, or **poho** must be construed as a statement. Question intonation itself cannot make questions from these sentences (see chapter 6).

- (42) * **¿Cmaam iha?**
 female DCL
 ('¿Es/Era mujer/hembra?')
(Is/was it a female.)
- (43) * **¿Cmaam ihi?**
 female PAST
 ('¿Era hembra?')
(Was it a female?)
- (44) * **¿Cmaam poho?**
 female perhaps
 (¿Tal vez es/era hembra?) *(¿Maybe it is/was a female?)*

The future modal **sihi** is not used in simple statements. It seems to be usually rendered as *I wonder* or as a self-directed question. See §20.6.

- (45) **¿Zó haxz sihi?**
 which? dog FUTURE
 '¿Qué perro será?'
What dog would that be? (or I wonder what dog that is.) (DS2005, sihi) LHC_2-06-07_168
- (46) **¿Haan sihi?**
 smooth.Pacific.venus.clam FUTURE
 '¿Será una almeja china?'
Would it be a smooth Pacific venus clam? RMH_05-16-08_23

10.2.1 Time

The verbless construction with the basic modals is tenseless but realis in interpretation. If one wishes to express tense straightforwardly, for example, one typically uses the overt copula construction (§10.3). The translations which follow do not indicate all of the possible interpretations.

- (47) Subject Predicate
 Ø **Cmaam iha.**
 woman/female DCL
 'Es/Era hembra/mujer.' (*Será hembra/mujer.)
*It is/was a female/woman. (*It will be a female/woman)* LHC_2-06-07_160a
- (48) Ø **¿Cmaam -ya?**
 woman/female QM
 '¿Es/Era mujer/hembra?' (*¿Será hembra/mujer?)
*Was it a female/woman? (*Will it be a female/woman?)* LHC_2-06-07_160b

When the pronoun **hipíix** *this one* is the subject, the pragmatics of the situation makes the interpretation more likely to be present tense than past.

- (49) **Hipíx stacj iha.**
 DPS rock.oyster DCL
 ‘Éste es un ostión.’
This is a rock oyster. LHC_2-06-07_163c

The less common modals **iihi** and **siihi** include past and future tense, respectively.

- (50) Ø **Cmaam iihi.**
 woman/female PAST
 ‘Era mujer / hembra.’
It was a female / woman. LHC_2-06-07_160c
- (51) Ø **Ctam quiipe isoj iihi.**
 man SN-good 3P-self PAST
 ‘Era un hombre muy bueno.’
He was a very good man. (Overheard) RMH_08-14-07_84
- (52) Ø **Ctam quiipe siihi.**
 man SN-good FUTURE
 ‘¿Será un buen hombre?’
I wonder if he is a good man. RMH_09-28-07_161e

10.2.2 Omission and non-omission of the modal

The verbless predicative construction usually requires one of the modals listed in (40) in a simple utterance. It is generally not acceptable to simply juxtapose two nominals for a grammatical statement or question. Occasionally one does hear a simple NP spoken in response to a question, but this not typical and such examples are judged unacceptable when elicited. Thus such examples are marked “?” below. The interrogatives without **-ya** are more strongly rejected, however; they are marked with an asterisk.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(53) ?* Hipíx stacj.
 DPS rock.oyster
 (‘Éste es un ostión.’)
 <i>(This is a rock oyster.)</i></p> | <p>(54) * ¿Hipíx stacj?
 DPS rock.oyster
 (‘¿Es éste un ostión?’)
 <i>(Is this is a rock oyster?)</i></p> |
| <p>(55) ?* Stacj.
 rock.oyster
 (‘Es (un) ostión.’)
 <i>(It is a rock oyster.)</i></p> | <p>(56) * ¿Stacj?
 rock.oyster
 (‘¿Es (un) ostión?’)
 <i>(Is it a rock oyster?)</i></p> |

The modal may be omitted in the first part of a construction in which two clauses are juxtaposed, and the adverb **mos** may precede the second. (Two of these examples utilize deverbal nouns; see §10.4.)

- (57) **Hitróoqui quij quisil (iha), mos imáaixaj iha.**
 1P-vehicle the.CM SN-small DCL also SN-N-strong DCL
 ‘Mi carro es pequeño, y no es fuerte.’
My car is small, and it isn't strong. RMH_08-14-07_86
- (58) **Caay ihyáa° cop imóoxp (ha), mos imóopol iha. Quimáaxat iha.**
 horse mine the.VT SN-N-white DCL also SN-N-black DCL SN-gray DCL
 ‘Mi caballo no es blanco, ni es negro. Es gris.’
My horse is neither white nor black. It is gray. (ALIM 79) RMH_08-14-07_96a
- (59) **limox Impáfc hapáh quij, tiix ziix impézi (ha),**
 SN-PV-say the.CM DDS thing SN-N-PV-defeat DCL
ziix imahtái ha.
 thing SN-N-PV-overcome DCL
 ‘El llamado limox Impafc era invencible e insuperable.’ RMH_08-14-07_83
The one called limox Impafc was invincible and insuperable. (ES2007 limox_impafc 01)

The distribution of the verbless construction is like that of independent clauses. Two such clauses may be conjoined with the coordinator **xo** (25.2). The modal on the first of the coordinated clauses cannot be omitted.

- (60) a. **Hitróoqui quij quisil iha xo caaixaj iha.**
 1P-vehicle the.CM SN-small DCL but SN-strong DCL
- b. * **Hitróoqui quij quisil — xo caaixaj iha.**
 1P-vehicle the.CM SN-small but SN-strong DCL
- ‘Mi carro es pequeño pero fuerte.’
My car is small but it is strong. RMH_08-14-07_87

Since it has the distribution of an independent clause, the verbless construction cannot be used as a simple adverbial clause or a condition clause (§3.8). The ungrammaticality in the condition clause is also expected because such a clause would need to be in the irrealis mood, which would be incompatible with the verbless construction.

- (61) a. * **Stacj iha, iyomáhit.**
 rock.oyster DCL 3:3-DT-N-eat
- b. * **Stacj, iyomáhit.**

(‘Aunque era ostión, no lo comió.’)
*(Although it was a rock oyster, s/he didn’t eat it.)*³

(62) a. * **Stacj** **iha,** **ihsíhit** **aha.**
 rock.oyster DCL 1SS.TR-IR.ID-eat AUX-DCL

b. * **Stacj,** **ihsíhit** **aha.**

(‘Si es ostión, lo comeré.’) *(If it is a rock oyster, I’ll eat it.)*⁴

The verbless construction may occur in a subordinate clause with a subordinator such as **yax** *since, because* (§25.4). The modal is required in this construction.

(63) a. **Siimet** **quih** **quiipe** **ha** **yax,** **imíhit.**
 bread the.FL SN-good DCL since 3:3-PX-eat

b. * **Siimet** **quih** **quiipe** **yax,** **imíhit.**

‘Como el pan era bueno, lo comió.’

Since the bread was good, s/he ate it. LHC_2-06-07_171

The verbless construction may be embedded as a direct quote, as the following examples show. A modal is required when the construction is embedded in this situation.

(64) — **Me** **quihéhe**^o **caacoj** **poho** — **ox** **imíi.**
 2PRO ruler SN-big DOUBT thus 3:3-PX-tell

‘—Quizás eres un rey —le dijo.’

“Maybe you are a king,” he said to him. (Jn 18:37) LHC_2-06-07_172a LHC_2-06-07_163e

(65) a. — Ø **Stacj** **iha** — **ox** **imíi.**
 rock.oyster DCL thus 3:3-PX-tell

b. * — Ø **Stacj** — **ox** **imíi.**

‘—Es un ostión —le dijo.’

“It is a rock oyster,” s/he told him. LHC_2-06-07_172b

But when embedded as *indirect* speech or thought (somewhat broadly construed), the modal is necessarily *absent*, with the exception of **poho** DOUBT, and the embedded sentence is interpreted necessarily as a statement.

³ The (a) example is grammatical with a different intonation pattern, having the reading *It was a rock oyster. S/he didn’t eat it.*

⁴ The (a) example is grammatical with a different intonation pattern, having the reading *It is a rock oyster. I will eat it.*

- (66) **Haxölináail hipquij stacj ____, him miih.**
 mollusk PX-CM rock.oyster 1sDO PX-say
 ‘Me dijo que este molusco es un ostión.’
*S/he told me that this mollusk is a rock oyster. (*S/he asked me if this mollusk is a rock oyster.)* RMH_09-28-07_162a
- (67) **Haxölináail hipquij stacj iha, him miii. xxx WRONG VERB?**
 mollusk PX-CM rock.oyster DCL 1sDO PX-tell-PL
 (‘Me dijeron que este molusco es un ostión.’)
(They told me that this mollusk is a rock oyster.)
- (68) **Pedro quih ctam quiipe ____, imíih.**
 the.FL man SN-good 3:3-PX-say
 ‘Le(s) dijo que Pedro es buen hombre.’
S/he told him/her/them that Pedro is a good man. RMH_09-28-07_163b
- (69) a. **Hipíix stacj ____, hax maaimoz.**
 DPS rock.oyster just PX-1EM.S.TR-think
 b. * **Hipíix stacj iha, hax maaimoz.**
 ‘Éste es un ostión, creo.’
This is a rock oyster, I think. LHC_2-06-07_163d
- (70) **Ctam ticop cocsar ____, teemyo.**
 man MD-VT Mexican PX-say-PL
 ‘Dicen que ese hombre es un mexicano.’
They say that that man is a Mexican. LHC_2-06-07_163f
- (71) **..., Ø hipi iiquet° ____, °hax tahí° hax maa.**
 INTNS her.child it.seemed just PX-be
 ‘..., (y) era como si fuera su propio hijo.’
... (and) he was as if he were her own child. (Ac 7:21) LHC_2-06-07_164c
- (72) **Ø Ziix caméepit ____, yoque.**
 thing SN-strange DT-US-say
 ‘Se dice que era una cosa extraña.’
It is said that it was a strange thing. RMH_09-28-07_163c
- (73) **Ø Ctam cacösxaj ____, yoque.**
 man SN-tall/long DT-US-say
 ‘Era un hombre alto, se dice.’
He was a tall man, it is said. LHC_2-06-07_160d

- (74) °Ziix coosyat° heeque quij ctam ____, yoque.
giant juvenile the.CM man/male DT-US-say
'El gigante joven era un varón, se dice.'
The young giant was a male, it is said. (Gigante_Huerfano_01) RMH_05-16-08_24
- (75) Heesam com cmique ____, yoque.
seahorse the.Hz person/Seri DT-US-say
'El hipocampo era persona, se dice.'
The seahorse was a person, it is said. RMH_08-14-07_85
- (76) Cmaam tiquij cmaam cazfim ____, yoque.
woman MD-CM woman SN-pleasant DT-US-say
'Esa mujer era una mujer hermosa, se dice.'
That woman was a beautiful woman, it is said. LHC_2-06-07_163b
- (77) °Azlc canl° quih capxa coi °xiica ccamotam° ____, yoque.
stars the.FL SN-three the.PL animals DT-US-say
'Se dice que las tres estrellas eran animales.'
The three stars were animals. (ES2007, Hapj_03)
- (78) Haxölináail° hipquij stacj ihi, him miii.
mollusk PX-CM rock.oyster PAST ISDO PX-say.PL
'Me dijeron que este molusco es un ostión.'
(They told me that this mollusk is a rock oyster.)
- (79) Haxölináail° hipquij stacj poho, him miii.
mollusk PX-CM rock.oyster DOUBT ISDO PX-say.PL
'Me dijeron que este molusco posiblemente es un ostión.'
They told me that this mollusk is perhaps a rock oyster. LHC_2-06-07_175

Given the existence of (internally-headed) relative clauses (§8.4), one should expect to find the verbless construction modifying a nominal. Examples such as those that follow show that they indeed exist.⁵ The analysis of these as relative clauses, illustrated by Figure 8.5 (see §8.4.1), accounts for the word order straightforwardly. In this construction, however, as in other cases of embedding, the modal does not occur.

⁵ This kind of structure is ungrammatical with a demonstrative pronoun as head of the modified nominal.

- (i) * Taax cmajjic (*iha) smalx aha.
DDP woman.PL DCL IR.ID-N-go.PL AUX-DCL
'Ésas que son mujeres (o ésas las mujeres) no van a ir.'
(Those who are women (or those the women) will not go.)

- (80) **Haxz ctam (*iha) ticop hin yocátxla.**
 dog male DCL MD-VT 1sDO DT-bite.[like.dog]
 ‘Ese perro macho me mordió.’
That male dog bit me. LHC_2-06-07_179a
- (81) **He cmajíic (*iha) hascámx aha.**
 IPRO woman.PL DCL 1PS-IR.ID-N-go-PL AUX-DCL
 ‘Nosotras las mujeres no vamos a ir.’
We women will not go. LHC_2-06-07_179b

The possessive pronouns (§16.1) may be used adnominally; these may be taken as this same construction although they are rendered as possessive adjectives in free Spanish and English translations.

- (82) **trooqui hyaa° quij**
 vehicle mine the.CM
 ‘mi vehículo’
my vehicle LHC_2-06-07_180

10.3 Copular construction

A predicative construction may include a copular verb, as in the following example.

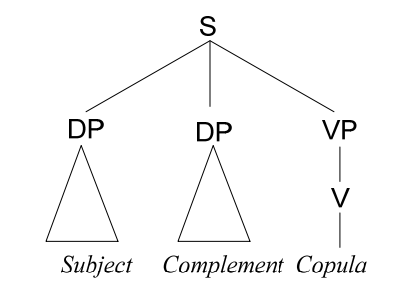
- (83) Subject Complement
 °Hehe icám° com ah seenel quih yoháa.
 caterpillar the.Hz FOC butterfly the.FL DT-EQ
 ‘La oruga se convierte en mariposa.’
The caterpillar becomes a butterfly. (DS2005, chaa) RMH_09-28-07_162b

The copular construction is similar to other clauses in that it has DPs followed by a VP; compare Figure 10.2 with Figure 2.1 (of basic clause structure). The verb may be in a finite form, as in (83), but more commonly the copula appears in one of two subject-oriented deverbal noun forms, **haa** (SN.EQ) and **chaa** (SN-EQ) — the difference between these forms is discussed in §10.3.4 — followed by a modal in the same pattern as that found with other verbs (§10.1, §20.5, §20.6).

- (84) Subject Complement Copula Modal
Hipíix hiif quij haa ha.
 DPS 1P-nose the.CM SN.EQ DCL
 ‘Ésta es mi nariz.’
This is my nose. (HE 61) RMH_08-14-07_92a

Whether the copula is a finite verb or a deverbal noun, it may be negated.

Figure 10.2: Copular construction



- (85) **Cmiique zo poháa, cmiique zo pomháa, ...**
 person/Seri a IR.DP-EQ person/Seri a IR.DP-N-EQ
 ‘Sea seri o no sea seri, ...’
Whether s/he is a Seri or s/he is not a Seri, ... RMH_09-28-07_162c
- (86) **Tiix cmiique ha xo cmiique áa z imháa ha.**
 DDS person/Seri DCL but person/Seri true a SN-N-EQ DCL
 ‘Era una persona, pero no era una verdadera persona.’
He was a person, but he wasn’t a real person. (Hipopampo_24)

In fact, the copular construction is necessary if the predication is negated since the verbless construction (§10.1) has no way of indicating negation.

- (87) **Juan quij, tiix ziix zo cöcacóaat z imháa ha.**⁶
 Juan the.CM DDS thing a 3IO-SN-cause.know a SN-N-EQ DCL
 ‘Juan no es (el) maestro.’
*Juan is not a/the teacher.*⁷ (modified from ALIM 99) LHC_2-06-07_189 RMH_08-14-07_92b

The copular construction with a finite verb is necessary if mood (realis or irrealis) is expressed.

⁶ Compare also the following grammatical example:

- (ii) **Juan quij, tiix ziix quih cöcacóaat quih imháa ha.**
 the.CM DDS thing the.FL 3IO-SN-teach the.FL SN-N-EQ DCL
 ‘Juan no es el maestro.’
Juan is not the teacher. RMH_08-14-07_93

⁷ Since negative sentences often use indefinite articles even though the referent is definite, this example is actually ambiguous between an ascriptive and a specifying interpretation.

- (88) **María quij ziix zo shaa caha.**
 the.CM thing a IR.ID-EQ AUX.SN-DCL
 ‘María será una oficial.’
*María will be an official/officer.*⁸ RMH_09-28-07_162d
- (89) **Ctam quij, tiix °ziix hast iix ano coom° com imháa.**
 male the.CM DDS northern.chuckwalla the.Hz PX-EQ
 ‘EL HOMBRE se volvió la iguana de la piedra.’
THE MAN became the northern chuckwalla. (ES2007, acaam_ccaa 20)

The copular construction with a finite verb is necessary if the predication is being expressed as a condition clause or as an adverbial clause without a subordinator.

- (90) **°Ziix quih cöihíhat° quih poháa ta x, hasíyaj aha.**
 truth the.FL IR.DP-EQ DS UT 1PS-IR.ID-know-PL AUX-DCL
 ‘Si es la verdad, lo sabremos.’
If it’s the truth, we will know it. (Mt 27:43) RMH_09-28-07_163a
- (91) **..., °ziix hast iix ano coom° com mos cmiique quih thaa x, ...**
 northern.chuckwalla the.Hz also person the.FL RL-EQ UT
 ‘..., la iguana también era una persona.’
..., the northern chuckwalla also was a person. (ES2007 acáam_ccaa 13)

The copular construction is also necessary if the complement has a determiner — whether definite, as in (83), or indefinite, as in (86), since the verbless construction also disallows both of these. As a result, if the complement is a partitive expression (§8.5), the copular construction is required to express the relationship between the subject and the complement.

- (92) **He mos Lola hapáh quij °iyat cöcoocapoj° coi,**
 1PRO also Lola SN-PV-say the.CM his/her.descendants the.PL
he zo haa ha.
 1PRO a/one SN.EQ DCL
 ‘Yo también soy uno de los descendientes de Lola (Casanova).’
I also am one of the descendants of Lola (Casanova). (DS2005, coocp, improved) RMH_05-16-08_25
- (93) **Xiica Hast ano coii Coftéecöl iti coii coi**
 thing-PL S.E.I. 3P.in SN-be.FL.PL S.E.I. 3P.on SN-be.FL.PL the.PL
zo haa ha.
 a/one SN.EQ DCL

⁸ The expression for *officer/official, person of authority* is **ziix zo chaa** (thing a SN-EQ) *who is a thing*.

‘Era uno del grupo de isla San Esteban.’
*He was one of the San Esteban people.*⁹ (improved on DS2005, Cofitéecó) LHC_2-06-07_184

The predicate complement of a copular verb can be one that is strengthened with a focal demonstrative pronoun (§16.2.4), as illustrated by the following example as well as (89).

- (94) **He Pedro González, tii haa ha.**
 1PRO DDS SN.EQ DCL
 ‘Yo soy Pedro González.’
I am Pedro González. RMH_05-16-08_26

The copular construction may be either ascriptive (§10.3.1) or specifying (§10.3.2). The ascriptive examples are actually quite limited, as explained below.

10.3.1 Ascriptive

The previous section has shown several situations in which the copular construction is necessary, including when there is mood or negation. Setting aside the situations in which a finite copular verb is present, we see that the ascriptive uses of the copular construction with a deverbal noun are somewhat special in nature and usage. For example, in response to a question such as (95), one may answer with (96), which is a verbless predicate nominal expression as described in (§10.1) above.

- (95) **Cotx — ¿Áz haxéhe -ya?**
 what? INTNS QM
 ‘‘Cotx’’ — ¿Qué es?’
 ‘‘Cotx’’ — *What is it?* RMH_08-14-07_90a
- (96) **Tiix hehe ha.**
 DDS plant DCL
 ‘Es una planta.’
It is a plant. RMH_08-14-07_90b

The use of the non-finite copular construction here is not straightforward. Examples like (97ff) are understandable but are considered ungrammatical.

- (97) * **Tiix hehe zo haa ha.**
 DDS plant a SN.EQ DCL
 (‘Es una planta.’) (*It is a plant.*)

⁹ The sentence in the 2005 dictionary had **yoháa** (DT-EQ), which some consultants interpret as meaning *became*; the preferred form is the one given here.

- (98) * **Pedro quih ctam quiipe zo haa, imíih.**
 the.FL man SN-good a SN.EQ 3:3-Px-say
 ('Le dijo que Pedro es buen hombre.')
- (99) * **Ziix caméepit zo haa, yoque.**
 thing SN-strange a SN.EQ DT-US-say
 ('Se dice que era una cosa extraña.')

The nonfinite copular construction with an ascriptive function is apparently much more acceptable when embedded if there is doubt involved, as in the following examples.

- (100) **Hipiix stacj zo haa, hax maaimoz.**
 DPS rock.oyster a/one SN.EQ just PX-1EM.S.TR-think
 'Éste es un ostión, creo.'

This is a rock oyster, I think. LHC_2-06-07_183

A non-finite copular construction may be used to express sarcasm, using a rhetorical question with the question modal *-ya* and a particular intonation.

- (101) **¡¿Tiix hehe zo haa -ya?!**
 DDS plant a/one SN.EQ QM
 '¡¿Es una planta?!' (¡No es planta!)
- (102) **¡¿Tiix °ziix hapáhit° zo haa -ya?!**
 DDS food a SN.EQ QM
 '¡¿Es comida?!' (¡No es comida!)

It's a plant?! (It's not a plant!) RMH_09-28-07_163d

That's food?! (It's not food!) RMH_09-28-07_163e

The complement of the non-finite copular construction may sometimes be very similar to that found in the verbless construction — a noun phrase which denotes a very small class. Compare examples (103)-(104) with (31ff) above.

- (103) **Hipiix hita chaa ha.**
 DPS 1P-mother SN-EQ DCL
 'Ésta es mi madre.'
- (104) **Hizáax °iti hmíihat° chaa ha.**
 DPP my.parents SN-EQ DCL
 'Éstos son mis padres.'

This is my mother. LHC_2-06-07_185

These are my parents. LHC_2-06-07_186

10.3.2 Specifying

The copular construction is primarily used with a specifying function — a function which the

verbless construction does not have. The complement is a specific individual or group, and as such may be represented by a name, a determiner phrase, or a pronoun.

- (105) **Quihéhe° quih Pedro Mendoza chaa ha.**
 ruler the.FL SN-EQ DCL
 ‘El gobernador (jefe) es Pedro Mendoza.’
The governor (leader) is Pedro Mendoza. LHC_2-06-07_187
- (106) **Alberto Suárez quih he °iti hmiha° ctam quih chaa ha.**
 the.FL 1PRO my.parent male the.FL SN-EQ DCL
 ‘Alberto Suárez es mi padre.’
Alberto Suárez es mi padre. LHC_2-06-07_188
- (107) **“Ziix hipxahcop haa poho,” ox tee, yoque.**
 thing PX- — -VT SN.EQ DOUBT thus RL-say DT-US-say
 ‘¿Tal vez es éste/ésta? — así preguntó.’
“Might this be him/her/it?” s/he asked. (DS2005, poho) LHC_2-06-07_190
- (108) **¿Tiix haa -ya?** (109) **Tiix haa ha.**
 DDS SN.EQ QM DDS SN.EQ DCL
 ‘¿Es aquél?’ LHC_2-06-07_191a ‘Es aquél.’ LHC_2-06-07_191b
Is it that one? (Overheard) It is that one. (Overheard)
- (110) **¿Me haa -ya?**
 2PRO SN.EQ QM
 ‘Eres tú?’
Is it you? (Overheard) LHC_2-06-07_191c

10.3.3 Embedded examples

The copular construction may be embedded, as the following examples show.

- (111) **Tiix haa, hax maaimoz.**
 DDS SN.EQ just PX-1EM.S.TR-think
 ‘Es aquél/aquella, creo.’
S/he/it is the one, I think. (DS2005, aa-) RMH_08-14-07_91 LHC_2-06-07_191d
- (112) **..., me tiix haa, teemyo.**
 2PRO DDS SN.EQ PX-say-PL
 ‘..., dicen que eres aquél.’
..., they say that you are he. (Mt 16:14) RMH_08-14-07_89a
- (113) **..., me tiix haa poho, teemyo.**
 2PRO DDS SN.EQ DOUBT PX-say-PL
 ‘..., posiblemente tú eres él, dicen.’
..., they say that maybe you are he. (Mt 16:14) RMH_08-14-07_89b

The copular construction may occur as a relative clause (see §8.4). Example (114) has a null head, and example (115) has **ctam** as head.

- (114) [Ø **Hatéeya quih chaa quij**] **ano hpsosi** (a)ha.
 glass the.FL SN-EQ the.CM 3P.in/from 1sS.IN-IR.ID-UO-drink AUX-DCL
 ‘Voy a tomar de la (taza) de vidrio.’
I am going to drink from the glass one (cup). (DS2005, coosi) LHC_2-06-07_192
- (115) [**Ctam fariséo quih chaa cop**] **tfit oo, toc cötap, ...**¹⁰
 man Pharisee the.FL SN-EQ the.VT RL-stand DL there 3IO-RL-stand
 ‘El (que era) fariseo estaba de pie, ...’
The (man who was the) Pharisee stood there, ... (Lk 18:11) LHC_2-06-07_193

Such examples are not common and seem to have a greater contrastive focus than similar examples using the verbless construction (§10.2.2).

10.3.4 The distribution of **cha** and **haa**

The two forms **cha** and **haa** occur in various examples above. These are distinct but in some sense competing forms of the subject-oriented deverbal noun of the otherwise regular copular verb $\sqrt{\text{haa}}$.¹¹ They are not simple variations one of the other; they cannot be freely interchanged. The morphologically irregular form **haa**, which is a bare stem,¹² is much more common. The morphologically regular form **cha** occurs only following a restricted set of constructions.

The complement of **cha** may be generic, as expressed in (116), with the definite article **quih**:

- (116) **Cmiique °haaix ima° quij cmiique áa quih chaa ha.**
 person/Seri serious the.CM person/Seri true the.FL SN-EQ DCL
 ‘Una persona seria es una persona buena.’
A serious person is a good person. (DS2005, haa) LHC_2-06-07_194

¹⁰ If the adverb **oo** were removed from this example, the meaning would be that he stood up, according to René Montaña Herrera.

¹¹ Examples like (116) with an article before **cha** are very important. For a long time I was unsure about whether **cha** really existed because the sequence **quih haa** would be pronounced precisely as **cha**. As explained in §21.2.4, the article **quih** has a variable pronunciation, depending on the phonological context, and before **haa** it would be expected to be [k], since the two glottal stops would merge and the vowel **i** would not appear. Either the vowel is dropped, or (as seems more likely) the vowel was never there in the underlying form of the article at all. The spelling convention, writing the article as **quih** in all situations, helps to avoid the frustration of trying to write different phonetic realizations of this ubiquitous article, but speakers are also quite aware that it is not a strong **quih** [kɪ?] in many situations. Even the pronunciation of the verb form **cha** has neither a very strong velar stop nor a very strong glottal stop in normal speech.

¹² This is one of perhaps only two verbs in Seri which have a word form that is identical to the root.

The complement may also be semantically definite as the result of ending with a possessed noun, as in (103)-(104) above. And it may also be a name; see example (105).

A definite nominal is most commonly expressed with an explicit determiner, and *a priori* one might expect to find any one of the various determiners in the DP before the copular verb. While it does seem that no particular prohibition of any of them exists, it is also true that the determiner **quih** is far and away much more common than the others. When another article is used, the preference is to use the form **haa** of the copula.

- (117) °**Itj iixquim° com ziix inaaíl quih chaa ha.**
 his/her.belt the.HZ thing 3P-skin the.FL SN-EQ DCL
 ‘Su cinturón era cuero.’
His belt was leather. (Mk 1:6) LHC_2-06-07_194
- (118) **Haptco cmiique caii quih chaa ha.**
 already person/Seri mature the.FL SN-EQ DCL
 ‘Ya es un adulto.’
He is already an adult. (Jn 9:21) LHC_2-06-07_194
- (119) a. **Hant himquij Tahéjōc quij haa ha.**
 land DT-CM Tiburón.Island the.CM SN.EQ DCL
 b. ?* **Hant himquij Tahéjōc quij chaa ha.**
 ‘Esa tierra es la isla Tiburón.’
That land is Tiburon Island. LHC_2-06-07_194

Unlike the form **haa** (see examples above), the form **chaa** cannot usually occur with an indefinite DP nor with a pronoun in this construction, as shown below.

- (120) * **Hipíix stacj zo chaa, hax maaimoz.**
 DPS rock.oyster a SN-EQ just PX-1EM.S.TR-think
 (‘Éste es un ostión, creo.’) (*This is a rock oyster, I think.*)
- (121) * **Tiix chaa ha.** (122) * **¿Me chaa -ya?**
 DDS SN-EQ DCL 2PRO SN-EQ QM
 (‘Es aquél.’) (*It is that one.*) (‘¿Eres tú?’) (*Is it you?*)

However, the form **chaa** very occasionally does occur following the pronoun **zo** or **pac** when used in a partitive expression, although the preferred form is **haa** (see examples (92-93)). For some speakers these are less acceptable or have a different meaning (*become* rather than *be*).

- (123) (compare with (92))
 ? **He mos Lola hapáh quij iyat cöcoocapoj° coi, he zo**
 1PRO also SN-PV-say the.CM his/her.descendants the.PL 1PRO a/one

chaa ha.
SN-EQ DCL

‘Yo también soy uno de los descendientes de Lola (Casanova).’
I also am one of the descendants of Lola (Casanova). RMH_05-16-08_27a

- (124) **Taax santáaroj coi pac chaa ha.**
DDP soldier-PL the.PL some SN-EQ DCL
‘Ellos (ahora) son algunos de los soldados (pero antes no eran).’
*They (now) are some of the soldiers (but weren’t before).*¹³ RMH_05-16-08_27b
- (125) **Taax cmaax santáaroj coi pac chaa ha.**
DDP now soldier-PL the.PL some SN-EQ DCL
‘Ellos ahora son soldados (no eran antes).’
They became soldiers. (Offered) RMH_08-14-07_95

The form **chaa** also occurs with an indefinite nominal in the expression **ziix zo √haa be** *someone of rank or with authority* (literally, *be a thing*). So **ctam ziix zo chaa** is a male official, *man with rank*, and **santaar ziix zo chaa** is a *soldier with rank*, such as a commander.

10.4 Clauses with deverbal nouns

Clauses with deverbal nouns instead of finite verbs are very common. Their syntax resembles the structure of verbless clauses with respect to the use of modals (see §10.1), but in many cases they do not seem to have any of the expected semantics of a predicative construction. This section discusses the use of deverbal nouns in main clauses primarily and briefly mentions their use in relative clauses — the adnominal uses shown in the following sections — without analyzing the structure in the latter (see §8.4). See also the sections about deverbal nouns in complement clauses (§12.2). Since there are three major types of deverbal nouns in Seri, they are presented separately here, first in their realis forms and then in their irrealis forms (§10.4.5). Any of these deverbal nouns may be inflected for negation (which is part of the verb morphology, see §17.1.4), and those based on transitive verbs may be passive (see §17.1.5).

10.4.1 Subject-oriented deverbal nouns

Subject-oriented deverbal nouns (see §14.1) are ubiquitous.¹⁴ The subject of the deverbal noun construction is what would be the subject of the verb in a synonymous finite construction. The deverbal noun may be based on any kind of predicate, as illustrated below both by examples of them in main clauses and in relative clauses.

¹³ Note the slightly different sense that the use of **chaa** gives to this sentence.

¹⁴ This is the form which is used as the entry word for the verbs in the 2005 dictionary.

The use of a subject-oriented deverbal noun necessarily prompts the use of an independent pronoun to express the subject if that subject is first or second person since subject person is not marked on subject-oriented deverbal nouns. The absence of a pronoun necessarily prompts an interpretation of the subject as third person. The number of the subject is expressed by the form of the verbs stem (§17.1.3) since personal pronouns do not indicate number.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(126) He coos iha.
 1PRO SN-sing DCL
 ‘Estoy cantando.’
 <i>I am singing.</i> RMH_05-16-08_28</p> | <p>(127) He coosi ha.
 1PRO SN-sing-PL DCL
 ‘Estamos cantando.’
 <i>We are singing.</i> RMH_05-16-08_29</p> |
| <p>(128) Me coos iha.
 2PRO SN-sing DCL
 ‘Estás cantando.’
 <i>You (sg.) are singing.</i> RMH_05-16-08_30</p> | <p>(129) Me coosi ha.
 2PRO SN-sing-PL DCL
 ‘Ustedes están cantando.’
 <i>You (pl.) are singing.</i> RMH_05-16-08_31</p> |
| <p>(130) Tiix coos iha.
 DDS SN-sing DCL
 ‘Ése/ésa está cantando.’
 <i>That one is singing.</i> RMH_05-16-08_32</p> | <p>(131) Taax coosi ha.
 DDP SN-sing-Pl DCL
 ‘Ésos/esas están cantando.’
 <i>Those are singing.</i> RMH_05-16-08_33</p> |
| <p>(132) Coos iha.
 SN-sing DCL
 ‘Está cantando.’
 <i>S/he/it is singing.</i> RMH_05-16-08_34
 <i>(*I am singing. *You are singing.)</i></p> | <p>(133) Coosi ha.
 SN-sing-Pl DCL
 ‘Están cantando.’
 <i>They are singing.</i> RMH_05-16-08_35
 <i>(*We/ You are singing.)</i></p> |

10.4.1.1 Deverbal nouns based on stative verbs

The clause may be headed by a deverbal noun based on a stative verb.

- (134) **Hanso quisil iha.**
 just SN-small DCL
 ‘No más es pequeño.’
It is just small. LHC_2-06-07_200
- (135) **He hooxi zo toc cöimíih iha.**
 1PRO 1P-ON-finish a there 3IO-SN-N-be.FL DCL
 ‘Nunca he hecho uno.’
I have never made one. (DS2005, quixi) LHC_2-06-07_201
- (136) **¿Zímjök xepe iti coom -ya?**
 when? sea 3P-on SN-lie QM
 ‘¿Cuándo la echaron al mar?’ LHC_2-06-07_202
When was it (the boat) launched? (More literally, When was it on the sea? (Overheard))

- (137) **Tiix quitéejōc iha.**
 DDS SN-thin DCL
 ‘Es / era flaco/a.’
S/he is / was thin. (ALIM 75) LHC_2-06-07_203a
- (138) **Tiix cacōsxaj iha.**
 DDS SN-tall/long DCL
 ‘Es / era alto/a / largo/a.’
S/he/it is / was tall / long.
- (139) **Tiix cacōsxaj, hax maaimoz.**
 DDS SN-tall/long just PX-1EM.S.TR-think
 ‘Es / era alto/a largo/a, creo.’
S/he/it is / was tall / long, I think. LHC_2-06-07_203c
- (140) **Zaaj ahóot hac caail iha.**
 cave 3P-entrance the.LC SN-wide/spacious DCL
 ‘La entrada de la cueva es ancha.’
The cave entrance is wide. (improved on DS2005, ahóot) LHC_2-06-07_204
- (141) **°Cmaa quih°, hax maacta.**
 now SN-be.FL just PX-1EM.S.TR-look.at
 ‘Es nuevo [el nombre], me parece.’
[The name] is new, I think. (Overheard) LHC_2-06-07_205
- (142) **Haxz ticom quictámo siihi.**
 dog MD-HZ SN-ferocious FUTURE
 ‘Me pregunto si ese perro es bravo.’
I wonder if that dog is ferocious. (DS2005, siihi) LHC_2-06-07_206

Adnominal examples

- (143) **Cmaam cacōsxaj zo yoofp.**
 woman SN-tall/long a DT-arrive
 ‘Una mujer alta llegó.’
A tall woman arrived. RMH_08-14-07_96b
- (144) **Cmiique caacoj àpa zo nsiiho (a)ha.**
 person SN-big enormous.quantity a/one 2sS-IR.ID-see AUX-DCL
 ‘Vas a ver una enorme cantidad de personas grandes.’
You are going to see a lot of big people. (DS2005, apa) RMH_08-04-07_248b

10.4.1.2 Deverbal nouns based on intransitive verbs (agentive and non-agentive)

The clause may be headed by a deverbal noun based on an intransitive action verb.

- (145) **..., cooha, yoque.**
 SN-cry DT-US-say
 ‘..., está llorando, se dice.’
..., she is crying, it is said. (ES2007, acaam_ccaa 22b)

- (146) **Cmaam tiquij xeele cöcoos, yoque.**
 woman MD-CM fog 3IO-SN-sing DT-US-say
 ‘Esa mujer tenía poder sobrenatural de la neblina, se dice.’
That woman had supernatural power of the fog, it is said. (Offered) RMH_08-14-07_97a
- (147) **Cocázní° com ilít quiq cactim iha xo**
 rattlesnake the.HZ 3P-head the.CM SN-be.cut DCL but
isoj com cói csijim oo ha.
 3P-body the.HZ still SN-move DL DCL
 ‘La cabeza de la víbora de cascabel se cortó, pero el cuerpo todavía se movía.’
The head of the rattlesnake was cut off, but its body was still moving. (DS2005, isoj) RMH_08
- (148) **Hapáspoj° quih hocö quih ano moca ha.**
 paper the.FL wood the.FL 3P.in/from TWD-SN-move DCL
 ‘El papel se obtiene de la madera.’
Paper is made from wood. (DS2005, ano) RMH_08-14-07_97c

Adnominal examples

- (149) **Coos quiq he hita quih haa ha.**
 SN-sing the.CM 1PRO 1P-mother the.FL SN.EQ DCL
 (‘La que está cantando es mi madre.’)
The one who is singing is my mother. RMH_08-14-07_97d
- (150) **cocsar catípan tacoí**
 Mexican(s) SN-work MD-PL
 ‘esos trabajadores mexicanos no indígenas’
those non-Indian Mexican workers (lit., *those non-Indian Mexicans who are working*) (DS2005, catáscar) XMH_08-15-07_29a

10.4.1.3 Deverbal nouns based on transitive verbs

The clause may be headed by a deverbal noun based on a transitive verb.

- (151) **Haxz ticop zixcám zo quihit iha.**
 dog MD-VT fish a SN-TR-eat DCL
 ‘Ese perro está comiendo un pescado.’
That dog is eating a fish. XMH_08-15-07_29b
- (152) **Haxz ticop zixcám z imáhit iha.**
 dog MD-VT fish a SN-TR-N-eat DCL
 ‘Ese perro no está comiendo un pescado.’
That dog is not eating a fish. XMH_08-15-07_29c

- (153) **Haxz ticop zixcám zo quihit ihi.**
 dog MD-VT fish a SN-TR-eat DCL
 ‘Ese perro estaba comiendo un pescado.’
That dog was eating a fish. XMH_08-15-07_29d
- (154) **Hapéte quih °miizj cmiique caai° ha.**
 ABS-mother the.FL well person SN-TR-make DCL
 ‘Nuestra madre nos cuida.’ (‘La madre de uno lo/la cuida.’)
Our mother does good things for us. (DS2005, ata) XMH_08-15-07_29e

Adnominal uses

- (155) **Ziix xiica quih caai, tahac iti quij quij, ...**
 thing thing.PL the.FL SN-TR-make MD.LC 3P-on SN-sit the.CM
 ‘El creador de las cosas who was there ...’
The maker of the things, who was there, ... (Conejo_Cuernos_1a)
- (156) °Acaam ccaa° tiquij, ziic ziix zo quihit áa z imháa ha.
 wren MD-CM bird thing a SN-TR-eat INTNS/a/one SN-N-EQ DCL
 ‘El chivirín no es un pájaro que come mucho.’
The wren is not a bird that eats a lot. (ES2007, acaam ccaa 04)

10.4.1.4 Deverbal nouns based on passives of transitive verbs

The clause may be headed by a deverbal noun based on a passivized transitive verb.

- (157) **Ziix spahit ca quisil ipi impáho ha.**
 thing IR.ID-PV-eat AUX.SN SN-small INTNS SN-N-PV-see DCL
 ‘No hay nada para comer.’
There isn’t anything to eat. (DS2005, ca) XMH_08-15-07_30a
- (158) **Hast coopol ticom, ¿zó hapái siihi?**
 mountain SN-black MD-HZ how SN-PV-tell FUTURE
 ‘¿Cómo se llama ese cerro negro? me pregunto.’
What could that black mountain be called, I wonder. (DS2005, siihi) XMH_08-15-07_30b

Adnominal uses

- (159) **Ziix hapáhit iha.**
 thing SN-PV-eat DCL
 ‘Es comida.’
It is food. (more literally, *It is something that is eaten.*) (Overheard) XMH_08-15-07_30c
- (160) **Hapéme quij ziix impápx iha.**
 ABS-father.FE the.CM thing 3P-ON-N-PV-mad.at DCL
 ‘Una mujer no se debe enojar con su padre.’
A woman should not get angry with her father. (DS2005, am) XMH_08-15-07_30d

10.4.2 Person-marking in sentences headed by deverbal nouns

Sentences which have deverbal nouns as the predicate in the main clause are interesting syntactically in that their presence affects the construction of the remainder of the sentence. The dependent clauses in examples like these are quite unusual, although this is not immediately evident. The verbs of the dependent clauses are stripped of subject inflection, including the 3:3 marking (§17.1.2.1): **tazoj** rather than **hptazoj** (with first person singular intransitive subject **hp-**) in (161), **tcooo** rather than **hacóoo** (with first person plural subject **ha-**) in (162) and (163), **tahit** rather than **itáhit** (with 3:3 **i-**) in (164), and **taai** rather than **itáai** in (165). The person of the subject is only indicated by the overt or implicit pronoun. In fact, in no other context is a word form such as **tahit** or **taai** grammatical.¹⁵

- (161) **He tazoj oo, comisiín iha.** (*hptazoj)
 1PRO RL-alone DL SN-pitiable DCL
 ‘Soy el único pobre.’
I am the only pitiful/poor one. XMH_08-15-07_30e
- (162) **He tcooo, hizac iti coii ha.** (*hacóoo)
 1PRO RL-all PX.LC 3P-on SN-be.FL.PL DCL
 ‘Estamos todos aquí.’
We are all here. (HE 34) RMH_09-28-07_164a
- (163) **He tcooo, Yooz quij oéen° iha.** (*hacóoo)
 1PRO RL-all God the.CM his.children DCL
 ‘Somos todos los hijos de Dios.’
We are all God’s children. (1Ti 3:15) RMH_09-28-07_164b
- (164) **°heen imt° quij tahit quicatx quij** (*itáhit)
 milk the.CM RL-eat SN-TR-release the.CM
 ‘el que dejó de comer la leche (en polvo)’
the one who stopped eating the (powdered) milk RMH_09-28-07_164c
- (165) **hant quij taai quixi quij** (*itáai)
 earth the.CM RL-make SN-TR-finish the.CM
 ‘el creador del mundo’
the creator of the world RMH_09-28-07_164d
- (166) **¿Me hoox oo iháamac poop, siitax quee -ya?** (*impóop)
 2PRO INTNS DL alone IR.DP-stand IR.ID-go AUX.SN QM
 ‘¿Vas sin acompañante?’
Are you going unaccompanied? (DS2005, iháamac) RMH_05-17-08_232

¹⁵ The form **tazoj**, on the other hand, as an intransitive verb, is easily used elsewhere as a third person form. The crucial difference with **tahit** and **taai** is that these two are transitive verbs.

The same kind of stripping of subject inflection is seen in the following example which has a deverbal noun (**camoz**) as the main predicate with a complement that is a thought (§12.5). Note that the verb **saai** is not inflected for subject person.¹⁶

- (167) ¿ **Me** **áz** **saai** **ta** **camoz** **-ya?**
 2PRO what? IR.ID-make AUX.RL SN-think QM
 ‘¿Qué piensas hacer?’
What are you planning to make? XMH_08-15-07_51h

The unusualness of the construction with a deverbal noun as head extends to the reflexive pronoun that occurs in them: it is always third person (unlike in finite clauses; see §11.2).

- (168) **He** **isoj** **cnipatim** **iha.** (***hisoj**)
 1PRO 3P-self SN-TR-hit-IMPF DCL 1P-self
 ‘Me estoy pegando.’
I am hitting myself. RMH_10-15-07_32a
- (169) **Me** **isoj** **cnipatim** **iha.** (***misoj**)
 2PRO 3P-self SN-TR-hit-IMPF DCL 2P-self
 ‘Te estás pegando.’
You are hitting yourself. RMH_10-15-07_32b
- (170) ¿ **Zó** **tpacta** **ma°** **me** **isolca** **cnooptolca** **-ya?** (***misolca**)
 why? 2PRO 3P-self-PL SN-TR-hit-PL-IMPF QM 2P-self-PL
 ‘¿Porqué se están pegando ustedes?’
Why are you hitting yourselves? RMH_10-15-07_32c

10.4.3 Object-oriented deverbal nouns

The object-oriented deverbal noun (§14.3) is used in similar constructions.¹⁷ This nominalization requires a possessor which corresponds to the subject of the verb in a synonymous finite construction. All of the verbs in this case are, of course, transitive.

- (171) **Comcáac** **coi** **ocóaa** **iha.**
 person/Seri.PL the.PL 3P-ON-know-PL DCL
 ‘La gente seri lo sabe.’
The Seri people know it. XMH_08-15-07_31a
- (172) **He** **hant** **moyáai** **zo** **himáai** **iha.**
 1PRO place 2P-ON-travel.to a 1P-ON-N-know-PL DCL
 ‘No sabemos a dónde vas.’
We don’t know where you are going. (Jn 14:5) XMH_08-15-07_31b

¹⁶ This is not an infinitival complement. Verbs like $\sqrt{\text{amoz}}$ are discussed in §12.6.

¹⁷ The thing which the deverbal noun refers to is apparently the topic in these examples.

- (173) **Oot zo toc cōtiih ma, he hapi htaai, hoicö ihi.**
 coyote a there 3IO-RL-be.FL DS 1PRO INTNS 1SS.Tr-RL-make 1P-ON-kill PAST
 ‘Yo mismo maté un coyote.’
I myself killed a coyote. XMH_08-15-07_31c
- (174) **Cmaam himcop xiica hizcop ipási oomzo ha.**
 woman DT-VT thing-PL PX-VT 3P-AON-Pv-drink 3P-ON-want DCL
 ‘Esa mujer quiere que esto se tome.’
That woman wants this to be drunk. XMH_08-15-07_31e

Adnominal use

- (175) **Hap hoicö com °iiha capii° ha.**
 mule.deer 1P-ON-kill the.Hz fat DCL
 ‘El venado bura que maté era gordo.’
The mule deer that I killed was fat. (DS2005, capii) XMH_08-15-07_31f
- (176) **haxöl ináail cazüm ocóho quih**
 clam 3P-shell/skin SN-pleasant 3P-ON-see the.FL
 ‘la concha bonita que había encontrado’
the pretty shell that s/he had found (DS2005, cacócta) XMH_08-15-07_32a
- (177) **He hant moyáai zo himáaj iha.**
 1PRO place 2P-ON-travel.to a 1P-ON-N-know-PL DCL
 ‘No sabemos a dónde vas.’
We don’t know where you are going. (Jn 14:5) XMH_08-15-07_32b

10.4.4 Action/oblique-oriented deverbal nouns

The action/oblique-oriented deverbal noun (§14.4) is commonly used in similar constructions. The possessor of the deverbal noun construction corresponds to what would be the subject of the verb in a synonymous finite construction.

- (178) **Cöizáxö hac haptco cöivásitím iha.**
 3IO-3P-AON-discuss the.Lc already 3IO-3P-AON-deceive DCL
 ‘Ya estaba engañándole con lo que decía.’
Already he was tricking him by what he was saying. (Tramposo_37) XMH_08-15-07_32c
- (179) **Cöivásitím iha.**
 3IO-3P-AON-deceive DCL
 ‘Le había engañado.’
He had tricked him. (Conejo_Coyote_36)

Adnominal use

- (180) **Hatéeya °ziix iháx° an ihíip quih conspóoin aha.**
 bottle cooking.oil 3P.in 3P-AON-stand the.FL 3IO-2sS-IR.ID-close AUX-DCL
 ‘Debes cerrar la botella de aceite.’
You should close the bottle of oil. (DS2005, an ihíip) XMH_08-15-07_32d

10.4.5 Irrealis examples

While the examples above are all realis, “deverbal” irrealis forms also exist and are common although numerous complications present themselves. Only a few simple examples are given here; more are found in §14.5 where they are discussed in detail.

A common future sentence has a stripped irrealis form (one lacking subject person inflection) followed by either the auxiliary **ca** (§20.2.2) and the declarative modal **ha** seen above (see also §20.5), or by the auxiliary **quee** (a contextual variant of **ca**, see §20.2.2) and the question modal **-ya** (§20.5).

Both finite and deverbal irrealis forms utilize the prefix **si-** (§17.1.1.3). The deverbal irrealis forms are distinguished from the finite irrealis forms in that the deverbal forms do not inflect for subject (§17.1.2.1) with the same morphology as finite verbs. When the verb is intransitive and the subject is third person, the irrealis finite and deverbal forms are indistinguishable except for the choice of auxiliary.

The following examples show the use of irrealis denominal verbs as main verbs. Note the lack of any marking of subject person on the verb itself.

- (181) **Hizac iti hayáii quih ixáap° poopxa ta,**
 PX.LC 3P-on 1PP-AON-be.FL.PL the.FL days IR.DP-three DS
he cōsitóoj caha. (*cōhasitóoj)
 1PRO 3IO-IR.ID-go.PL AUX.SN-DCL 3IO-1PS-IR.ID-go.PL

‘Después de quedarnos aquí tres días, saldremos.’

After we have been here three days, we will leave. XMH_08-15-07_33a

- (182) **¿Saapl quee -ya?**
 IR.ID-cold AUX.SN QM
 ‘¿Hará frío?’ / ‘¿Estará frío?’ XMH_08-15-07_33b
Will it be cold? (ambiguous between weather and simple interpretation)

- (183) **¿Me °hant pofii ta° smaaitoj quee -ya?**
 2PRO tomorrow IR.ID-N-fish-PL AUX.SN QM
 ‘¿No vas a ir a la pesca mañana?’
Won’t you go fishing tomorrow? RMH_10-15-07_61a RMH_10-15-07_61c

- (184) **He ma siiho caha.** (***ma hsiho**)
 1PRO 2sDO IR.ID-see AUX.SN-DCL 2sDO 1sS.TR-IR.ID-see
 ‘Te veré.’
I will see you. RMH_10-15-07_61b
- (185) **¿Cmaacoj quih zímjöc siifp quee -ya?**
 old.man the.FL when? IR.ID-arrive AUX.SN QM
 ‘¿Cuándo va a llegar mi viejo (padre)?’
When is my old man (father) going to arrive? (DS2005, cmaacoj) XMH_08-15-07_33c
- (186) **¿Me cmaax siitax quee -ya?** (***insítax**)
 2PRO now IR.ID-go AUX.SN QM 2SS-IR.ID-go
 ‘¿Vas a ir ahora?’
Are you going to go now? (DS2005, cmaax) XMH_08-15-07_33d

Irrealis forms are also used adnominally. The forms become more complicated, however; see §8.4 for examples and §14.5 for discussion of the forms.

10.4.6 The distribution of the deverbal nouns

At least two major questions arise. First, when does one use a deverbal noun construction rather than a finite verb? And second, how does one choose which deverbal noun type to use? The issue is important since some sentences that might be expected to be grammatical are not. The use of deverbal nouns in questions is discussed in chapter 6.

In the case of simple statements, the use of deverbal nouns expands the options for expressiveness, although there is often no obvious difference in meaning between a predicative clause of this type and clauses with finite verbs, as the following examples show.

- (187) **Me mipnáail quih maziím.**
 2PRO 2P-skirt the.FL PX-pleasant
 ... **yaziím.** ... **xaziím.** ... **caziím** **iha.**
 DT-pleasant EM-pleasant SN-pleasant DCL
 ‘TU falda es bonita’.
YOUR skirt is pretty. RRR
- (188) a. **Maticpan.** b. **Yaticpan.**
 PX-work DT-work
 c. **Xaticpan.** d. **Caticpan** **iha.**
 EM-work SN-work DCL
 ‘Está trabajando.’
S/he is working. RRR QQQ check time again

- (189) a. **Miifp.**
PX-arrive
- b. **Yoofp.**
DT-arrive
- c. **Xoofp.**
EM-arrive
- d. **Caafp iha.**
SN-arrive DCL

‘Está llegando’

S/he is arriving. RRR qqq check again

Nevertheless, some collocations and situations yield differences between these realis forms, of course.

- (190) °**Hax cmaapa° miifp.** ... **yoofp.** ... ***xoofp** ... **caafp iha.**
just.now PX-arrive DT-arrive EM-arrive SN-arrive DCL

‘Acaba de llegar.’

S/he/it just now arrived. RRR

- (191) **Zaah quih coox cah cömaticpan.**
sun/day the.FL all the.FL-FOC 3IO-PX-work
- ... **cöyaticpan** ... ***cöxaticpan** ... **cöcatícpán iha.**
3IO-DT-work 3IO-EM-work 3IO-SN-work DCL

‘Trabaja todos los días.’

S/he works every day. RRR

- (192) **Mipnáail quih mazíim áa.** ... ***yazíim áa.**
2P-skirt the.FL PX-pleasant INTNS DT-pleasant INTNS
- ... ***xazíim áa.** ... **cazíim áa ha.**
EM-pleasant INTNS SN-pleasant INTNS DCL

‘Tu falda es muy bonita’.

Your skirt is very pretty. RRR

- (193) **Panáal hizquih moáatjö.** ... ***yaatjö.** ... **xöaatjö.** ... ***coáatjö iha.**
honey PX.PL-FL PX-sweet DT-sweet EM-sweet SN-sweet DCL

‘La miel es dulce.’

Honey is sweet. (using the generic determiner **hizquih**) RRR

- (194) **Panáal quih moáatjö.** ... ***yaatjö.** ... **xöaajö.** ... **coáatjö iha.**
honey the.FL PX-sweet DT-sweet EM-sweet SN-sweet DCL

‘La miel es dulce.’

Honey is sweet. RRR

- (195) **Paanaal quih yaatjö,** °**xiica an icáai°** °**iiiqui cöihíin hac°.**
honey the.FL DT-sweet sugar with.respect.to.it

‘La miel es más dulce que el azúcar.’

Honey is sweeter than sugar. RRR

10.4.7 The comparative constructions

Several comparative constructions exist and all utilize a deverbal noun used predicatively. In each of these the item being compared to another is the subject of the clause and generally appears first.

In the most common comparative construction, the ‘standard’ is presented most often in a phrase that appears after the simple statement.¹⁸

- (196) **Cocázní° com, tiix cacáatol iha,**
 rattlesnake the.Hz DDS SN-dangerous DCL
haquímet com °iiqui cöihíin° hac.
 lizard the.Hz compared.to.it the.LC

‘Una víbora de cascabel es más peligrosa que una lagartija.’

A rattlesnake is more dangerous than a lizard. (DS2005, iiqui cöihíin hac) RMH_07-11-07_51c

However, there is flexibility in the presentation of the items being compared, as the following example demonstrates. But even in this more complicated presentation, the compared item precedes the standard (and then is repeated).

- (197) **Haamjö icáp coi hesen coi °iiqui cöihíin hac°**
 Agave.subsimplex 3P-stalk the.PL ironwood the.PL with.respect.to
haamjö icáp coi, taax cafzx iha.
 Agave.subsimplex 3P-stalk the.PL DDP SN-lightweight DCL

‘LA INFLORESCENCIA DEL AGAVE SUBSIMPLEX es más liviano que palo fierro.’

THE FLOWERING STALK OF THE AGAVE SUBSIMPLEX is lighter than ironwood.

(DS2005, icáp) RRR

The following example is similar to the preceding one except that the compared item (ego) does not lead out in the sentence.

- (198) **Rosa quih °iiqui he ihíin hac° he cacösxaj iha.**
 the. FL compared.to.me 1PRO SN-long/tall DCL

‘Yo estoy más alta que Rosa.’

I am taller than Rosa. (DS2005, cacösxaj) RRR

While the construction with **iiqui cöihíin hac** seems to be the most common explicit comparative construction, it is not the only one. In fact it is common in a conversation in which a couple of referents are already established, to hear simple questions like the following:

¹⁸ This type of comparative construction does not neatly fall into any of the types presented in Stassen (2001) although it is most similar to the so-called locational comparative.

- (199) **¿Quiñh caii -ya?**
 who? mature QM
 ‘¿Quién es mayor?’
Who is older? (More literally, *Who is mature?*) RRR
- (200) **¿Me caii -ya? ¿Me quisil -ya?**
 2PRO mature QM 2PRO SN-small QM
 ‘¿Eres mayor o menor?’
Are you older or younger? (More literally, *Are you mature? Are you young?*) RRR

The reply to these kinds of questions typically is a simple sentence such as the following.

- (201) **He quisil iha.**
 1PRO SN-small DCL
 ‘Yo soy menor.’
I’m younger. (Literally, *I’m little.*) RRR

The idiomatic expressions **iizc ano cōcayáxi** (3P-front 3P.in 3IO-SN-measure) and **iizc ano coha** (3P-front 3P.in 3IO-SN-be_{Irreg}) mean *smaller, younger*; they have comparison included in them automatically and are illustrated by the following examples. The standard is the oblique/indirect object of the predicate expressed as the deverbal noun.

- (202) **Oot cop, tiix xecoj cop °iizc ano cōcayáxi° ha.**
 coyote the.VT DDS wolf the.VT smaller/younger DCL
 ‘EL COYOTE es más pequeño que el lobo.’
A COYOTE is smaller than a wolf. (DS2005, cōcayaxi) RRR
- (203) **He °miizc ano me coha° ha.**
 1PRO 2P-front 3P.in 2IO 3IO-SN-be_{Irreg} DCL
 ‘Yo soy más joven (o más pequeño) que tú.’
I am younger (or smaller) than you. (DS2005, coha) RRR

The idiomatic expressions **°itácl cōcayáxi°** (3P-surface/place.above 3IO-SN-measure) and **°itácl cōquiyat°** (3P-surface/place.above 3IO-SN-reach) are similar in structure and mean *bigger, older, and higher*, respectively.

- (204) **Zaah quij hant quij °itácl cōcayáxi° ha.**
 sun the.CM earth the.CM bigger/older DCL
 ‘El sol es más grande que la tierra.’
The sun is larger than the earth. (DS2005, cōcayaxi) RRR

Another, but less common, comparative construction presents the compared item in a simple clause and then tells the way in which it surpasses another item.

- (205) **Eenim quih zix caaiscan iha.**
 metal the.FL thing SN-hard DCL

Hocö quih iiscan quih anxö cöqueemij iha.
 sawn.wood the.FL 3P-AON-hard the.FL INTNS 3IO-SN-Tr-surpass DCL

‘El metal es duro. Es mucho más duro que la madera.’
Metal is strong. It is much stronger than wood. (More literally, Metal is strong. It surpasses wood in hardness.) (DS2005, cöqueemij) RRR

Another relatively uncommon construction uses the stative verb $\sqrt{\text{ayáxi}}$ *measure* in a negative form. In the following example that verb appears as a finite verb, unlike the others in this section. It is also different from other examples in this section in that the standard of comparison is a nonreferential nominal (**cmiique** *person*).

(206) **Cmaacoj tiquij tihíj oo toohit,**
 old.man MD.CM RL-remain.seated DL RL-UO-eat
cmiique hax yomayáxi.
 person INTNS DT-N-measure

‘Ese viejo se quedó comiendo. Es más grande que cualquier persona.’
That old man stayed behind eating. He is bigger than anyone else. (DS2005, quihij) RRR

Finally, the following examples illustrate the presentation of more specific information about the measurements in the comparison. These also do not use simple predicative clauses, but a transitive verb that means *leave behind, go away from*. The first example below uses an object-oriented deverbal noun (see §14.3).

(207) **¿Me hant zó cyaxi cömoaix -ya?**
 2PRO land/year how? SN-? 3IO-2P-ON-go.away.from QM
 ‘¿Cuántos años tienes más que él?’
How many years older than him are you? (DS2005, quiiix) RRR

(208) **Hant coocj cohyóaix.**
 land/year SN-two 3IO-1S.Tr-DT-leave.behind
 ‘Tengo dos años más que él/ella.’
I am two years older than him/her. (DS2005, quiiix) RRR

See also the use of superlative expressions with **quipac** discussed at the beginning of chapter 24.