

Appendix C: Tests for transitivity

The following tests are available for surface transitivity or intransitivity in Seri, directly relating to the presence or absence of a direct object: (a) the allomorphy of certain prefixes, (b) the application of a phonological rule that relates to the allomorphy of one group of prefixes (c) the possibility or impossibility of passive or unspecified subject morphology, and (d) the 3:3 prefix **i-**. These are in addition to the very obvious evidence from direct object inflection (see §17.1.2.3) and are especially helpful when third person is involved since that is unmarked.

C.1 Allomorphy

Some prefixes have suppletive allomorphy which is determined in whole or in part by the surface transitivity or intransitivity of the clause.

C.1.1 First person singular subject inflection

Two suppletive allomorphs for the first person singular subject inflectional prefix exist: **hp-** if the clause is intransitive and **h-** if it is transitive. For more details, see §17.1.2.1.

Intransitive

- (1) **ihpyomafp**
 ‘no llegué’
I didn’t arrive
- (3) **ihpyompazt**
 ‘no fui tatuado’
I wasn’t tattooed

Transitive

- (2) **ihyomaho**
 ‘no lo/la vi’
I didn’t see him/her/it
- (4) **ma hyomaho**
 ‘no te vi’
I didn’t see you (sg.)

C.1.2 First person emphatic subject inflection

Two suppletive allomorphs for the first person emphatic subject inflectional prefix exist: **ca-** if the clause is intransitive and **a-** if it is transitive. This prefix occurs in a different position in the word than the normal subject inflectional affixes and substitutes for the normal first person subject inflection. For more details, see §17.1.2.1.

Intransitive

- (5) **Hatee somcaatax aha.**
 ‘YO no iré.’
I won’t go. (DS2005, caa-)

Transitive

- (6) **Hatee smaahit aha.**
 ‘YO no lo comeré.’
I will not eat it. (DS2005, aa-)

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|--|--|
| (7) Hatee <u>s</u>capazt aha.
‘YO seré tatuado.’
<i>I will be tattooed.</i> | (8) Hatee <u>y</u>asi.¹
‘YO lo tomé.’
<i>I drank it.</i> |
| (9) Scaalx.
‘¡Vamos!’
<i>Let’s go!</i> | (10) Saaitoj!
‘¡Comámoslo!’
<i>Let’s eat it!</i> |

C.1.3 Infinitival prefix

Two suppletive allomorphs for the infinitival prefix exist: **ica-** if the clause is intransitive and **iha-**_{Abi} if it is transitive. For more details, see §17.2.1.

- | Intransitive | Transitive |
|--|---|
| (11) <u>i</u>capanzx
‘correr’
<i>to run</i> | (12) <u>i</u>hapii
‘probarlo/la’
<i>to taste it</i> |
| (13) <u>i</u>capazt
‘ser tatuado’
<i>to be tattooed</i> | (14) ma <u>i</u>hasanj
‘llevarte en la espalda’
<i>to carry you (sg.) on my back</i> |

C.1.4 Imperative

The imperative prefix has several suppletive allomorphs, the distribution of which is predictable based primarily on the phonological shape of the following morpheme, but also on certain other factors including the surface transitivity of the clause in limited situations. If the morpheme following the imperative prefix begins with a vowel other than **i**, **ii**, (short) **a** or (short) **e**, transitivity is relevant. Intransitive forms take the prefix \emptyset -_{Abi}; transitive forms take the prefix **h-**. For more details see §17.2.2.

- | Intransitive | Transitive |
|--|---|
| (15) asanj < stem $\sqrt{\text{osanj}}$
<i>carry (unspecified) on back</i> | (16) <u>h</u>oocta < root $\sqrt{\text{oocta}}$ <i>look at</i> |
| (17) as < root $\sqrt{\text{oos}}$ <i>sing</i> | (18) <u>h</u>aai < root $\sqrt{\text{aai}}$ <i>make</i> |
| (19) aanpx < root $\sqrt{\text{aanpx}}$ <i>go home</i> | |

C.1.5 Realis action/oblique deverbal nouns

The prefix for realis action/oblique deverbal nouns has suppletive allomorphs, and the

¹ This verb has a short vowel although a long vowel in such situations would be expected.

distribution of these is predictable based primarily on the phonological shape of the following morpheme, but the surface transitivity of the clause is also sometimes relevant. If the morpheme following the imperative prefix begins with any vowel other than **a**, **e**, **i** or **ii**, transitivity is relevant. Intransitive forms take the prefix **y-**_{Abl}, while transitive forms take the prefix **h-**. For more details see §14.4. The forms below are all cited in third person subject/possessor forms for the sake of simplicity.

Intransitive	Transitive
(20) yasanj < stem √ osanj <i>carry (unspecified) on back</i>	(21) ihoocta < root √ oocta <i>look at</i>
(22) yas < root √ oos <i>sing</i>	(23) ihaa i < root √ aa i <i>make</i>
(24) yaanpx < root √ aanpx <i>go home</i>	(26) ihcetol < root √ cetol <i>push</i>
(25) yeemej < root √ eemej <i>move slowly (intr.)</i>	

C.2 Phonological rule

Three mood prefixes end in **o**: dependent irrealis **po-** (§17.1.1.1), emphatic realis **xo-** (§17.1.1.8), and distal realis **yo-** (§17.1.1.6). They interact differently with a **o**-initial stems in intransitive clauses than they do with **o**-initial stems in transitive clauses. In the intransitive clauses, the **o**'s merge and change to **a**. In the transitive clauses, the **o** of the prefix is deleted. These facts are discussed in §27.2.2.

Intransitive	Transitive
(27) pas < { po-oos } IR.DP-sing	(28) ipoocta < { i-po-oocta } 3:3-IR.DP-look.at
(29) xoas < { xo-oos } EM-sing	(30) ixoocta < { i-xo-oocta } 3:3-EM-look.at
(31) ihpyás < { hp-yo-oos } 1SG.S.IN-DT-sing	(32) ihyoocta < { h-yo-oocta } 1SG.S.TR-DT-look.at

C.3 Passive vs. Unspecified Subject

Transitive verbs commonly have passive counterparts; intransitive verbs do not. When one wishes to omit explicit reference to the agent of a transitive verb, the passive form is used (see §17.1.5). When one wishes to do the same for an intransitive verb, the unspecified subject prefix is used (§17.1.5). Passive morphology is not permitted on intransitive verbs and unspecified

subject morphology is not permitted on transitive verbs. Therefore transitive verbs are straightforwardly distinguishable from intransitive verbs because this unspecified subject prefix may not be used with transitive verbs. The forms below are all cited in the action or oblique-oriented deverbal noun form (§14.4.1) in third person. Note that the intransitive verbs do not permit the presence of the passive prefix and the transitive verbs do not permit the presence of the unspecified subject morpheme.

Intransitive	Transitive
(33) a. icaafp i-Ø-ca-afp 3P-AON-US-arrive <i>one's arriving</i> b. * ipafp i-Ø-p-afp 3P-AON-Pv-arrive	(34) a. ihacazni i-h-ah-cazni 3P-AON-Pv-bite <i>his/her being bitten</i> b. * icacazni i-Ø-ca-cazni 3P-AON-US-bite <i>(one's biting him/her/it)</i>
(35) a. icapanzx i-Ø-ca-panzx 3P-AON-US-run <i>one's running</i> b. * ihapanzx i-h-ah-panzx 3P-AON-Pv-run	(36) a. ipaho i-Ø-p-aho 3P-AON-Pv-see <i>his/her being seen</i> b. * icaaho i-Ø-ca-aho 3P-AON-US-see <i>(one's seeing him/her/it)</i>

C.4 3:3 i-

The prefix **i-** occurs on finite transitive verbs only when both the subject and direct object are third person. (For more details see §17.1.2.1.) Therefore it does not occur in (37), because it is intransitive, nor in (38) because the Direct Object is first person, nor in (39) because the Subject is first person. But it does occur in (40) because the proper conditions are met.

- (37) **Yoofp.**
 DT-arrive
 'Llegó.'
S/he/it arrived.

- (38) **Hin yooho.**
1SGDO DT-see
'Me vio.'
S/he/it saw me.
- (39) **Zo hyooho.**
one 1SGS.TR-DT-see
'Vi uno.'
I saw one.
- (40) **Lyooho.**
3:3-DT-see
'Lo/la vio.'
S/he/it saw it/her/him.