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## Switch Reference in Seri

Stephen A. Marlett and Mary B. Moser

Switch reference systems have attracted attention since they were first described as such by Jacobsen 1967. The Seri facts presented here have challenged the most detailed theoretically-oriented account of such systems (Finer 1985a, Finer 1985b), despite the relatively simple appearance of the system. The Seri switch reference system, apparently unlike other switch reference systems, is not keyed in to the superficial subject of the clause nor to some notion like Agent, Actor, or deep structure Subject. Passive clauses and those with Raising are very relevant facts, besides clauses with impersonal verbs like *rain* and verbs with nonvolitional action like *die* (which interact just like verbs with volitional action).

Seri is spoken by about 700 people who live in the state of Sonora in northwestern Mexico. The data presented here were collected primarily by Edward and Mary Moser between 1951 and the present. Further data were collected by Steve Marlett between 1976 and 1981. Basic data and analysis are presented in various publications (listed below) by Moser, Marlett, and most recently Farrell, Marlett and Perlmutter.

This data squib presents key data in one place and in one orthographic form (the practical orthography). The interlinear translations, while not morpheme by morpheme or even word by word, are fairly literal. Switch reference marking appears on verbs in the dependent realis (*t-*, switch reference marker *ma*) and verbs in the dependent irrealis (*po-*, switch reference marker *ta*). These verb forms are translated with simple past and simple future forms in the English interlinear glosses. There are no words such as *if*, *when*, *as*, *while*, *after*, etc., in Seri, but these are supplied in the free translation line as appropriate, although other translations may also be possible. Similarly, nominalized clauses are translated below with simple tense in English.

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## Switch Reference in Seri (Mexico)

### Basic Data

- (1) *Pocoo(\*ta)* *siizcamaha.*  
they will be all they will arrive  
*All of them will arrive.*
- (2) *Pocoota* *nsiihitaha.*  
they will be all you will eat them  
*You should eat them all.*
- (3) *Tcoo(\*ma)* *yaanipxat.*  
they were all they went home  
*They all went home.*
- (4) *Tcooma* *imiitolca.*  
it was all they ate it  
*They ate all of it.*
- (5) *Impoofpta* *tmaticpan.*  
you will arrive s/he can work  
*When you arrive, s/he can work.*
- (6) *Tapcama* *hpyiim.*  
it rained I slept  
*I slept while it rained.*
- (7) *Toxi(\*ma)* *mheemt.*  
it died it stank  
*It stank after it died.*
- (8) *Mizj tama* *he yomaamx.*  
it was well s/he didn't tell it to me  
*S/he didn't tell it to me correctly.*
- (9) *Him tcaznima* *hpyaha.*  
it bit me I cried  
*Since it bit me, I cried.*
- (10) *Minl quih pozatxtax* *insoohaha.*  
your fingers will have thorns in them you will cry  
*If your fingers get thorns in them, you will cry.*
- (11) *Tommequema* *hyomasi.*  
it wasn't warm I didn't drink it  
*Since it wasn't warm, I didn't drink it.*
- (12) *Hapaspoj zo mpaaita* *hpaazitax* *cocsar zo haquix mopa(\*ta)x*  
you will make a paper I will carry it an outsider will come along  
  
*he poofp(\*ta)x* *ziix zo him iseaha.*  
s/he will arrive to me s/he will give me something  
  
*If you make a paper, and I carry it, when an outsider comes along and s/he comes to me, s/he will give me something.*
- (13) *Yoofp(\*ma/\*ta)* *xo* *hymaho.*  
s/he arrived but I didn't see him/her.  
*S/he arrived but I didn't see him/her.*

## Data with Passive

- (14) *Ihpahcaznitax ihpsoohaha.*  
I will be bitten I will cry  
*If I am bitten, I will cry.*
- (15) *Hap quih toxima yopahit.*  
the deer died it was eaten  
*Whenever a deer died, it (the deer) was eaten.*
- (16) *Cöset hapah hehe cap tpezima tatax yoque.<sup>1</sup>*  
the tree called Cöset was defeated he went away it is said  
*The tree called Cöset was defeated, (and) he went away, it is said.*
- (17) *Haat quih pahcaax heepol quih mos sahcaaha.*  
limberbush will be looked for white ratany will also be looked for  
*Whenever limberbush is looked for, white ratany (plant) should also be looked for (at the same time).*

## Data with Raising

- (18) *Ma hiizt ihpmaapxa.<sup>2</sup>*  
my tattooing you I was three  
*I tattooed you three times.*
- (19) *Moxima quih iqui iipca maapxa.*  
its raining yesterday it was three  
*It rained three times yesterday.*
- (20) *Hipazt quih yootxo / hpyahatxo.<sup>3</sup>*  
my being tattooed it was many / I was many  
*I was tattooed many times.*
- (21) *Mipazt quih pootxotax / impahatxo(\*ta)x insoohaha.*  
your being tattooed it will be many / you will be many you will cry  
*If you are tattooed many times, you will cry.*
- (22) *Haxz himcop him icatxla quih pahatxo(\*ta)x soxiaha.*  
that dog's biting me he will be many he will die  
*If that dog bites me many times, he will die.*
- (23) *Sooda coopol quih ipasi quih pocahatxo(\*ta)x hacx scamiihaha.*  
cola soda's being drunk one will be many one will die  
*If cola soda is drunk often, one will die.*

<sup>1</sup> Switch reference marking never appears before a quotative verb like *yoque*.

<sup>2</sup> Literal translation is not very meaningful here. The tensed verb is inflected for person (as shown), and when it is so inflected in agreement with the (superficial) subject of the lower clause, the number verb also carries an extra prefix. The verb of the lower clause occurs in a nominalized form.

<sup>3</sup> When the complement clause is passive, there are two possibilities: without raising (the simple verb), or with raising (the derived verb has person agreement as discussed above).