

# Multiple event marking in the Seri verbal paradigm

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## Seri

- Seri is spoken in northwest Mexico, in two villages on the coast: *Haxöl lihom*/El Desemboque and *Socaaix*/Punta Chueca



Figure: The Seri region in Mexico

- Isolate, approx. 900 speakers (Ethnologue 2007 estimate)

## The problem

- Verb stems in Seri typically have 4 forms

(1)

'run'	Form A	Form B	Form C	Form D
	-panzx	-panozxim	-pancojc	-pancoxlca

- Question: how should these 4 stems be analysed?

## Outline I

Background on Seri verbs & Seri morphology

Seri MULT-forms are pluractionals

Comparison SgSubj and PlSubj MULT-forms

Conclusion

## Seri verbal morphology

- Seri verbs generally have four forms
- Morphology is not straight-forwardly predictable
  - many different exponents with a range of allomorphs
  - no one-to-one relation between exponents and meaning (Marlett, 2016; Baerman, 2016).

(2) No one-to-one mapping between suffix form and function

Meaning	SG subject		PL subject	
intercept	-zactim	-zacatim	-zacatoj	-zacatam
lap up	-oaala	-oaalatim	-oaalatam	-oaalatoj
fall	-poc	-poc <del>ti</del> m	-poc <del>li</del> m	-pocalam
unfasten	-aafp	-aafip <del>to</del> j	-atoofip <del>to</del> j	-atoofipolca

## Seri verbal forms

- Question: how should the 4 stems of verbs in Seri be analysed?
- Many-to-many correspondences => no clear morphological clues to the meaning of the stems
- Need to examine the meaning of the stems

Background on Seri verbs & Seri morphology    Seri MULT-forms are pluractionals    Comparison SgSubj and PlSubj MULT-forms    Conclusion

## Seri verbal forms: subject number agreement

- Category 1: subject number agreement (Moser, 1961)

(3)

	Cat. 1: subject number			
	singular		plural	
	Form A	Form B	Form C	Form D
'run'	-panzx	-panozxim	-pancojc	-pancoxica

(4) I ran

- Ihp-yo-panzx.
- Ihp-yo-panozxim.  
1 SG-RLS.YO-run
- \*Ihp-yo-pancojc.
- \*Ihp-yo-pancoxica.  
[EDSEI22ABR2018AMMO]

(5) We ran

- \*Ha-yo-panzx.
- \*Ha-yo-panozxim.  
1 PL-RLS.YO-run
- Ha-yo-pancojc.
- Ha-yo-pancoxica.  
[EDSEI22ABR2018AMMO]

- Subject number agreement not tied to specific exponents

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## Seri verbal forms: category 2

- Meaning difference between A & B, and between C & D?

(6)

	Cat. 1: subject number			
	singular		plural	
	Form A	Form B	Form C	Form D
'run'	-panzx	-panozxim	-pancojc	-pancoxica

- Cabredo Hofherr, Pasquereau, and O'Meara (2018) (CPO) argue that the distinction is between a neutral form and a form marking event multiplicity (glossed MULT-forms)

(7) Ihp-yo-panozxim.  
1 SG-RLS.YO-run  
I ran.

- Context 1: Yesterday, I ran (once) in a 100m race. FALSE
- Context 2: Yesterday, I ran in several 100m races. TRUE
- Context 3: Yesterday, I did a treasure hunt. TRUE

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## Seri MULT-forms are pluractionals

- CPO use SgSubj MULT-forms to argue for a pluractional analysis
  - MULT-forms cannot be used for single events
  - MULT-forms ≠ imperfectives (don't mark habitual or continuous readings)
  - MULT-forms ≠ pl object agreement (allow sg objects)
- The arguments can be replicated with PlSubj MULT-forms
- However, pluractionals vary widely (e.g. iteratives, distributives) → two pluractionals can be different

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## Seri category 2 = pluractionality

- Following Marlett 2016 & Baerman 2016, CPO analyse the distinction between A & B, and between C & D as corresponding to a single feature
- Paradigm with subject number cross-cutting multiplicity (8).

(8) Same-paradigm hypothesis: MULT.sg and MULT.pl are part of the same paradigm

run	Cat. 2: multiplicity	
	NEUTRAL	MULT
Cat. 1: subject #	SG	panzx
	PL	pancojc
		panozxim
		pancoxica

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## Seri verbal forms: category 2

- Given the complex morphology of Seri treating this is not a trivial assumption.
  - Differences between SgSubj MULT-forms and PlSubj MULT-forms
  - Pluractionals are cross-linguistically heterogeneous
- SgSubj MULT-forms and PlSubj MULT-forms → could be two types of pluractionals

(9) Different-paradigm hypothesis: MULT.sg and MULT.pl do not express the same feature

run	NEUTRAL	MULT-1	MULT-2
Cat. 1: subject #	SG	panzx	panozxim
	PL	pancojc	pancoxica

- Question: How can we exclude an analysis as in (9)?

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## Differences SgSubj and PlSubj MULT-forms

- MULT.SG is not licensed by distribution of events over suitcases

(10) Context: At 2pm today, I saw Juan pulling his 3 suitcases behind him with 3 ropes.

#Juan quih xiica an ihyaacalca quih hant  
Juan def suitcases DEF.FLX down  
**iyootoxim.**  
3;3.RLYO.drag.MULT.SG

Juan dragged the suitcases. [Questionnaire6FT3, elicitation]  
SC: ok if he does it several times or goes to several places

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## Differences SgSubj and PISubj MULT-forms

- MULT.PL is licensed (for some speakers) by distribution of events over suitcases and children

(11) Context: At 2pm today, I saw Juan, Isaac and Manuel each pulling one suitcase.

Xicacaziil quih xiica an ihyaacalcoj quih hant  
 child.PL DEF suitcases DEF down  
**iyootyaxlca.**  
 3;3.RLYO.drag.MULT.PL

The children dragged the suitcases. (40+: true, 40-: variation)

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## Differences SgSubj and PISubj MULT-forms

- MULT.SG is not licensed by distribution of events over its argument
- MULT.PL is licensed by distribution of events over arguments (at least for 40+ speakers)

(12)

	sg. MULT	pl. MULT	
		40-	40+
dist. over ptcp only	X	%	✓

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## Differences SgSubj and PISubj MULT-forms

- Distribution over times only is enough to license MULT.PL

(13) Context: The women crossed the river together, various times. (source [EDSEIFEB2017DRPM, elicitation])

Cmajjiic quih hant ipzx com imac  
 woman.PL DEF river DEF 3POS.middle  
**cöyatooquelam.**  
 3IO.RLS.YO.cross.MULT.PL

The women crossed the river.

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## Differences SgSubj and PISubj MULT-forms

- Distribution over participants only is possible for older speakers, not so clear for younger ones.

(14) Context: The women crossed the arroyo together, once.

Cmajjiic quih hant ipzx com imac  
 woman.PL DEF river DEF 3POS.middle  
**cöyatooquelam.**  
 3IO.RLS.YO.cross.MULT.PL

The women crossed the river. (40+: true, 40-: variation)  
([EDSEI9MAY2019DRPM.ATHF, elicitation])

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## Differences SgSubj and PISubj MULT-forms

(15)

	sg. MULT	pl. MULT	
		40-	40+
dist. over ptcp only	X	%	✓
dist. over time only	✓	✓	✓

- Possibly locative distribution over a SgSubj was possible in earlier stages of Seri
- the phrase meaning *gray whale* contains the MULT-form of the verb 'be white'
- MULT-form licensed by spatial distribution: the property of being white is predicated of spatially-distinct parts of the whale.

(16) Ziix cooxapoj (Marlett, 2016)  
 thing SBJ.NMLZ.white.MULT  
 Gray whale (lit. whale that is spotted with white/ white here and there)

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## Differences SgSubj and PISubj MULT-forms

(17)

	sg. MULT	pl. MULT	
		40-	40+
dist. over ptcp only	X	%	✓
dist. over time only	✓	✓	✓

- SgSubj and PISubj MULT-forms have different distributive properties
  - SgSubj MULT-forms require distribution over times
  - PISubj MULT-forms require distribution over times OR over arguments
- However, this difference is an artefact of the presence of the PISubj:
  - Simultaneous readings of PISubj MULT-forms are due to distribution over the plural subject (each boy pulling a suitcase, each woman crossing the river moving in different directions)
  - Distribution of simultaneous events over the SgSubj is not available with these predicates
  - With a SgSubj distribution over time is the only option.

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## Speaker variation with MULT-forms

- New fieldwork: narrowed possible context with pictures
- The differences between the speakers disappear
- Differences between speakers due to differences in the context constructed by the speakers for an "out of the blue" sentence

(18) The women crossed the arroyo together, once.

Cmajiic quih hant ipzx com imac  
 woman.PL DEF river DEF 3POS.middle  
**cöyatooquelam.**  
 3IO.RLS.YO.cross.MULT.PL

The women crossed the river. (40+: true, 40-: variation)  
 ((EDSEI9MAY2019DRPM.ATHF, elicitation))

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## Speaker variation with MULT-forms

(19) Cmajiic quih hant ipzx com imac  
 woman.PL DEF river DEF 3POS.middle  
**cöyatooquelam.**  
 3IO.RLS.YO.cross.MULT.PL  
 The women crossed the river. ((EDSEI9MAY2019DRPM.ATHF, elicitation))

Picture 1: false    Picture 2: true

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## Differences SgSubj and PlSubj MULT-forms

(20) Context: At 2pm today, I saw Juan, Isaac and Manuel each pulling one suitcase.

Xicacaziil quih xiica an ihyaacalcoj quih hant  
 child.PL DEF suitcases DEF down  
**iyootyaxlca.**  
 3;3.RLYO.drag.MULT.PL

The boys dragged the suitcases. (40+: true, 40-: variation) = (11)

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## Speaker variation with MULT-forms

- Picture 1: (20) false (boys pulling the suitcases together)
- Picture 2: (20) % (boys pulling suitcases separately)
- Picture 3: (20) true (boys pulling suitcases separately in different directions)

Picture 1    Picture 2    Picture 3

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## Speaker variation with MULT-forms

- Once the contexts are made clearer, the variation between speakers disappears

(21)

	sg. MULT	pl. MULT	40-	40+
dist. over ptcp only				
+different directions	X	✓	✓	✓
-different directions	X	X	X	X
dist. over time only	✓	✓	✓	✓

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## Speaker variation with MULT-forms

(22)

	sg. MULT	pl. MULT
dist. over ptcp only		
+different directions	X	✓
-different directions	X	X
dist. over time only	✓	✓

- At first sight, singular and plural subject MULT-forms might seem to lexicalize different pluractional features
  - Singular subject MULT-forms require distribution over times
  - Plural subject MULT-forms require distribution over times OR over arguments
- But in fact, these differences are superficial: the consequence of real-world limitations

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## Conclusion

- Seri SgSubj and PISubj MULT--forms are pluractionals
- Seri SgSubj and PISubj MULT--forms have different distributive properties
- However, these differences are due to the presence of the plural subject
- Speaker differences for certain examples largely disappear when context is made more precise (spatial configuration)
- →no argument for different paradigm analysis (9)
- Same paradigm analysis in (8) is preferable

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## Open question

- There are examples without movement that elicited different speaker reactions that seem to align with age.
- Problem: small sample size (8 speakers)

(23) Context : A child made a joke and his mother and aunt laughed at the same time.

Cmaajjic coi **yoosintolca.**  
 woman.PL DEF.PL RLS.YO.laugh.MULT.PL

The women laughed. (40+: true, SC: because there are 2 people, 40-: false) ([Questionnaire3FT2, elicitation])

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## ¡Haxahtiipe!

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## References I

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References

## List of abbreviations

ABS	absolute	MULT	multiple
ART	article	NMLZ	nominalizer
AW	away	OBJ	object
CAUS	causative	PASS	passive
DEF	definite	PL	plural
DEM	demonstrative	POS	possessive
FLX	flexible	RLS	realis
FOC	focus	SG	singular
INDEF	indefinite	SUJ	subject
INF	infinitive	TRNS	transitive
INTR	intransitive	UNSPEC	unspecified
IO	indirect object		

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