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Absolute Descriptives

A Description of a Novel Verbal Component in **Siwa**

Étienne Ljóni Poisson

Abstract: Siwa is an apriori conlang set in pre-Columbian Quebec whose protolanguage emerged at the end of the last glacial maximum in Europe and subsequently migrated to North America. In this essay, a component of verbal morphology is described which has not been indentified in natural languages, though it may be likened to Japanese counter words. Absolute descriptives are monosyllabic infixes that add directly to verb stems and add information about the absolute argument. Interestingly, Siwa is an active-stative language and does not display ergative-absolute alignment. The article is part of the language's complete grammatical description, *A Descriptive Grammar of Siwa*.

Absolute descriptives are infixes which can be added directly to the root of verbs and the copula. They are housed in the slot 1 of verbs (directly onto the root)¹. They are called absolute descriptives because their main function is to describe the shape, state, form or nature of absolute arguments, that is to say the subjects of intransitive verbs and the objects of transitive verbs. There are nine such markers and each describes a category of characteristics, usually descriptive of the shape or form of the arguments. Absolute descriptives have four main functions.

They describe the shape/state/form/nature of:

1. The subject of an intransitive verb
2. The object of a transitive verb
3. The change of state of the subject of translative or passive intransitive verbs or the object of causal transitive verbs

They can also act as adverbs, generally describing the way in which the action is performed. Some descriptives may combine to form a more specific derivative and some extra descriptives exist but are very restricted in use (dialectally or in certain fixed expressions).

Absolute descriptives are attached directly to the verb stem. Verb stems ending in a consonant see no change, whereas verb stems ending in a vowel have vowel coalescence. The absolute descriptive markers lose their initial vowel if they precede an identical vowel.

For the formation of the past, the stem vowel is re-used after the absolute descriptive. Consonant-final verbs use regular postverbal vowels:

sokli·a
[ˈsɔkl:ia]
sokl=i-a-Ø-Ø
hoist-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG
'X will hoist Y'

¹ Siwa verbs can be preceded by three *preverbal* slots and followed by nine *postverbal* slots.

sokl·u·a
[ˈsɔkl:ua]
sokl-u-a-Ø-Ø
hoist-past-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG
'X hoisted Y'

sokl·ohk·u·a
[ˈsɔkl:ɔhkua]
sokl-ohk-u-a-Ø-Ø
hoist-ohk-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG
'X hoisted (a heavy thing/container)'

ked·a
[ˈcʰeda]
ked-a-Ø-Ø
carry-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG
'X will carry Y'

kedd·a
[ˈcʰet:a]
ke<dd>-a-Ø-Ø
carry.PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG
'X carried Y'

kedd·ohk·a
[ˈcʰet:ɔhka]
ke<dd>-ohk-a-Ø-Ø
carry.PAST-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG
'X carried (something heavy)'

Absolutive Descriptives are not required for any verb, but are common in story telling and more vivid or expressive speech. They may also be found with the copula of there-existential sentences (or other there-existential verbs). In this case, the absolutive descriptives refer to the argument of the copula.

Siwa allows its speaker to state where or what something is by referring to it indirectly, only giving information about the shape or nature of the argument.

Syntactically, absolutive descriptives often occur once the object of the verb has already been mentioned, in which case they function as a descriptive of the argument. New objects however can be introduced with a descriptive whose function is then adverbial. And as stated above, the descriptives may also give information about the state of the argument as induced by the verb:

nubm·aht·a elepri
[nʊʔpmahta ˈelɛpxi]
nu<bm>-aht-a-Ø eleba-ri
catch.PAST-aht-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG flower-PAT
'X gathered flowers (into a bouquet)'

sarkk·ahp·i·a
[ˈsark:ahpia]
sarkk-ahp-i-a-Ø-Ø
break-ahp-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG
'X broke Y into a point or a flake'

Compare the basic verb form *iruita* 'X bit into Y' when used with absolutive descriptive:

iribuita

[i'ribuida]

i-r-ib-u-i-ta-Ø

DIT-bite-ib-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR-into-3P.AG.SG

'X bit into (something small)'

or 'a child/boy/girl bit into it'

iriuluita

[i'riuluida]

i-r-iul-u-i-ta-Ø

DIT-bite-iul-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR-into-3P.AG.SG

'X bit into (something ripe)'

irebuita~irjubuita

[i'rebuida ~ i'rjubuida]

i-r-eb/jub-u-i-ta-Ø

DIT-bite-eb/jub-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR-into-3P.AG.SG

'X bit into (something fresh/new)'

irohnuita

[i'rohnuida]

i-r-ohn-u-i-ta-Ø

DIT-bite-ohn-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR-into-3P.AG.SG

'X bit into (something dry)'

irohkuita

[i'rohkuida]

i-r-ohk-u-i-ta-Ø

DIT-bite-ohk-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR-into-3P.AG.SG

'X bit into (something big)'

or 'X took a big bite of X'

Compare these examples to the same verb but lacking a patientive argument (changing the verb from locative ditransitive to intransitive). The absolutive descriptive then describes the subject of the verb (the active agent).

ribui

[ri'bui]

r-ib-u-i-Ø

bite-ib-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

'a child/small animal bit'

-AHP-

This absolutive descriptive is generally associated with long, flat, pointy or sharp objects, although large open spaces (skies, rivers, fields) may also be found with **-ahp-** then accentuating the openness, flatness or emptiness of the space. Below are examples of words which may trigger the use of absolutive descriptive **-ahp-** or may be referred to implicitly by it.

pointy / sharp / horned / hoofed / hard

ihpi

'arrow head, point'

usgas

'flake'

<i>eteri</i>	'spear'
<i>ennju</i>	'pole'
<i>irri</i>	'arrow'
<i>tapaki</i>	'knife'
<i>nũjũ</i>	'knife'
<i>sira</i>	'fish'
<i>aihha</i>	'needle, thorn' (and by extension all thorny plants)
<i>okęhi</i>	'pine needle' (and by extension all trees with needles)
<i>ridni</i>	'itch' (and by extension most pains)
<i>ri</i>	'tooth'
<i>salama</i>	'antler/caribou' (and by extension all livestock)
<i>goi</i>	'point, edge'
<i>nyly</i>	'nose, snout'
<i>tás</i>	'nose'
<i>mokkuo</i>	'beak'

gikkahpuma

[ˈji:ʔkahpuma]

gikk-ahp-um-a-Ø-Ø

sharpen-ahp-OBLI-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG

'X must sharpen (a knife/spear)'

usarkahpui

[uˈsark:ahpui]

u-sarkk-ahp-u-i-Ø

PASS-break-ahp-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

'X was broken into an arrow/point'

tsuoknahpua to hemi

[ˈtsʊʊʔŋahpua tʰɔˈhemi]

tsuokn-ahp-u-a-Ø to hemi-Ø

snatch-ahp-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT 3P.ACT.SG.ANI bird-ACT

'the bird snatched (a fish/bone)'

jahrahpa tseddjet

[ˈjahrahpa ˈtʰedz:ɛʔe]

<jahr>-ahp-a-Ø tseddjet-Ø

kill.PAST-ahp-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT old.man-ACT

'the old man killed (a caribou/fish)'

nantahpu ritša

[ˈnantahpu ˈritʃa]

na<nt>-ahp-u ri-tša

break.PAST-ahp-ASS.CONCL.TRANSL tooth-PAT

'a (sharp/pointy) tooth broke'

knirahpippen ma benho

[ˈkʰnirahpiʔpen ma ˈbenho]

knir-ahp-i-ppen m-a benho-Ø

smell-ahp-ASS.INCONCL.ITR-FREQU COP.PAST.INCONCL-ASS.TR dog-ACT

'the dog was sniffing around with its (long) snout'

long / flat / open / straight

<i>gjaukama</i>	'down, feathers'
<i>kven</i>	'feather'
<i>alahra</i>	'floating log'
<i>birgo</i>	'beam, log'
<i>kili</i>	'wood'
<i>tini</i>	'fire wood' (by extension also fires)
<i>givo</i>	'nail'
<i>ehrana</i>	'stick to hunt fish'
<i>nomono</i>	'fang'
<i>deumu</i>	'bone (tissue)'
<i>demo</i>	'(single) bone'
<i>nidla</i>	'face, surface'
<i>sèu</i>	'river'
<i>din</i>	'barren field'
<i>eulhi</i>	'grassy field'
<i>atsio</i>	'glade' (and by extension other landscape features)

buikkahpuma tsi hemi

[ˈbʊɪʔkahpuma tsi ˈhemi]

buikk-ahp-um-a-Ø tsi hemi-Ø

pluck-ahp-OBLI-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG 3P.DAT.SG bird-DAT

'one needs to pluck the bird (of its feathers)'

tileḍḍahpini ũvvita

[tʰiˈleḍːahpini ˈøwːida]

t-i-le<ḍḍ>-ahp-i-ni ũvv-ita

3P.UNAG-float-ahp-ASS.CONCL.ITR-CISLOC here-ILLAT

'a log/beam floated over here'

setḡahpan ũaddja

[ˈsetːxahpan ˈøædzːa]

setḡ-ahp-a-Ø-n ũa-ddja

put-ahp-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-2P.IMP right.here

'put it (wood, logs) right here'

so solukkahpui-a?

[ˈsːɔlʊʔkahpuja]

so s-o-lukk-ahp-u-i-a

INTERR 2P.UNAG.SG-SUBJ-prick-ahp-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR-INTERR

'did you prick yourself (with something sharp)?'

suḍḍahpi sũbũ

[ˈsuḍːahpi ˈsøbø]

su<ḍḍ>-ahp-i s<ũbũ>

flow-ahp-ASS.CONCL.ITR river-PAT

'the river (narrowly, flatly) flowed'

idedlahpabi (nomono)

[iˈdetʰahpabi (ˈnɔmɔnɔ)]

i-de<dl>-ahp-a-bi-Ø (nomono-Ø)

DIT-show-ahp-ASS.CONCL.TR-1P.PL.RECI-3P.AG.SG (fangs-DAT)

'X showed us its (pointy fangs)'

tatsilahpippen

[tʰaːtɕilahpɪʔpɛn]

ta-tsil-ahp-i-ppen-Ø

3P.PAT-hang-ahp-ASS.CONCL.TR-FREQU

'(bone, knife) hangs'

neynûrahpi gÿenneja eutsagi

[ˈneønørahpi ˈxwenːeja ˈeutsɑːji]

neynûr-ahp-i gÿe<nne>-ja eu-tsa-gi

billow-ahp-ASS.CONCL.ITR wind-INESS grassy.field-PAT-PL

'the (flat, long) grassy fields are billowing in the wind'

rekkahpaju rekkes

[ˈrɛʔkahpaju ˈrɛʔçɛs]

rekk-ahp-aj-u rekke-s

open-ahp-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR sky-PAT

'the sky opened (widely) up'

or 'the sky opened up (in a narrow band)'

nenahpin!

[ˈnenahpɪn]

nen-ahp-i-n

sit-ahp-ASS.CONCL.ITR-2P.SG.IMP

'sit straight'

oġa on misas, sarkkahpia ju

[ˈoġãð ˈmɪsɑs ˈsɑrkːɑhpiaju]

<oġ>-a-Ø on misas-Ø, sarkk-ahp-i-a-Ø-Ø ju

take.PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG ON rock-DAT, break-ahp-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG JU

'X took the rock and broke it (into a point or flake)'

tšanda on demo, djiġgahpia ju

[ˈtʃɑndãð ˈdemo, ˈdʒiːġgɑhpiaju]

tša<nd>-a-Ø on demo-Ø, dji<ġg>-ahp-i-a-Ø-Ø ju

find.PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG ON bone-DAT, carve-ahp-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.SG JU

'X found a bone and carved it (into something long and sharp)'

-ATST- or -ADD]-

This absolutive descriptive is similar to **-ahp-** but usually also entails some sort of fragility, breakability or flexibility which **-ahp-** lacks. In opposition to **-aht-**, **-atst-** can also imply loose, not bound. **-atst-** is also sometimes used when talking about women and children to underline their fragility. The difference between **-ahp-** and **-atst-** is that the former refers to long, solid or hard things (like a spear, large branch, pole, big stick) while the latter refers to long, fragile or thin things (like a branch, blade, a stick).

thin / long / narrow / fragile

<i>hide</i>	'hair' (when loose)
<i>hiri</i>	'hair' (on body)
<i>kèppa</i>	'arm' (of women or children)
<i>miebi</i>	'leg'
<i>naŷi</i>	'waist'
<i>tsġiame</i>	'cedar strip'
<i>nidagan</i>	'stripe'
<i>aihha</i>	'needle' (for sewing)

<i>aihabbi</i>	'coniferous branch'
<i>baja</i>	'branch'
<i>letse</i>	'stick/pole'
<i>kaibmu</i>	'stick, walking stick, support'
<i>tvela</i>	'blade'
<i>holi</i>	'stem'
<i>jeigge</i>	'path' (in snow)
<i>moni</i>	'path, way'
<i>mykyt</i>	'way along a river'
<i>rodlot</i>	'wrinkle' (and by extension old faces)

suđđatsti hiedi

[ˈsuðːatst:i ˈhiedz̥i]

su<đđ>-atst-i hi<Ø>-e-di

flow.PAST-atst-ASS.CONCL.ITR hair-PAT

'X's hair flowed (unbound)'

isyvvatstakin tieka

[iˈsywːatst:ɑ̃n ˈtiega]

i-syvv-atst-a-ki-n tie-ka

DIT-show-atst-ASS.CONCL.TR-1P.RECI.SG-2P.SG.IMP hand-GEN

'show me your hand (to a child/woman)'

de ju sopratstajagjen

[deju ˈsɔpxatst:ɑ̃jɑ̃:ɛn]

de ju sopr-atst-a-ja-gjen

so then split-atst-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT.PL-4P.AG

'then we split them (into long thin strips)'

nantatstu aihka

[ˈnantatst:u ˈaɪhka]

na<nt>-atst-u aihha-ka

break.PAST-atst-ASS.CONCL.TRANSL needle-PAT

'the (thin) sewing needle broke'

ađgatstami letsgeita

[ˈaðgatst:ami ˈletsxeida]

a<đg>-atst-a-Ø-mi le<tsge>-ita

cut-atst-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-1P.AG.SG stick-ILLAT

'I cut X into sticks'

katamakatsti rihta

[kˈɑtɑˈmakatst:i ˈri:hta]

kata-mak-atst-i ri=h-ta

from-goes-atst-ASS.CONCL.ITR skin-PAT

'the skin is peeling off in flakes'

oahkurtatsti

[ˈoahkɔrtatst:i]

oahkur-t-atst-i-Ø

test-PAST-atst-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

'X tested the snow's depth (with a blade, stick)'

cf. *oahkurrahpi*
[ˈoahkur:ahp:i]
oahkurr-ahp-i-Ø
test-ahp-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG
'X tested the snow's depth (with a long branch, spear)

konatsti nata
[ˈkɔnatst:i ˈnɔta]
kon-atst-i n-a-ta
walk-atst-ASS.ITR COP.INCONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG
'X is walking (with a walking stick/cane)'

katadgatsta
[kʰatʰadgatst:a]
kat-a<dg>-atst-a-Ø-Ø
from-cut.PAST-atst-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG
'X cut (a branch/stem/strip) off'

gakodatstiri
[gɑˈkɔdatst:iri]
ga-ko<d>-atst-i-ri
along-walk.PAST-atst-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.PL
'they walked in a queue/path'

nèuntaddjia kiqba
[ˈnø:ntadz̥:ia ˈcʰiːqba]
nèunt-adj-i-a-Ø ki=qba
close-atst-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG eyes-DAT
'X closed its (wrinkly/thin) eyes'

mahhaddjoḥa
[ˈmɑ:hadz̥:ɔʔa]
mahh-adj-oḥa
follow-atst-1P.PL.IMP
'let's follow (the river, path)'

akatstake omi deigo oḡami tsḡiauhdi
[akatz̥:ɔje ˈomi deigo ˈoɣami ˈtsɣiauhdz̥:i]
ak-atst-a-ke omi d-e-iko <oḡ>-a-mi tsḡiaug-di
cut-atst-TR-LINK.GOAL for COP-INFER-ELAT.REL take.PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-1P.AG.SG cedar.wood-GEN
'I took cedar wood in order to cut out of it (*tsḡiame* 'cedar stripes)'

tetatsta sviladi nogjita
[ˈtʰetatst:a ˈsviladz̥:i ˈnoʒ:ida]
<tet>-a-atst-a-Ø-Ø svi<l>-a-di nogj-ita
place.PAST-atst-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG braid-GEN at.end.ILLAT
'X placed Y (a hair needle) at the end of X's braid'

-AHT-

This absolutive descriptive is used for things bound, packed or contained but also for things that are scattered around or large and/or formless (skins, things that have to be spread out). The words below are likely to trigger or be found with the absolutive descriptive **-aht-**. It may also confer an idea of 'tight' or 'full' to

verbs such as *utsua* 'pack', *seta/setğa* 'put', *nŭria* 'load, stuff' and *hiddjuja* 'stack' and *ha* 'to eat' (especially *o·h·aht-i* 'to eat oneself full').

large / formless / scattered / stuffed / packed

<i>nošmo</i>	'bag, pouch'
<i>bename</i>	'pouch, leather pouch'
<i>peles</i>	'stuffed stomach, belly'
<i>keggas</i>	'baby, foetus'
<i>bengomu</i>	'roof, skins'
<i>damu</i>	'skin with fur'
<i>jasuma</i>	'animal skin'
<i>iri</i>	'skin, bark'
<i>kehma</i>	'(human) skin'
<i>rihko</i>	'(human) skin'
<i>nuobmo</i>	'stretched skin, window'
<i>puna</i>	'deer skin' (and by extension living deer)
<i>pybme</i>	'seal skin' (and by extension living seals)

isetğahtaitan

[i'set:xahtaidan]

i-setğ-aht-a-ita-Ø-n

DIT-put-aht-ASS.CONCL.TR-into-3p.pat-2P.SG.IMP

'put X into y (by stuffing it, pushing it, packing it)'

tymutsuahtan õkki

[tym'utçoahtan 'õ?ci]

tym-utš-u-aht-a-n omi-ki

down-press-aht-ASS.CONCL.TR-2P.SG.IMP snow-GEN

'compress the snow (tightly together)'

omahtimi

[o'mahtɕimi]

o-<m>-aht-i-mi

subj-eat.PAST-aht-ASS.CONCL.ITR-1P.AG.SG

'I ate too much/until I was full'

kedahiti na

[c'hedahtɕina]

ked-aht-i n-a-Ø

carry-aht-ASS.TR COP.INCONCL-3P.AG.SG

'she is with child'

iŷavvahtumagga

[i'waw:ahtumak:a]

i-ŷavv-aht-um-a-Ø-gga

DIT-spread-aht-OBLI-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-1P.AG.PL.INCL

'we have to spread (the skin, something that was packed) out'

vanahta nuomoma

[vanahta 'nuomɔma]

van-aht-a-Ø nuo<m>o-ma

stretch-aht-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG skin-GEN

'X will stretch the skin out (after having been packed)'

The absolutive descriptive **-aht-** is also used with things after falling to the ground and scattering or to allude to complex/complicated objects/tasks.

enclosed / contained / bound / dead

<i>nənnu</i>	'box, container'
<i>ohkis</i>	'birch bark box'
<i>saiyu</i>	'pot, safe place'
<i>kolra</i>	'large container/pot/tub'
<i>koru</i>	'pot'
<i>ailme</i>	'tanned skin'
<i>tulmu</i>	'clothing' (and by extension all clothes)
<i>amoi</i>	'blood' (inside the body)
<i>horet</i>	'body, torso'
<i>amora</i>	'vein'
<i>tähma</i>	'heart'
<i>bilin</i>	'liver'
<i>tsoadjun</i>	'intestines, guts'
<i>sáhpa</i>	'lungs'
<i>mahhji</i>	'fallen bear'
<i>helba</i>	'[pregnant] female moose' (and by extension <i>liota</i> 'female bear')
<i>ipro</i>	'carcass'
<i>rohtot</i>	'hollow tree' (by extension, old/abandoned/long dead structures/animals)
<i>jata</i>	'bowl'
<i>tsǵǔli</i>	'skull' (and by extension, all animal heads)
<i>njèut</i>	'package, parcel, bundle'
<i>hide</i>	'hair' (when tied)
<i>vebo</i>	'knot'

utsodahti

[u'tsodahtɕi]

u-tsod-aht-i-Ø

PASS-hold-aht-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.PAT

'X is held (in a box)'

luhhahti nata

['luh:ahtɕi 'nata]

luhh-aht-i na-ta

boil-aht-ASS.ITR COP.INCONCL-3P.PAT

'(a pot) is boiling'

iruollahtaki tulumma tobika

[i'ruo:l:ahtɕi 'tʰɔlmuma 'tʰɔbiga]

i-ruo<ll>-aht-a-ki tulmu-ma tobi-Ø-ka

DIT-roll.PAST-aht-ASS.CONCL..TR-1P.RECI.SG clothes-GEN sister-ACT-1P.PAT.SG

'my older sister folded me clothes (into a container)'

bùbmuahiti tähma

['bu:ʔpmʌhtɕi 'tʰæ:hma]

bùbmo-aht-i tähma-Ø

beat-aht-ASS.CONCL.ITR heart-ACT

'the heart beats (in the chest)'

njerterahtaka

[ˈnjerterahtaga]

njerter-aht-a-ka

smart-aht-ASS.CONCL.TR-1P.PAT.SG

‘I have chest pains’

konahti ma helba

[ˈkʰonahtɕi ma ˈhɛlba]

kon-aht-i m-a helba-Ø

walk-aht-ASS.ITR COP.INCONCL-ASS.TR pregnant.female.moose-ACT

‘the female moose was walking (heavily due to pregnancy)’

šošia rihnahtui iprua

[ˈʃoʃia ˈrihnahtui ˈiprua]

šoś-ia rihn-aht-u-i ipro-a-Ø

every-INCESS is.scattered-aht-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR carcass-PL-ACT

‘there were carcasses scattered on the ground everywhere’

medgahta tsǵǔldi

[ˈmɛðxahta ˈtsxœldɕi]

mɛ<dg>-aht-a-Ø tsǵǔli-di

shake.PAST-aht-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG skull-GEN

‘X shook the (empty) skull’

omaudgahtas hide

[ɔˈmauðgahtas ˈhide]

om-audg-aht-a-Ø-s hide-Ø

SUBJ-tie-aht-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG-HABT hair-DAT

‘X usually ties her hair into a bun’

kiggahtaja on, tūtatiellia de suvo

[ˈcʰik:ahɬajã ʰtʰotaˈtiellia de ˈsuvo]

ki<gg>-aht-a-ja-Ø on tū-ta-tiell-i-a-Ø de suvo-Ø

pick.up.PAST-ahta-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT.PL-3P.AG.SG ON down-3P.ACT.UNAG-miss-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR DE berry-DAT

‘X missed the berries down and picked them up (from being scattered/into a container/gathered together)’

jasuma kedahta kepsi-ho gajo

[ˈjasuma ˈcʰedahta ˈcʰɛps:iho ˈgajo]

jasuma-Ø ked-aht-a kepsi-Ø-ho g-a-io-Ø

tanned.skin-AGT carry-aht-TR mushroom-DAT-3P.ANI.POSS COP.PAST-ASS-INCESS.REL-3P.AG.SG

‘the skin in which X carried mushrooms (as a bag)’

-IB- or -IDB-

This absolutive descriptive is generally descriptive of small and young things and can carry a diminutive connotation as well. It is commonly used in speech with children. The form **-idb-** is especially common for round things or things that roll. Unlike other absolutive descriptives, it is often used to describe the subject of verbs whether they are transitive or intransitive, especially if the subject is a child.

round / fat / little / small / fine / young / ripe

<i>hogi</i>	'ball, pearl'
<i>bieli</i>	'fat'
<i>tsibi</i>	'baby, toddler'
<i>éno</i>	'little bay'
<i>hylys</i>	'little/thin person'
<i>kydly</i>	'bell, little girl'
<i>kori</i>	'boy'
<i>dida</i>	'girl'
<i>tsegma</i>	'child'
<i>kigjini</i>	'youngest child'
<i>njunni</i>	'little child'
<i>suvo</i>	'berry' (and by extension all berries and fruits)
<i>pivi</i>	'cheek' (and by extension young/healthy faces)

manibin

[ˈmanibɪn]

man-ib-i-n

come-ib-ASS.CONCL.ITR-2P.SG.IMP

'come here (to a child)'

mairibi

[ˈmaɪrɪbɪ]

mair-ib-<i>-Ø

laugh-ib-PAST.ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

'X giggled, X laughed (of something small, cutely)'

tsitsibi

[ˈtɕɪtɕɪbɪ]

tsits-ib-i-Ø

crawl-ib-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

'X crawls around (of a child)'

tiddiqbi

[ˈtɪdːɪɔ̃bɪ]

t-i-<dd>-iqb-i

3P.PAT-fall-iqb-ASS.CONCL.ITR

'X fell (and rolled around)'

biaiqbakin

[ˈbɪaɪɔ̃bɑ̃kɪn]

bia-iqb-a-Ø-ki-n

throw-iqb-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-1P.RECI.SG-2P.SG.IMP

'throw X at me (by rolling it on the ground)'

edqibi

[ˈɛðxɪbɪ]

e<dg>-ib-i-Ø

sit.down.PAST-ib-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

'the boy/girl/child sat down'

hiḍbaundan

[ˈhiḍbaʊndan]

h-iḍb-a-unda-n

eat-iḍb-ASS.CONCL.TR-DIM-2P.SG.IMP

‘eat a few (berries)’

or ‘eat a few (to a child)’

nèuntiban

[ˈnø:ntɛiban]

nèunt-ib-a-Ø-n

close-ib-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-2P.SG.IMP

‘close (your eyes)’

kediba nata

[ˈcʰediba ˈnata]

ked-ib-a n-a-Ø-ta

carry-ib-TR COP.INCONCL-ASS-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG

‘X is carrying a baby/is pregnant’

sgjittiba šošia njunnie

[ˈsxɪʔtiba ˈšoʃia ˈnun:ie]

šgi<tt>-ib-a šoš=ia njunni-Ø-e

there.is.little.PAST-ib-ASS every.INESS child-AGT-PL

‘there were little children everywhere’

-IKS-

This absolutived descriptive is often used in pair with the pejorative or things perceived to be old, broken, no good or bad. It can also be found to refer to tools and stones. In combination with the pejorative, the preverb *aiḥ-* ‘wrongly’, *-iks-* can be added to verbs to confer a sense of performing the action in a completely wrong way:

gikka nŭjŭma nana

[ˈji:ʔka ˈnøjɔma ˈnana]

gikk-a nŭjŭ-ma n-a-na

sharpen-ASS.TR knife-GEN COP.INCONCL-TR-2P.AG.SG

‘you are sharpening your knife’

aiḥeggikkiksa nŭjŭma nana

[aiʔeˈji:ʔka ˈnøjɔma ˈnana]

aiḥe-gikk-a nŭjŭ-ma n-a-na

wrong-sharpen-ASS.TR knife-GEN COP.INCONCL-TR-2P.AG.SG

‘you are sharpening your knife all wrong’.

crooked / broken / cold / old / tools / pieces / arrows / projectiles

boji

‘deciduous branch’

njuhi

‘old woman’

tšeddjet

‘old man’

iu

‘older relative’

davva

‘past, old times’

<i>šešo</i>	'old tree'
<i>kene</i>	'broken/dead tree'
<i>kvispi</i>	'scraper'
<i>eid̥bi</i>	'cutter, carving tool'
<i>eirpi</i>	'tool'
<i>soroko</i>	'piece'
<i>kidjut</i>	'part, room' (and by extension most rooms)
<i>irri</i>	'arrow'
<i>tò</i>	'stone'

mansiksi tšeddjet

[ˈmansɪks:i ˈtʃɛdʒ:ɛʔɛ]

ma<ns>-iks-i tšeddjet-Ø

come.PAST-iks-ASS.CONCL.ITR old.man-ACT

'the old man came'

kodiksih̥hen

[ˈkɔdɪks:iʔɛn]

ko<d>-iks-i-h̥hen-Ø

walk.PAST-iks-ASS.CONCL.ITR-FREQU-3P.AG.SG

'(an old person) kept on talking'

iddiksi šešue

[ˈi:tɪks:i ˈʃɛʃue]

i<dd>-iks-i šešo-e

fall.PAST-iks-ASS.CONCL.ITR old.tree-PAT

'an old tree fell'

delpiksumagga kene

[ˈdɛlɪpɪks:umak:a ˈcʰene]

delp-iks-um-a-gga kene-Ø

flip.over-iks-OBL-ASS.CONCL.TR-1P.AG.PL dead.tree-DAT

'we must flip the (old) dead tree over'

gikkiksa nami

[ˈji:ʔɪks:a ˈnami]

gikk-iks-a n-a-Ø-mi

sharpen-iks-ASS.TR COP.INCONCL-TR-3P.PAT-1P.AG.SG

'I am sharpening (the tool)'

aniksia

[aˈnɪks:ia]

a=n-isk-i-a-Ø-Ø

PAST.throw-iks-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG

'X threw (a stone)'

rostiksa oddjobmua-ho

[ˈrɔstɪks:sa ˈɔˈdʒ:ɔʔpmuahɔ]

ro<st>-iks-a odj=tšobmu-Ø-a-ho

lies.there.PAST-iks-TR PEJ-finger-AGT-PL-3P.POSS.ANI

'X's old (crooked) fingers were lying there'

katakostiksa hōttamo

[kʰatakɔstɪks:sa ˈhɔʔtamɔ]

kata-ko<st>-iks-a-Ø hōtta-mo

from-rip.PAST-iks-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT gust.of.wind-PAT

'the gust of wind ripped it away (branch/arrow/piece of wood)'

-IPR-/IBĠ- or -IUL-

These absolutive descriptives refer to things that are alive, moving, wet and may confer vigor to an absolutive argument or the verb. The **-iul-** is especially common with liquids and wet things. Certain speakers add **-ibġ-** to underline the animacy of the absolutive argument. The verb *siv-ibġ-i* or *siv-ipr-i* is often used with bad weather (patientive).

lively / living / fresh / pretty / vivid / spry / plants / happy / bright / colored / intense / warm / clear

<i>òlma</i>	'leaf' (and by extension all leaves or vegetation)
<i>eleba</i>	'flower' (and by extension all flowers)
<i>è</i>	'plant' (and by extension all plants)
<i>kepsi</i>	'mushroom' (and by extension all fungi)
<i>homot</i>	'insect' (and by extension all insects)
<i>tsammi</i>	'forest'
<i>tasko</i>	'woods'
<i>elet</i>	'meadow'
<i>miuki</i>	'bog'
<i>njelsi</i>	'sprig'
<i>pihba</i>	'sapling'
<i>idlu</i>	'sprout'
<i>gilra</i>	'drizzly weather'
<i>igmo</i>	'rapidly changing/unpredictable weather'
<i>butta</i>	'bad weather'
<i>rōtta</i>	'foggy weather'
<i>ujo</i>	'(fresh/clear) water' (and by extension all fresh water bodies)
<i>omġautsaka</i>	'fall colors'

sabsibġui ġuġenneja òlkagi

[ˈsabsɪbɟuɪ ˈxwenːeja ˈɔːʔkɑjɪ]

sabs-ibġ-u-i ġuġ<nne>-ja òl-ka-gi

sway-ibġ-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR wind-INNESS leaf-PAT-PL

'the leaves swayed spryly in the wind'

edlibġi iludi

[ˈetɫɪbɟɪ ˈiːludɟɪ]

e<dl>-ibġ-i i<l>-u-di

grow.PAST-ibġ-ASS.CONCL.ITR sprout-PAT

'a sprout grew'

negipra tseksigi

[ˈneɟɪpɾɑ ˈtɕɛkɕɪjɪ]

n<eg>-ipr-a-Ø tsek-ši-gi

see.PAST-ipr-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG child-GEN-PL

'X saw children (moving, playing)'

homottibġuima tsamsia

[ˈhɔmɔʔtɪbɟuɪmɑ ˈtsɑmɕɪɑ]

homott-ibġ-u-i-ma tsa<mś>-ia

is.quiet-ibġ-PAST-ASS.TR-INCONCL forest-INNESS

'it was quiet (but teeming with life) in the forest'

kodiuligga irta

[ˈkʰɔdiulik:a ˈirta]

ko<d>-iul-i-gga irta

walk.PAST-iul-ASS.CONCL.ITR-1P.AG.PL.INCL through

‘we walked through (a bog, a wet place)’

šivvibġi ġilradi

[ˈʃiw:ɪbxi ˈɟilradʒi]

ši<vv>-ibġ-i ġilra-di

stay-ibġ-ASS.CONCL.ITR wet.weather-PAT

‘there was (lit. stayed) wet weather’

amġibġi

[amˈxɪbxi]

a=mġ-ibġ-i-Ø

drink.PAST-ib-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

‘X drank (fresh water)’

nubmipra sù

[nʊʔpmɪpxa ˈsu:]

nu<bm>-ipr-a-Ø su<v>o

pick.PAST-ipr-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG ON berry-GEN

‘X picked (brightly colored/ripe) berries’

rekkiulu nata

[ˈrɛʔciulu ˈnɔta]

rekk-iul-u n-a-ta

open.up-iul-ASS.CONCL.TRANSL COP.INCONCL-ASS-3P.AG.SG

‘(a flower) is opening up’

iriuliaita

[iˈriuliaida]

i-r-iul-i-a-ita-Ø

DIT-bite-iul-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-ILLAT-3P.AG.SG

‘X bit into (something ripe)’

-JUP/-YP/-EB-

Similar to *-ipr/-ibġ/-iul-*, this absolutive descriptive is used to infer a sense of something wet, humid or fresh. However, *-jup-* is also used heavily with smells. While the previous descriptive denoted a certain vitality, this descriptive also invokes freshness or the idea of something ephemeral. Thicker liquids also usually appear with *-jup-*, such as honey, resin, sap. The descriptive can be found as *-jup-* or *-jub-*, *-yp-* or *-yb-* or *-ùb-* after rounded vowels, and *-eb-* in other cases.

Compare the two examples contrasting the idea of ‘wet’ or ‘living’ with *-ibġ-* and the idea of ‘fresh’ (previously unexposed) or ‘wet (but not alive)’ with *-jup-*.

rekkiubia ġiandid

[ˈrɛʔcɟubia ˈɟiandʒɪdʒ]

rekk-jub-i-a-Ø ġiandi-d

open-jup-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG rotten.fallen.tree-GEN

‘X opened up the rotten fallen tree (which had not been exposed before)’

rekkibǫgia giandid

[ˈrɛʔcɪbxiɑ ˈɟiɑndʒɪdʒ]

rekk-*jub*-i-a-Ø giandi-d

open-*ibǫ*-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG rotten.fallen.tree-GEN

'X opened up the rotten fallen tree (which was wet or teeming with life)'

iddibǫgi ólkagi

[ˈit:ɪbxi ˈo:ʔkɑɟi]

i<dd>-*ibǫ*-i ól-ka-gi

fall.PAST-*ibǫ*-ASS.CONCL.ITR leaf-PAT-PL

'the (wet/living) leaves fell off' (animate)

iddjupi ólmamo

[ˈidʒ:ubi ˈo:lmɑmɔ]

i<dd>-*jup*-i ólma-mo

fall.PAST-*jup*-ASS.CONCL.ITR leaf-PAT

'the (wet) leaves fell off' (inanimate)

wet / humid / fresh / new(ly born) / smells

<i>siǫva</i>	'rain'
<i>nieugi</i>	'mist'
<i>óut</i>	'newly fallen snow'
<i>sira</i>	'fish' (and by extension all fish)
<i>sitru</i>	'soup'
<i>kikin</i>	'soup, meal'
<i>sivi</i>	'honey'
<i>ljó</i>	'resin'
<i>ijuri</i>	'pitch' (and by extension glues and sticky things)
<i>maudli</i>	'maple sap'
<i>paǫlis</i>	'urine'
<i>tsemmi</i>	'animal tracks'
<i>akna</i>	'traces'
<i>émsi</i>	'smell' (and by extension all smells)
<i>mieri</i>	'moss'
<i>kjori</i>	'rotten wood'
<i>kelta</i>	'ground'
<i>seuma</i>	'soil'
<i>úmú</i>	'earth'

sasleba meihhie ma máhra

[ˈsastʰɛba ˈmeih:iema ˈmæ:hra]

sas-*eb*-a meihhi-e m-a máhra-Ø

lick-*eb*-ASS.TR honeycomb-GEN COP.INCONCL-TR bear-ACT

'the bear was licking (the honey out of) the honeycomb'

ykjúbis njuhhi-go

[ˈycjɔbɪs ˈɟuh:iɡo]

ykj-*úb*-i-s njuhhi-Ø-go

collect-*úb*-ASS.CONCL.ITR-HABT old.woman-ACT-1P.SG.POSS

'my grandma usually goes around collecting (resin/honey/pitch)'

katabiebuma (paġlihi)

[kʰɑtɑˈbiebʊmɑ (ˈpʰɑxlihi)]

kata-b=i-eb-um-a-Ø (paġli-hi)

from-throw-**eb**-OBL-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG urine-GEN

‘X must go (urinate)’

tšandjupagga tšemme

[ˈtʃɑndʒʊbɑkːɑ ˈtʃɛmːɛ]

tša<nd>-jup-a-gga tšemmi-e

find.PAST-jup-ASS.CONCL.TR-1P.AG.PL.INCL animal.tracks-GEN

‘we found (fresh) animal tracks’

hətsadnjupeba

[hæˈtʃɑʔtʃnubɛbɑ]

hə-tšadn-jup-e-ba-Ø

up-find-jup-INF.CONCL.TR-1P.PAT.PL.INCL-3P.AG.SG

‘X will find us out (by our smell)’

həkeɣebi keltariska ma niúbid

[hæˈcʰɛwɛbi ˈcʰɛʔtɑrɪskɑmɑ ˈniúbɪdʒ]

hə-keɣ-eb-i ke<lt>a-ri=ska m-a nieugi-d

up-rise-**eb**-ASS.ITR ground-ABLA COP.INCONCL.PAST-TR ground.mist-PAT

‘ground mist was rising up from the (fresh/wet) ground’

jekkjupi òuttaita bidjiska

[ˈjɛʔcʃubi ˈɔːʔtɑɪdɑ ˈbɪdʒɪskɑ]

je<kk>-jup-i òutta-ita bidjɪs-Ø-ka

run.PAST-jup-ASS.CONCL.ITR new.snow-ILLAT puppy-ACT-PL

‘the puppies ran into the newly fallen snow’

knirreba ùmùma

[kʰnɪrːɛbɑ ˈòmòmɑ]

kni<rr>-eb-a-Ø ùmù-ma

smell.PAST-**eb**-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG earth-GEN

‘X smelled (the fresh) earth’

sinda on retro, miaddjupa ju

[sɪndɑ̃ð ˈrɛtʃɔ ˈmɪɑdʒʊbɑju]

si<nd>-a-Ø on retro-Ø mia<att>-jub-a-Ø ju

catch.PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG ON northern.pike-DAT, gut.PAST-jub-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG

‘X caught a northern pike and then gutted it (still fresh)’

kvìgjupake on kimi atseba oskon, keidigga ka

[kʰviːjːubɑɣɛð ˈcʰimi ɑˈtʃɛbɑ ˈɔskɔn ˈcʰeidʒɪkːɑkɑ]

kvi-jup-a-ke on kimi at=s-e-ba oskon-Ø keid-i-gga ka

feel-jup-TR-LINK.ADV ON for NEG=COP-INFER-1P.PAT.PL male.moose-AGT, light.fire-ASS.CONCL.ITR-1P.AG.PL.INCL KA

‘so the moose does not feel us (our smell), we will light a fire’

iddjupi òlmamo

[ˈɪdʒʊbi ˈɔːlmɑmɔ]

i<dd>-jub-i òlma-mo

fall.PAST-jub-ASS.CONCL.ITR leaf-PAT

‘the (wet) leaves fell’

-OHN-ÖHN-

This absolutive descriptive is opposite to **-ibǵ-** and **-jup-** in that it invokes something dry, powdery and also refers to dry smells and fire.

powder / dirt / sand smells (dry/fire/wood)

<i>neyri</i>	'powder, dust'
<i>vih</i>	'dust, dirt'
<i>luri</i>	'dirt, scum'
<i>lagjas</i>	'flour'
<i>rento</i>	'grain, seed'
<i>kelho</i>	'hung meat'
<i>siehhumi</i>	'dried meat'
<i>sýkǵhi</i>	'dried needle bed'
<i>oni</i>	'dried moss, tinder' (and by extension inflammable things)
<i>tinin</i>	'fire wood'
<i>sogji</i>	'drought'

ǵillohni noimmika

[xi:l:ohni 'noim:iga]

ǵi<l>-ohn-i nobem-m=ika

crackle-ohn-ASS.CONCL.ITR fire-ELAT

'the fire was cracking (dryly)'

isidlohniki

[i'si:tǵohniǵi]

i-si<dl>-ohn-i-ki

DIT-blow.PAST-ohn-ASS.CONCL.ITR-1P.RECI.SG

'I got dirt/sand/smoke (in my eyes)'

sarkkohnia tinis

[sark:ohnia 'tinis]

sarkk-ohn-i-a-Ø tini-s

break-ohn-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG firewood-GEN

'X broke (dry) firewood'

tamaduohni

[t'ama'dǵohni]

tama-d=u-ohn-i-Ø

on-step.PAST-ohn-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

'X stepped (on something dry)'

irohnuita

[i'rǵohnuida]

i-r-ohn-u-i-ta-Ø

DIT-bite-ohn-PAST-ASS.CONCL.ITR-into-3P.AG.SG

'X bit into (something dry)'

tsaundohni

[tsaundǵohni]

t-sau<nd>-ohn-i

3p.unag-catch.on.fire.PAST-ohn-ASS.CONCL.ITR

'X caught on fire (from being too dry)'

myrrohna pini
[myr:ɔhna 'p'i:ni]
m<yrr>-ohn-a-Ø pini-Ø
grind.PAST-ohn-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG corn-DAT
'X ground the corn (into a flour)'

tsahhōhni
[ʔsah:ōhni]
t-sahh-ōhn-i
3P.UNAG-burn-ōhn-ASS.CONCL.ITR
'(dry wood/tinder) will burn'

hepohni na nūnamo
[ʔhepɔhni na 'nɔnamɔ]
hep-ohn-i n-a nū<n>a-mo
break-ohn-ITR COP.INCONCL-ass wave-PAT
'the waves are breaking (on the sand)'

luhhōhna
[ʔluh:ōhna]
luhh-ōhn-a-Ø-Ø
boil-ōhn-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG
'X will boil (a tea/treatment/grounded leaves)'

iɣavvohnaibma
[i'wɔw:ɔhnaɪʔpma]
i-ɣavv-ohn-a-ibma-Ø
DIT-spread-ohn-ASS.CONCL.TR-ALLAT-3P.AG.SG
'X spread/add (flour/sand/dirt/dried ingredients) on it'

-OHK-

The absolutive descriptive **-ohk-** generally refers to large, heavy, male or difficult things. It is also used with the verbs *seja* 'listen', *odena* 'look', *kyša* 'try', *pitta* 'pay attention to' in the imperative to make a more emphatic demand:

sejohkan
[sejɔhkan]
sej-ohk-a-Ø-n
listen-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-2P.SG.IMP
'listen well!'

odnohkan~oinohkan 'look well!'
[ʔɔʔtnɔhkan~ɔinɔhkan]
odn~oin-ohk-a-Ø-n
look-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-2P.SG.IMP

kyšohkan
[cʰyɕɔhkan]
kys-ohk-a-Ø-n
try-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-2P.SG.IMP
'try (your best)'

pittohkan

[pʰɪʔtɔhkan]

sej-ohk-a-Ø-n

pay.attention-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-2P.SG.IMP

'pay all your attention to X'

In addition, it also refers to long things such as neck/throat/tongue, heads, geese and swans and even canoes.

large / round / cylindrical / long / heavy / male / big / difficult

<i>tahha</i>	'tree' (and by extension all large trees)
<i>sukno</i>	'large conifer'
<i>pũdũ</i>	'log'
<i>sikvut</i>	'bonfire'
<i>tũmkki</i>	'boulder'
<i>hokon</i>	'big rock'
<i>oskon</i>	'male moose' (and by extension all [large] male animals)
<i>okon</i>	'big man'
<i>toron</i>	'big bear/guy'
<i>peilini</i>	'eldest'
<i>njelli</i>	'chief'
<i>sappiska</i>	'paw, big hand'
<i>selo</i>	'large river'
<i>sinin</i>	'big fish'
<i>ata</i>	'(open) mouth'
<i>gegin</i>	'(animal) mouth'
<i>kvoga</i>	'throat'
<i>oadi</i>	'tongue'
<i>niman</i>	'neck'
<i>totami</i>	'head'
<i>giga</i>	'goose' (and by extension all long-necked birds)
<i>gũme</i>	'rope'
<i>tonkua</i>	'sinew'
<i>kehkjo</i>	'canoe'
<i>mavvu</i>	'meat'

iddohki šešue

[i:tɔhci ʃeʃue]

i<dd>-ohk-i šešo-e

fall.PAST-ohk-ASS.CONCL.ITR old.tree-PAT

'the big old tree fell (heavily)'

kedohkan ũat

[cʰedɔhkan ʔæʔæ]

ked-ohk-a-n ũat-Ø

carr-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-2P.SG.IMP this-DAT

'carry this (heavy thing)'

mairiohki

[mairiohki]

mair=i-ohk-i-Ø

laugh.PAST-ohk-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

'X laughed (loudly)

or '(a large man) laughed'

maid̥dohki

[maid̥:ohki]

mai<d̥d>-ohk-i-Ø

smile.PAST-ohk-ASS.CONCL.ITR-3P.AG.SG

'X smiled from ear to ear'

n̥yh sindohkami keppi

[n̥y:h 'sindohkami 'cʰeʔpi]

n̥yh si<nd>-ohk-a-mi keppi-Ø

wow catch.PAST-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-1P.AG.SG head-DAT

'wow, I caught a big one'

rekkohkin

[reʔkohcin]

rekk-ohk-i-n

open-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-2P.SG.IMP

'open wide (your mouth)'

sarkkohkia mekvi

[sark:ohcia 'mek:vi]

sark-ohk-i-a-Ø mekvi

break-ohk-PAST-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG swan-DAT

'X broke the swan('s neck)'

katagiohka kohdaika

[kʰat̥a'iohka 'kʰohdaiga]

kata-g=i-ohk-a-Ø koh=da-ika

from-push.PAST-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.AG.SG anchorage.on.beach-ELAT

'X pushed (the canoe) from the its anchor on the shore'

tamokevvohki toron

[tʰam̥o'cew:ohci 'toron]

tam-o-kevv-ohk-i toron-Ø

on-SUBJ-rise-ohk-ASS.CONCL.ITR big.bear-AGT

'the big bear (heavily) stood up (on its two legs)'

tats̥gatskohki

[tʰa'tsxatsk:ohci]

ta-tsga<tsk>-ohk-i

3P.UNAG.SG-tear.PAST-OHK-ASS.CONCL.ITR

'(the rope/leather) tore'

kats̥adgohkaika soroko

[kʰat̥s̥'adgohkaiga 'sorog̊o]

kat-i-a<dg>-ohk-a-ika-Ø soroko-Ø

from-DIT-cut.PAST-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-ELAT-3P.AG.SG piece-DAT

'X cut (a large) piece from it'

hohkas

[hɔhkas]

h-ohk-a-Ø-Ø-s

eat-ohk-ASS.CONCL.TR-3P.PAT-3P.AG.SG-HAB

'X eats (meat/a lot)'

Absolute descriptives in Siwa are a useful way of implying something about the subject of intransitive verbs or the object of transitive verbs. Each descriptive covers a certain number of qualities, often shapes (long, sharp, straight, large, etc.), qualities (hard, bundled, dead, fragile, fat, young, odorant, etc.) or allude to the doer's gender, age or physical status. This allows speakers of Siwa to use contextual information in order to avoid directly naming participants. Because Siwa's third person has no overt form, either as a subject (agentive) or an object, it is possible that absolute descriptives emerged as a disambiguative device, similar to the distinction between the proximate and obviative third person and the fourth person found in Siwa pronouns.

Siwa certainly has other novel grammatical constructions that are worth exploring, for example its use of a split-stem copula, so-called link constructions and double agentivity, all of which are described thoroughly in the book from which this essay was adapted, *A Descriptive Grammar of Siwa*.

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