

## Verb classes in Inuktitut and the Transitivity Hierarchy: ‘Aspects’ of Antipassive

Bettina Spreng  
University of Toronto

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### 1 Introduction

This paper explores the role verb classes play in the conditioning of transitivity alternations in Inuktitut. I will concentrate on a construction, commonly known as Antipassive, which is taken to occur only in ergative languages.

Previous analyses of Antipassive (AP) describe the construction solely in terms of the different case marking and take the occasional absence of overt AP marking as an allomorphic variation; its conditioning not yet determined. In the course of this paper, I will demonstrate that this view is not accurate. There is clear evidence that the occurrence of overt AP morphology on the verb is determined by the argument structure of the verb. It will also show that the AP morpheme is just that and does not denote any aspectual information, i.e. it is not an aspectual marker. IN some sense, this view contrasts sharply with Bittner (1987), which proposes that the various AP morphemes in Kallaalissut (West Greenlandic) are in fact aspectual markers, which also appear in ergative constructions. On the other hand, it confirms the notion that there are AP morphemes and there are aspectual morphemes, which co-occurs with the AP morpheme.

Antipassive can be described as a construction, where the case assignment and agreement features differ from the ergative construction. Example (1a) shows a canonical transitive structure with the agent in the ergative case and the patient in the absolutive case. The verb shows agreement with both arguments. Inuktitut being an ergative language, the subject of an intransitive case receives the same case as the object of a transitive sentence, the absolutive. Example (1c) to (1e) shows the basic possible AP constructions with the subject in the absolutive case, the optional object in an oblique case, which received various names in the literature (modalis, instrumental, irrealis). Due to this irregularity, I will refer to this oblique case as *mik*-case. Some of the verbs obligatorily take the overt AP marker *-si* (1c and 1d), whereas others do not (1e).

Inuktitut can be viewed as pro-drop language where both arguments do not necessarily appear as overt pronouns or DPs.

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|--|---|
| <p>1. a. <i>Ergative</i><br/>         anguti-up arnaq kunik-taa<br/>         man-erg woman(abs) kiss-part.3/3sg<br/>         The man is kissing the woman</p>                              | <p>b. <i>Intransitive</i><br/>         angut niri-vuq<br/>         man(abs) eat-ind.3sg<br/>         The man is eating.</p>                                       |
| <p>c. <i>Antipassive with overt object</i><br/>         angut kunik-si-vuq arna-mik<br/>         man(abs) kiss -AP-ind.3sg woman-instr.<br/>         the man is kissing a woman</p>        | <p>d. <i>Antipassive with non-overt object</i><br/>         anguti kunik-si-vuq<br/>         man(abs) kiss-AP-ind3sg.<br/>         the man is kissing someone</p> |
| <p>e. <i>Antipassive with non-overt AP morphology</i><br/>         angut niri-[-v] -vuq niqi-mik<br/>         man(abs) eat-AP-ind.3sg. meat-instr.<br/>         the man is eating meat</p> |   |

In the course of this paper, I will concentrate on the following properties of AP in Mittimatalik.<sup>1</sup>

1. What determines overt AP morphology on the verb.
2. Is the AP morpheme an aspect marker.
3. In what sense is the demoted argument optional.

Previous accounts of AP in Inuktitut were mainly concerned with the status of the demoted object and the way it receives case. Some analyses treat it as a structural argument, similar to the accusative in accusative languages (Bok-Benemma 1991). Other treat it as a mirror image of the passive and the *mik*-case as some sort of inherent lexical case (Marantz 1984, Schieberl-Manga 1996). Due to the agreement facts and the oblique case on the patient argument, AP has also been analyzed as detransitivized construction, a mirror image of the passive in accusative languages. In this paper, I argue for a more differentiated view, which emphasizes on the properties of the verb and the AP morphology. Transitivity alternations in Inuktitut – and an analysis of the AP – are determined primarily by the argument structure of the verb and only secondarily by properties of the arguments.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses the Transitivity Hierarchy proposed by Hopper & Thompson (1980) and its applicability to measure the degree of transitivity of ergative, AP, and intransitive construction in Inuktitut. It considers the usefulness of a measuring tool of surface properties for a theoretical analysis of transitivity of formally distinct but lexically close constructions. Section 3 examines AP and ergative construction with respect to previously proposed aspectual differences. It contains a discussion of the AP morpheme and its use as an aspect marker. Section 4 argues for the AP as a construction which differs syntactically from intransitive sentences only in the presence of overt AP morphology.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, all examples are from my fieldwork with Ida Awa, a speaker of the North Baffin dialect Mittimatalik. My thanks to her for her patience.

Section 5 closes with a suggestion regarding the syntactic analysis of AP and provides an outlook for further research on this topic.

## 2 The Transitivity Hierarchy

I will start this discussion with an evaluation of transitivity of the AP construction compared to intransitive and ergative constructions in Inuktitut through a tool, which has been argued for by Hopper & Thompson (1980). In this paper, semantic and pragmatic criteria are used to measure the transitivity of a sentence according to a transitivity hierarchy. Independent from morphosyntactic means, transitivity is measured through a combination of semantic/aspectual and pragmatic features of arguments and predicates, which should mirror the morphosyntactic features on a transitivity scale but provide a much more distinguished measurement of transitivity. Hopper & Thompson propose the following criteria.

<b>2.</b>	<b><u>HIGH TRANSITIVITY</u></b>	<b><u>LOW TRANSITIVITY</u></b>
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	2 or more	1
KINESIS (CONTACT)	action	non-action
ASPECT (TELICITY)	telic	atelic
PUNCTUALITY (ASPECT)	punctual	non-punctual
VOLITIONALITY	volitional	non-volitional
AFFIRMATION	affirmative	negative
AGENCY OF A <sup>2</sup>	A high in potency	A low in potency
AFFECTEDNESS OF O	O totally affected	O not affected
INDIVIDUATION OF O	O highly individuated	O non-individuated
	proper	common
	human, animate	inanimate
	concrete	abstract
	singular	plural
	count	mass
	referential, definite	non-referential

(Hopper/Thompson 1980:252)

An evaluation through semantic and pragmatic criteria should give us a clearer insight on the question as to whether the AP without overt object retains a non-overt object *pro* which distinguishes a canonical intransitive construction. As a working hypothesis based on morphosyntactic properties, an evaluation of ergative, AP, and intransitive constructions should yield the following hierarchy.

3. *Ergative > AP with overt object > AP with non-overt object > Canonical intransitive*

### 2.1 Evaluation of Transitivity

<sup>2</sup> Hopper/Thompson follow Dixon (1979) using A (for Agent), and O (for Object) in a two-participant clause.

In this section, the criteria proposed by Hopper & Thompson (1980) are applied to the examples in (1).

### 2.1.1 Number of Participants

This criterion does not distinguish between structural arguments and oblique DPs but only counts the recoverable presence of participants in the event. As Spreng (2001) has shown, AP with non-overt objects are difficult to recover, although certain facts seem to indicate the presence of a non-overt object *pro* in the AP, which may function as a second participant although there is no overt agreement on the verb. However, since there is no formal means to distinguish the intransitive construction (1b) from an AP with a zero AP morpheme with non-overt object *pro*, a caveat is in order.

	ergative	AP	AP with non-overt object	intransitive
Number of Participants	2	2	1 or 2	1

### 2.1.2 Kinesis (contact)

This criterion cannot be applied since we compare formally different constructions, which use the same verb. It refers to the difference between action verbs and state verbs. Since we have no state verb in (1), this criterion should not distinguish the construction with respect to kinesis. However, it demonstrates the effect semantic properties of a verb have on the transitivity of a construction.

	ergative	AP	AP with non-overt object	intransitive
Kinesis (contact)	yes	yes	yes	no

### 2.1.3 Aspect (Telicity)

According to Tenny (1994), an object functions as a measurer/delimiter for an event and renders a telic interpretation in English. At this point, I will assume, based on findings for Kallaalissut (Bittner 1988) and Yup'ik (Benua 1995) that this is true for Inuktitut and the AP yields an atelic reading. I will discuss this issue in detail in section 3, whether this criterion can be applied for Mittimatalik.

	ergative	AP	AP with non-overt object	intransitive
Aspect (Telicity)	telic	atelic	atelic	atelic

### 2.1.4 Punctuality (Aspect)

Since the class of basically telic, non-punctual verbs is rather small, I assume that telic aspect correlates to punctuality.

	ergative	AP	AP with non-overt object	intransitive
Punctuality (Aspect)	non-punctual	non-punctual	non-punctual	non-punctual

### 2.1.5 Volitionality

Concerning volitionality, the data is inconclusive. The sentences in (1) do not employ a difference in volitionality.

	ergative	AP	AP with non-overt object	intransitive
Volitionality	yes	yes	yes	yes

### 2.1.6 Affirmation

All sentences are affirmative.

	ergative	AP	AP with non-overt object	intransitive
Affirmation	yes	yes	yes	yes

### 2.1.7 Agency of A

This criterion interacts with kinesis and, given a greater prominence of the agent in the ergative construction might be interpreted as more agentive than the Antipassive.<sup>3</sup>

	ergative	AP	AP with non-overt object	intransitive
Agency	highest	high	high	high

### 2.1.8 Affectedness of O

Ergative and Antipassive construction do not differ with respect to the affectedness of the object. Contrary to the findings of Benua (1995) for Yup'ik, the oblique object in the AP does not show a lesser degree of affectedness.

<sup>3</sup> My consultant emphasizes that the ergative subject seems to be more important than the absolutive subject in the AP construction. Whether this translates to higher Agency is still a matter of speculation on my part.

## 4. example from Benua!

	ergative	AP	AP with non-overt object	intransitive
Affectedness of O	high	high	high or N/A	N/A

**2.1.9 Individuation of O**

The properties of the object differ with respect to individuation between the constructions. Schieberl-Manga (1996) argues that the ergative construction, either with overt or non-overt DP arguments shows a specific object, whereas the AP construction shows non-specific objects. If we include specificity as criterion for individuation of the object, we can observe the following distinction.

	ergative	AP	AP with non-overt object	intransitive
Individuation of O	high	less (non-specific)	less than AP	non-referential low

The above evaluation demonstrates that the AP construction is less transitive with respect to semantic properties of the theme participant. This result conforms with previous analyses, which emphasized on the fact that an AP construction is determined by the theme argument. However, the above evaluation can only evaluate superficial properties of the constructions under discussion. The criteria proposed by Hopper & Thompson (1980) are more appropriate to evaluate different sentences, which differ not only in syntax but also lexically. Common with previous analyses, it implies that it is only the theme DP, which determines the application of the AP construction. The above evaluation confirms the formal working hypothesis but does not provide any insight as to the questions posed in the introduction. In the next section, I will examine in greater detail, whether the semantics of the theme DP correlate not only with its syntactic status but have also an impact on the telicity of the construction.

**3 Aspects of Antipassive****3.1 Telicity**

Tenny (1994) argues that a sentence is telic if there is an element present that can function as a measurer/delimiter of the event. Direct objects are delimiters and measurer at the same time. Any other element can be a measurer but not a delimiter. This applies to incremental theme verbs (5a), change-of-state verbs (5b), and route verbs with path objects (5c).

5. a. eat an apple / build a house
- b. The baseball cracked the glass

- c. play a sonata / Bill climbed the ladder (Tenny 1994:15-17)

6. ***Measuring-Out Constraint on Direct Internal Arguments***

- (ii) Direct internal arguments are the only overt arguments which ‘can measure out the event.’ (Tenny 1994:11)

These are object-deleting verbs (cf. Levin 1993). From a different perspective, they can occur without an overt direct object, thus rendering the event atelic. I assume they are basically intransitive and optionally allow a direct object for measuring-out the event.

7. ***Terminus Constraint on indirect internal arguments***

- (i) An indirect internal argument can only participate in aspectual structure by providing a terminus for the event described by the verb. The terminus causes the event to be delimited. (Tenny 1994:68)

For the verbs I will discuss in this paper, I assume that the AP construction changes telicity of the event. If we take the *mik*-DP as direct object in Tenny’s sense, it should render the AP construction telic. If we take the *mik*-DP as some sort of indirect DP, we would expect that the AP construction has an atelic reading as opposed to the ergative construction.

Benua (1995) shows that the Antipassive construction denotes atelic aspect in Yup’ik (8). Specifically, it denotes a non-resultative meaning. She also cites West Greenlandic examples by Bittner (1988) that show this reading (9).

8. a. Lucy-m Mary-q utaqallrua  
Lucy-erg Mary-abs wait for-PST-ind.3-3s  
Lucy waited for Mary (Mary showed up)
- b. Lucy-q Mary-mek utaqallruuq  
Lucy-abs Mary-am wait for-PST-ind.3s  
Lucy waited for Mary  
(Mary did not necessarily appear) (Benua 1995:33)
9. a. Jaakup Aana tuqup-p-aa  
J.-ERG A.-ABS kill-ind-3/3  
Jacob kills Ann  
(Ann is already dead)
- b. Jaaku Aanamik tuqu-ssi-v-uq  
J.-ABS A.-INS kill-AP-ind-3  
Jacob kills Ann  
(Ann is not dead yet, but almost)  
(Bittner 1988:68, fn6)

This means that the DP in the *mik*-case cannot function as a delimiter, whereas the absolutive DP in the ergative construction is able to delimit the event.

However, these findings cannot be confirmed for Mittimatalik. A similar example shows that the AP does not denote a resultative interpretation. The overt AP marker *-si* cannot be analyzed as marker for telicity.

- |        |  |    |  |
|--------|--|----|--|
| 10. a. | anguti qimmirmik qukirsivuuq<br>man(as) dog-instr. shoot-si-ind.3.sg.<br>the man shot the dog<br>(unclear whether the dog is dead) | b. | angutiup qimmiq qukirjaa<br>man-erg dog(abs) shoot-part.3sg/3sg<br>the man shot the dog<br>(unclear whether the dog is dead) |
|--------|--|----|--|

The analysis of the Yup'ik examples in (8) shares a common problem apparent in the literature on aspect, especially on approaches, which analyze aspect as a functional projection. Resultative aspect cannot be equated to telic aspect. The verb *kill* has an inherent endpoint, it is telic due to the obligatory presence of a patient. The constructions do not contain any information as to the result of the event.

Common telicity tests do not show any difference in telicity between the ergative and the AP construction for Mittimatalik. The atelic and the telic reading with overt AP morphology on the verb is ungrammatical in both constructions (11a, 11b), whereas the sentences with non-overt AP morphology illustrate that the telic reading in both constructions is ungrammatical (12c, 12d).

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 11. a. | *angut kunik-si-vuuq arna-mik ikaralimaamut<br>man(abs) kiss-si-ind.3.sg. woman-instr. 'for an hour'<br>the man is kissing the woman for an hour |
| b.     | *angutiup arnaq kuniktaa ikaralimaamut<br>man-erg woman(abs) kiss-part.3sg/3sg 'for an hour'<br>the man is kissing the woman for an hour         |
| c.     | *angut kunik-si-vuuq arna-mik ikarami<br>man(abs) kiss-si-ind.3.sg. woman-instr. 'in an hour'<br>the man is kissing the woman in an hour         |
| d.     | *angutiup arnaq kuniktaa ikarami<br>man-erg woman(abs) kiss-part.3sg/3sg 'in an hour'<br>the man is kissing the woman in an hour                 |
| 12. a. | anguti niri-vuuq palaugaarmik ikaralimaamut<br>man(abs) eat-ind.3sg bread-instr. 'for an hour'<br>the man is eating bread for an hour            |
| b.     | angutiup palaugaaq nirivaa ikaralimaamut<br>man-erg bread(abs) eat-ind.3sg/3sg 'for an hour'<br>the man eats the bread for an hour               |
| c.     | *anguti niri-vuuq palaugaarmik ikarami   |

man(abs) eat-ind.3sg bread-instr. ‘in an hour’  
 the man is eating bread in an hour

- d. \*angutiup palaugaaq nirivaa ikarami  
 man-erg bread(abs) eat-ind.3sg/3sg ‘in an hour’  
 the man eats the bread in an hour

Although the above examples clearly demonstrate that AP in correlation with certain semantics of the object does not produce an atelic reading as in Yup’ik, we can see that the aspectual judgements vary depending on the verb, which is used in the construction. The constructions with overt AP morphology are neutral with respect to telicity, whereas the constructions with non-overt AP morphology can only be atelic, regardless of whether the construction is ergative or AP. We can conclude that the syntactic status of the theme as such does not have any impact on telicity. However, there is a significant difference with respect to the verb as Tenny (1994) has shown. We are now faced with two possibilities: Either it is the semantics an/or the argument structure of the verb that allow or disallows for a certain aspectual reading or the fact that it does not allow overt AP morphology determines a certain aspectual reading. In reference to Tenny (1994), it depends primarily on the verb, how an event can be measured out or be delimited by an object. I will test this hypothesis in the next section.

### 3.2 Aspects of AP morphology

Generally, the Western dialects and languages of the Eskimo language family are considered to have only one AP morpheme *-si* as opposed to Labrador Inuttut or West Greenlandic (cf. Johns 1999, Bittner 1987, Beaudoin-Lietz 1982). In all dialects, some verbs do not take overt Antipassive morphology and therefore, based on the identical case marking, are taken to have a zero Antipassive morpheme.

Bittner (1987) demonstrates that the various morphemes commonly perceived as AP morphemes in West Greenlandic denote various aspectual readings.

*more examples from that paper*

13. Jaaku malilirpaa

Jaaku maliq—lir-p-aa

Jacob(A) follow-begin-tr.indic.-3sgE/3sgA

He began to follow Jacob.

(Bittner 1987:200)

Most of them occur in the AP construction as well as in the ergative construction and not all verbs can be marked with every aspectual marker. Bittner argues that the morphemes, which previously had been taken to be allomorphs of an abstract AP morpheme, are aspectual morphemes. For instance, according to Bittner (1987), the above inceptive morpheme *-lir* is the most productive and can appear with any verb (Bittner 1987:200).

Mittimatalik belongs to the dialects, which are taken to have only one overt AP morpheme. This morpheme can also function as an inceptive marker for certain verbs.

Therefore, Bittner's analysis might be applied to this dialect. However, Mittimatalik also has an inceptive marker *-lir*. These two morphemes have the following distribution.

8. *Verbs, which take no –si in the AP and mark inceptive with –si*
- a. anguti niri-vuq niqimik  
man(abs) eat-ind.3sg meat-instr.  
the man is eating meat
- b. anguti niri-vuq  
man(abs) eat-ind.3sg  
the man is eating (something)
- c. anguti niri-lir/si-puq niqimik  
man(abs) eat-icpt.-ind.3sg. meat-instr.  
the man starts to eat meat
- d. anguti niri-lir/si-puq  
man(abs) eat-icpt.-ind.3sg  
the man starts to eat (something)
- e. anguti uniartuq qamatimik  
man(abs) pull-ind.3sg sled-instr.  
the man is pulling the sled
- f. anguti uniartuq  
man(abs) pull-ind.3sg  
the man is pulling (something)
- g. anguti unia-lir-puq qamutimik  
man(abs) pull-icpt.-ind.3sg. sled-instr.  
the man starts to pull the sled
- h. anguti unia-lir-puq  
man(abs) pull-icpt.-ind.3sg.  
the man starts to pull (something)
- a. arnaq ingirtuq pisirmik  
woman (abs) sing-part.3sg. song-instr.  
the woman is singing a song
- b. arnaq ingirtuq  
woman (abs) sing-part.3sg.  
the woman is singing
9. *Verbs, which take –si in the AP and mark inceptive with –lir*
- c. angut kunik-si-vuq arna-mik  
man(abs) kiss-si-ind.3.sg. woman-instr.  
the man is kissing the woman
- b. angut kunik-si-vuq  
man(abs) kiss-si-ind.3.sg.  
the man is kissing someone
- f. anguti kunik-si-lir-puq arnamik  
man(abs) kiss-si-icpt.-ind.3sg. woman-instr.  
the man starts to kiss a woman
- e. anguti kunik-si-lir-puq  
man(abs) kiss-si-icpt.-ind.3sg.  
the man starts to kiss someone

**Summary:**

	Verbs	AP morpheme	inceptive aspect
[-si]	eat, sing, pull	zero	lir or si
[+si]	kiss, shoot	si	si-lir or N/A

Mittimatalik has verbs, which do not take the overt AP marker *-si*. However, they have an inceptive marker of the same form. This aspectual marker is not available for verbs, which take overt *-si* in the AP. In that case, *-si* co-occurs with the other inceptive marker *-lir*. We are now faced with the possibility that *-si* either functions as an inceptive marker and an AP morpheme or, on the other hand, we have two different morphemes *-si*.

The first option leaves us with the task to determine, in which way *-si* combines these two functions in the grammar. The latter requires proof that this is indeed the case but leaves open the question, why some verbs require overt AP morphology and why others do not permit overt *-si*. In terms of theory-internal elegance, both options are equally unsatisfactory. Since telicity does not play a role in distinguishing the ergative from the AP construction, we will leave this path of investigation for the moment.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.3 Aspect marker versus AP marker

Even if there is a connection between aspect and AP, the question remains why some verbs take overt *-si* and why some verbs do not when there is no inceptive aspect. Inceptive aspect is used in the ergative construction with the *-si* morpheme as well as in the AP construction. The alternative inceptive marker *-lir* however cannot be used as an allomorph of *-si* in the AP construction, it co-occurs with *-si* in the AP construction.

A major piece of evidence that *-si* in the AP is not an aspectual morpheme comes from phonology. If we examine verbs, whose root ends in a consonant, we observe that when we denote inceptive aspect, the final consonant is deleted. If we have a simple AP construction with no inceptive aspect, the final consonant is not deleted. Thus, there are two different morphemes *-si*. One of them denotes inceptive aspect; the other is used in the AP construction.

#### 10. examples

As the examples in Mittimatalik has no AP allomorphy but the aspectual morphemes are just that and are not related to alternating grammatical relations. In fact, there is only one overt AP morpheme *-si*. However, previous analyses assume that there is alternation between zero and overt AP morphology (sources). I will propose during the discussion in the next section that the occurrence of the overt AP marker is predictable from the verb's argument structure and that there is no zero AP morpheme in Mittimatalik.

## 4 Intransitive or Antipassive?

The above results demonstrate that there is a profound difference between verbs that take overt AP morphology and verbs that have no overt AP morpheme. Intuitively, verbs, which inherently require two participants, have overt AP morphology and take another morpheme to denote inceptive aspect. The discussion in this section will confirm this intuitive notion further.

Marantz (1984) argues that reflexive constructions in Central Arctic are in fact Antipassive constructions. Note that *taku* does not have *--si* in the AP.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Beaudoin-Lietz (1982) shows for Labrador Inuttut that there are actually more verbs, which take *-si* that can occur with intransitive inflection on the root. However, she does not show whether this is only due to the fact that these verbs have inceptive aspect in this case.

<sup>5</sup> See a rejection of this analysis in Johns (1984).

11. a. angut arnamik takuvuq  
man(abs) woman-instr. see-ind.3sg.  
the man sees the woman

b. angut ingminik takuvuq  
man(abs) self-instr. see-ind.3s  
the man sees himself

In this paper, I am excluding perception verbs. The verbs I examined have this reading only with an overt reflexive pronoun in the *mik*-case.

12.

a. arnaq ingirtuq  
woman (abs) sing-part.3sg.  
the woman is singing/\*to herself

b. anguti niri-vuq  
man(abs) eat-ind.3sg  
the man is eating (something)

c. anguti uniartuq  
man(abs) pull-ind.3sg  
the man is pulling (something)/\*himself

Verbs, which take no overt *-si* (I will call them [-*si*] verbs as opposed to [+*si*] verbs in the remainder of this paper) do not have a reflexive interpretation when there is no overt reflexive pronoun.

[+*si*] verbs can may have a reflexive reading without an overt AP morpheme and intransitive inflection. My consultant rejected them as ungrammatical or at least questionable with the reflexive reading, including a non-volitional or accidental reading.

13. a. kapivunga  
kapi-vunga  
stab-IND,1s  
I stab myself

b. kapisivunga  
kapi-si-vunga  
stab-ANTIPASS-IND,1s  
I stab someone  
Kalmar (1979) cited from Siegel (1998:165)

14. a. ?anguti kunik-puq  
man(abs) kiss-ind.3sg  
?the man is kissing /?\*himself

b. ?anguti qukirvuq  
man(abs) shoot- ind.3.sg.  
?the man shot himself accidentally

Siegel (1998) suggests that [-*si*] verbs are “[...] optional object argument verbs, which do not have the object argument realized.”(Siegel 1998:166). I adopt this suggestion and propose that [+*si*] verbs are inherently transitive. When they are marked with intransitive agreement, *-si* introduces the option of a second participant, which is not an argument in the syntactic sense. Contrary to Tenny (1994), they do not allow a atelic reading, regardless whether it is overt or not. [+*-si*] verbs obligatorily have two arguments. Semantic properties of the internal argument (specificity, cf. Schieberl-Manga 1996) determine, how and which case it receives.

When [-si] verbs occur with a second participant, this second participant is not necessarily part of the argument structure of the verb but can be introduced optionally. Primarily, they occur in intransitive constructions but can allow a second argument only in ergative constructions. The theme argument functions as a delimiter only in ergative constructions or when it appears as overt DP in the *mik*-case in the AP construction. Sentences differ in telicity only for [-si] verbs. [+si] verbs do not fall under Tenny's classification since they do not allow the absence of an object. The atelic reading can only be obtained by the suffix *-sar*, which means habitually. Neither the overtness/non-overtness nor the status of the theme argument has any impact on telicity for [+si] verbs.

[-si] verbs show sensitivity to the overtness of the object but not to the syntactic status. We might interpret this as an indication that this object is not part of the argument structure of the verb and therefore does not function as a delimiter for the event.

- |        |  |    |  |
|--------|--|----|--|
| 15. a. | anguti kunik-sar-tuq ikaralimaamut<br>the man kissed someone for an hour | b. | *anguti kunik-si-vuq ikaralimaamut<br>the man kissed someone for an hour |
| c.     | *anguti kunik-si-vuq ikarami<br>the man kissed someone in an hour        | d. | *anguti kunik-si-vuq ikarami<br>the man kissed someone in an hour        |
| e.     | angutiup kuniksartaa ikaralimaamut<br>the man is kissing her for an hour | f. | *angutiup arnaq kuniktaa ikarami<br>the man kissed her in an hour        |
| 16. a. | anguti niri-vuq ikaralimaamut<br>the man ate for an hour                 | b. | *anguti niri-vuq ikarami<br>the man ate something in an hour             |
| c.     | *angutiup nirivaa ikaralimaamut<br>the man ate it for an hour            | d. | angutiup nirivaa ikarami<br>the man ate it in an hour                    |

The Transitivity Hierarchy misses the following generalizations:

Transitivity is not necessarily a surface phenomenon, which can be measured accordingly. ON the other hand, although argument structure of verbs might differ, it is not only the number and properties of arguments, which determine a degree of transitivity but the syntactic status, these arguments have pre and post-derivation. As a starting point, the argument structure of a verb is the primary factor to determine transitivity but the syntactic structure after the derivation might show a different picture. In addition, it cannot make any statements concerning non-overt pronouns, which are not easily recoverable via verbal pronominal agreement and therefore blurs the picture even further.

Regarding previous analyses of the AP in Inuktitut, AP has been determined solely through the different case marking on overt DPs. A closer look at the verbal morphology has demonstrated that we can only speak of Antipassive as an alternative 'transitive' construction in the presence of overt AP morphology. The occurrence of the AP morpheme *-si* is easily predictable via the argument structure of the verb. If a verb requires two arguments in its lexical entry, it will occur in the AP construction with overt AP morphology. Every other construction, which looks like an AP because of the DP in the *mik*-case, is an intransitive construction, since its verbs do not require a second argument.

## 5 Towards an Analysis

The previous sections have demonstrated that we can only speak of AP as a detransitivized ‘transitive’ construction when we have overt AP morphology. Contra to Bittner, in Mittimatalik, there is a clear difference between aspectual markers and the AP marker *-si*. Following work by Hale & Keyser (1993, 1998), on the syntactic nature of argument structure, we have an external argument outside the core VP, which is projected by the verb. Constructions with non-overt AP morphology do not have an external argument and behave like unergative verbs. However, some of them allow a second argument, which cannot appear as a subject in s-syntax. In terms of argument structure, i.e. l-syntax, they are intransitive, whereas verbs which do include an external argument do so even when they occur in an AP construction in s-syntax.

[-*si*] verbs have an intransitive argument structure, similar to unergative verbs although they allow a theme DP to be present. If we refer back to the notion of theta roles, but keep with Hale & Keyser’s notion of the structural configuration of the theta role, we need to keep the agent of these verbs at the same position, even in the same relational configuration.

A problem arises with the notion of little *v*. Hale & Keyser do refer particularly to the notion of little *v*, which introduces an external argument. However, if we keep with the notion that it is little *v* and not the verb itself that introduces the agent argument we have to decide, whether by introducing an agent, we are already on the level of s-syntax. In other words, where does syntax proper start to work after the verb is inserted with its argument structure?

Leaving this admittedly interesting question aside for the moment, I would like to suggest that in order to capture the syntactic structure of the AP, we have to assume that little *v* in the AP is somehow different compared to the one in an ergative construction. In the ergative construction, it is able to assign objective case, and probably even agrees with the object. At this point, however, we run into problems regarding the case, which is assigned by T. If we assume it to be ergative case, then T might be somehow defective in the AP in the sense that it cannot assign ergative. We also would have to assume that *v* cannot assign absolutive to the internal argument, which may stay in situ and receives inherent *mik*-case from the verb. This latter element of the analysis resembles Schieberl-Manga’s analysis, who argues that the non-specific object of the AP remains in situ. However, I will leave an analysis of the AP for syntax proper for future research.

To sum up, AP as a ‘transitive’ construction without being formally transitive is only possible with verbs, which require two arguments in their argument structure. The argument structure of verbs, which optionally allow a second argument, differs from an AP construction but resembles more closely an canonical intransitive construction. AP can be classified similar to the passive in accusative languages as a ‘detransitivized’ version of the ergative construction, which requires overt morphology on the verb.

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