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Antipassivization and the Morpheme *-si* in Inuktitut*

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1. Introduction

In this paper we will examine some cases of unexpected appearances of antipassive morphology in Inuktitut, an Inuit (Eskimo) language spoken in Northeastern Canada and in the very closely-related language West Greenlandic.

The tokens to be examined are mostly from naturally-occurring Inuktitut texts in Kalmár (1979b) and from Fortescue's (1984) grammar of West Greenlandic. Other sources are cited below.

Antipassivization is canonically a valency-changing operation that intransitivizes a transitive verb by "demoting" the direct object to an oblique Case or omitting it altogether.

In Inuktitut, the antipassive is marked by a suffix which has several allomorphs. Many researchers claim that the specific allomorph which appears is lexically governed to some extent and is at least partially arbitrary or idiosyncratic and not necessarily conditioned by phonological or other factors. Bittner (1987) and Johnson (1980) argue that the different antipassive morphemes are not allomorphs, but actually are used in different discourse contexts. The most common overt antipassive marker is *-si*, the one that we will focus on in this paper.

2. The Data

There are many examples in Inuktitut of *-si* appearing in places that are unexpected given the standard function and distribution of antipassivization.¹

2.1. Prototypical Antipassivization

Before discussing the unexpected cases of antipassive morphology, I will first review what Inuktitut sentences without special valency-changing morphology look like. Then I will show an example of prototypical intransitivizing antipassivization.

2.1.1. Ergativity

Inuktitut is an ergative language, so the subjects of transitive verbs are marked with Ergative Case and the subjects of intransitive verbs and the objects of transitive verbs are marked with Absolutive Case.

The sentence in (1) shows a typical intransitive verb. The subject is marked with Absolutive Case, which has no overt realization in Inuktitut. The verb has a suffix which fuses together subject agreement and mood.

- (1) Jaani tikittuq
 Jaani tikit -juq
 Johnny(ABS) arrive -PAR,3s
 'Johnny arrived.'

I: (Allen, 15)

The sentence in (2) shows a typical transitive verb. The subject is marked with Ergative Case, the object is marked with Absolutive Case. The suffix on the verb fuses together both subject and object agreement (along with mood).

- (2) arnaup qimiq takuvaa
 arnaq -up qimiq taku -vaa
 woman -ERG dog(ABS) see -IND,3s/3s
 'A/the woman saw the dog'

I: (Kalmár, 87)

2.1.2. Antipassivization

Antipassivization is a way of intransitivizing a transitive verb. The subject is realized in Absolutive Case and the object can either appear in an oblique Case (usually Modalis (Instrumental) in Inuktitut) or be omitted. The verb agrees only with the subject. In other words, the Case and agreement pattern of an antipassive sentence is the same as that of a normal intransitive, and there is typically antipassivizing morphology on the verb.

The sentence in (3) illustrates a standard antipassive sentence in Inuktitut with the morpheme *-si* being used in its standard object-demoting antipassive use.

- (3) Inunnik tuqutsivuq
 (Inuk -nik) tuqut -si -vuq
 (person -MOD,PL) kill -ANTIPASS -IND,3s
 'He killed people'

WG: (Fortescue, 86)

2.2. Non-typical Use of Antipassive Morphology

There are many examples of antipassive morphology being used in Inuktitut that do not fit in with the standard antipassivization pattern described above.

2.2.1 Intransitive Verbs

There are examples of what appears to be the antipassive morpheme *-si* suffixed to intransitive verbs (as in (4), (5), (6)² and (7)). This is clearly unexpected given the nature of antipassivization.

(4)

iqlaq -si -kallak -pak -lunga
 laugh -ANTIPASS -suddenly -FREQ -ICM,1s ...
 'I'd suddenly have to laugh, ...'

I: (*Kalmár, 127, line 36 of Text II*)

(5)

qilalukka -nik pui -si -vuq
 whale -MOD,PL come up to surface -ANTIPASS -IND,3s
 'There appeared whales on the surface (of the sea)'

WG: (*Bitner(1988) as cited in Bok-Bennema, 263*)

(6)

natsiqannaavaa
 natsiq anna -i -vaa
 ringed seal(ABS) get away -ANTIPASS -IND,3s/3s
 'The ringed seal got away from him'

WG: (*Fortescue, 269*)

(7)

ammalu tuavirnaq -tuqaa -si -kaatla -k -pat
 CONN -emergency -there is -ANTIPASS -suddenly -REL -3s
 'And when all of a sudden there is an emergency...'

I: (*Kalmár, line 41 of Text III*)

(8)

Taania -p qajar -taa -ni asiru -i -vaa
 Taania -ERG kayak -new -his(REFL)(ABS) break -AP -IND,3s/3s
 'Taania had his new kayak destroyed (unintentionally).'

WG: (*Fortescue, 269*)

2.2.2. Antipassivization/Causative Interactions

Other unexpected occurrences of the morpheme *-si* include some puzzling interactions between the antipassive and other valency-changing operations, especially causativization (as in (9)). We will not discuss these cases here.

(9)

sunauvva siqinir -mut immur -naq -si -tit -lugu
 CONN sun -ALL water -make -ANTIPASS -CAUS -ICM,X/3s
 'I melted water with the sun'

I: (*Kalmár, 121, line 47 of Text I*)

2.2.3 Antipassivization and Inceptive Aspect

There are also many examples of *-si* in sentences in which I will argue it is being used to convey aspectual information (as in (4), (7), (10) and (11)). In this use, the verb is often modified by ‘suddenly’.

This use is found with both transitive and intransitive verbs and sometimes corresponds (in terms of argument structure and Case) to a standard antipassive and sometimes does not.

(10)

jo qukiq -si -ju -kulu -u -tainna -r -mat
 Joe(ABS) shoot -ANTIPASS -PART,3s -DIM -BE -suddenly -REL -3,CONJ
 ‘All of a sudden Joe fired, and ...’

I: (*Kalmár, 130, line 74 of Text II*)

(11)

utuqaat aliikkutaSSaraluwatik
 the old couple those who should have been an entertainment for them
 taSSaḡḡannaq aniSigamikkik
 suddenly when they had them go out for them
 ‘When they had the bad luck that those who should have been an entertainment
 for them suddenly went out.’

WG: (*Bugge & Lynge(1934-44) as cited in Bergsland, 109*)

2.2.4. “Detrimental Use”

The example in (13) illustrates another use of the antipassive morpheme, one that Fortescue (1984) calls a highly lexicalized “detrimental use” (p. 269). The example in (12) shows the typical intransitive form of the sentence. It de-agentivizes the subject.³

(12)

qajar -taa -va asirur -sima -vuq
 kayak -new -his(ABS) break -PERF -IND,3s
 ‘His new kayak has been destroyed (broke).’

WG: (*Fortescue, 269*)

(13)

Taania -p qajar -taa -ni asiru -i -vaa
 Taania -ERG kayak -new -his(REFL)(ABS) break -AP -IND,3s/3s
 ‘Taania had his new kayak destroyed (unintentionally).’

WG: (*Fortescue, 269*)

2.3. Potential Analyses

Given this pattern, one possibility would be to say that the uses of *-si* which do not correspond to the standard properties of the antipassive are evidence for accidental homophony, i.e. the

existence of at least one other morpheme which has the same phonological form as that of *-si* but which is unrelated to antipassivization.

The other, more interesting possibility is that *-si* is present in the seemingly disparate cases for the same reason(s).

In this paper we will investigate whether unification of the different uses of *-si* is possible or not. We will argue that the seemingly disparate cases of *-si* are not purely cases of accidental homophony. We will show that it is possible to collapse, at least partially, the uses of *-si*. This clearly has implications for the morphosyntactic treatment of antipassivization. This paper can be seen as a first step at investigating the contribution of the Inuktitut data to such an analysis.

3. Antipassivization and Aspect

The antipassive morpheme *-si* can be used to mark aspectual information, even in the absence of the object-demotion that is typical of the antipassive.

The particular aspectual information is to describe the *inception* of the action. This ties in with the observation in Dowty (1987) that adverbs such as 'suddenly' have a pragmatic effect that induces an inceptive interpretation on states.

(14)

iqlaq -si -kallak -pak -lunga
 laugh -ANTIPASS -suddenly -FREQ -ICM,1s ...
 'I'd suddenly have to laugh, ...'

I: (*Kalmár*, 127, line 36 of Text II)

(15)

ammalu tuavirnaq -tuqaa -si -kaatla -k -pat
 CONN -emergency -there is -ANTIPASS -suddenly -REL -3s
 'And when all of a sudden there is an emergency...'

I: (*Kalmár*, line 41 of Text III)

(16)

jo qukiq -si -ju -kulu -u -tainna -r -mat
 Joe(ABS) shoot -ANTIPASS -PART,3s -DIM -BE -suddenly -REL -3,CONJ
 'All of a sudden Joe fired, and ...'

I: (*Kalmár*, 130, line 74 of Text II)

The link between voice and aspect in West Greenlandic has been discussed in Bittner (1987), although I argue that the relationship is somewhat different than the one that she posits. What I propose here is not necessarily incompatible with Bittner's (1987) analysis, but can be seen as an extension of it.

3.1. Cross-Linguistic Connections between Voice and Aspect

There is also cross-linguistic support for the relationship between voice and aspect.

In the Mayan language Tzutujil, there is a ‘completive passive’ which emphasizes the result and the termination of the activity and a ‘simple passive’ which ‘simply defines and describes the activity’ (Dayley (1985) as cited in Dixon (1994), 148)

Russian reflexive morphology can be used for passivization, but only in the imperfective (Geniušiene (1987)).

- (17) a. Sosed stroit dom
 neighbor-NOM builds house-ACC
 ‘The neighbor is building a house.’
- b. Dom stroit -sja sosed -om
 house-NOM builds -REFL neighbor -INS/SG
 ‘The house is (being) built by a neighbor.’

3.2. Summary: Antipassive and Inceptive Aspect

- In Inuktitut, the antipassive morpheme *-si* can be used to mark inceptive aspect.
- There is cross-linguistic support for the connection between voice and aspect.

4. Antipassive Morphology and Verb Classes

We have shown that the Inuktitut and West Greenlandic data indicate that antipassive morphology can be used to mark inceptive aspect. However, there are remaining cases of non-canonical uses of antipassive morphology that do not seem related to this aspectual use.

I will argue that we can get insight into these cases by investigating the nature of the verb roots themselves, not just at the antipassive.

Specifically, if we look at the way that verb roots pattern based on what happens when the object is dropped, we can gain some insight into some of the functions of *-si*.

4.1. Likely Reflexives

In Inuktitut, it is sometimes possible to make a transitive verb become reflexive by omitting the object and using only subject agreement morphology on the verb. No overt reflexive marker is needed. An example of this is shown in (18).

- (18) kapivunga
 kapi -vunga
 stab -IND,1s
 ‘I stab myself’

Compare (18) with the corresponding canonical antipassive given in (19).

- (19) kapisivunga
 kapi -si -vunga
 stab -ANTIPASS -IND,1s
 'I stab something/someone'

I: (*Kalmár, 18*)

So the example in (18) has the same Case and agreement pattern as an antipassivized transitive verb, but there is no overt antipassive morphology.

4.2. Not-So-Likely Reflexives

However, in other cases, using the Case and agreement patterns found with antipassivized verbs, without using antipassive morphology, results in an antipassive interpretation of the sentence, not a reflexive one. An example of this is shown in (20).

- (20) arnaq miqsuq -tuq japa- mik
 woman(ABS) sew -PART,3s parka -MOD
 'The woman sews a parka'

I: (*Bok-Bennema, 47*)

This type of sentence has been analysed as having a null antipassive (Woodbury (1977), Jensen and Johns (1989), Allen (1994)). The verbs meaning 'eat', 'chew' and 'bite' and are in this class also (Allen (1994) and Bok-Bennema (1991)).

So, perhaps this pattern can give us some hints about some of the remaining cases of non-canonical antipassivization.

I propose that it is the class of verbs which are not likely to be used reflexively which allow the "null antipassive" to be used. For the class of verbs which are more likely to be used reflexively, overt antipassivization must be used. This means that *-si* is used to force the non-reflexive reading.

There is also cross-linguistic support for the idea that the object-suppressing functions of antipassivization and reflexivization are closely connected.

4.2.1. Cross-Linguistic Connections between Reflexive and Object-Suppression

There are cross-linguistics connections between reflexivization and object-suppression. One example can be seen with the case of the Lithuanian 'Absolute' Reflexive construction (from Geniušiene (1987)). The example in (21a) shows a Lithuanian sentence with a transitive verb. The example in (21b) shows the Lithuanian 'Absolute' Reflexive construction. This is a case of reflexive morphology on a transitive verb resulting in an object-suppressing habitual reading. The example in (22) shows the typical reflexivizing use of this same reflexive morphology which appeared in the object-suppressing habitual reading in (21b).

- (21) a. Berniuk-as muša vaik-us
 boy-NOM beats child-ACC/PL
 'The boy beats children.'
- b. Berniuk-as muša-si
 boy-NOM beats-REFL
 'The boy fights (is pugnacious)'
- (22) Av-ys bado-si
 sheep-NOM-PL butt-REFL
 'Sheep butt', 'Sheep are butting one another'

This type of formation is lexically limited. The verbs that can be used in this construction are verbs that are unlikely to be used with a reflexive interpretation; *fight, curse, tease, pester, pinch*, etc. So this parallels the Inuktitut case where reflexive morphology (or lack thereof, in the Inuktitut case) can be used to give a non-reflexive object suppression reading in cases where the verb is not likely to have a reflexive interpretation.

This configuration is also incompatible with perfectivizing morphology as the examples in (23) show. This gives us another link between aspect and voice, as I argued there was in Inuktitut.

- (23) a. Šu-o ap- kandžio-j-o vaik-us
 dog-NOM PERF bite-PAST-3 child-ACC/PL
 'The dog bit the children.'
- b. *Šu-o ap- si kandžio-j-o.
 dog-NOM PERF REFL bite-PAST-3
 'The dog bit.'

Russian also has reflexive morphology which can be used with verbs that are unlikely to be reflexivized to give an object-suppression reading. This can be seen in (24). The examples in (25) illustrate the reflexive use of this morphology.

- (24) Sobaka kusaet-sja
 The dog bites-REFL
 'The dog bites (habitually).'
- (25) a. Ona odevaet kuklu
 she dresses doll
 'She dresses the doll.'
- b. Ona odevaet-sja
 She dresses-REFL
 'She dresses herself.'

4.2.2. Summary: Antipassive and Reflexive

- Inuktitut transitive verbs can be grouped on whether they are likely to be reflexivized or not.

- Dropping the object of the verbs that are likely to be reflexivized results in a reflexive interpretation, but *-si* can be used to force the non-reflexive object-suppression reading (antipassive or habitual).
- There is cross-linguistic support for this connection between the use of a reflexive configuration with certain verbs and a non-reflexive object-suppression meaning.

4.3. Transitivity Alternation Verbs and De-Agentivizing

Transitivity Alternation verbs provide further support for the idea that dividing verbs into classes based on their behavior when the object is dropped will help with the seemingly disparate uses of antipassive morphology in Inuktitut.

With transitivity alternation verbs like ‘break’, omitting an argument and using the case and agreement patterns of the antipassive does not result in an antipassive interpretation as it does for the “unlikely reflexivizers”, nor in a reflexive interpretation as it does for the “likely reflexivizers”.

But, this makes sense given the fact that the object-dropped, intransitive form of the verb is the anticausative form, as can be seen in (26).

- (26) qajar -taa -va asirur -sima -vuq
 kayak -new -his(ABS) break -PERF -IND,3s
 ‘His new kayak has been destroyed (broke).’

WG: (*Fortescue*, 269)

In this case, then addition of the antipassive morpheme seems not to intransitivize the verb (the Case and agreement pattern is that of a transitive), but to contribute to the meaning by de-agentivizing the subject, i.e. making the subject into an experiencer or patient.

It is not clear, a priori, whether *-si* is being affixed to the intransitive form of the verb and adding an argument, an experiencer subject, or whether it is being added to the transitive form of the verb, and not demoting the object, but instead, de-agentivizing the subject.

If the former explanation were true, we would expect any intransitive verb to be able to take the *-si* suffix, and then turn into a transitive verb with an experiencer subject, but this is clearly not the case. So, we can be certain that the latter possibility is the correct one. We can then account for the “detrimental” or de-agentivizing uses of the antipassive morpheme *-si*, illustrated in (27).

- (27) Taania -p qajar -taa -ni asiru -i -vaa
 Taania -ERG kayak -new -his(REFL)(ABS) break -AP -IND,3s/3s
 ‘Taania had his new kayak destroyed (unintentionally).’

WG: (*Fortescue*, 269)

We can include in this use of the antipassive morpheme *-si*, the example in (6), repeated here as (28).

- (28) natsiqannaavaa
 natsiq anna -i -vaa
 ringed seal(ABS) get away -ANTIPASS -IND,3sgS/3sgO
 'The ringed seal got away from him.' (i.e. 'He had the ringed seal get away from him.')

WG: (*Fortescue, 269*)

There is another example of what seems to be the antipassive morpheme serving to de-agentivize the subject, or indicate that the subject is not in control of the action. This is the case in (4), repeated here as (29). Interestingly, this example also has the inceptive aspect meaning.

- (29) iqlaq -si -kallak -pak -lunga
 laugh -ANTIPASS -suddenly -FREQ -ICM,1s ...
 'I'd suddenly have to laugh, ...'

I: (*Kalmár, 127, line 36 of Text II*)

Although the example in (29) is an unergative and not a transitivity alternation verb as are the other de-agentivized cases in (27) and (28), the fact that these two classes of verbs pattern together may not be unexpected.

This relates to work on Salish by Demirdache (1996) where unergatives and certain transitives pattern together to get a meaning where the subject is de-agentivized with the addition of an "out of control" morpheme.

So, it may be that example (29) shows that unergatives pattern with Transitivity Alternation verbs in Inuktitut, or it may be that (29) is simply a case of the inceptive aspect use of *-si*. It is not clear how to choose between these possibilities at this point.

4.4. Summary: Antipassive and De-Agentivization of the Subject

- When the antipassive morpheme *-si* is added to transitivity alternation verbs and unergative verbs, it does not result in reading in which the object is "demoted", but one in which the subject is de-agentivized.

5. Conclusions

I have shown that there is good reason to believe that the seemingly disparate uses of *-si* are not all cases of accidental homophony. One use of the antipassive morpheme *-si* is to contribute an inceptive aspect meaning. The other meanings can be grouped by dividing the verb stems to which *-si* attaches into classes depending on the patterns seen when the object of the verb is omitted. If the verb is of the class that gets a reflexive interpretation when the object is omitted, the addition of *-si* can rule out the reflexive reading resulting in "demoted" object or a habitual reading. In the case of transitivity alternation and possibly unergative verbs, when

the default interpretation of the dropped object/intransitive case is an anticausative or spontaneous reading, addition of *-si* de-agentivizes the subject. There is cross-linguistic support for these patterns.

6. Remaining Issues

- Formalization of the verb classes; lexical vs. syntactic properties etc.
- Examination of the interaction between 'suddenly' and *--si* in the inceptive aspect cases.
- Relating the inceptive aspect cases to the verb classes. Can the inceptive aspect uses of *-si* be linked to the de-agentivizing uses?

Notes

*My foremost debt in writing this paper is to the researchers cited throughout whose fieldwork I am relying on for data and for insights into Inuktitut and West Greenlandic grammar; I am grateful for their work. For helpful comments and discussion I would also like to thank Dave Embick, Alec Marantz, Rolf Noyer, Don Ringe and Robin Clark. Thanks also to Roumi Izvorski for help with the Russian data. I take full responsibility for any errors in fact or interpretation.

¹ The examples are in the maximum amount of detail allowed by the original source. The following abbreviations and notational conventions are used:

ABS=Absolute Case, ANTIPASS=Antipassive Suffix (may or may not be canonical case of antipassivization), CAUS=Causative, CONJ=Conjunction, CONN=Connective, FREQ=Frequentative, ICM=Incontemporative Mood, IND=Indicative Mood (Mood and Agreement morphology appear as a fused suffix on the verb), MOD=Modalis(Instrumental) Case, PART=Participle, {1,2,3}{S,PL}=Subject person & number agreement), {1,2,3}{S,PL}/{1,2,3}{S,PL}=Subject and Object person & number agreement)

²The antipassive morpheme *-si* surfaces as *-i* here, as it does occasionally elsewhere, due to phonological factors.

³The construction shown in (13) is similar to the Japanese adversative passive, an example of which (from Kubo (1990)) is given below.

Taro-ga Hanako-ni shinkoushukyo-o hajime-rare-ta
 Taro-NOM Hanako-DAT new-religion-ACC begin-PASS-PAST
 'Taro had Hanako start a new religion on him.'

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