

LITTLE *v* IN INUKTITUT: ANTIPASSIVE REVISITED*

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ABSTRACT

*This paper provides an in-depth examination of the distribution of the Antipassive morpheme -si- in Mittimatalik, a dialect of Inuktitut spoken in North Baffin. It is demonstrated that the occurrence of the overt Antipassive marker in Mittimatalik correlates with the argument structure of the verb. The analysis of the Antipassive takes into account the fact that only inherently transitive verbs and causativized verbs require the Antipassive marker in the Antipassive construction. It is proposed that the Antipassive morpheme -si- occupies *v* and is responsible for accusative assignment to the patient argument. Assuming that *v* is the focal point of transitivity, the differences in argument structure lie therefore in the feature make-up of *v*. The proposal accounts for the fact that the distribution of the Antipassive morpheme coincides with the argument structure of the verb. Moreover, the analysis is able to predict the occurrence of the Antipassive morpheme in Mittimatalik.*

1. INTRODUCTION—WHAT IS ARGUMENT STRUCTURE?

Based on an analysis of the Antipassive in Inuktitut, this paper argues for a structural view of argument structure where at the same time showing argument structure (AS) to be a lexical property of the verb. The latter property is to be understood in the sense that the verb minimally merges with a lexically predetermined number of arguments in also predetermined structural configurations. In this sense, I take AS to be similar to Hale and Keyser's (1993) term *l-syntax*. I understand the term *l-syntax* as synonymous to a structural representation of a verb's AS. Any modification thereof, is taken to occur in *syntax proper*, or *s-syntax* in Hale and Keyser's terms. AS is therefore the least number of arguments a verbal head needs to merge with.

* If not indicated otherwise, all Inuktitut data are taken from my fieldwork with Ida Awa, a speaker of Mittimatalik. My thanks for her efforts to explain the semantic subtleties to me, which I hope I will understand eventually. I would also like to thank my supervisor Alana Johns for keeping me on my toes throughout the writing of this paper. Additional thanks go to Rebecca Smollett for proof-reading and correcting my English as well as to the members of my general's paper committee, Elizabeth Cowper and Diane Massam. Thanks for your patience. Remaining errors of any kind are of course my responsibility.

The following central question will be discussed in the course of this paper: Is the object in a sentence like *John is eating an apple* an argument of the lexical verb *eat* in the same way as the object of *drop* in *John dropped the glass*?

Crucial for the analysis will be the following view of ergativity. Ergativity is a phenomenon that typologically characterizes a rather small group of the world's languages. In this context, it is a term that describes a certain case system of a comparatively small group of languages. On the other hand, ergativity describes also a property of a verb, i.e., a description of its AS. Ergative/unaccusative verbs are characterized as having only one (patient) argument as a complement (Burzio 1986). Ergativity in this sense is therefore a description of the argument structure of a verb.

For instance, causativization of an unaccusative/ergative verb like *break* results in the addition of an external argument, selected not by the lexical verb itself but by its functional head *v*. On the other hand, transitivity of a verb like *eat* creates a second argument not selected by *v* but an internal argument selected by the lexical verb.¹

This paper approaches ergativity in the latter sense by focussing on the apparently more marked construction in an ergative language, the Antipassive (AP). The dialect of Inuktitut that I am mainly concerned with here is Mittimatalik spoken in North Baffin Island, Nunavut, Canada. A detailed examination of the distribution of the AP marker in this dialect will show that the AP morpheme is neither an aspectual morpheme in any sense (Bittner 1987) nor an atelic marker (Benua 1996). The examination of the distribution of overt AP morphology will further demonstrate that the occurrence of overt AP morphology is closely related to ergativity, i.e., to unaccusativity in this language. The subsequent analysis will show that the occurrence of the AP morpheme allows accusative case to be assigned, in contrast to the ergative construction. Consequently, I will show that in a language like Inuktitut that is predominantly ergative, accusative assignment is more marked and requires additional morphology. Through overt AP morphology, different structural case assignment (accusative) is made possible.

In the course of this paper, I will also address the following questions that have been raised in the literature on ergativity in Inuktitut:

1 The terms 'external argument' and 'internal argument' will be used in this sense throughout this paper.

- What is the nature of the AP marker?
- What determines the occurrence of overt AP morphology?
- Is the object case in the AP construction a structural accusative or an oblique case?
- When is the absolutive NP a subject?

The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 provides the basic case and agreement facts of Inuktitut. Section 2 discusses the Antipassive morpheme in Inuktitut, its distribution, its occurrence as an aspectual marker, and its allomorphic alternations. Section 3 illustrates the behaviour of three different verb classes, classified according to their behaviour with respect to AP morphology and argument structure. Section 4 provides a derivation of AP, ergative, and intransitive constructions in Mittimatalik within the Minimalist framework (Chomsky 1998). Section 5 shows the features my proposal shares with previous analyses and the ways it differs from and modifies these accounts. Section 6 closes with a summary and a proposal for future research.

2. CASE AND AGREEMENT IN INUKTITUT

Inuktitut has a predominantly ergative case assignment system with an alternative system of case assignment, the Antipassive (AP). The transitive (ergative) and intransitive constructions differ with respect to case assignment and agreement.

As shown in (1), an ergative construction shows ergative case on the agent, absolutive case on the patient, and pronominal agreement in person and number with both arguments on the verb (1a). An intransitive sentence shows absolutive case on the sole argument and the verb agrees with it (1b).

- (1) a. Ergative
 anguti-up arnaq kunik-taa
 man-ERG woman(ABS) kiss-PART.3SG/3SG²
 'the man is kissing the woman'

² Verbal pronominal inflection in Inuit languages is preceded by a mood marker. Since its role with respect to grammatical relations is not yet clear, I will gloss it throughout as part of the verbal inflection suffix. See Johns (1987) for a detailed discussion.

b. Intransitive³

ang ʔti niri-vuq
 man(ABS) eat-IND.3SG
 'the man is eating'

The Antipassive differs from the ergative construction both in case assignment and overt agreement morphology on the verb.

The agent receives absolutive case (like the sole argument in an intransitive sentence or the patient argument in the ergative construction) and the verb shows pronominal agreement only with this argument. The patient receives what traditionally has been called an oblique case, the *mik*-case⁴. Example (2a) illustrates that the verb is marked with an AP marker *-si-*. This marker has previously been taken to have a zero allomorph (2b).⁵

(2) a. Antipassive with overt AP marker

ang ʔti kunik-si-vuq arna-mik
 man(ABS) kiss-AP-IND.3SG woman-mik
 'the man is kissing a woman'

b. Antipassive with non-overt AP morphology

ang ʔti niri-∅-vuq niqi-mik
 man(ABS) eat-AP-IND.3SG meat-mik
 'the man is eating meat'

Inuktitut could be called a *pro*-drop language, in the sense that overt pronominal agreement on the verb signals the role of non-overt arguments both in ergative and intransitive sentences.

- (3) a. kunik-taa
 kiss-PART.3SG/3SG
 's/he is kissing him/her'
- b. niri-vuq
 eat-IND.3SG
 's/he is eating'

³ Glossary: ERG=ergative case; ABS=absolutive case; PART=participial mood; IND.=indicative mood. The mood marker is an obligatory part of the verbal agreement inflection. See Johns (1987, 1992) for a discussion.

⁴ This case has received various names in the literature: modalis, comitative, instrumental. To avoid terminological confusion, I will refer to this case as the *mik*-case according to its morphological form in the singular. Examples taken from sources other than my fieldwork will be glossed according to the sources.

⁵ See detailed discussion on the AP marker in section 2.

In the Antipassive construction, there is pronominal agreement only with the agent argument. However, although the verb shows pronominal agreement only with the agent argument, the patient argument can also be non-overt. This could mean two things. Firstly, the patient argument could be simply not present at all. Secondly, the patient argument could be represented as *object-pro*.⁶

- (4) a. kunik-si-vuq
 kiss-AP-IND.3SG
 's/he is kissing someone'
- b. niri-vuq
 eat-IND.3SG
 's/he is eating something'

Due to the absence of an overt AP marker, the constructions in (3b) and (4b) look exactly the same. Without other means of recovering the non-overt patient in (4b), we have no accurate means to determine the presence of an *object-pro* in (4b) and the absence of an *object-pro* in (3b), since they are ambiguous and can be translated either with *something* (as in 4b) or without. Without the implicit assumption that (4b) contains a non-overt AP marker, the constructions are indistinguishable. On the other hand, (4a) can never occur without *-si-*, whereas (4b) never occurs with *-si*.⁷

The following section will consider the nature of the AP marker as has been previously discussed in the literature on Inuktitut. It will show that the AP marker is neither a nominal element nor any kind of aspectual morpheme as has previously been claimed in the literature.

3. THE AP MORPHEME

Inuit languages differ with respect to the number of AP morphemes. For instance, Kalaallisut (West Greenlandic) and Labrador Inuttut seem to show more than one overt AP morpheme. On the other hand, dialects further West in Canada (like Mittimatalik) seem to have only one overt AP morpheme *-si-* (Johns 1999).

AP morphemes have been described as aspectual morphemes (Bittner 1987) for Kalaallisut, as intransitivizers (Beaudoin-Lietz 1982) for Labrador Inuttut, as incorporated nouns (Marantz 1984, Bittner and Hale 1996a, b,

⁶ See Spreng (2001) for a detailed discussion of this issue.

⁷ Anticipating the discussion of the non-overt AP morpheme, examples with non-overt AP morpheme will be glossed without the AP marker.

Baker 1988) and as nominalizers (Jensen and Johns 1989). It seems that there is widespread disagreement in the literature as to the exact nature and function of the AP morpheme.

3.1 The nature of the AP morpheme—demotion of the patient

One kind of analysis of the AP crucially revolves around the cause of the demotion of the patient argument. For instance, Baker (1988) offers an incorporation analysis that takes the AP morpheme to be a noun that incorporates into the verb, thus absorbing the theta-role the verb usually assigns to the patient argument. The optionally occurring overt patient argument doubles and receives therefore the oblique case.

Another analysis (Jensen and Johns 1989) takes the AP morpheme to be a nominalizing affix that attaches to the verb in the lexicon. The features of the affix prevent the theta features of the verb from percolating upwards, thus preventing theta assignment and therefore syntactic licensing of an argument. The argument can then only be realized as adjunct with oblique case.

These approaches explain the demotion of the patient argument through ascribing certain features to the AP morpheme. They do not ask primarily what the nature of the AP morpheme is but what properties of the AP morpheme can cause the demotion of the patient argument. The fundamental question as to what determines the distribution of the AP morpheme and as to the nature and function of this morpheme has not been sufficiently answered. Especially, since its function seemed implicitly understood to be the cause of demotion of the patient argument.

3.2 The nature of the AP morpheme—an aspectual marker?

Bittner (1987) was the first study to demonstrate that the previously assumed allomorphs of the AP morpheme are in fact different aspectual morphemes in Kalaallisut. She discusses the five so-called AP allomorphs *-si-*, *-llir*, *-(ss)i*, *-ɔ*, and *-nnig* and illustrates that the verb root determines to a certain degree which AP morpheme is selected since each root can occur with a specific selection of different (AP) morphemes.

Bittner shows that the markers that previously have been called AP markers also occur in ergative constructions (5a), yielding the same aspectual readings as in the AP (5b). Consider the following contrast where the AP construction has an imperfective reading.

- (5) Kalaallisut
- a. Jaakup illu taana sanavaa
 Jaaku-p illu taa-rna sana-pa-a
 Jacob-E house(A) this-SG.A build.TR.INDIC-3SGE/3SGA
 'Jacob built/was/is building this house (may but need not have finished)'
- b. Jaaku illumik taassuminnga sanavuuq
 Jaaku illu-mik taa-ssuminnga sana-ø-pu-q
 Jacob(A) house-INS this-SG.INS build-ø.AP-INTR.INDIC-3SGA
 'Jacob built/was/is building this house (has not finished it yet)'
 (Bittner 1987:202)

However, the same sentences in Mittimatalik yield a different or even opposite reading. The Mittimatalik ergative construction in (6a) yields the reading of the Kalaallisut AP in (5b), whereas the flexible reading of the Kalaallisut ergative construction (5a) is depicted in the AP construction in Mittimatalik in (6b).

- (6) Mittimatalik
- a. Jak-up iglu sana-vaa
 Jake-ERG house(ABS) build-IND.3SG/3SG
 'Jake is building the house (not yet finished)'
- b. Jake sana-vuuq iglu-mik
 Jake(ABS) build-IND.3SG house-mik
 'Jake is building a house (hands on, may or may not yet be finished)'

A similar claim that the AP marker denotes some sort of imperfective aspect has also been made for Yup'ik (Benua 1995), a closely related language spoken in Alaska. Benua shows that the AP construction has an imperfective reading in Yup'ik, as opposed to the ergative construction, which seems to express perfective aspect.

- (7) Yup'ik
- 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)⁸

⁸ PST= past; am=*mik*-case. Actually, there seems to be some confusion as to whether telic, resultative, or completive are the same concepts. According to Benua (1995:37) telic, completive and resultative aspect seem to be treated identically.

Again, the same sentences yield a different reading in Mittimatilik. there is no indication as to whether the person someone was waiting for appeared.

(8) Mittimatilik

- a. Lucy utarqi-laur-tuq Mary-mik
Lucy(ABS) wait-PAST-PART.3SG Mary-mik
'Lucy waited for Mary (Mary probably showed up)'
- b. Lucy utarqi-laur-tuq Mary-mik kisiani
Lucy(ABS) wait-PAST-PART.3SG Mary-mik but
Mary tiki-lau-ngimmat
Mary(ABS) arrive-PAST-CAUS.3SG
'Lucy waited for Mary, but Mary showed up (although it took her very long)'
- c. Lucy-up Mary utarqi-laur-tanga
Lucy-ERG Mary(ABS) wait for-PAST-PART.3SG/3SG
'Lucy waited for Mary (no sense as to whether Mary showed up)'

Canonical telicity tests also reveal that there is no difference between the telicity of the AP construction compared to the ergative construction, regardless of whether the AP morpheme is overt or non-overt.

- (9) a. AP with verbs that require -si: atelic reading
*anɣut kunik-si-vuq arna-mik ikaralimaamut
man(ABS) kiss-AP-IND.3SG woman-mik 'for an hour'
'the man kissed a woman for an hour'
- b. Ergative construction with verbs that require -si- in the AP: atelic reading
*anɣuti-up arnaq kunik-taa ikaralimaamut
man-ERG woman(ABS) kiss-PART.3SG/3SG 'for an hour'
'the man kissed the woman for an hour'
- c. AP with verbs that require -si- in the AP: telic reading
anɣit kunik-si-vuq arna-mik ikarami
man(ABS) kiss-AP-IND.3SG woman-mik 'within the hour'
'the man kissed the woman in an hour' (competition)
- d. Ergative construction with verbs that require -si- in the AP: telic reading
anɣiti-up arnaq kunik-taa ikarami
man-ERG woman(ABS) kiss-PART.3SG/3SG 'within the hour'
'the man kissed the woman in an hour' (competition)

- (10) a. AP with verbs that have no *-si*: atelic reading
 *anguti niri-vuq palaugaar-mik ikaralimaamut
 man(ABS) eat-IND.3SG bread-mik 'for an hour'
 'the man ate bread for an hour'
- b. Ergative constructions with verbs that have no *-si* in the AP: atelic reading
 *anguti-up palaugaaq niri-vaa ikaralimaamut
 man-ERG bread(ABS) eat-IND.3SG/3SG 'for an hour'
 'the man ate the bread for an hour'
- c. AP with verbs that have no *-si*: telic reading
 anguti niri-vuq palaugaar-mik ikarami
 man(ABS) eat-IND.3SG bread-mik 'within the hour'
 'the man ate bread in an hour'
- d. Ergative constructions with verbs that have no *-si* in the AP: telic reading
 anguti-up palaugaaq niri-vaa ikarami
 man-ERG bread(ABS) eat-IND.3SG/3SG 'within the hour'
 'the man ate the bread in an hour'

The above examples clearly demonstrate whether we get an atelic reading does not depend on whether we have an ergative or AP construction. The examples also show that the presence or absence of the AP marker has no impact on telicity. Whether the AP morphology is overt (present) or non-overt (absent) does not influence telicity in Mittimatalik.

3.3 The nature of the AP morpheme—dual functions?

Beaudoin-Lietz (1982) found in her extensive study of intransitivizing suffixes⁹ in Labrador Inuttut that these suffixes have dual functions. They function as aspectual morphemes in the AP construction as well as in the ergative construction.

(11) 'Special' Meaning

- a. *-(t)-si(k)-*
 'buy, see' (attaches to nominals; incorporating)
- b. *-Xsi-*
 'now, in the process of, starting to' (allows transitive inflection)

⁹ Excluding *-ø*, Labrador Inuttut has six AP markers. Beaudoin-Lietz' study does not include the zero allomorph

- c. $-\text{=}\xi\text{-}$
'to turn, to become' (allows transitive inflection)
- d. $-\text{tsi-}$
'wait for (allows transitive inflection)'
- e. $-\text{Xn}\ \text{niQ}$ (or $-\text{=niQ-}$)
'had xed' (allows transitive inflection)
- f. $-\text{=n}\ \text{k-}$
'nominalizer' (V→N)
- g. $-(\text{n})\ \text{ni}(\text{k})-$
'be peasant to' (undetermined)
- h. $-\text{i}(\text{k})-$
'lose, become without, have no more, not x, etc' (undetermined)
- i. $-\text{i-}/\ \text{ij-}$
'involutarily' (allows transitive inflection)
- j. $-\text{Xg}-$
'also, again, surprisingly, accidentally' (allows transitive inflection,
deletes C) (Beaudoin-Lietz 1982: 73-99)

The morphemes in (11) although similar, differ in certain aspects from the intransitivizing (or AP) suffixes. First, some of them behave differently phonologically. Second, others can occur in ergative constructions, and finally, some attach to nominal forms or derive nominals from verbs.

The difference in meaning and function of the morphemes listed in (11) suggests that a wide range of intransitivizing morphemes (i.e., AP morphemes) in this dialect might actually have double functions. Although identical in form, they act either as intransitivizing morphemes or have the meanings listed in (11).

Some of them might even be aspectual morphemes as Bittner (1987) suggests for Kalaallisut. However, when they carry some meaning and do not function solely as intransitivizing morphemes, they behave differently both phonologically and morphologically.

Therefore, I suggest that *-si-* and the zero AP morpheme in Mittimatalik also contrast to an aspectual morpheme in the language and that the latter should be distinguished from the AP morpheme as Beaudoin-Lietz suggests for the various intransitivizers in Labrador Inuttut.

As already mentioned, dialects farther West (including the North Baffin dialect Mittimatalik) seem to have only one overt AP morpheme *-si-* (Johns 1999). Supposedly, it can also encode aspectual information, i.e., inceptive aspect. Another inceptive marker is *-lir-*, similar to *-llir-* in Kalaallisut. As illustrated in (12) and (13), inceptive can be marked by *-si-* or by *-lir-*, re-

ardless of the choice of verb. When inceptive is marked with *-si-*, verbs that take *-si-* in the AP construction occur with two *-si-* morphemes, indicating that aspectual and AP morpheme co-occur even when there is no overt AP morpheme (12).

- (12) a. anguti kunik-si-vuq arna-mik
man(ABS) kiss-AP-IND.3SG woman-mik
'the man is kissing the woman'
- b. anguti kunik-si-lir-puq arna-mik
man(ABS) kiss-AP-ICPT-IND.3SG woman-mik
'the man starts to kiss a woman'
- c. anguti niri-vuq niqi-mik
man(ABS) eat-IND.3SG meat-mik
'the man is eating meat'
- d. anguti niri-lir-puq niqi-mik
man(ABS) eat-ICPT-PART.3SG meat-mik
'the man starts to eat meat'
- (13) a. anguti niri-si-vuq niqi-mik
man(ABS) eat-ICPT-IND.3SG meat-mik
'the man starts to eat meat'
*'the man is eating meat'
- b. anguti kunik-si-si-vuq arna-mik
man(ABS) kiss-AP-ICPT-IND.3SG woman-mik
'the man starts to kiss the woman'

In Mittimatalik like in Kalaallisut, the inceptive marker *-lir-* and the inceptive reading with *-si-* also appear in the ergative construction.

- (14) a. anguti-up niqi niri-si-vaa
man-ERG meat(ABS) eat-ICPT-IND.3SG/3SG
'the man starts to eat meat'
*'the man is eating meat'
- b. anguti-up niqi niri-lir-paa
man-ERG meat(ABS) eat-ICPT-IND.3SG/3SG
'the man starts to eat meat'
- c. anguti-up arnaq kuni-lir-paa
man-ERG woman(ABS) kiss-ICPT-IND.3SG/3SG
'the man starts to kiss the woman'
- d. anguti-up arnaq kuni-si-jaa
man-ERG woman(ABS) kiss-ICPT-IND.3SG/3SG
'the man starts to kiss the woman'
*'the man kissed the woman'

The examples in (14) demonstrate that inceptive aspect marking is not restricted to the AP construction. The non-inceptive (neutral) reading and the appearance of an overt *-si-*, however, are not compatible with an erga-

tive construction (14a, 14d). Evidently, AP marking on verbs on the one hand and aspectual marking on the other are two different phenomena since the verbs that take overt *-si-* in the AP retain this marker when there is inceptive marking *with* either *-lir-* (12b) or *-si-* (13b). The inceptive marker *-lir-* on the other hand is also available for verbs with no overt AP morpheme (12b, 14b).¹⁰

The above examples (12b, 13b) demonstrate that the AP morpheme for verbs that take an overt AP morpheme can co-occur with the inceptive marker in the AP construction. This might indicate that there is actually a zero AP allomorph for verbs which do not take an overt AP marker. The occurrence of two *-si-* morphemes in (13b) indicates that there are two different *-si-* morphemes to be inserted from the lexicon, one of which is an AP morpheme, and the other of which is an inceptive marker.

The morpheme *-si-* seems to have two applications, as AP morpheme and as aspectual morpheme. Example (13b) demonstrates clearly that it is applied twice with different functions. This fact points to two possibilities:

There is one marker *-si-* that alternately functions as an AP marker and an aspectual marker.

There are two different *-si-* morphemes. One is the AP marker, and the other is an aspectual marker.

An important piece of evidence that *-si-* in the AP (neutral reading) is a different morpheme from the inceptive marker comes from phonology. The examination of verbs whose root ends in a consonant reveals that in sentences with *-si-* and an inceptive reading, the final consonant of the verb root is deleted (14d, 15d). The same pattern occurs with the inceptive marker *-lir-* (14c). In the case of a simple AP construction with no inceptive aspect, the root final consonant cannot be deleted (15a). The marker *-si-* where there is no consonant deletion is also impossible in an ergative construction with neutral reading (15c). Evidently, the inceptive marker causes the deletion of a preceding consonant, whereas the AP marker has no such property.

- (15) a. akti.r-si-vuq
 tuc 1-AP-IND.3SG
 's/he is touching someone'

¹⁰ These facts are very similar to the AP in Halkomelem Salish where there seem to be two AP markers, one of the denoting an aspectual reading (Gerds and Hukari 2000).

- b. aktu-si-vuq
 touch-ICPT-IND.3SG
 's/he starts to touch (someone)'
- c. *aktur-si-jaa
 touch-AP-PART.3/3SG
 'she touches him/her'
- d. aktu-si-jaa
 touch-ICPT-PART.3/3SG
 's/he starts to touch him/her'
- e. kunik-si-si-juq
 kiss-AP-ICPT-PART.3SG
 's/he starts to kiss someone'
- f. *kuni-si-si-juq
 kiss-ICPT-AP-PART.3SG
 's/he starts to kiss someone'
- g. kunik-si-lir-tuq
 kiss-AP-ICPT-PART.3SG
 's/he starts to kiss someone'
- h. *kuni-lir-si-juq
 kiss-ICPT-AP-PART.3SG
 's/he starts to kiss someone'

Examples (15e-h) also show that the order of AP marker and inceptive marker is restricted: The AP marker precedes the inceptive marker. This conforms to the affix ordering posed by Fortescue (1983). The AP morpheme *-si-* belongs to the group of what he calls 'verb-extending affixes', which precede negation and 'sentential affixes' (Fortescue 1983: 97). Inceptive *-lir-* and inceptive *-si-* belong to the latter category.¹¹

The above examples demonstrate that the aspectual function of *-si-* differs in two respects from the AP (or intransitivizing) function: First, the inceptive marker is available regardless of which verb is used and regardless of whether it is in the ergative or AP construction. The overt AP marker *-si-* (neutral reading) is available in the AP construction only for certain types of verbs (*kunik-* 'kiss') but not for verbs like *niri-* 'eat'.

Second, the inceptive marker *-si-* differs phonologically from the AP marker but behaves identically to the other inceptive marker *-lir-*. Both inceptive markers cause the deletion of a preceding consonant.

¹¹ Inceptive *-lir-* and inceptive *-si-* can be found in group 17, (Fortescue 1983, 44). AP *-si-* or intransitivizing *-si-*, as he calls it, can be found in group 14 (Fortescue 1983:42). According to Fortescue (1983, 97), affixes of group 9-14 precede affixes of group 15-18.

The examples in (15) provide morphological (morpheme order) and phonological evidence for the fact that AP and inceptive aspect are denoted by two different morphemes or one morpheme with two different functions.

They cannot, however, provide more than circumstantial evidence for the presence or absence of a zero AP morpheme. There is, however, clear evidence that inceptive marking and AP marking are separate issues in Mittimatalik. In contrast to the findings for Kalaallisut, AP *-si-* denotes neither imperfective nor any other aspectual reading.

4. VERB CLASSES

The previous section has demonstrated that the aspect marker and the AP marker in Mittimatalik are distinct. Furthermore, it has shown that the inceptive marker *-si-* and the AP morpheme *-si-* display different behaviour with respect to phonology and morpheme order. Thus, the AP morpheme is not an aspect marker and appears obligatorily only with certain verbs and only in an AP construction, whereas the aspect marker occurs in both the ergative and the AP construction. This section will clarify what it is that determines the occurrence of an overt AP marker.

As already mentioned, previous analyses assume more or less explicitly that there is an alternation between zero and overt AP morphology (Marantz 1984, Bok-Bennema 1991, Bittner 1994, Bittner and Hale 1996a,b, Johns 1999, and others). So far, the determining factors of this apparent allomorphy have not yet been examined.

The following sections will examine the distribution of the AP morpheme *-si-* in Mittimatalik and will illustrate the correlation between its presence and the argument structure of the verbs which require it.

4.1 Unaccusative verbs and causativization

According to Burzio's generalization (Burzio 1986), verbs that do not assign a theta-role to an external argument cannot assign accusative case to their complement, forcing the latter to raise to subject position. Transferring this generalization to Inuktitut, we are faced with the following facts.

As we would expect, unaccusative verbs in Mittimatalik are usually verbs which have no semantic agent. They cannot occur in the AP with an overt *mik*-NP, whether with overt or with non-overt AP morphology.

- (16) a. *Peter sinik-tuq nutara-mik.
 Peter (ABS) sleep-PART.3SG baby-mik
 'Peter is sleeping the baby'

- b. *Peter sinik-si-juq nutara-mik
 Peter(ABS) sleep-AP-PART.3SG baby-mik
 'Peter is sleeping the baby'

As expected, they also do not appear in the ergative construction with transitive inflection, unless they appear with a transitivizing morpheme, i.e., some sort of causativizer.

- (17) a. Peter tuqu-si-vuq
 Peter(ABS) die-ICPT./*AP-IND.3SG
 'Peter is dying (about to die)/*kills something'
- b. Peter tuqu-vuq
 Peter(ABS) die-IND.3SG
 'Peter is dead'
- c. Peter qimmiq tuqu(t)-taa
 Peter-ERG dog(ABS) die-CAUS-PART.3SG/3SG
 'Peter killed the dog'
- (18) a. Peter tiki(t)-tuq
 Peter(ABS) arrive-CAUS-PART.3SG
 'Peter arrives'
- b. Peter tiki-si-juq
 Peter(ABS) arrive-ICPT./*AP-PART.3SG
 'Peter starts to arrive (is about to arrive)/*arrives'
- c. Peta-up tiki(t)-taa
 Peter-ERG arrive(caus)-PART.3SG/3SG
 'Peter arrives at it'
- (19) a. Umiaq kivi-juq
 boat(ABS) sink-PART.3SG
 'the boat (is) sunk'
- b. Peta-up umiaq kivi-ti(t)-taa
 Peter-ERG boat(ABS) sink-CAUS-PART.3SG/3SG
 'Peter made the boat sink'¹²

English allows causativization of certain unaccusative verbs without overt morphological means of causativization. Well-known examples are *break*, *sink*, *open*, and *drop*. In Mittimatalik, these verbs appear in intransitive sentences, in the AP construction, and in the ergative construction and require the overt AP morpheme *-si-*.

- (20) a. Paa matuir-tuq (intransitive)
 door(ABS) open-PART.3SG
 'the door opens/is open'

¹² *-tit-* usually means literally 'make, cause to, let', whereas the consonant in (18c, 19c) might be a more direct means of causativization (Alana Johns, p.c.).

- b. Peter matuir-si-juq paa-mik (AP)
 Pete:(ABS) open-AP-PART.3SG door-mik
 'Pete opens a door'
- c. Peter-up paa matuir-taa (ergative)
 Pete:-ERG door(ABS) open-PART.3SG/3SG
 'Pete opens the door'
- (21) a. ana itaq surak-tuq (intransitive)
 stick(ABS) break-PART.3SG
 'the stick broke'
- b. Peter surak-si-juq anautar-mik (AP)
 Pete:(ABS) break-AP-PART.3SG stick-mik
 'Pete broke the stick'
- c. Peter-up anautaq surak-taa (ergative)
 Pete:-ERG stick(ABS) break-PART.3SG/3SG
 'Pete broke the stick'

The argument that always occurs is a patient argument, regardless of whether the sentence is intransitive, in the ergative construction, or in the AP construction. The agentive argument is optional in the sense that the verb may be intransitive. The AP construction with two arguments is possible only with the overt AP morpheme *-si*.

If we adopt a structural approach to AS similar to Hale and Keyser (1993), we have to ask whether these verbs have a single-argument AS and the second argument is introduced by an external CAUSER element (Harley 1995, 1999) or whether this second argument is part of the lexical verb's AS.

Since these verbs allow both intransitive and transitive constructions, I assume as a working hypothesis, and in keeping with the generally more or less agreed-upon view (Chomsky 1995, 1998, Kratzer 1996, Harley 1999), that the agent argument is not part of the AS of the verb *per se* but when present is introduced by a higher *v*. Following a structural view of the representation of the AS of the verb (Hale and Keyser 1993), the higher argument is not part of the lexical verb's AS, but merges with a higher verbal head.

4.2 Unergative verbs and object deleting verbs

Following Hale and Keyser (1993), I assume unergative verbs to be basically transitive. This means that there is always a higher verbal element *v*, which merges with the sole 'external' argument but the roots themselves have no AS. These verbs are distinct from unaccusative verbs in that regard, since the latter require the sole argument themselves.

- (22) a. Peter pisuk-tuq
 Pete:(ABS) walk-PART.3SG
 'Pete is walking'

- b. Peter *pisu-si-juq*
Peter(ABS) walk-ICPT-PART.3SG
'Peter starts to walk'
- (23) a. Peter *ani-juq*
Peter(ABS) leave/go out-PART.3SG
'Peter left/went out'
- b. *Peter *ani-si-juq*
Peter(ABS) leave-AP-PART.3SG
'Peter starts to leave/to go out'

However, most of the semantically agentive unergative verbs allow for a second 'internal' argument. I will call these verbs object-permitting verbs. In Mittimatalik, these verbs occur in intransitive sentences (25a), ergative constructions (25b), and AP constructions (25c). In the AP construction and in a simple intransitive sentence, crucially they do not show overt AP morphology. Recall that AP constructions may also occur without an overt patient argument.

- (24) a. *anguti niri-juq* (intransitive/AP)
man(ABS) eat-PART.3SG
'the man is eating (something)'
- b. *anguti-up niqi niri-vaa* (ergative)
man-ERG meat(ABS) eat-IND.3SG/3SG
'the man is eating meat'
- c. *anguti niri-vuq niqi-mik* (AP)
man(ABS) eat-IND.3SG meat-mik
'the man is eating meat'
- (25) a. Peter *taku-juq* (intransitive/AP)
Peter(ABS) see-PART.3SG
'Peter sees (something)'
- b. Peter *peta-up qimmiq taku-jaa* (ergative)
Peter-ERG dog(ABS) see-PART.3SG/3SG
'Peter sees/saw the dog'
- c. Peter *taku-juq qimmir-mik* (AP)
Peter(ABS) see-PART.3SG dog-mik
'Peter sees a dog'

As mentioned in section 1, the AP construction without overt *mik*-NP, and a normal intransitive construction, appear exactly the same on the surface in these cases (25a, 26a). Only the assumption that there is a zero AP morpheme in (25c) and (26c) in combination with the optional *mik*-NP can provide a means to distinguish the AP from the intransitive constructions in (25a) and (26a). As discussed in section 2, this assumption is by no means substantiated.

Following Hale and Keyser (1993), I will assume that unergative verbs are derived through incorporation of a noun into a semantically (almost) empty verb. The difference to Baker's (1988) incorporation analysis of the AP lies in the following: there is no AP morpheme that is incorporated into a verbal root but a root element is incorporated into an abstract verbal element, thus forming a verbal root together. Baker's analysis targets only AP constructions with overt AP morpheme in syntax proper whereas this analysis derives unergative and object-permitting verbs.¹³ The underlying structure parallels the analytic form of Basque noun-*egin* constructions, which are usually semantically unergative verbs in other languages (Levin 1983). The implication here is that the incorporation does not occur in Basque.

- (26) Oso ondo hitz egin duzu
 very good word-SA make 3SA-ukan-2SE
 'You spoke very well' (Levin 1983: 304)¹⁴

Apart from the option of the second (patient) argument, the verbs in (37) and (38) are indistinct from intransitive unergative verbs. The agent argument is always present and the patient argument is optional in the same sense as the agent argument is optional for so-called unaccusative verbs.

4.3 Inherently transitive verbs

This group of verbs occurs in ergative constructions but cannot appear in an intransitive construction except in an AP construction with obligatory AP morphology.

- (27) a. Peter kapi-si-vuq nanu-mik (AP)
 Pete:(ABS) stab-AP-IND.3SG polar bear-mik
 'Pete: stabbed a polar bear'
- b. Peter-up nanuq kapi-jaa (ergative)
 Pete:-ERG polar bear(ABS) stab-PART.3SG/3SG
 'Pete: stabbed the polar bear'
- c. *Peter kapivuq (intransitive)
 Pete:(ABS) stab-IND.3SG
 'Pete: stabbed himself'

¹³ According to Hale and Keyser (1993), this derivation occurs in I-syntax. In this framework an interesting question would be where the level of I-syntax would be located. See section 4.

¹⁴ 3sA=3rd person singular absolutive; 2sE=2nd person singular ergative agreement

- (28) a. anguti kunik-si-vuq arna-mik (AP)
 man(ABS) kiss-AP-IND.3SG woman-mik
 'the man kissed a woman'
- b. anguti-up arnaq kunik-taa (ergative)
 man-ERG woman(ABS) kiss-PART.3SG/3SG
 'the man kissed the woman'
- c. *anguti kuniktuq (intransitive)
 man(ABS) kiss-PART.3SG
 'the man kissed'

These verbs always occur with two arguments, unless they show overt *-si-* in the AP construction.

- (29) a. *Peter kapi-vuq¹⁵
 Peter(ABS) stab-PART.3SG
 'Peter stabbed (himself accidentally, fell onto a knife).'
- b. *anguti kunik-tuq
 man(ABS) kiss-PART.3SG
 'The man kissed (not even possible with an accidental, unwilled reading).'
- c. Peter kapi-si-vuq
 Peter (ABS) stab-AP-IND.3SG
 'Peter is stabbing someone'.
- d. Peter kunik-si-vuq
 Peter(ABS) kiss-AP-IND.3SG
 'Peter is kissing someone'.
- e. *Susan kivik-puq
 Susan(ABS) lift-IND.3SG
 'Susan lifted (also impossible with reflexive reading)'
- f. Susan kivik-si-vuq
 Susan(ABS) lift-AP-IND.3SG
 'Susan lifted someone'

Concerning the AP morpheme, inherently transitive verbs behave identically to causativized unaccusative verbs such as *surak-* 'break', i.e., they require overt *-si-*. I therefore keep the notion of little *v* for inherently transi-

¹⁵ Siegel (1998) cites Kalmar (1979:17) claiming that the intransitive form *kapi-vunga* 'I stab myself' is entirely acceptable. My Mittimatalik consultant had the same problems with this form as with *kapi-vuq* 'he stabbed himself'. This class of verbs is very problematic, if not impossible, with an intransitive inflection. Marantz (1984) claims that this type of verbs is necessarily reflexive in Central Arctic, but with a passive reading in Kallaalissut, following Sadock (1980). The 'accidental' reading of (30a) would allow both interpretations in Mittimatalik. However, (30b, e) are entirely unacceptable.

tive verbs intact. However, there is a fundamental difference between causativized unaccusative verbs and inherently transitive verbs. The latter cannot appear with only one argument, unless with overt *-si-* in the AP construction (*kunil-* 'kiss'; *kapi-* 'stab', *kivik-* 'lift'), whereas the former can appear with two arguments with an overt (*tuqu-* 'die') or non-overt (*surak-* 'break') causative element on the verb.

5. SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN MITTIMATALIK: TOWARDS AN ANALYSIS

Section 3 showed that there is a clear correlation between the AS of a verb and the presence/absence of an overt AP marker. Inherently transitive and causativized unaccusative verbs require the AP morpheme *-si-* whereas unergative and object-permitting verbs never take an overt AP morpheme. If we take *vP* as the domain where the difference in AS is anchored we can assume that the AP morpheme plays a major role for the outcome of the derivation of an AP construction. This also suggests a difference in the feature make up of *v*, depending on the presence (or overtness) of the AP marker.

5.1 The verbal projection

The structure of the VP has undergone various modifications within Generative Syntax. Especially since Larson's (1988) proposal for Double Object Constructions with a second VP shell above the basic VP, the view on verbal projections has motivated approaches such as Hale and Keyser's (1993) structural design for AS. It has also led to the view that the external argument is introduced by a higher functional head *v* (Chomsky 1995 et seq.), promoting the idea that the external argument is not actually an argument of the verb (Marantz 1984, Kratzer 1996, Harley 1995, 1999, and others). Kratzer (1996) has argued that 'external' actually means that it is an argument of an event/causer element, which—when it is overt—can be a Spell-Out of *v*. In general, there seems to be agreement on the idea that the external argument is not an argument of the lexical verb per se.

The presence of an external argument is equivalent in some sense to the notion of transitivity. Minimally, it implies that there is a second argument that is required by the verb. However, in the case of unergative verbs, this seems not so obvious. Unergative verbs behave differently from inherently transitive and unaccusative causativized verbs, in that their AS is represented by including a second verbal element, but the verb as such does not have an 'internal' argument (Harley 1999).

This question has been discussed in a variety of ways (see Hale and Keyser 1993, Harley 1995, 1999, Chomsky 1995 for discussion). The dominant point of view seems to be that unergative verbs do not merge with their sole argument but rather that it is always merged with a built-in *v*, i.e., *v* is part of the lexical entry of the verb. This CAUSER/MAKE/DO (Harley 1999) element in *v* always provides an external argument position for the agent. Hale and Keyser (1993) propose an analysis where unergative verbs are always derived via incorporation of a noun into a semantically poor verb on the level of I-syntax. This however has the following consequence: If an unergative verb is always derived through incorporation of a root into a semantically empty verb, and we assume this semantically empty verb to be *v*, there is no verbal entry for unergative verbs in the lexicon. This means there is no VP projection in the syntax but a syntactically undetermined $\sqrt{\text{VP}}$ headed by the root $\sqrt{\text{V}}$ that will incorporate into *v*.¹⁶ The optional patient argument for object-permitting verbs is therefore an argument of the root rather than an argument of the verb. Consequently, there are no unergative V's in the lexicon since they are always derived in the syntax; I-syntax in Hale and Keyser 1993, syntax proper in later versions of comparable views (Harley 1995, 1999).

In essence, the presence of *v* is a necessity for the derivation of unergative verbs, whereas the presence of the internal argument is optional in the case of object-permitting verbs. In contrast, unaccusative V's require an 'internal' argument themselves and may merge subsequently with a functional 'transitivizing' or 'causativizing' *v*, which in turn merges with an 'external' argument. In this case, the external argument is optional or rather irrelevant for the lexical verb.

An additional property of *v* is that it can assign accusative case. However, in accusative languages not all *v*'s have the accusative feature, for instance in constructions with unaccusative verbs and in passive constructions. There is still some discussion as to whether there actually is a *v*P projection present when there is no accusative case assignment in those constructions (cf. Rezac 2001, Legate 1998 for a discussion). I will assume that the projection of *v*P is not necessarily conditioned by the presence of an accusative feature. For Mittimatalik—an ergative language—I propose that *v* never assigns accusative case in intransitive and ergative constructions. In other words, *v* has no inherent accusative feature in this language.

¹⁶ See Harley (1999) for a similar analysis within Distributed Morphology.

A consequence of the proposal that *v* does not assign accusative case is that the derivation of the ergative and the intransitive construction should proceed along the lines of an unaccusative derivation as proposed by Burzio (1986). This means that the argument of the lexical verb always receives subject case in subject position and that there is no equivalent accusative case assignment in the ergative sentence.

Thus, I will adopt the idea that absolutive is the case that has to be checked obligatorily in Mittimatalik following previous analyses (Levin and Massam 1985, Johns 1992, Bok-Bennema 1991 and others).

The proposal that transitivity does not equal an accusative case feature on *v* accounts for the fact that inherently transitive verbs and causativized unaccusative verbs pattern together with respect to AP morphology. If the functional *v* above these verbs could assign the equivalent of accusative case, we would have to stipulate that unaccusative verbs assign accusative case in Mittimatalik when they are causativized, regardless of whether they appear in the AP construction or the ergative construction. Mittimatalik would be the only instance where Burzio's generalization and the insight that intransitive verbs differ with respect to their AS do not hold. Instead, I propose that in Inuktitut, *v* does not inherently have an accusative feature.

5.2 Case assignment

Adopting the idea of an obligatory case that must be assigned in a language (Levin and Massam 1985, Bobaljik 1993, Austin and López 1997), I assume this to be absolutive case in Mittimatalik.

Although absolutive NPs in Inuktitut originate at the same position as accusative NPs in an accusative language like English, absolutive case has to be assigned (checked) in subject position. This accounts for the fact that absolutive NPs pattern together with respect to relativization. According to Creider (1978: 95), "... the only noun phrase (NP) position inside the relative clause which may be relativized into is the absolutive."

- (30) ang at (iksiva-juq) quviasuk-puq
 man sit-active participle(he) happy-IND(he)
 'the man who is sitting is happy' (Creider 1978: 98)¹⁷

This follows straightforwardly from the fact that regardless of the construction, one NP always has absolutive case and the finite verb always

¹⁷ Brackets indicate the relative clause. The example is from Kaniqliniq, which is typologically neighboring to the Baffin Island dialects.

agrees with this NP. Following Johns (1987, 1992), Bok-Bennema (1991), Bittner (1994), Schieberl-Manga (1996), and others, I assume that absolutive case is always assigned by T to Spec,TP. The subjecthood of the absolutive NPs or at least their patterning together with respect to control¹⁸ and relativization (Creider 1978, Smith 1984, Johns 1987, Bok-Bennema 1991, Gugeler 1994, Bittner 1994)¹⁹ seems to be justified. Consequently, I am assuming T causes agreement and movement to Spec,TP. Movement is caused by a strong EPP feature of T.

I assume further that ergative case is assigned by *v* under spec-head agreement to the specifier of *v*P. This takes into account that the finite verb agrees with the ergative NP. This also implies that the ergative case is a lexical case (Woolford 1997).

For the AP construction, I propose that *v* is occupied by the AP morpheme. We will see in the following subsections that it introduces an accusative feature to *v*. Only in this case, ergative assignment in the merge position is not possible. The ϕ -features and the strong EPP feature of T require absolutive case checking and therefore movement of the NP in Spec,*v*P to Spec,TP. In essence, the accusative feature on *v* actually alters the feature make up of *v*, preventing agreement with and ergative case assignment to the NP in its specifier. Instead, it causes accusative assignment to the lower NP. Thus, I take *-si-* to be a verbal element that occupies *v*.

The view that the AP morpheme is a verbal element contrasts with many analyses that take the AP morpheme to be a nominal element that incorporates into the verb, absorbing the case the verb usually assigns (Baker 1988, Bittner and Hale 1996a, b, Bittner 1994, Marantz 1984). The idea that *-si-* is verbal instead of nominal avoids the problems caused by an incorporation analysis for the AP in Mittimatalik. As discussed in section 2.1, the view that the AP morpheme incorporates into the verb syntactically or in the lexicon is highly problematic.

On the other hand, *-si-* behaves perfectly normally as a verbal element: In particular, verbal inflection and verbal postbases can be attached to it directly. It also precedes the aspectual marker (cf. section 2.5). Thus, we have to classify it as verbal unless we assume the aspectual marker to be a verbalizing element that attaches to a noun, a highly unusual assumption.

¹⁸ See however Wharram (1996) for a critique of this view regarding control and infinitive sentence structures.

¹⁹ Note that these include more dialects of Inuktitut than just the one discussed here.

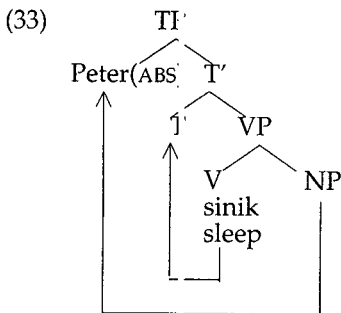
- (31) anġuti kunik-si-lir-puq/kunik-si-si-vuq arna-mik
 mar (ABS) kiss-AP-ICPT-IND.3SG woman-mik
 'the man starts to kiss a woman'

5.3 Derivation of the unaccusative/causative construction

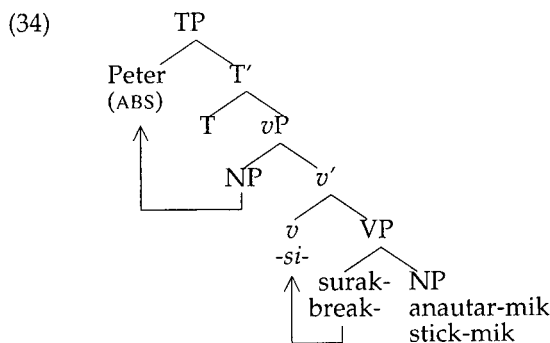
Consider an unaccusative verb like *sinik-* 'sleep', which takes one argument in Mittimatalik.

- (32) a. Peter sinik-tuq.
 Peter(ABS) sleep-PART.3SG
 'Peter is sleeping'
- b. *Peter-a-up sinik-taa
 Peter-ERG sleep-PART.3/3SG
 'Peter is sleeping him/her'

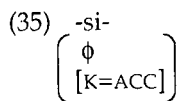
The verb merges with its sole argument and projects a VP. The verb moves further to the functional head T, where it assigns absolutive case to the sole NP, which moves to Spec,TP coming from the internal argument position of the VP. In the context of my analysis, we could equally well assume that there is a *v*P projection. It is of no relevance whether there is a *v* or not since *v* does not merge with an external argument. As mentioned, unaccusative verbs cannot have two arguments and, following Burzio's generalization, they cannot assign accusative case even in accusative languages.



Consider a semantically unaccusative (agent-less) verb such as *surak-* 'break', which can be causativized by overt or non-overt means. As demonstrated in section 3.1, it occurs in the AP with overt *-si*. The derivation of the AP construction with *-si* proceeds in the following way: The verb moves up to adjoin to *-si* and the NP merged with the the verb receives *mik*-case (accusative case). Finally, movement of the NP in Spec,*v*P to T ensures assignment of absolutive case.

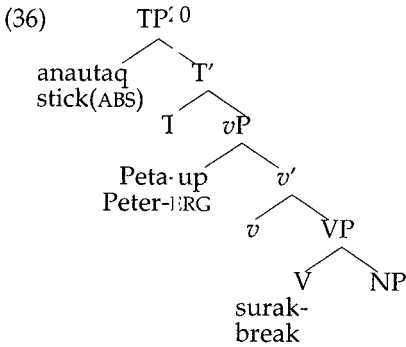


This is based on the following feature make-up of *-si-*.



This analysis adopts the view that *mik*-case is an accusative case (Bok-Bennema 1991). Following a structural view of AS (Hale and Keyser 1993), we can abandon the notion that the AP morpheme is a nominal that absorbs the verb's case and theta role (Baker 1988) or blocks its theta-assigning feature (Jensen and Johns 1989), notions that are in themselves rather problematic. However, *v* can only assign accusative case when occupied by the AP morpheme *-si-*. We will see in section 4.4 that only *-si-* has this feature.

The sentence in tree (35) rendered in the ergative construction, differs from the AP derivation in the following respects: *v* is not occupied by *-si-* and is therefore unable to assign accusative case; it therefore assigns ergative case under spec-head agreement and agrees with this NP, and finally the internal NP raises to Spec,TP to receive absolutive case.



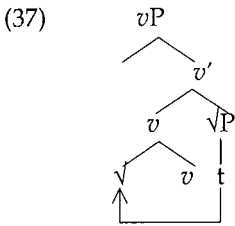
5.4 Derivation of the unergative/object permitting construction

As already mentioned, according to Hale and Keyser (1993) unergative verbs are derived via incorporation of a noun into a higher verbal head at the level of I-syntax.

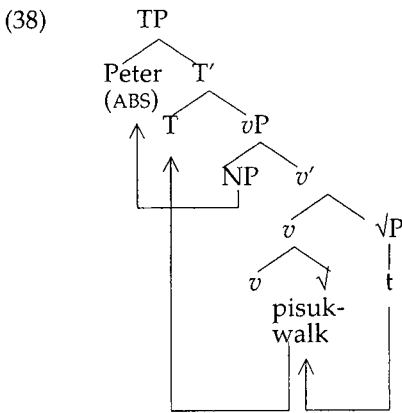
Working within a later model of Minimalism, this would mean—and this is more or less generally agreed upon—that unergative verbs always project *vP* where *v* requires the so-called external argument. I am adopting Harley's (1999) analysis that modifies Hale and Keyser's proposal for the derivation of unergative verbs.

Instead of incorporation on the level of I-syntax, I assume this to be a process of syntax proper (s-syntax in Hale and Keyser's terms). A semantically simple (almost empty) verb *v* merges with a \sqrt{P} headed by \sqrt{v} , which in turn obligatorily incorporates into *v*.

²⁰ The tree structure in (36) renders a ABS-ERG-V word order in contradiction with the basic word order ERG-ABS-V in the ergative construction. Although ABS-ERG-V is possible this might indicate the fact that the structure is probably right-headed as proposed by Schieberl-Manga (1996). Another indication for this is that verb-initial clauses are ungrammatical in any construction. However, I will leave the structure left-headed since it has no bearing on the analysis. However, it might indicate that the ergative NP might move higher (see Wharram 1996 for a proposal).



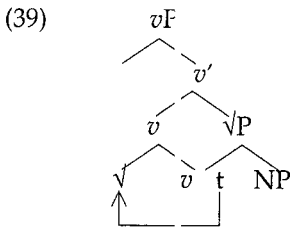
The external argument is merged with the *v*-√ complex. In an intransitive sentence, this argument moves to Spec,TP to receive absolutive case since *v*-√ in this intransitive sentence has no ergative case feature.



If these verbs have a second argument, we are faced with a predicament. The question is whether it is the incorporated √ that takes a complement prior to incorporation or whether it is the *v*-√ complex. This NP is optional since it is not required by the derived verb itself. The verb is derived through incorporation and has no lexical entry. If we keep the notion that a verb's AS is a lexical property *niri*- 'eat' has no lexically defined AS since it has no lexical entry. Thus, the sentence would be entirely grammatical without the patient argument. Therefore, I assume that the optional patient argument merges optionally with the root. Implied in this assumption is the idea that this root has no AS, so if there is a second overt NP, it merges with the root. This optionality is represented in the fact that it can be omitted. In contrast, the patient argument of an unaccusative verb can never be left out since it is required obligatorily by the lexical verb. On the other hand, the derived unergative/object-permitting verb does not require an internal argument. In this case, only *v* requires an argument. Thus, extensions of the lexically determined AS of the verb are caused by *v* through

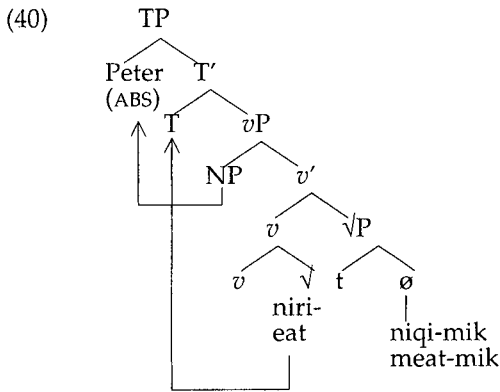
causativization for unaccusative verbs. In the case of object-permitting verbs, the extension is not an extension of the AS of the derived verb.

For the derivation of the AP, if we assume that there is a zero AP allomorph present in *v* with the same features as *-si-*, the derivation should proceed in the same manner as the derivation of AP construction with *-si-*. This would make the following predictions: The internal argument receives accusative case from *v*. However, *v* in this case is occupied by a *v-√* complex. We would have to assume that the AP morpheme would also adjoin to this complex somehow bringing the accusative case feature.²¹ An analysis that assumes that there is no AP morpheme present would make no such prediction. In fact, unless occupied by *-si-*, *v* has no accusative case feature at all.

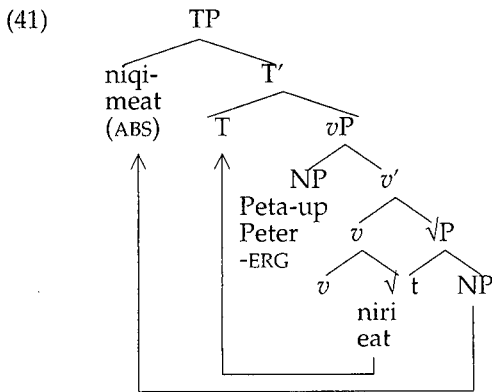


Since *v* has no accusative case feature just like in the ergative and the intransitive construction the external argument raises to Spec,TP to receive absolutive case in both AP and intransitive construction. The internal argument however receives *mik*-case inherently from the *√-v* complex. The difference to the AP construction with causativized unaccusative verbs is that *mik*-case is assigned inherently.

²¹ This would resemble an incorporation analysis similar to Baker (1988) with the AP morpheme originating in argument position.



In the ergative construction however, this inherent argument raises to Spec,TP to receive case, since T cannot assign case to the higher NP in Spec,vP due to the ergative feature on *v*. The strong EPP feature of T requires movement to its specifier position and the patient argument therefore receives absolutive case.



Little *v* has thus the same feature make up in the AP and the intransitive construction for these verbs, which accounts for the fact that in absence of the second argument the so-called AP construction and the so-called intransitive sentences look exactly the same. In both constructions, *v* has no ϕ -features and no case feature. It simply does not assign structural case. However, T behaves alike in all constructions, assigning absolutive case to its specifier position.

Intransitive constructions and AP constructions with no AP morpheme thus look and derive identically, whereas AP constructions with overt AP

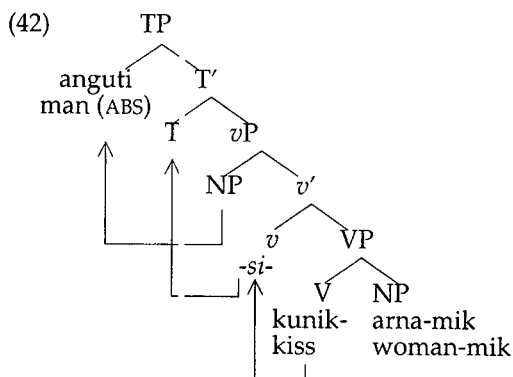
morphology derive in an identical fashion to, for example, a transitive sentence in an accusative language.

Thus, we have an explanation for why object-permitting verbs do not have an overt AP morpheme in the AP. In fact, they do not allow an AP morpheme at all

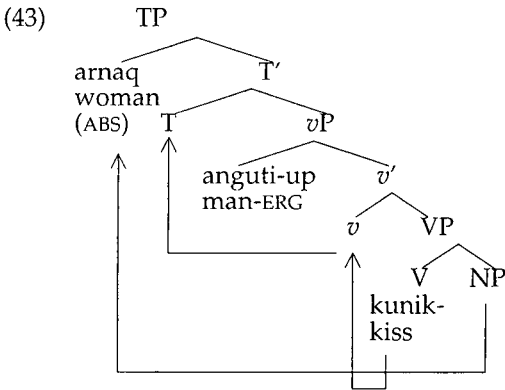
5.5 Derivation of the inherently transitive construction

Inherently transitive verbs only appear with transitive inflection or in the AP with *-si-*. I therefore analyze these constructions identically to (35) and (37) in sect on 4.3.

In the AP construction, *v* is occupied by *-si-*, which assigns accusative case (*mik*-case) to the internal argument, whereas the external argument raises to Spec,TP for absolutive case. In the case of an AP with non-overt patient argument, we could assume that there is actually an object-*pro* that receives *mik*-case, in keeping with the notion that these verbs just like causativized ur accusative verbs obligatorily have an internal argument.



In the ergative construction, the 'external' argument is merged with *v*, whereas the internal argument is required to merge with the verb. *v* assigns ergative case under spec-head agreement whereas the internal argument raises to Spec,TP to receive absolutive case.



5.6 Summary

The above analysis crucially depends on the notion that *v* differs in its feature make up depending on the kind of construction and the AS of the verb. Case assignment is predominantly determined by features. The table in (44) summarizes the features of *v*.

(44) Feature make up of *v*

Intrans. sentence	unergative verbs: requires external argument	unaccusative verbs: (probably) not present	
	object-permitting verbs:	causativized verbs:	inherently transitive verbs:
AP	requires external argument	occupied by <i>-si-</i> , accusative feature, requires external argument	occupied by <i>-si-</i> , accusative feature, requires external argument
Ergative	requires external argument, ergative case feature	requires external argument, ergative case feature	requires external argument, ergative case feature

The above table shows that *v* is identical for unergative and object-permitting verbs in the AP and the intransitive construction. On the other hand, unaccusative and causativized verbs differ in the AP and the intransitive construction, due to a *v* that only occurs when there is an additional

argument. In case of inherently transitive verbs, this is also the case, probably also due to a causativizing element in *v* that is however obligatory for these verbs in contrast to causativized unaccusative verbs. The difference between the ergative construction on the one hand and the AP and the intransitive on the other is that *v* has *-*features and an ergative case feature. According to Schieberl-Manga (1996), the reason for this lies in the fact that patients in ergative constructions are always specific, in contrast to patients of AP constructions. However, since she draws no distinction between AP with *-si-* and AP without *-si-*. Further examination of this difference is required for future research.

An analysis that assumes that there is always an AP morpheme, either zero or overt would assume identical derivations. However, this cannot explain the distribution of the overt versus the non-overt version of the AP morpheme. Therefore, an analysis that contains as a crucial feature that there is in fact no alternation can not only explain the morphological alternation—or rather, that there is in fact none—but also the fact that this so-called alternation depends crucially on the verb's AS.

6 CONCLUSION

The examination of the distribution of the AP morpheme in Mittimatalik has produced the following results. The AP morpheme has no zero allomorph and occurs only with verbs that have an external argument due to overt or non-overt causativization. The AP morpheme is a verbal element that assigns accusative case, thus causing a syntactic derivation that is different from the ergative construction and intransitive construction. With respect to parameterization, we can conclude that *v* in the predominantly ergative languages Mittimatalik lacks the ability to assign accusative case (Johns 1992, Bittner 1994, and others). In Mittimatalik, accusative case is assigned only by an AP morpheme *-si-* that occupies the head of *v*P. Further research might find crosslinguistic evidence for this view.

In contrast to many previous approaches to ergativity, the above conclusions were reached through a close examination of the distribution of the AP morpheme. Firstly, this examination showed that the AP marker is not an aspect marker as previously claimed. It also illustrated that the previously assumed alternation between zero and overt AP marker can be supported only by circumstantial evidence. The empirical evidence supports equally well the alternative view, i.e., that there is no alternation. However, the proposed analysis explains why the alternation is closely related to the AS of the verb. The alternative, namely that there is alternation can of

course explain the why the object becomes an oblique. However it cannot explain why the supposed alternation correlates to the AS of the verb. An analysis claiming that there is alternation would merely have to stipulate this correlation.

The above proposal provides an account for the fact that the distribution of the overt AP morpheme coincides with verbs that display identical AS. Moreover, the analysis is able to predict the occurrence of the AP morpheme in Mittimatalik.

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