

Functional and Phonological domains in Inuktitut

Inuktitut is a polysynthetic language belonging to the Inuit-Yup'ik-Unangam family, with multiple dialects spoken in Canada's Eastern Arctic. Every 'word' begins with a root, followed by multiple suffixes, and ends in an agreement marker (1). It is an ergative language with agreement cross-referencing subject and object (2a) in formally transitive constructions. It also has an antipassive construction (2b) where agreement cross-references the absolutive subject only. A subclass of punctual achievement verbs requires overt antipassive marking for this construction, while durative and stative verbs do not. Like in many other languages (Polinsky, 2017), the antipassive in Inuktitut has an imperfective interpretation (2b) facilitated by the antipassive marker. This imperfective interpretation is unavailable in unmarked constructions with punctual verbs (2a,3a). The default antipassive marker in the Inuit-Yup'ik-Unangam family *-si* has a homonymic inceptive *-si* in many languages (Kalaallit=West Greenlandic: Fortescue 1983:44; Baffin Island Inuktitut: Harper 1979:69; Labrador Inuttut: Beaudoin-Lietz 1982:75; Nunavik: Dorais 1977:45; Utkuhikšalingmiut: Briggs et al. 2015; Iñupiaq: Nagai 2006:107). I argue that it is implausible that the same accidental homonymy pair occurs across the family, including phonologically distinct languages such as Iñupiaq. Therefore, expanding on Siegel (1998), I propose that this homonymic pairing is not an accident and that both *-si* are allomorphs of one inceptive morpheme. This proposal explains the imperfective reading of the antipassive construction and the need for *-si* for antipassives with punctual verbs, rendering an inceptive type imperfective reading typical for punctual verbs every time *-si* is present (2a, 3b, 4) (Rothstein 2004, Borik 2002).

An empirical argument against this proposal would be that only inceptive *-si* causes preceding consonant deletion in Inuktitut (3b), while antipassive *-si* does not. If they occur in the same structural position, there is no reason why one would delete and the other would not. While morphophonological processes are often rooted in lexical properties of the affixes (Fortescue 1983), some are rooted in general dialectal properties in Inuit languages (Dorais 1986). This contrast occurs in Baffin Island Inuktitut and Labrador Inuttut (Beaudoin-Lietz) but not in other languages (Fortescue 1983).

A more severe counterargument is that these allomorphs may occur in the same verb complex (4a). This double-occurrence is rare and can only be found in direct elicitation, although semantically transparent. The antipassive non-deleting *-si* always occurs closer to the root than deleting inceptive *-si* (4b). This ordering suggests that when the non-deleting antipassive *-si* occurs, it occurs in a different structural position than deleting *-si*. Note that only antipassive non-deleting *-si* affects case and agreement while deleting *-si* does not.

A proposal accounting for morpheme order by Compton and Pittman (2010) based on the Phases framework in Minimalism (Chomsky, 2008) has demonstrated that the verb complex in Inuit languages forms one phonological phase. Expanding on this proposal, I suggest that the first non-deleting *-si* forms a functional semantic phase boundary since it affects case and agreement (Yuan 2018). The deleting *-si* has no such effect and thus forms neither a semantic nor a phonological phase boundary, thus retaining access to delete preceding consonants. Thus, we have a mismatch between the phonological spellout of the whole verb complex and a smaller semantic spell-out phase when non-deleting *-si* occurs. When both allomorphs occur (4), the phase boundary separates the structural domain for allomorphy to allow both allomorphs to occur while retaining the domain for phonological processes for deleting *-si*.

[root non-deleting *-si* _{CI}[deleting *-si* _{CI/SM}[CP

Since deleting *-si* occurs in a different grammatical 'word' from non-deleting *-si*, the allomorphs of the inceptive morpheme do not compete for the same structural position while contributing the same semantics to antipassives or other constructions with *-si*.

Fieldwork data from speakers of Baffin Island Inuktitut

- (1) *pisuk-liq-qqau-nngit-tuq*
walk-INCPT-PAST-NEG-PART.3SG
's/he didn't start walking today'
- (2a) *Piita-up naalautiq surak-taa* (2b) *Piita surak-si-juq nalauti-mik*
Peter-ERG radio.ABS break-PART.3SG>3SG Peter.ABS break-ANTIP-PART.3SG radio-MOD
'Peter broke the radio' 'Peter is breaking a radio'
- (3a) *naalautiq surak-tuq* (3b) *naalautiq sura(~~k~~-si-juq*
Radio.ABS break-PART.3sg radio.ABS break-PART.3sg
'the radio broke' 'the radio is breaking'
- (4a) *anguti kunik-si-si-puq* *arna-mik*
man.ABS kiss-ANTIP-INCPT-IND.3sg woman-MOD
'the man starts to kiss a woman'
- (4b) **anguti kunik-si-si-vuq* *arna-mik*
man.ABS kiss-ANTIP-INCPT-IND.3sg woman-MOD
'the man starts to kiss a woman'

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