Aspect and transitivity in Siglitun

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“Le mot est comme une maison dont on aurait changé à plusieurs reprises la disposition intérieure et la destination. L’analyse objective totalise et superpose ces distributions successives ; mais pour ceux qui occupent la maison, il n’y en a jamais qu’une.” (F. de Saussure [1916] 1972: 252)

1. Introduction

While working on the Siglit Inuvialuit Uqautchiita Nutaat Kipuktirutait Aglipkaqtat (Lowe 2001), I noted that many speakers insisted on a difference in meaning between intransitive and transitive declarative (indicative) forms of the same verbs. They would say of the intransitive “this means present” or “this means past” of the transitive. The declarative forms are usually considered neutral for the distinction between past and present (Lowe 1985a: 118). On further scrutiny, it appeared that not all intransitives had this present meaning. Some verbs like tikittuaq ‘he arrived’ or tagiuqsagtaq ‘he sneezed once’ for example, do not lend themselves easily to a “present” reading as their lexical aspect is punctual.

1 I would like to thank my colleagues John Ritter and Doug Hitch for providing comments on previous versions of this paper.
Clearly, this difference would have to do with grammatical aspect, opposing an imperfective to a perfective. This is the hypothesis I intend to explore in this paper.

Siglitun is one of the six dialects grouped under Western Canadian Inuit (Fortescue et al. 1994: xiii). It is mainly spoken in the communities of Sachs Harbor, Paulatuk, Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik. This dialect is phonologically conservative as it preserves many of the original consonant clusters of Proto-Eskimo. It also maintains the forms of the Inupiaq indicative and participial moods within the single declarative mood without maintaining the distinction between past and present. This fact is likely relevant in the investigation of an imperfective viewpoint for intransitive verbs in Inuit Languages.

Different parts of the grammar of Eskaleut Languages can conspire to give an imperfective reading to intransitive constructions. In section 2, I look at transitive and intransitive constructions and the distinction between ergatives and antipassives. In section 3, I explore some explanations for the necessity of a half-transitive marker in antipassive constructions. In section 4, I look at a link between aspect and the merging of the indicative and participial moods in Siglitun and its effect on the construction of participial adjectives. Finally in section 5, I will conclude by discussing some of the limitations of semantic explanations to interpret synchronic forms and how exaptation (Lass 1990, 1997) might influence aspect in daughter languages.

2. Transitives and intransitives

The link between transitivity and aspect has been the subject of many studies in the past. Hopper & Thompson (1980), for example, include aspect and punctuality as parameters for their scale of transitivity where telic and/or punctual clauses are more transitive than atelic and/or non-punctual clauses. The difficulty of any such proposal is to establish a convincing link between the aspect properties of a clause and the morphosyntactic markings or semantic interpretations exhibited by the arguments present in the same clause. The morphosyntactic markings of transitive and intransitive clauses in Eskaleut languages have been studied for many years and the issues are well known.
Eskaleut languages possess two series of endings for verbs, one cross-referencing only one argument, traditionally called intransitive, and the other cross-referencing two arguments, traditionally called transitive. Following Dixon (1994) we will represent the sole argument of the intransitive series as S and the two arguments of the transitive series as A and O. Each ending potentially carries features for person (1, 2, 3, 4\^2) and number (singular, dual, plural) for each argument. Personal endings also vary according to mood. The moods recognized for a specific language seem to vary from one language to the next or from one description to another since the morphosyntactic or semantic criteria used in descriptions are often subjective and can include more than one morpheme. A comparison of different terminologies is given in Nagai 2006. Moods are divided in two categories. Independent moods appear in independent or main clauses whereas dependent moods appear in dependent clauses. Lowe (1985a: 115) recognizes seven moods for Siglitun, four independent moods (declarative, interrogative, imperative and optative) and three dependent moods (conditional, causative and conjunctive). The declarative mood can be further subdivided into declarative kiitaimma, declarative future (preceded by the postbase suffix -niaq-) and declarative negative (preceded by the postbase suffix -suit-).

Transitive endings are notoriously underspecified for number and, to a lesser extent, for person (Lowe 1985a, Bourcier 2012, also Nagai 2006). In Siglitun, the syncretism of forms in the transitive endings overwhelmingly favors the number of O over A, maintaining the number of A almost exclusively when O is singular.

(1)a.  Utaqqiyapkin.
    utaqqi-yapkin
    wait-DECL.1SG/2SG
    ‘I waited for you.’

b.  Utaqqiyaptitkin.
    utaqqi-yaptitkin
    wait-DECL.1DU/2SG
    ‘We waited for you.’

\(^2\) The fourth person is a third person co-referent to a main clause S or A in possessives and dependent clauses.
c. *Utaqqiyaptigin.*
   ụtaqqi-yaptigin
   wait-DECL.1PL/2SG
   ‘We waited for you.’

d. *Utaqqiyapsi.*
   ụtaqqi-yapsi
   wait-DECL.1SG.DU.PL/2PL
   ‘I/we waited for you.’

The transitive endings in the declarative preserve the most distinctions for both arguments whereas dependent moods neutralize A partially or almost totally in the case of the conjunctive:

(2)a. *Utaqqigupku, malingniariptigut?*
   ụtaqqi-gupku malik-niaq-kiptigut
   wait-COND.1SG/3SG go with-FUT-DECL.2SG/1DU
   ‘If I wait for her, will you come with us?’

b. *Utaqqigupku, malingniariptik.*
   ụtaqqi-gupku malik-niaq-kiptik.
   wait-COND.2SG/3SG go with-FUT-DECL.1SG/2DU
   ‘If you wait for her, I will go with you.’

c. *Utaqqiguptigu, malingniariptigut?*
   ụtaqqi-guptigu malik-niaq-kiptigut
   wait-COND.1PL/3SG go with-FUT-DECL.2SG/1Pl
   ‘If we wait for her, will you come with us?’

d. *Utaqqigupsingu, malingniariptisi.*
   ụtaqqi-gupsingu malik-niaq-kipsi
   wait-COND.2PL/3SG go with-FUT-DECL.1SG.DU.PL/2PL
   ‘If you wait for her, I (we) will go with you.’

e. *Utaqqimablunga, sigaaqtuami.*
   ụtaqqi-ma-blunga sigaaq-tuami
   wait-IMPF-CONJ.1SG smoke a cigarette-DECL.1SG
   ‘While waiting, I smoked a cigarette.’

f. *Utaqqimablunga, sigaaqtutin.*
   ụtaqqi-ma-blunga sigaaq-tutin
   wait-IMPF-CONJ.2SG/1SG smoke a cigarette-DECL.2SG
   ‘While waiting for me, you smoked a cigarette.’

g. *Utaqqimablunga, sigaaqtuaq.*
   ụtaqqi-ma-blunga sigaaq-tuaq
   wait-IMPF-CONJ.3SG/1SG smoke a cigarette-DECL.3SG
   ‘While waiting for me, she smoked a cigarette.’
Mood morphemes also have a feature for the third person A in declarative future and declarative negative (-ki-/ka-), and a third person S or A feature in the interrogative and the optative (-pi-/pa-, -vi-/va-):

(3)

a. *Utaqqiniariga.*
   utaqqi-niaq-kiga
   wait-FUT-DECL.1SG/3SG
   ‘I will wait for her.’

b. *Utaqqiniarin.*
   utaqqi-niaq-kin
   wait-FUT-DECL.2SG/3SG
   ‘You will wait for her.’

c. *Utaqqiniagaa.*
   utaqqi-niaq-kaa
   wait-FUT-DECL.3SG/3SG
   ‘He will wait for her.’

d. *Qamruqpik?*
   qamruq-pik
   snore-INTERR.1SG
   ‘Did I snore?’

e. *Qamruqpa?*
   qamruq-pa
   snore-INTERR.3SG
   ‘Did she snore?’

f. *Uqallautivinga?*
   uqallauti-vinga
   tell someone-INTERR.2SG/1SG
   ‘Did you tell me?’

g. *Uqallautivanga?*
   uqallauti-vanga
   tell someone-INTERR.3SG/1SG
   ‘Did she tell me?’

Eskaleut languages have a case system usually described as ergative where the case marking of S in the intransitive “is mapped into” the case marking of O in the transitive (Dixon 1994: 7). In Sliglitun, S and O take the absolutive case and A takes the relative case:

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3 Lowe (1985: 36) calls this case SUBJECT. Since I want to avoid confusion with S, I will use the more traditional name ABSOLUTIVE.
(4a).  
\[ \text{Irniqa siniktuaq.} \]
\[ \text{irniq-ka sinik-tuaq} \]
\[ \text{son-POSS.1SG.ABS.SG sleep-DECL.3SG} \]
‘My son is asleep.’

b.  
\[ \text{Irniirma tuktu pilagaa.} \]
\[ \text{irniq-ma tuktu-Ø pilaq-kaa} \]
\[ \text{son-POSS.1SG.REL.SG caribou-ABS.SG butcher-DECL.3SG/3SG} \]
‘My son butchered the caribou.’

There is again some syncretism affecting cases. For example, the unpossessed dual and plural of the absolutive and the relative cases fall together:

(5a).  
\[ \text{Tuktut takuyatka.} \]
\[ \text{tuktu-t taku-yatka} \]
\[ \text{caribou-ABS.PL see-DECL.1SG/3PL} \]
‘I saw the caribou.’

b.  
\[ \text{Tuktut takuyaanni.} \]
\[ \text{tuktu-t taku-yaanni} \]
\[ \text{caribou-REL.PL see-DECL.3PL/1SG} \]
‘The caribou saw me.’

There are some restrictions to the appearance of intransitive and transitive endings on verbs. Some verb bases can only take intransitive as in (4a) above or transitive endings as in the following verb base:

(6)  
\[ \text{Iqalluk kauyakka.} \]
\[ \text{iqaluk-k kau-yakka} \]
\[ \text{fish-ABS.DU grab by the gills-DECL.1SG/3DU} \]
‘I grabbed the two fish by the gills.’

Some other verb bases and verbal postbases can take both the intransitive and the transitive endings. The meaning of the intransitive clause remains transitive, but A takes the absolutive case and O can be explicitly expressed in the modalis case. If O is not expressed, it is still implied to the point that speakers will baulk at an example leaving it out and insist: \[ \text{Sunamik pilaqtuaq?} \] or even more simply \[ \text{Suna?} \] implying \[ \text{Suna pilagaa?} \] These clauses are called antipassives.

(7a).  
\[ \text{Irniirma tuktu pilagaa.} \]
\[ \text{irniq-ma tuktu-Ø pilaq-kaa} \]
\[ \text{son-POSS.1SG.REL.SG caribou-ABS.SG butcher-DECL.3SG/3SG} \]
‘My son butchered the caribou.’
b. *Irnira tuktumik pilaqtuaq.*
   irniq-ka  tuktu-mik  pilaq-tuaq
   son-POSS.1SG.ABS.SG  caribou-MOD.SG  butcher-DECL.3SG/3SG
   ‘My son is butchering a caribou.’

c. *Irnira pilaqtuaq.*
   irniq-ka  pilaq-tuaq
   son-POSS.1SG.ABS.SG  butcher-DECL.3SG/3SG
   ‘My son is butchering something.’

d. *Sunamik pilaqtuaq?*
   suna-mik  pilaq-tuaq
   what-MOD.SG  butcher-DECL.3SG
   ‘What is he butchering?’

e. *Suna pilagaa?*
   suna  pilaq-gaa
   what-ABS.SG  butcher-DECL.3SG/3SG
   ‘What did he butcher?’

Finally, some verb bases restricted to transitive endings can take
intransitive endings if followed by a half-transitive (de-transitivising)
postbase. The mapping of the arguments remains the same, A taking the
absolutive case and O taking the modalis case:

(8)a. *Natchiq amiigara.*
   natchiq-Ø  amiiq-kara
   seal-ABS.SG  skin-DECL.1SG/3SG
   ‘I skinned the seal.’

b. *Natchirmik amiiqsiyuami.*
   natchiq-mik  amiiq-si-yuami
   seal-MOD.SG  skin-HT-DECL.1SG
   ‘I’m skinning a seal.’

3. Antipassive and aspect

It is mainly the existence of the half-transitive marker that has sparked
research on a possible link between transitivity and aspect. Bittner (1987)
and Spreng (2012), for example, have suggested that half-transitive -si- and
-liq- are in fact positional variants of aspectual morphemes -si- and -liq- (inceptive/imperfective) in Kalallisut and -si- in Inuktitut. For them,
antipassive clauses with a half-transitive marker differ from the ergative
clauses either in telicity, where the former would be atelic and the latter
telic (Bittner), or in viewpoint or grammatical aspect where antipassives
with a half-transitive marker would have imperfective viewpoint or grammatical aspect and the ergatives perfective viewpoint (Spreng). Spreng (2012: 99) also predicts that only punctual telic verbs would need a half-transitive morpheme since punctual verbs have perfective viewpoint by default and need the half-transitive to facilitate the imperfective interpretation whereas durative verbs have imperfective viewpoint by default making them directly compatible with the imperfective viewpoint of antipassive constructions. Although this hypothesis is intriguing and has potential in explaining the imperfective interpretation described by speakers of Siglitun, the arguments proposed by Spreng are very language specific and do not carry over well in Siglitun. They also raise issues for comparative and historical studies in Eskaleut languages.

3.1. Historical reconstructions of half-transitives

The first argument for the aspectual interpretation of half-transitives is based on identity of half-transitive markers -si- and -lliq- and inceptive markers -si- and -liq-. Fortescue et al. (1994) gives separate Proto-Eskimo historical reconstructions for these forms. The reconstruction for the half-transitive -si- is *ði- (ibid.: 396) whereas the reconstruction for the equivalent inceptive marker is *li- (ibid.: 405). In Siglitun, the reflexes for these proto-forms are half-transitive -si- and inceptive -si-, exactly as they are in Eastern Canadian Inuit. The reconstruction for the eastern half-transitive -liq- is *kliq-, possibly involving two proto-morphemes *kɔ- ‘have as’ + *liR- ‘provide with’ (ibid.: 406), while the proto-form for the eastern inceptive marker is *liq-. In Siglitun, the reflexes are -kli(q)- for the half-transitive and -valliq- for the inceptive, although the inceptive also appears with participial adjectives as we will see later. Fortescue et al. (1994: 432) gives the possible reconstruction *var- ‘go towards’ + *liq-.

Historically, these markers were all different morphemes as underlined by Fortescue (1996: 35), but it doesn’t mean that they are still distinct synchronically. It is possible that these markers are homophones for speakers of languages where the forms have fallen together, preserving the historical distinctions. But it is also possible that speakers only see polysemous morphemes able to lend either or both meanings depending on circumstances. The historical reconstructions do not invalidate Spreng’s
hypothesis *per se*. For Siglitun speakers, the marker *-si*- could be a single polysemous morpheme. As for the half-transitive *-kli(q)-* and inceptive *-vulliq-*, it would be strange to posit a single polysemous morpheme. It should be noted, however, that the half-transitive *-kli(q)-* is not productive anymore, either in Siglitun or in Inuktitut.

3.2. Punctuals and duratives

The second argument proposed by Spreng rests on the difference in aspectual values between punctuals and duratives. The first part of the argument implies that aspect is independent of time reference in Inuktitut. By contrasting constructions in the participial and the similar construction containing the past marker *-lauq-*, Spreng shows that punctual verbs are interpreted as perfective with or without the past marker, but are only acceptable in a construction with the past marker when the construction contains a past adverbial.

(9)a. *Tikit-tuq.*
    arrive-Ø-PART.3SG
    ‘He just arrived.’

b. *Tikit-tuq ippaksaq.*
    arrive-Ø-PART.3SG yesterday
    ‘He arrived yesterday.’

c. *Tiki-lauq-tuq ippaksaq.*
    arrive-PAST-PART.3SG yesterday
    ‘He arrived yesterday.’

Duratives have an imperfective reading in intransitive and antipassive constructions, with or without a past marker, but they also need an obligatory past marker in construction with a past adverbial.

(10)a. *Pisuk-tuq.*
    walk-PART.3SG
    ‘He is walking.’

b. *Anguti qamuti-mit uniar-tuq.*
    man-ABS.SG sled-MOD.SG uniaq-PART.3SG
    ‘The man is pulling the sled.’

c. *Pisuk(l)-lauq-tuq.*
    walk-PAST-PART.3SG
    ‘He was walking.’
   man-ABS.SG sled- MOD.SG uniaq- PAST-PART.3SG
   ‘The man was pulling the sled.’ (Spreng 2012: 98)

   John  dance-Ø- PART.3SG yesterday
   ‘John danced yesterday.’ (Spreng 2012: 95)

The second part of this argument rests on the obligatory presence of the half-transitive to lend an imperfective reading to punctual verbs in antipassive constructions whereas both punctuals and duratives are perfective in ergative constructions without extra markers, therefore establishing a relation of necessity between imperfective aspect and half-transitive markers for punctuals.

   built-PART.1SG house- MOD.SG
   ‘I am building a house.’

   Peter.ABS.SG stab- HT-PART.3SG polar bear- MOD.3SG
   ‘Peter is stabbing a polar bear.’ (Spreng 2012: 101)

(13)a. Piita-up nanuq kapi-jaa.
   Peter-REL.SG polar bear-ABS.SG stab-PART.3SG/3SG
   ‘Peter stabbed the polar bear.’

b. *Anguti-up qamuti uniaq-taa.
   man-REL.SG sled-ABS.SG pull-PART.3SG/3SG
   ‘The man pulled the sled.’ (Spreng 2012: 102)

The distinction between punctuals and duratives certainly exists in Siglitun, as I said in the introduction, but the past marker -lauq- is not used and there does not seem to be a specific marker to express the past (Lowe 1985a: 122). This means that the constructions rejected for Inuktitut would be acceptable in Siglitun since all constructions in the declarative or participial can be interpreted as past or present.

The capacity to overtly mark an event progressing in time is another distinctive characteristic of Siglitun. According to Lowe (1985a: 123), the marker -ma/-sima- can be used to indicate the progression or the duration
of an event, independent from mood or time reference. This marker is suppletive, using -ma- after vowels and -sima- after consonants.

(14)a. *Suvit unnungmi?*
   su-vit    unnungmi
   what do-INTERR.2SG yesterday
   ‘What did you do yesterday?’

b. *Unnungmi sigaaqtuami qulinik.*
   unnungmi sigaaq-tuami quli-nik
   yesterday smoke-DECL.1SG ten-MOD.PL
   ‘Yesterday, I smoked ten cigarettes.’

c. *Sumavit qangma?*
   su-ma-vit qangma
   what do-IMPF-INTERR.2SG right now
   ‘What are you doing right now?’

d. *Qangma sigaaqsimayuami.*
   qangma sigaaq-sima-yuami
   right now smoke-IMPF-DECL.1SG
   ‘I’m smoking right now.’

e. *Sumavit unnuaq aigama?*
   su-ma-vit unnuaq ai-gama
   what do-IMPF-INTERR.2SG last night come home-CAUS.3SG
   ‘What were you doing last night when I came home?’

f. *Savaksimayuami.*
   savak-sima-yuami
   work-IMPF-DECL.1SG
   ‘I was working.’

This marker is also used extensively in the conjunctive mood to express the simultaneity of two events.

(15) *Naniriaqtuqsimablunuk pisuktimun kiipkaqtuaq.*
    naniriaqtuq-sima-blunuk pisukt-i-mun kii-pkaq-tuaq
    be trapping-IMPF-CONJ.1DU fox-TRM.SG bite-let-DECL.3SG
    ‘While we were trapping, he got bitten by a fox.’

Most importantly for our discussion, it can appear in intransitive (13a), transitive (14c) and antipassive (14b) constructions with or without the half-transitive marker as shown in the examples below.
(16)a. Aitqatikka qiniqsimapkaqtillugik
aitaqan-kka qiniq-sima-pkaqtillugik
mitten-POS.1S.ABS.DU look-IMPF-CONJ.NR.1SG/3DU
\textit{tuuvaaqanma paqitak.}
tuuvaq-qan-ma paqit-tak
hunter-partner-POSS.1SG.REL.SG find-DECL.3SG
‘My spouse found my mitts while I was looking for them.’

b. Natchirmik amiiqsiyuami.
natchiq-mik amiiq-si-yuami
seal-MOD skin-HT-DECL.1SG
‘I am skinning a seal.’

c. Natchirmik amiiqsimablunga kiliqtuami.
natchiq-mik amiiq-si-ma-blunga kiliq-tuami
seal-MOD.SG skin-HT-IMPF-CONJ.1SG cut-DECL.1SG
‘I cut myself while skinning a seal.’

This seems to imply that there is no inherent distinction of aspect between transitives, intransitives and antipassives constructions in Siglitun. If the half-transitive were the marker of the imperfective, there would be no need to mark the antipassive construction again with \textit{-ma/-sima-}. How then can I explain my own observation that intransitives are usually considered “present” and transitives “past”?

4. Declarative markers and aspect

There are some restrictions to the use of the postbase \textit{-ma/-sima-}. Lowe (1985a: 123) notes that the imperfective marker cannot be used with verbs that: ‘refer basically to past event’ (ibid.: 122). This statement is generally true for constructions in the declarative, but there are some cases of dependant clauses where the same marker seems to act as a durative marker in the past.

(17)a. Aullaqtuaq.
aullaq-tuaq
leave-DECL.3SG
‘He left’

b. Aullaqsimapkaqtillugu uini nutaqqiyyuaq.
aullaq-sima-pkaqtillugu ui-ni nutaqqi-yuaq
leave-IMPF-CONJ.4SG husband-POSS.3SG.ABS.SG have-a-baby-DECL.3SG
‘She had her baby while her husband was away.’
c. Yarablunga aiyuami.
   yara-blunga    aiyuami
   be tired-CONJ.R.1SG go home-DECL.1SG
   ‘Because I was tired, I went home.’

d. Yaramagaluaqluta savaksimayuanni.
   yara-ma-galuaq-luta savak-sima-yuanni
   be tired-IMPF-although-CONJ.1PL work-IMPF-DECL.1PL
   ‘Although we are tired, we are working.’

The preceding examples show an event with a certain duration that can be interrupted during its development or ongoing at the moment of speech. In (17b), the addition of the imperfective marker gives the impression that the leaving created a situation that will remain after the second event. The verb base might be a new lexical item aullaqsima- giving the idea of ‘being away’, distinct from aullaq- ‘leave’ precisely in the sense that the former would be punctual and the latter durative. The contrast between (17c) and (17d) is also difficult to sort out. It seems to rely on some sort of temporal agreement between the two propositions and the moment of speech since the latter is static (we are tired now) while the former is no more (I was tired, but not anymore).

This same postbase is used in many Eskaleut languages, but its meaning is usually described as perfective. Its reconstruction is *(u)ma- with a variation *cima- after -t (Fortescue et al. 1994: 410). Schneider (1979: 151-152) gives the following definition of this postbase: “exprime le parfait, l’achèvement de l’action. […] -simavoq exprime un état durable, quelque peu durable, qui dure, de fait, suite à l’action (« et est maintenant ainsi »), mais aussi quelques fois que l’action dure (he is doing).” This definition emphasizes the perfective meaning of the postbase, but it adds that durative impressions might overwhelm the perfective. Harper (1979: 70) offers the following: “The suffix -sim- describes a state acquired through a completed action. It may be active [aullaqsimajuq ‘he is away’] or passive [titiraqsimajuq ‘it is written’].” Here, the emphasis is not only on the perfective value of the postbase, but also on its stative value. I can accept that aullaqsimayuaq might be a state in (17b), but it’s difficult to understand why yarablunga (17c) would be less of a state than yaramagaluaqluta (17d) or how saviksimayuanni could be stative.
The empirical evidence points towards two opposite meanings for the same postbase. If it is the case, there must be a reason why Siglitun kept -ma-/sima- as an imperfective marker whereas all other languages, to the best of my knowledge, use it only as a perfective.

4.1. Merging the indicative and the participial moods

The perfective/stative meaning of the postbase -ma-/sima- is also used in Siglitun. In Lowe (2001: 253), it receives a separate dictionary entry besides the imperfective marker. One of the reasons to justify a separate entry is that they use different declarative markers. The declarative marker -yua- follows the imperfective marker whereas the declarative marker -yu- follows the perfective marker.

Western Canadian Inuit (WCI) languages form a transitional dialectal space between North Alaskan Inuit (NAI) languages and Eastern Canadian Inuit (ECI) languages. WCI comprises three languages: Uummarmiutun, Siglitun and Kangiryuarmiutun. The first one is closer to NAI and the last one is closer to ECI languages, but their speakers have been in contact long enough to have a certain cultural unity, linguistically evident in borrowings and adaptations. The declarative in Uummarmiutun distinguishes between the indicative and the participial. Markers vary according to phonological context and grammatical person, but we can abstract, for comparison, markers -tu- in intransitives and -ki-/ka- in transitives for the indicative (Lowe 1985b: 111) and markers -tua- in intransitives and -kkaq- in transitive for the participial (Lowe 1985b: 125). The meaning of the indicative can be past or non-past, but the meaning of the participial is definitely past. Whether both can express a past event, the indicative is interpreted as an immediate past and the participial as a further definite moment in the past.

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4 Lowe actually calls them present declarative and past declarative. Since the Iñupiaq traditional terms are more common, I will adopt them here. Actual forms vary much more than the abstract forms given here.
(18)a. **Katak tuq.**
    katak-tuq
    fall off-IND.3SG
    ‘It fell off (just a moment ago).’

  b. **Katak tuaq.**
    katak-tuaq
    fall off-PART.3SG
    ‘It fell off (at that time).’

In Kangiryuarmiut, the declarative only uses the markers -tu- in intransitives and -ta- in transitives (Lowe 1985c: 107), morphologically aligning itself with the NAI indicative in morphology and keeping the unmarked meaning of past or non-past. In Siglutun, the declarative uses the marker -tua- (intransitive) and -ta- (transitive), aligning itself with the NAI participial, but giving it the unmarked meaning of the indicative. The indicative morphology -tu- is nevertheless maintained and is generally used with statives, passives and negatives.

(19)a. **Iqu yuaq.**
    iqu-yuaq
    tell a lie-DECL.3SG
    ‘He told a lie.’

  b. **Iqu tu-yuq.**
    iqu-tu-yuq
    tell a lie-always-DECL.3SG
    ‘He is a liar.’

  c. **Niri yau-yuq qimmimin.**
    niri-yau-yuq qimmiq-min
    eat-PASS-DECL.3SG dog-ABL.SG
    ‘It has been eaten by a dog.’

  d. **Niri sunnityuq.**
    niri-suk-nnit-yuq
    eat-want-NEG-DECL.3SG
    ‘He doesn’t want to eat.’

The presence of the declarative marker -tu- with the perfective marker -ma-/-sima- is significant. Not only is the perfective -ma-/-sima- making all verbs stative, it also seems to make all transitive verbs patientive as they seem unable to take an agent in an oblique case, a defining characteristic of patientive verb bases according to Nagai (2006: 121-122). It is also something Schneider (1979: 152) had noticed:
“C’est un « passif caché » qui arrive beaucoup plus souvent, semble-t-il bien, que le simple passif caché à forme de présent réfléchi […] On le trouve avec des verbes dont ce réfléchi ne peut avoir ce sens.”

(20)a. Navigaa.
navik-yaa
break-DECL.3SG/3SG
‘He broke it.’

b. Nавiktuaq.
navik-tuaq
break-DECL.3SG
‘It broke.’

c. Nависимаяк.
navik-sima-yuq
break-PF-DECL.3SG
‘It is broken.’

d. Аglagaa.
aglak-yaa
write-DECL.3SG/3SG
‘He wrote it.’

e. Aglaktuaq.
aglak-tuaq
write-DECL.3SG
‘He is writing.’

f. Аglаксимаяк.
aglak-sima-yuq
write-PF-DECL.3SG
‘It is written.’

g. Kapiyaa.
kapi-yaa
stab-DECL.3SG/3SG
‘He stabbed it.’

h. Kapiyuaq.
kapi-yuaq
stab-DECL.3SG
‘He stabbed himself.’

i. Кapisiyuaq.
kapi-si-yuaq
stab-HT-DECL.3SG
‘He stabbed someone.’

5 For a full description of “passif caché”, see Schneider (1976: 91-92).
j. *Kapimayuq.*
   
   kapi-ma-yuq
   stab-PF-DECL.3SG
   ‘It has been stabbed.’

It can be difficult here to distinguish the contribution of the postbase from the contribution of the declarative marker to the global stative/patientive meaning of the constructions, but a few other postbases also use the declarative marker -*tu-*; although it is sometimes difficult to pinpoint a clear rationale for the use of the declarative marker -*tu-* instead of -*tua-*.

For example, the postbase -*paluk-* means ‘to succeed X-ing in spite of all, in the end’.

(21)a. *Sinaaqsiyuaq.*
   sinaaqsi-yuaq
   fall asleep-DECL.3SG
   ‘He fell asleep.’

b. *Sinaaqsipaluktuq.*
   sinaaqsi-paluk-tuq
   fall asleep-in spite of all-DECL.3SG
   ‘He managed to fall asleep.’

c. *Inuuniaqtaq.*
   inuu-niaq-tuaq
   alive-try-DECL.3SG
   ‘He makes a living.’

d. *Inuuniapaluktuq.*
   inuu-niaq-paluk-tuq
   alive-try-in spite of all-DECL.3SG
   ‘He is getting by all right.’

The meaning of this construction might be qualified as state-like if we push it, but it does not seem to be the main reason why -*tu-* would appear here along this postbase. In *sinaaqsipaluktuq*, the argument S does not have as much control of the event as in *sinaaqsiyuaq*. In *sinaaqsipaluktuq*, the event happened with difficulty, against adverse conditions opposing the will of S to fall asleep, something (21d) emphasize even more. We can contrast the meaning of the postbase with the postbase -*tainnaq-* meaning ‘to have finally X-ed’.

(22) *Sinaaqsitainnaqtauq.*
    sinaaqsi-tainnaq-tuaq
    fall asleep-finally-DECL.3SG
    ‘He finally fell asleep.’
The situation here does not seem to emphasize adverse conditions. Instead, the result is presented either as a success for S or as a relief for the speaker. This postbase seems somewhat more agentive than the previous one. These two postbases can combine in -paluktainaq- meaning ‘to have finally managed to X’. The interesting fact with this postbase is that speakers insist on the positive value of the outcome. It is shown in Lowe (2001: 295-296) by the exclamation point after each sentence.

(23)  *Sinaaqsipaluktainaqtaq!*
  sinaaqsi-paluktainaq-tuaq
  fall asleep-finally-managed to-DECL.3SG
  ‘He finally managed to fall asleep!’

Here, the emphasis is clearly on the capacity of S to overcome adverse conditions by his own will to achieve the result. This might indicate that the meaning contributed by the declarative marker -tu- is effectively a lack of agentivity in both -ma-/sim- and -paluk-.

Another postbase using the declarative marker -tu- is -tlaq- meaning ‘to nevertheless find oneself X-ing’. Here, the meaning is not state-like either, but S is clearly acting against his will.

(24)a. *Uqallikitaqtuaq.*
  uqallikitaq-tuaq
  babble-DECL.3SG
  ‘He babbles.’

b. *Ugarungiltuaqiluninuiqallikitaakitaqtuq.*
  uqaq-suk-ningit-llaq-lluq-uninuiqallikitaq-akiq-tlaq-tuaq
  speak-want-NEG-very-CONJ.3SG babble-INCEP-nevertheless-DECL.3SG
  ‘Although he didn’t want to speak, he nevertheless started babbling.’

Even more interesting, the transitive endings use the forms of the indicative that are not maintained elsewhere.

  tupak-tuaq
  wake up-DECL.3SG
  ‘He woke up.’
b. Tupaarunngiluaqługu, tupaatqaiga.
tupaaq-suk-ngit-lluaq-ługu tupaaq-tłaq-kiga
wake up-want-NEG-very-CONJ.1SG/3SG wake.up-nevertheless-DECL.1SG/3SG
‘Although I didn’t want to wake him up, I woke him up all the same.’

It seems difficult to characterize all of these constructions with a single feature. What is common to statives and negatives is the notion of unchanged duration. The perfective postbase -ma/-simu- seems to share this feature, but adds a focus on the state of the subject, either as S in intransitives or as O in transitives, a feature it shares with passives as Schneider underlined by calling it “passif caché”. In -paluk- and -tłaq-, we find a certain lack of control over the event for S or A, caused by adverse conditions or a lack of will, echoing the stative, the passive and the patientive effect of the perfective postbase. Siglitun seems to have innovated by grammatically encoding a basic distinction stative/non-stative by means of the alternation -tu/-tua-, co-opting the forms of a previous opposition between past and non-past. It then seems to have correlated this stative/non-stative distinction with a lack of control of S or A over the result of the event.

4.2. Participial adjectives

Siglitun makes another important distinction with the two declarative markers. The declarative is used with word bases expressing qualities to create the equivalent of adjectives in English. According to Lowe (1985b: 241-242), Uummarmiututun can use either the indicative or the participial to express qualities. Generally, the indicative is preferred.

(26) Taamna aquppiutaq nakuuʁuq.
taamna aquppiutaq nakuu-ʁuq
that.one.right.there-ABS.SG chair-ABS.SG good-IND.3SG
‘That chair is good.’

When the participial is used, a past meaning is added to the quality.

(27) Nakuuʁuq navikkaluaqani.
nakuu-ʁuq navik-galuaqani
good-DECL.3SG break-NEG.CONJ.3SG
‘It was good before it broke.’

6 See Lowe (1985b) for a complete description of the indicative transitive.
If these quality verb bases are used as adjectives, they must be marked for case. In this situation, only the participial can be used.

(28) \textit{Miki}́\textsubscript{u}u\textsubscript{angnik hallihingnik iqa\textsubscript{q}lipit?}  
\[ \begin{array}{llllll}
\text{miki} & \text{-uak-nik} & \text{hallihink-nik} & \text{iqa-liq-pit} \\
\text{small-PART.3DU-MOD.DU} & \text{scissors-MOD.DU} & \text{look for-HT-INTERR.2SG} \\
\end{array} \]

‘Are you looking for the small scissors?’

In Siglitun, both declarative markers can be used to form participial adjectives. Generally, qualities are expressed using the declarative -\textit{tu}-.

(29) \textit{Taikingna iksivautaq nakuuyuq.}  
\[ \begin{array}{llllllll}
\text{ta-ikingna} & \text{iksi} & \text{vautaq} & \text{nakuu} & \text{yuq} \\
\text{that.one.over.there-ABS.SG} & \text{chair-ABS.SG} & \text{good-DECL.3SG} \\
\end{array} \]

‘That chair over there is good.’

If used as adjectives, both markers can appear before case markings, but the resulting meaning differences are given as a distinction between indefinite and definite qualified (Lowe 1985a: 262).

(30)a. \textit{Savingmik mikiyumi\textsubscript{ik} aittugaa.}  
\[ \begin{array}{llllll}
\text{savin\textsubscript{k}-mik} & \text{miki-yu-mik} & \text{aittu-gaa} \\
\text{knife-MOD.SG} & \text{small-DECL.3SG-MOD.SG} & \text{give-DECL.3SG/3SG} \\
\end{array} \]

‘He gave him a small knife.’

b. \textit{Savingmik mikiyuamik aittugaa.}  
\[ \begin{array}{llllll}
\text{savin\textsubscript{k}-mik} & \text{miki-yua-mik} & \text{aittu-gaa} \\
\text{knife-MOD.SG} & \text{small-DECL.3SG-MOD.SG} & \text{give-DECL.3SG/3SG} \\
\end{array} \]

‘He gave him the small knife.’

This result is very surprising since this meaning difference is usually discussed when comparing the antipassive to the transitive as seen in (7a-b) and repeated here as (31).

(31)a. \textit{Angutim tuktu takuyaa.}  
\[ \begin{array}{llll}
\text{angun-m} & \text{tuktu} & \text{taku-yaa} \\
\text{man-REL.SG} & \text{caribou-ABS.SG} & \text{see-DECL.3SG/3SG} \\
\end{array} \]

‘The man saw the caribou.’

b. \textit{Angun tuktumik takuyuaq.}  
\[ \begin{array}{llll}
\text{angun} & \text{tuktu-mik} & \text{taku-yuaq} \\
\text{man-ABS.SG} & \text{caribou-MOD.SG} & \text{see-DECL.3SG} \\
\end{array} \]

‘The man sees a caribou.’

The distinction between indefinite and definite is usually dismissed when discussing (31a) and (31b) and the differences in meaning attributed to case assignment. But adjectives are not verbs and their case is assigned by
the verb of the clause. Even if we were to view adjectives as verbal forms, both would be intransitive and would not justify different case assignment. Even more troubling, the declarative -tua- is usually found in antipassive constructions giving an indefinite meaning to O. Why would it give a definite meaning with participial adjectives?

I have shown previously that Siglitun uses the postbase -ma-/sim- as an imperfective marker compatible with a “present” interpretation in the transitive, intransitive and antipassive constructions. This fact is peculiar since this postbase has a perfective/stative meaning in other dialects. It can also have a perfective/stative meaning in Siglitun when it is used with the declarative marker -tu- of the original indicative, which seems marked for the perfective/stative when opposed to the unmarked -tua- in this dialect. We also saw that the declarative marker -tu- can mark a lesser degree of agentivity than -tua- with other postbases. Finally, we can now see how the declarative markers -tu- and -tua- can influence the meaning of participial adjectives along lines usually attributed to the antipassive and the transitive.

I would suggest that the alternation between the three declarative markers should be looked at as the expression of two different semantic features coalescing, in the declarative marker -tua-, to give speakers a strong impression of “present”. The first semantic feature, separating -tu- from -tua-, combines stative/non-stative and, to a lesser extent, agentivity. No change of state and a lack of agentivity would be expressed with -tu-. A change of state and increased degree of agentivity would be expressed with -tua-. This feature is clearer when we look at specific change of state markers. Siglitun has two change-of-state markers, -ruq- and -si-. The postbase -ruq- is denominal and it is used with weather terms and a few noun bases to express a change of state. Fortescue et al. (1994: 420) give the proto-form *ŋ(ŋ)ur- which would be analysed as two proto-morphemes *(ŋ)u- ‘be’ plus an element *r- inceptive. Siglitun preserves both postbases.

(32)a. qiqi
   Cold

b. Qiqinguyuaq.
   qiqi-ngu-yuaq
   cold-be-DECL.3SG
   ‘It is cold.’
c. *Qiqiruqtuaq.*  
   qiqi-ruq-tuaq  
   cold-become-DECL.3SG  
   ‘It has become cold.’

d. *tutuk*  
   dirt, grime

e. *Tuturuqtuaq.*  
   tutuk-ruq-tuaq  
   dirt-become-DECL.3SG  
   ‘It has become dirty, grimy.’

These can be contrasted for good measure with the following inceptive imperfective.

(33)a. *Qiqaiqtuaq.*  
   qiqi-iq-tuaq  
   cold-NEG-DECL.3SG  
   ‘It is warm (of weather).’

b. *Qigaigsimakiqtuaq.*  
   qiqi-iq-sima-akiq-tuaq  
   cold-NEG-IMPF-INCEP-DECL.3SG  
   ‘It is getting warmer (of weather).’

I have already talked about the postbase -si- in section 3.1. Following others, I called it an inceptive marker, but I am not certain this characterization is exact when we compare it to other inceptive postbases like -valliq- ‘to have started, to be starting to X’ or -akiq- ‘to have started, to be X-ing (with punctuals)’. Beginning and becoming seem to be treated differently in Siglitun. When -si- is added to quality predicates, it seems to emphasize a change of state.

(34)a. *Qatiqtuq.*  
   qatiq-tuq  
   white-DECL.3SG  
   ‘It is white.’

b. *Qatiqsiyuaq.*  
   qatiq-si-yuaq  
   white-become-DECL.3SG  
   ‘It has become white.’

All these examples show at least the compatibility of -tua- with a change of state and the incompatibility of -tu-. They also show that -tua- is
compatible with the inceptive although it is not, by itself, an inceptive as (35) shows clearly.

(35)a. *Silaluktuq.*
    silaluk-tuq
    rain-DECL.3SG
    ‘It is raining.’

b. *Silaluakiqtuaq.*
    silaluk-akiq-tuaq
    rain-INCEP-DECL.3SG
    ‘It has started to rain.’

The second semantic feature, separating *-tua-* from *-ta-*, corresponds to the distinction between intransitive/transitive. The focus here is also on a change of state, but a change of the state of O. The declarative marker *-tua-* is used with changing state events and marks an increased agentivity when compared to *-tu-. In antipassive constructions with *-tua-*, O is only partially affected and stays independent from the event to a certain extent. It is affected by the event but not defined by it. With *-ta-*, O is totally affected by the event. It is embedded in the event. The logical conclusion of the partial affectation of O is that the event with *-tua-* is simply not completed. If O were totally affected, the event would be in *-ta-* and it would be defined by the event. Case marking is also a good indication of how affected O is, as the case of O and S is the absolutive, essential to the event, whereas A takes the relative case, as accessory in this construction as it is in possessive constructions.

Of course, not all verbs will react the same way to the affectation of O. Patiентive verbs, for which O becomes S in intransitive constructions, already treat O as totally affected by the event. This is quite clear with a postbase like *-langa-* ‘inherent quality of an object, possibility of X-ing, being X-ed’. This postbase can also be used in the negative with the meaning ‘cannot be X-ed easily anymore’. With patientive verb bases, the result is the expression of an intrinsic quality of the object and the postbase appears with the declarative marker *-tu-. With agentive verb bases, the intransitive construction is patientive, but it seems momentaneous or partial and requires the use of the declarative marker *-tua-. The transitive construction remains fully agentive with *-ta-*. 
(36)a. **Navigaa.**

navik-gaa  
break-DECL.3SG/3SG  
‘He broke it.’

b. **Navilangayuq.**

navik-langa-yuq  
break-langa-DECL.3SG  
‘It is breakable.’

c. **Qikiqtaq tikitaqput.**

qikiqtaq  
tikit-gaqput  
island-ABS.SG  reach-DECL.1PL/3SG  
‘We reached the island.’

d. **Qikiqtaq tikilangagaqput.**

qikiqtaq  
tikit-langa-gaqput  
island-ABS.SG  reach-langa-DECL.1PL/3SG  
‘We can easily reach the island.’

e. **Tikilangaigtuq qikiqtaq.**

tikit-langa-iq-tuaq  
qikiqtaq  
reach-langa-NEG7-DECL.3SG  island-ABS.SG  
‘The island cannot be easily reached anymore.’

f. **Qikiqtaq tikilangaiqgaat.**

qikiqtaq  
tikit-langa-iq-gaat  
island-ABS.SG  reach-langa-NEG-DECL.3PL/3SG  
‘They cannot reach the island anymore.’

The partial affectation hypothesis could also explain the difference in meaning of the participial adjectives. The declarative marker -tu- states an intrinsic quality of a class of objects. It defines the object, whereas the declarative marker -tua- describes a contrastive quality, the object as it has become. A small knife, savik mikiyuqaq, is the small knife amongst all the knives whereas savik mikiyuq is one of the small knives. Both meaning distinctions would coalesce under the declarative marker -tua- to give a fleeting impression of an incomplete event, an imperfective, for most verbs except the punctuals. As soon as another postbase explicitly marks an aspect or a mood change, this impression disappears.

7 The negative postbase -iq- usually follows noun bases and would take the declarative marker -tu-: nuyaq ‘hair’, nuyaiqtuq ‘he has no more hair’. I cannot explain why it would take the declarative marker -tua- when combined with -langa-.
5. Historical reconstructions, redundancy and exaptation

In this paper, I have presented evidence suggesting that the “present” meaning of intransitive in the declarative is created by two sets of semantic oppositions: stative/non-stative and intransitive/transitive. Stative constructions use the declarative marker -tu- whereas non-stative constructions use -tua-. Non-stative intransitive constructions mark an increase in agentivity through the use of the declarative marker -tua- whereas the non-stative transitive constructions mark a totally affected O through the use of the declarative marker -ta-. These two sets of oppositions coalesce in the declarative marker -tua- as a non-stative agentive event to give the impression of an ongoing, incomplete event. When transitive verbs are used in antipassive constructions, the resulting meaning is a partial change occurring in O. With participial adjectives, the distinction becomes intrinsic qualities with -tu- against characteristic qualities with -tua-. Playing again on the non-stative partial change meaning, participial adjectives in -tua- get a definite object meaning whereas participial adjectives in -tu- get an indefinite generic class object meaning.

This explanation rests on the evolution of the declarative markers in Eskaleut languages and its particular incarnation in Siglitun. The use of the indicative marker -tua- to mark the non-stative agentive “imperfective” in Siglitun is a good example of what Lass (1990, 1997) calls exaptation which is the co-optation of stuff already present in a language to serve new functions. As I have shown, many postbases can create distinctions of time and aspect. As speech patterns form, specializing and distinguishing forms like the perfective and the imperfective -ma/-sima-, forming complex postbases like -paluktainaq-, constructions become redundant and some parts are bound to loose their salience. For some reason, Siglitun speakers ceased to find the time distinction between the indicative and the participial useful. The meaning of those forms was lost but some of the forms themselves survived and were re-used as a distinction between stative and non-stative. This distinction is no more essential than the distinction between past/non-past it replaced, as the disappearance of both forms and meaning in all Eastern Eskaleut languages shows clearly. But it remains salient in Siglitun. The same can be said of the ergative construction now seemingly falling off the speech patterns in Eastern languages (Spreng 2012: 190). The antipassive and the ergative constructions are redundant to one
another as they cover the same kind of events. Speakers could favor one over the other. The forms of the ergative would then be available to exaptation following a semantic evolution similar to the evolution of the declarative markers or simply disappear all together.

By nature, semantic explanations feel unsatisfactory or even arbitrary as another explanation can always be proposed using the intuitions of yet another speaker. My semantic conclusions are no exception. I have tried to provide comparative and historical evidence to support my semantic claims. Although this evidence is not totally free from speakers’ interpretations, it is my hope that it should remove some of the arbitrariness of my hypothesis.

**Abbreviations**

A=more agent-like argument of transitive verbs; ABS=absolutive case; COND=conditional mood; CONJ=conjunctive mood; DECL=declarative mood; DU=dual; FUT=future postbase; HT=half-transitive postbase; IMPF=imperfective postbase; INCEP=inceptive postbase; IND=indicative mood; INTERR=interrogative mood; MOD=modalis case; NEG=negative postbase; NR=non-reflexive; O=more patient-like argument of transitive verbs; PART=participial mood; PASS=passive postbase; PAST=past postbase; PF=perfective postbase; PL=plural; POSS=possessive postbase; R=reflexive; REL=relative case; S=single argument of intransitive verbs; SG=singular; TRM=terminalis case.

**References**


