

Morphosyntactic Correlates of Force and Grammatical Mood in Unangam Tunuu

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1. Overview

Unangam Tunuu is the sole representative of the ‘Aleut’ branch in the Eskimo-Aleut language family, and though it shares certain features with Yupik, Inuktitut, and other Eskimo languages, it is distinct and employs a host of unique strategies to convey meaning. In this presentation I investigate the grammatical category of MOOD and the markers which have been glossed as such with particular consideration given to the indicative and imparative markers. Working within the theoretical framework of Distributed Morphology and following generative proposals by Han (1998) I argue that the characteristics of each mood-marker in Unangam Tunuu can be understood through its form, that is, through the syntactic arrangement of the verbal clause. I further argue that a mood-marker in Unangam Tunuu includes an operator which minimally consist of two morphosyntactic features; one for directive force (related to structure) and another for *irrealis* [+/-irrealis]. In this presentation I provide a syntactic analysis of Unangam Tunuu verb morphology within the framework of Distributed Morphology and present an analysis which supports my postulation as to the nature of the categorical paradigm which has been termed MOOD in this language.

Due to the limited availability of an analyzed natural speech corpus in Unangam Tunuu, much of the data used for analysis herein have been acquired from legacy documents compiled by linguists and clergy members who documented this language during a period when it was more robustly spoken and from data which appears in the linguistic literature. Every effort has been made to give appropriate credit to the linguists whose work appears here; original analyses by this researcher can be identified by a lack of citation. Any errors within this manuscript are my own.

2. Analysis of morphosyntax

I have opted to take a generative approach to the analysis of UT syntax as this theory hypothesizes a relationship between a hierarchical ordering of constituents and expressive power. I specifically utilize the framework of Distributed Morphology (DM) as the model for analysis because DM adopts a syntactic approach to the analysis of morphological word-parts and has proved to be the most useful approach in elucidating the underlying structures and features of verb phrases and clausal constructions in Unangam Tunuu (UT). In DM, it is assumed that the same syntactic operations which generate phrases are ‘mirrored’ at a sub-word level thereby deriving words through a combining of root and affixal morphemes; this is known as the ‘Mirror Principal’ (Baker 1985).

Languages in the Eskimo-Aleut language family share certain characteristics such as polysynthesis, and a complex and productive derivational and inflectional morphology. The morphological process of these languages is almost exclusively suffixing (Woodbury 2004), with a base-derivational morpheme(s)-inflectional morpheme(s)=enclitic word structure (Johns 2007). The languages in this family include Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenlandic Inuit), Inuit Nunaat/Nunangat (Canadian Inuktitut), Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Alaskan Yup’ik, and Unangam Tunuu. The Yupik and Inuit languages considered the ‘Eskimo languages,’ are thought to be more closely related, where Unangam Tunuu is the sole representative of the Aleut branch. As observed by linguistic researchers of these languages, the

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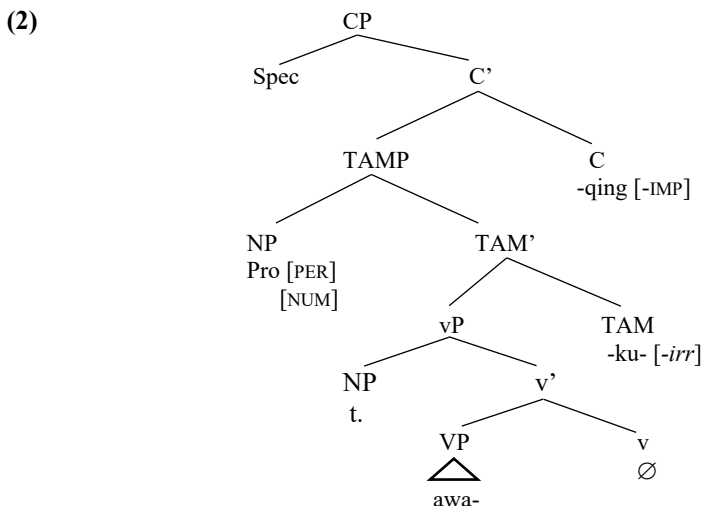
grammatical structures of Eskimo-Aleut languages utilize “an orthodox, elegant system of recursive, productive holophrastic word formations” (Woodbury 2004).

Verbs in this language family minimally consist of a stem and an affix (or often multiple affixes) denoting mood, negation, person, and number agreement. Grammatical mood-markers in Unangam Tunuu, which are the focus of this paper, are used when subordinating/coordinating clauses, denoting the aspectual ordering of events, and as I will argue, assist in performing illocutionary speech acts. While UT is not a templatic language, the recursive suffixation ordering does appear to relate fine-grained meaning-making through possible combinations of paradigmatic morphemes within a verb phrase. Morphemes traditionally considered to be mood-markers in UT are understood to express indicative (IND), optative (OPT), imperative (IMP), conjunctive (CONJ), and conditional (COND) statements. The verbal head of a matrix clause is often inflected with the indicative (IND) mood-marker *-ku-* in a declarative sentence. Below in (1) is a propositional phrase intended to convey a truth-conditional statement (Johns 2007). Truth conditional statements in UT are inflected with the indicative (IND) marker *-ku-* shown in (2) as the terminal daughter node to what is being referred to here as, TAM’ or Tense-Aspect-Modality (as a working term), in an abridged syntactic projection.

- (1) *awakuqing*
 awa-ku-qing
 work-IND-1SG
 ‘I am working’ (Berge 2010)

2.1. Scope, force, and mood-markers

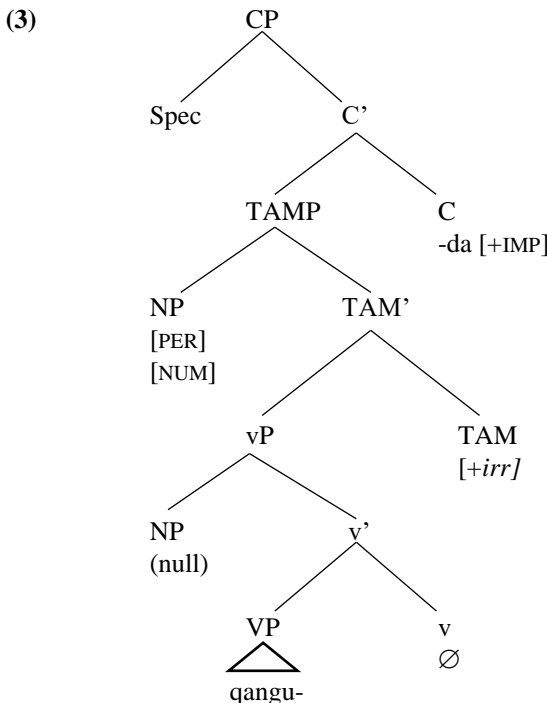
Halle (1992) argues that more deeply embedded morphemes occur first in spell-out; I postulate that a verbal stem, to which derivational and inflectional markers attach, is typically the most deeply embedded meaningful unit in a UT word-phrase (see figure (2) above). Given that the morphological strategy of Eskimo-Aleut languages employs an “orthodox” system of suffixation (Woodbury 2014)—meaning that all inflections recursively follow a nominal or verbal head—the functional projections for a UT verb are fairly straightforward with regard to structural hierarchy. Concatenation of morphological elements in a UT verb appear to be unambiguously attained through overt head movement. In Eskimo-Aleut languages, mood inflection “does the work of illocutionary particles, certain modals, subordinating conjunctions, and complementizers, and of processes like English interrogative inversion” (Woodbury 2017). Mood-markers such as the conjunctive, imperative, and optative are found at the end of verbs, and may not directly follow the verbal stem, whereas the indicative is generally followed by case for person and number. At first blush, this irregular placement of mood-markers appears to be an inconsistency in templatic patterning; however, we can find an explanation for this morphological sequencing by giving a thorough treatment of the morphosyntax.



In a propositional, or truth conditional phrase, the mood-marker in UT may directly follow the verb stem and is followed by case markers. This imbedded morphosyntactic position decreases the scope correlating with a decrease in its directive force. With regard to illocutionary force, propositional phrases (phrases that express a condition which is either true or false) are considered to be inert (relative to other types of phrases) as they require little to no action on the part of a hearer. The mood-markers in a UT declarative statement occupy a more medial morphosyntactic position as shown in Ex.1a where -ku-(IND) is in TAM, sister to little-vP. An ‘operator’ is a semantic modifier of the constituent to which it is a sister-node; an operator has scope over those constituents within its syntactic domain (Reinhart 1979, 1983).

2.2. Illocutionary force

Operators are often quantifiers, determiners, or interrogatives (the latter of which is marked by a head raising construction in English) but may also be semantic modifiers such as modals (Harley personal communication 2019). With regard to illocutionary force, a proposition is relatively inert in that it is simply an assertion and requires little or no action on the part of the interlocutor(s). The degree of force is relative to statements which have a shared illocutionary point; requesting that someone sit down, and insisting they sit have a similar point, however, insisting has more force. A forceful speech act is intended to elicit a socially appropriate response—or perlocution; for example, issuing a command to sit down (supposing a situation where the power dynamics are culturally appropriate for the speaker to issue the command) would cause the interlocutor to sit. Examples of illocutionary acts include promising, advising, requesting, inquiring, or warning, which in Eskimo-Aleut are conveyed through use of obligatory grammatical mood-marking on the verb. In Unangam Tunuu, commands are issued with the imperative (IMP) mood-marker *-da*. I suggest here that the directive force expressed by mood morphemes are vital to illocutionary acts. The mood-marker in an imperative (IMP) UT statement occupies the clausal head where it increases in both scope and directive force relative to that of a propositional marker. See (3) for an analysis of the syntactic projection.



The projections in (2) and (3) indicate features and feature bundles including [+/-irrealis] in TAM and [+/-IMP] for an imperative clause in C. Note that in (3) the command *qangu*da, ‘come in,’ has both +IMP and +irrealis, as it is necessary to distinguish potential conveyances such as a wish from a command.

Conditions where we would predict +irrealis would include hypothetical situations or those where a condition is not yet realized, and indeed, we do find that the conditional and optative markers operate in a similar manner in the clausal head. See (4) for an example of a word-phrase inflected with the optative.

- (4) *tutaqaġiiġta*
 tuta-qaġii-ġ-ta
 hear-INTRANS-3SG-OPT
 ‘may he listen’

It is important to note that though I have analyzed certain nodes as requiring +/- features, within a given context speakers may employ a variety of linguistic, pragmatic, or semiotic resources to achieve an intended perlocution; however, such topics are beyond the scope of this presentation.

3. Future research

The structure of an imperative word-phrase lacks case for person as it likely precludes the need for specificity of such information as a command is generally conveyed directly to an other(s). What is unusual about this construction is that it appears to show up in conjunction with NEG.IND forms such as *-laka(g)/laga(x)* as in *hyutlagada* ‘don’t spill it’ or *sulagada* ‘don’t take it’ (translations by Bergsland 1997:96). If we analyze the negative form as truly incorporating the indicative this would be evidence that the categorical paradigm for grammatical mood, currently suggested in Unangam Tunuu, is incomplete. At this point in my research, I reject the notion that the indicative *-ku-* is inherently embedded within the negative morpheme, *laka-*. However, it remains possible that *-ku-* has previously been categorized as indicative due to its appearance in indicative-like phrases rather than because of its canonical grammatical role. The possibility that *-ku-* is not a part of the UT mood paradigm may explain the idiosyncratic nature of its syntactic positions. Further research in this area is needed, as are speaker judgments and a corpus of natural speech to draw from for linguistic analysis.

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