

Case as an Anaphor Agreement Effect: Evidence from Inuktitut

1 Introduction

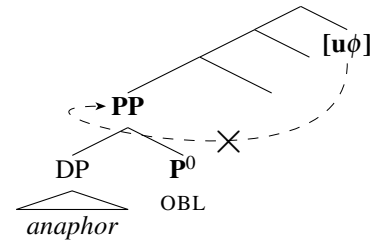
Since Rizzi (1990), it has been observed that anaphors across languages resist co-variance with ϕ -agreement, a phenomenon now known as the Anaphor Agreement Effect (AAE). In Italian, for instance, verbal ϕ -agreement cross-references nominative (NOM) arguments, which, while typically associated with subjects, may also surface on objects. While ϕ -agreement with a NOM object is normally licit, this becomes impossible if the object is an anaphor, (1a). That this ungrammaticality arises from *co-varying* ϕ -agreement with the anaphor is further evidenced by (1b), as default (3SG) ϕ -agreement may ameliorate the sentence. Subsequent cross-linguistic work has shown that languages make use of a wide range of strategies beyond the ones seen here, all conspiring to avoid co-varying ϕ -agreement with anaphors (e.g. Woolford 1999; Haegeman 2004; Tucker 2011; Patel-Grosz 2014; Sundaresan 2014, 2016; Murugesan 2019; Preminger 2019).

- (1) a. *A loro interest-**ano** solo **se-stessi**
to them interest-3PL only themselves.NOM
Intended: ‘They are interested only in themselves.’ (Rizzi 1990:(15b))
- b. ?A loro interest-**a** solo **se-stessi**
to them interest-3SG only themselves.NOM
‘They are interested only in themselves.’ (Sundaresan 2016:(3)) (Italian)

In this short paper, I identify and confirm a prediction about the typology of possible AAE strategies, based on recent theoretical advances concerning case and ϕ -agreement. Empirically, I focus on a previously unattested AAE strategy found in Inuktitut (Inuit).¹ I demonstrate that anaphors in Inuktitut are lexically-specified as projecting additional syntactic structure (a PP²), with the head of this projection realized as oblique (“modalis”) case morphology. In other words, anaphors in the language are obligatorily oblique. Because

only ERG and ABS arguments may be targeted by ϕ -agreement in Inuktitut, a ϕ -probe will *fail to Agree* (in the sense of Preminger 2011, 2014) whenever it encounters an oblique-marked anaphor. The basic case pattern and proposed structure are given below in (2)-(3).

- (2) a. Taiviti-up Kiuru nagli-gi-**janga** (3)
 David-ERG Carol.ABS love-TR-3SG.S/3SG.O
 ‘David loves Carol.’
- b. Taiviti immi-**nik** nagli-gi-**juq**
 David.ABS self-MOD love-TR-3SG.S
 ‘David loves himself.’ (Inuktitut)



That anaphors in Inuktitut are uniquely required to be contained within a PP-layer is reminiscent of the cross-linguistically common pattern of anaphoric elements being enclosed in structurally complex constituents, such as possessive DPs. As various authors have since noted, this also circumvents the AAE, as anaphors are ‘protected’ from ϕ -agreement by the intervening structure (Woolford 1999; Tucker 2011; Sundaresan 2016; Preminger 2019). Thus, the Inuktitut pattern shows that anaphors may be similarly ‘protected’ from ϕ -agreement by an impenetrable prepositional or case layer.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2, provides an overview of the AAE, as well as the notion that Agree may fail. Section 3 provides several pieces of evidence that anaphors in Inuktitut are obligatorily and immediately dominated by a PP, whose head is exponed as oblique case morphology, and that this structural layer serves as an intervener for ϕ -Agree. Section 4 illustrates how this structure interacts with ϕ -agreement, and argues against previous detransitivization-based approaches to reflexivity in the language.

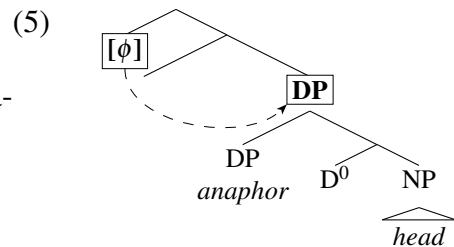
2 The inability to ϕ -Agree

Besides the use of default agreement, (1), two other cross-linguistic patterns have been analyzed as due to the AAE: the containment of anaphors within a larger syntactic constituent,

and the inability for anaphors to surface with NOM case (Rizzi 1990; Woolford 1999).³

Woolford (1999) connects the AAE to the long-observed fact that anaphors across languages are commonly enclosed in possessive and body-part DPs (cf. Faltz 1977; Schladt 2000). This is illustrated with Selayarese in (4). At first glance, Selayarese displays ϕ -agreement with anaphoric objects. However, this ϕ -morphology is *invariably* 3SG, regardless of the featural specifications of the anaphor.⁴ Woolford proposes that this is in fact agreement with the *complex DP*, not the anaphor within the DP. This additional structure serves as an intervener for ϕ -Agree, preventing the ϕ -probe from accessing the anaphor internal to this structural material.⁵

- (4) ku-jañjang-i **kaleng-ku**
 1SG.ERG-see-3.ABS self-1SG
 ‘I saw myself.’ (Woolford 1999:(50a)) (Selayarese)



That *morphological case* may also block ϕ -agreement with anaphors is also discussed by both Rizzi (1990) and Woolford (1999), and can be illustrated with Icelandic. Like Italian, ϕ -agreement in Icelandic cannot target NOM anaphoric objects. Icelandic moreover possesses an anaphor, SIG, which may be bound as a subject across a subjunctive clause boundary. As expected, SIG may not surface if the subject should bear NOM case; it is available only if the subject receives quirky (e.g. DAT) case, (6).⁶ In contrast to the complex DP structure in Selayarese, the non-NOM case morphology below is not a lexical extension of the anaphor, i.e. not inherent to it. Rather, its presence is tied to idiosyncratic case specifications imposed by certain verbs.

- (6) a. *Jón segir [að **SIG** elski Maria]
 Jon says that (REFL.NOM) love.3SG.SUBJ Maria
 Intended: ‘Jon_i says that he_i loves Maria.’ (Rizzi 1990:(15b))

- b. Hún sagði [að sér þaetti vaent um mig]
 she said that REFL.DAT was.SUBJ fond of me
 ‘She_i said that she_i was fond of me.’ (Maling 1984:(8b)) (Icelandic)

Following Preminger (2011, 2014), this ‘case-discriminating’ property of ϕ -probes interacts with the *fallibility of Agree*: the invocation of the Agree operation is obligatory, but the syntactic derivation need not crash if a suitable goal is not found (for instance, if the ϕ -probe encounters a quirky case-marked nominal). If Agree fails, the relevant ϕ -probe is simply left unvalued; in Icelandic (and Italian), this is expounded as default (3SG) agreement.

We have now seen two manifestations of the AAE. First, anaphors may be lexically-specified as enclosed within a larger DP constituent; second, they may surface in certain ϕ -inaccessible case positions. At this juncture, we might expect the existence of a third type of AAE pattern, which triangulates the two others discussed above: languages should also permit anaphors to be *lexically-specified as contained within a syntactically opaque case layer*. While this pattern has not been previously attested in the literature on the AAE, it is precisely what I will argue for based on new data from Inuktitut (Inuit).

3 Anaphors project a PP in Inuktitut

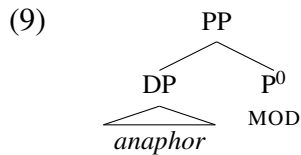
Inuktitut permits ϕ -agreement with both unmarked (ABS) and ERG-marked nominals (Bobaljik 2008). However, nominals bearing other cases (e.g. oblique cases such as *-mik* ‘modalis’ in the antipassive example in (7b)) may not be indexed by object agreement morphology.

- (7) a. **Taiviti-up** surak-**tanga** **iqalaaq**
 David-ERG break-3SG.S/3SG.O window.ABS
 ‘David broke the window.’
- b. **Taiviti** surak-si-**juq** igalaar-mik
 David.ABS break-AP-3SG.S window-MOD
 ‘David broke the window.’

In addition to ERG and ABS, Inuktitut has a number of oblique cases, one of which introduced in the previous section. An exhaustive list of oblique cases is given in (8). Most of these cases display contextual allomorphy, with the choice of morph determined by the grammatical properties of the stem to which it attaches (see AUTHOR 2015 for details). For our purposes, the anaphor *immi* surfaces with the variant on the right.

(8)	modalis (MOD)	locative (LOC)	ablative (ABL)	allative (ALLAT)	vialis (VIA)	similaris (SIM)
	-mik~-nik	-mi~-ni	-mit~-nit	-mut~-nut	-kkut~-gut	-(ti)tut

I provide several pieces of evidence that anaphors are in fact lexically-specified as immediately dominated by a PP-layer, whose head is typically realized as MOD case morphology, (9). This PP-structure is obligatorily present, even in contexts in which case morphology typically does not surface. This conclusion is partly informed by comparing the distribution of MOD case on anaphors (henceforth ‘MOD_{ANAPH}’) to that of the other oblique cases, including MOD case marking antipassive objects (henceforth ‘MOD_{AP}’).⁷



3.1 Case stacking and morpheme order

The first argument that anaphors obligatorily bear MOD_{ANAPH} case comes from the novel observation that it surfaces in contexts in which case is otherwise absent. One such context is within *picture of* complex DPs, which may be expressed in Inuktitut with the nominal *ajjinnguaq* ‘picture’ modified by another DP-internal nominal.⁸ Both nominals bear the case that is assigned to the complex DP as a whole, which I treat as the result of a case concord process (cf. Norris 2014). This is first shown in (10a-b), with a non-anaphor.

- (10) a. Kiuru-up taku-qqau-janga [DP **ajjinnguaq ivvi-nnguaq**]
 Carol-ERG see-REC.PST-3SG.S/3SG.O picture.ABS 2SG-fake.ABS
 ‘Carol saw a picture of you.’
- b. Kiuru nani-si-qqau-juq [DP **ajjinnguar-tuqar-mik**
 Carol.ABS find-AP-REC.PST-3SG.S picture-old-MOD_{AP}
 Taiviti-nnguar-**mik**]
 David-fake-MOD_{AP}
 ‘Carol found an old picture of David.’

Crucially, when the modifier of *ajjinnguaq* is an anaphor, it is obligatorily marked MOD_{ANAPH} case morphology, (11); in (11b-c) we additionally see *case stacking*, as the anaphor surfaces with both MOD_{ANAPH} and the case assigned to the entire DP. Finally, (11c) demonstrates that case stacking persists even in the absence of an intervening modifier.

- (11) a. Kiuru-up taku-qqau-janga [DP **ajjinnguaq**
 Carol-ERG see-REC.PST-3SG.S/3SG.O picture.ABS
 immi-**ni**-nnguaq]
 self-MOD_{ANAPH}-fake.ABS
 ‘Carol_i saw a picture of herself_i.’
- b. Kiuru nani-si-qqau-juq [DP **ajjinnguar-tuqar-mik**
 Carol.ABS find-AP-REC.PST-3SG.S picture-old-MOD_{AP}
 immi-**ni**-nnguar-**mik**]
 self-MOD_{ANAPH}-fake-MOD_{AP}
 ‘Carol_i found an old picture of herself_i.’
- c. sivuliuqti [DP **ajjinnguar-mut immi-**ni**-mut**]
 premier.ABS picture-ALLAT self-MOD-ALLAT
 qimirua-giaqtu-qqau-juq
 look.at-go.to-REC.PST-3SG.S
 ‘The Premier (of Nunavut) went to go look at a portrait of himself.’

Throughout (11), the morpheme order is ANAPHOR-MOD_{ANAPH}-ADJ-CASE2. Assuming that morpheme order reflects syntactic hierarchy (Baker 1985), this means that the anaphor is immediately dominated by the MOD_{ANAPH} PP, which may then be dominated by an AdjP if one is present.⁹ The MOD_{ANAPH} > ADJ order on anaphors is inviolable, as shown in (12a),

although CASE > ADJ orderings are otherwise generally impossible on non-anaphors, (12b).

- (12) a. *ajjinnuaq immi-**nnguar-mik**
 picture.ABS self-fake-MOD_{ANAPH}.ABS
 Intended: ‘picture of (one)self’ (ABS *obj.*)
- b. *ajjinnuar-mik Taiviti-**mi-nnguaq**
 picture-MOD_{AP} David-MOD_{AP}-fake
 Intended: ‘picture of David’ (*antipassive obj.*)

An apparent exception to the above comes from high adjectival suffixes such as *-tuaq* ‘only’ (*c-modifiers* in the terminology of Cardinaletti and Starke 1999), which participate in both CASE > ADJ and ADJ > CASE morpheme orders when attached to non-anaphors, with no apparent difference in meaning, (13). Nonetheless, in accordance to our previous empirical generalization, the morpheme order is rigidly CASE > ADJ on anaphors, (14):

- (13) a. Taiviti-**mi-tuaq**
 David-MOD_{AP}-only
 ‘(picture of) only David’
- b. Taiviti-tuar-**mik**
 David-only-MOD_{AP}
- (14) a. immi-**ni-tuaq**
 self-MOD_{ANAPH}-only
 ‘(picture of) only (one)self’
- b. *immi-tuar-**mik/nik**
 self-only-MOD_{ANAPH}

Altogether, we can understand these facts in light of the proposed structure in (9). Anaphors in Inuktitut are *obligatorily* and *immediately* dominated by a PP-layer, whose head is expounded as oblique case morphology (MOD_{ANAPH}).

3.2 Haplology of adjacent obliques

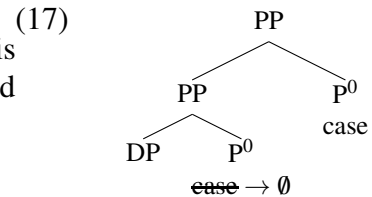
At this point, an alternative analysis is available: one under which the sequence *imminik* is monomorphemic, such that *-nik* does not encode MOD case at all. However, supporting evidence for the present analysis comes from morphological interactions with other oblique

cases in the language. First, (15) shows that the sequence *-nik* is *absent* when the anaphor is found in other oblique contexts. This is unexpected if *imminik* is monomorphemic.

- (15) a. immi-**nut** uqa-qati-qaq-tunga
 self-ALLAT speak-partner-have-1SG.S
 ‘I_i am talking to myself_i.’
- b. Ragilee-up Kiuru immi-**titut** inngi-qatta-qu-janga
 Ragilee-ERG Carol.ABS self-SIM sing-GEN-want-3SG.S/3SG.O
 ‘Ragilee_i wants Carol_j to sing like her_i.’

I propose that this pattern is due to a *postsyntactic haplology rule* operating on structurally adjacent P⁰s, such that the internal case morpheme (MOD_{ANAPH}) is not pronounced, as stated in (16). In other words, the examples in (15) are represented by the structure in (17).

- (16) **Haplology rule on adjacent P⁰s:**
 Given two PPs, if PP₁ dominates PP₂, and there is no other XP such that XP is dominated by PP₁ and XP dominates PP₂: P⁰₂ ⇔ [∅].



MOD_{ANAPH} thus surfaces whenever the environment triggering the haplology rule is not met. This is further evidenced below. Recall from (14) that the adjectival suffix *-tuaq* ‘only’ may optionally attach higher or lower than a (non-MOD_{ANAPH}) case layer. Crucially, this affects whether MOD_{ANAPH} surfaces on the anaphor. If the adjective is Merged above the outer P⁰, the rule in (16) applies and MOD_{ANAPH} does not surface, (18a); if it intervenes between the two P⁰s, then (16) does not apply and case stacking results, (18b).

- (18) a. immi-**nu**-tuaq niqi-taaq-tuq
 self-ALLAT-only food-get-3SG.S
 ‘She got food only for herself.’
- b. immi-**ni**-tuar-**mut** niqi-taaq-tuq
 self-MOD_{ANAPH}-only-ALLAT food-get-3SG.S
 ‘She got food only for herself.’

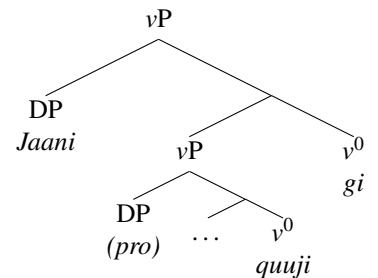
Finally, I return to the pattern discussed in Section 3.1—in particular, the case stacking

in (11c) despite the absence of an intervening adjective. I suggest that haplology does not apply in that context because the outer case morpheme on the anaphor surfaces as the result of a concord process—that is, the relevant case feature value originates in the highest head of the extended projection of the complex DP and is copied downward via a morphological rule (Pesetsky 2007, 2013; Norris 2014). As such, the outer PP-layer does not directly dominate the inner PP-layer, and so the environment triggering haplology is not met.

4 Case circumvents the AAE

I now illustrate how the PP-layer interacts with ϕ -Agree. As already seen in (2), anaphoric objects of transitive verbs trigger an ABS-MOD case frame, with ϕ -agreement indexing only the subject. That this is the result of *failed Agree* is most straightforwardly demonstrated with predicates bearing the transitivizer *-gi*. This morpheme introduces an external argument and embeds otherwise intransitive predicates such as psych-predicates (as in (2)) and certain noun-incorporating constructions, (19). I analyze this morpheme as a v^0 and the argument as its specifier; its complement in (19b) is the noun-incorporating verb phrase predicate, suggesting a structure as in (20).¹⁰

- (19) a. (*pro*) uvanga-u-quuji-jutit (20)
 (2SG.ABS) 1SG.PRON-be-seem-2SG.S
 ‘You look like me.’
- b. Jaani-up (*pro*)
 Jaani-ERG (2SG.ABS)
 uvanga-u-quuji-**gi**-jaatit
 1SG-be-seem-TR-3SG.S/2SG.O
 ‘Jaani thinks that you look like me.’
 (Lit.: Jaani has you as seeming to be me.)



Crucially, *gi*-transitivized verbs may not be antipassivized—meaning that an ABS-MOD case frame is normally not ever possible, as shown by the ill-formedness of (21a).¹¹ However, (21b) demonstrates that the otherwise impossible ABS-MOD case pattern *exceptionally*

surfaces when the object is an anaphor (see also (2b) above).

- (21) a. *Jaani **ilin-nik** uvanga-u-quuji-gi-juq
Jaani.ABS 2SG-MOD 1SG-be-seem-TR-3SG.S
Intended: ‘Jaani thinks that you look like me.’
(Lit.: Jaani has you as seeming to be me.)
- b. Jaani **immi-nik** uvanga-u-quuji-gi-juq
Jaani.ABS self-MOD_{ANAPH} 1SG-be-seem-TR-3SG.S
‘Jaani_i thinks that he_i looks like me.’
(Lit.: ‘Jaani has himself as seeming to be me.’)

The pattern in (21b) is unsurprising given our proposed structure of anaphors. The MOD case morphology on the anaphor arises from its lexically-specified PP-layer, not from antipassivization. Moreover, since PPs are syntactically opaque, a ϕ -probe encountering such a PP will inevitably fail to be valued—resulting in the absence of object ϕ -morphology. Finally, I posit that the loss of ERG case on the subject is suggestive of a *dependent* treatment, in that the presence of MOD_{ANAPH} on the anaphor removes the case competitor for dependent case assignment to the subject (Yip et al. 1987; Marantz 1991; Baker 2015).¹²

Finally, I briefly consider an alternative account, namely that the constructions above are simply detransitivized. The presence of oblique case on the object, concomitant with the loss of ERG case on the subject, has been previously taken to indicate that the verb is *syntactically intransitive* (Marantz 1984; Bok-Bennema 1991; Woolford 1999), in line with arity-reducing (i.e. detransitivizing) approaches to reflexivization (e.g. Reinhart and Siloni 2005). Under this view, the intransitive predicate by itself is sufficient to yield a reflexivized reading, with the anaphor thus functioning as an adjunct. However, I introduce here a crucial piece of evidence against such an approach: anaphors cannot be omitted in Inuktitut, a fact not expected of adjuncts. As first observed by Michael and Spreng (2014), omitting the anaphor either eliminates the reflexive reading or renders the sentence ungrammatical altogether, demonstrated in (22).¹³ Michael and Spreng additionally show that this is a point of variation across Inuit; the anaphor does seem to be optional in other varieties such as

Kalaallisut and Iñupiaq, (23). Thus, a detransitivization analysis of reflexive constructions is untenable for Inuktitut, even though it may be correct for other Inuit varieties.

- | | | | | |
|------|----|---|----|--|
| (22) | a. | ?*(<i>pro</i>) kapi-junga
1SG.ABS stab-1SG.S
Intended: ‘I stabbed myself.’ ¹⁴
(Michael and Spreng 2014:(6a)) | b. | *Kiuru nagli-gi-juq
Carol.ABS love-TR-3SG.S
Intended: ‘Carol _i loves herself _i .’ |
| (23) | a. | piniartoq toqup-poq
hunter.ABS kill-3SG.S
‘The hunter _i killed himself _i .’
(Sadock 1980:(12)) (Kalaallisut) | b. | agnaq tuqut-tuq
woman.ABS kill-3SG.S
‘The woman _i killed herself _i .’
(Nagai 2006:(198b)) (Iñupiaq) |

In sum, the PP-layer on anaphors blocks ϕ -agreement between the anaphor and a higher probe, such that the probe is left unvalued. This interaction offers further evidence for the AAE as a grammatical phenomenon, as the intervening structure is particular to anaphors.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, I have demonstrated that anaphors in Inuktitut are lexically-specified as enclosed within a PP, such that they obligatorily bear oblique case morphology. This is an Anaphor Agreement Effect: because obliques cannot be targeted by ϕ -Agree processes, a ϕ -probe that encounters an anaphor will inevitably fail to be valued. Furthermore, I have shown that, though previously unattested, this pattern is a welcome addition to the existing typology of AAE strategies, given its structural parallels with other such patterns.

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to explain *why* the AAE holds (in Inuktitut and in general), the Inuktitut pattern offers a novel explanandum for existing theories. For instance, it is incompatible with a recent account advanced by Preminger (2019), which takes anaphors to be universally composed of a ϕ -bearing core contained within a structural layer (“AnaphP”) that both contributes the nominal’s anaphoricity and prevents ϕ -Agree by a higher probe. While this seems analogous to the PP-structure argued for here, the

relevant opaque structure in Inuktitut is clearly a case layer (see §3.2) and is thus *external* to the anaphor, regardless of the anaphor’s internal composition. At the same time, the Inuktitut data present a conceptual challenge for approaches that connect the AAE to the idea that anaphors lack ϕ -features altogether and therefore cannot value a ϕ -probe (e.g. Shiraki 2004; Murugesan 2019). However, if the Inuktitut pattern involves failed Agree, and ϕ -probes may simply be left unvalued, it is not obvious why an intervening structural layer above the anaphor is needed at all.

Notes

¹The Inuit languages are a continuum of dialects spanning the North American Arctic and Greenland. This paper primarily focuses on Inuktitut, the dialect group spoken in Eastern Canada. The majority of the uncited data in this paper were elicited between 2017–2019, and represent the North Baffin varieties. The empirical generalizations presented in this paper do not necessarily extend to other Inuit varieties.

²Oblique case morphology is represented in this paper as heading a PP. However, the data in this paper are equally compatible with an approach that takes case to be KPs (Bittner and Hale 1996a).

³Apparent exceptions to the AAE include languages that use special agreement morphology to index anaphors. As discussed by Woolford (1999), however, these are not true counterexamples, because the AAE pertains specifically to the impossibility of ϕ -agreement targeting the ϕ -features of the anaphor (which, in turn, match those of its antecedent). As such, these cases will be set aside in this paper.

⁴See also Iatridou (1988), Haegeman (2004), and Preminger (2019) for similar data from Greek, West Flemish, and Georgian, respectively.

⁵Alternatively, Preminger (2019) proposes that anaphors are composed of an outer layer, termed AnaphP, which dominates an inner pronominal core, and that this structural material may be morphologically realized in the languages above. I will briefly revisit this line of analysis in the conclusion of this paper.

⁶‘SIG’ is meant to denote the hypothetical form that the anaphor would take in NOM case. As discussed by Rizzi (1990) and Woolford (1999), the ill-formedness of (6a) is not due to a morphological gap in the anaphor’s paradigm.

⁷It has been proposed that MOD_{AP} is a structural Case akin to ACC, i.e. assigned by a vP-level head via Agree (Spreng 2006, 2012, AUTHOR 2018, cf. Bok-Bennema 1991), or, alternatively, that MOD_{AP} is realized

on an object that fails to be assigned structural Case (Bittner and Hale 1996b; Levin 2015). Both analyses are compatible with the data shown here; what is important is that MOD_{AP} and MOD_{ANAPH} have different sources.

⁸As discussed by Compton (2012), such constructions may be analyzed as involving two DP nominals in apposition. Note also that the modifying nominal in this context may take a suffixal adjective *-nnguaq* ‘fake,’ which seems to encode proxy reference in the sense of Jackendoff (1992).

⁹See Compton 2012, 2017 for arguments that adjectival and adverbial suffixes in Inuit are not adjuncts, but rather head projections that are Merged along the nominal spine, per Cinque (1994, 1999).

¹⁰In (20), the incorporating verb is labelled as v^0 , following Johns (2007, 2009).

¹¹Inuktitut, like other Inuit languages, possesses several antipassive morphemes, including a null variant (see Spreng 2012:15-16 for discussion). None of these are possible on a *-gi*-transitivized verb.

¹²For independent evidence that ERG in the Inuit languages is a dependent case, or assigned configurationally, see Bittner and Hale (1996a,b), and AUTHOR 2018.

¹³Michael and Spreng’s (2014) data represent the South Baffin variety of Inuktitut, (22a). As shown in (22b), the same facts hold for the closely related North Baffin varieties discussed in this paper.

¹⁵Regarding (22a), Michael and Spreng (2014) note that this sentence, to the extent that it is well-formed, evokes a reading of, “falling on a knife.”

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