

*Functional and Phonological Spell-out Domains in Inuktitut*  
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Inuktitut is a polysynthetic language belonging to the Inuit-Yup'ik-Unangan 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 *-si* with an inceptive marker *-si* 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. Inspired by the work of Siegel (1998) and Bittner (1987), I argue that *-si* is always an inceptive morpheme, and the two occurrences are allomorphs of this inceptive morpheme. This proposal explains the imperfective reading of the antipassive (2b) and the need for *-si* for antipassives with punctual verbs. It enables an inceptive imperfective reading typical for punctual verbs every time a single *-si* is present (2b, 3b) (Rothstein 2004, Borik 2002).

An obvious counterargument against the allomorphy analysis is that these allomorphs may occur in the same verb complex (4). Non-deleting *-si* always occurs closer to the root than deleting inceptive *-si* (4). This ordering suggests that when the non-deleting antipassive *-si* occurs, it occurs in a different structural position than deleting *-si*. Note that only non-deleting *-si* affects case and agreement while deleting *-si* does not.

A proposal accounting for morpheme order (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 non-deleting *-si* creates a functional and semantic phase boundary. Its formal properties predictably affect case, agreement, and the interpretation of the *vP* since it only occurs in marked antipassives. Deleting *-si* has no such effect since it may occur in any construction and thus forms neither a semantic nor a phonological phase boundary. 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.

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.

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*

Peter-ERG radio.ABS break-PART.3SG>3SG

'Peter broke the radio'

(2b) *Piita surak-si-juq nalauti-mit*

Peter.ABS break-ANTIP-PART.3SG radio-MOD

'Peter is breaking a radio'

(3a) *naalautiq surak-tuq*

Radio.ABS break-PART.3sg

'the radio broke'

(3b) *naalautiq sura(~~k~~)-si-juq*

radio.ABS break-PART.3sg

'the radio is breaking'

(4) *anguti kunik-si-si-puq arna-mit*

man.ABS kiss-ANTIP-INCPT-IND.3sg woman-MOD

'the man starts to kiss a woman'

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