

Definiteness in Inuktitut

Peter Hallman

ABSTRACT

This paper presents evidence that definite NPs in Inuktitut are existential quantifiers with a uniqueness restriction, but no pre-suppositions. The uniqueness restriction requires a definite to refer back to a previously introduced member of the same predicate, but is vacuous in its discourse initial use, which is just the behavior that absolutive case marked objects in Inuktitut show, as opposed to instrumental case marked objects, which are purely indefinite. The absolutive/instrumental contrast has previously been shown to correlate with wide vs. narrow scope (Bittner 1987). Hence: (1) a language may show a correlation of definiteness with wide scope even though the uniqueness restriction characteristic of definiteness in no way reduces to having wide scope, and (2) the fact that instrumental objects are locked into a low scope reading speaks against the proposal that indefinites are lexically ambiguous between a referential and a quantificational reading, independent of scope (cf. Fodor and Sag 1982). Rather, the referential reading crucially requires the intervention of a scope shifting operation, which is marked overtly by case in Inuktitut.

1 Introduction

In Inuktitut, an Inuit language of Arctic Canada, common noun phrases (e.g. *dog*, *sharp knife*, etc.) show an interpretational contrast linked to morphological case. Kleinschmidt (1851), Bergsland (1955), Fortescue (1984), Bok-Bennema (1991), and Sadock (2003) claim that at least under some circumstances, NPs in the ergative or absolutive case are definite, while NPs in the instrumental case are indefinite. On the other hand, Bittner (1987, 1994) claims that while absolutive case marks wide scope with respect to certain semantic operators, there is no connection between scope and definiteness.¹ This paper investigates definiteness in Inuktitut and finds that (1) Bittner’s claim is correct that absolutive case is an indicator of wide scope (as is ergative), but that (2) above and beyond the scope distinction, ergative and absolutive NPs are interpreted as definite, but also that (3) definiteness in Inuktitut differs from English in lacking presuppositions—definite NPs in Inuktitut are existential quantifiers restricted by a uniqueness assertion. As a result, when a potential discourse antecedent has been introduced, an NP in the ergative or absolutive case obligatorily refers back to it, and so displays the behavior typical of definites. When no potential antecedent is available, an NP in the ergative or absolutive case introduces a new discourse referent, giving the impression of indefiniteness in those cases and obfuscating the special status of ergative and absolutive NPs. Instrumental NPs do not carry a uniqueness restriction and are purely indefinite.

Two theoretically significant conclusions can be drawn from these facts. First, while definiteness is not an epiphenomenon of scope in Inuktitut (the uniqueness restriction that ergative and absolutive NPs show does not fall out from having wide scope with nothing further said), it nonetheless correlates with scope. Thus, scope and definiteness hierarchies may coincide in a language without being reducible to one another. Second, the fact that in Inuktitut, NPs that are indefinite by virtue of bearing instrumental case do not show an ambiguity with a referential reading supports Ludlow and Neale's (1991) defense of Russell's (1905) quantificational analysis of indefinites against Fodor and Sag's (1982) lexical ambiguity analysis. In a language in which scope is explicitly marked in the case morphology, low scope-marked NPs are only interpreted quantificationally, suggesting that putatively referential readings of indefinites (in languages that show the ambiguity) are the result of scope-shifting operations.

The interpretational pattern described above accrues only to property-denoting NPs (consisting of a common noun and its modifiers). Case has no discernible effect on the interpretation of inherently referential NPs such as names and demonstrative pronouns. Hence, throughout this work, my use of the terms 'NP', 'subject', 'object' and 'argument' refer to bare NPs headed by common nouns, unless explicitly qualified as 'referential'. The examples presented here are from my own field work on the South Baffin dialect unless stated otherwise.

2 Case and Interpretation

Inuktitut is an ergative language, meaning that the subject of an intransitive verb behaves like the object of a transitive verb with respect to certain morphosyntactic processes, particularly case and agreement in Inuktitut. Compare (1a) and (1b).²

- (1) a. *niviaqsia-p jappa miqsuq-tanga*
girl-ERG parka_{ABS} sew-IND:3E/3A
'The girl sewed the parka.'
- b. *niviaqsiaq illaq-tuq*
girl_{ABS} laugh-IND:3A
'The girl laughed.'

The subject of a transitive verb (e.g. *niviaqsia-p* (*girl*) in (1a)) bears the ergative case suffix *-up*, while the object of a transitive verb (e.g. *jappa* (*parka*) in (1a)) and the subject of an intransitive verb (e.g. *niviaqsiaq* (*girl*) in (1b)) appear in the unmarked absolutive case. An intransitive verb bears an agreement suffix that expresses mood (IND for 'indicative' above) and the person and number of the absolutive subject. A transitive verb bears an agreement suffix that expresses mood and the person and number of both the ergative subject and absolutive object (Harper, 1974).

The notion of 'transitivity' that is expressed by the agreement morphology is a morphosyntactic one, not a semantic one. Morphosyntactic processes such as antipassivization may convert a semantically transitive verb (denoting a polyadic predicate) into a morphosyntactically intransitive one. The

subject of a semantically transitive antipassive verb bears absolutive case, like the subject of a ‘true’ intransitive, and is indexed by the intransitive agreement paradigm on the verb. The object of an antipassive verb bears the ‘instrumental’ case, marked by the suffix *-mik* or *-mit*, subject to dialectal variation, and is not indexed by the verbal agreement morpheme.³ (2) is the antipassive of (1a).

- (2) niviaqsiq jappa-mit miqsuq-tuq
 girl_{ABS} parka-INS sew-IND:3A
 ‘The girl sewed a parka.’

Antipassivization, then, is a process affecting semantically transitive verbs, that demotes the ergative grammatical function to absolutive and the absolutive to instrumental. The absolutive-instrumental case frame commonly co-occurs with the verbal antipassive suffix *si*, (AP in the glosses here), though some verbs, such as *miqsuq* (‘sew’) above, show a case frame alternation between ergative-absolutive and absolutive-instrumental without *si* (see Spreng 2006 on the factors conditioning *si*). Even in the absence of *si*, the morphosyntactic transitivity of a verb can be read off the case of its NP arguments and its agreement morphology. In summary, semantically transitive sentences in Inuktitut alternate freely between the two syntactic patterns in (3), where TR stands for the transitive agreement paradigm (the one indexing ergative and absolutive arguments) and INTR stands for the intransitive agreement paradigm (the one indexing only an absolutive argument).

- (3) a. AGENT_{ERG} PATIENT_{ABS} V-TR

b. AGENT_{ABS} PATIENT_{INS} V-(*si*)-INTR

The linguistic literature on Inuit comments on a distinction in the interpretation of an object contingent on whether it bears absolutive or instrumental case (Bergsland 1955, p. 76; Kleinschmidt 1851, p. 85; Fortescue 1984, p. 85-86; Bok-Bennema 1991, p. 267-271; Sadock 2003, p. 40-41). This body of literature claims that the interpretation of an absolutive object is analogous to an English definite description, i.e., it refers back to a previously introduced discourse referent, while the interpretation of an instrumental object is analogous to the English indefinite, i.e., it introduces a new discourse referent. Kleinschmidt cites the examples in (4) among others, Fortescue those in (5) among others, Sadock those in (6) among others. Note that in Inuktitut, a non-overt argument is interpreted as a pronoun bearing the features attributed to it by the agreement morpheme.

- (4) a. ujaraq tigu-vaa
stone_{ABS} take-IND:3E/3A
‘He took the stone.’
- b. ujarqa-mik tigu-si-vuq
stone-INS take-AP-IND:3A
‘He took a stone.’
- (5) a. tuttu taku-aa
caribou_{ABS} see-IND:3E/3A
‘He saw the caribou.’
- b. tuttu-mik taku-vuq
caribou-INS see-IND:3A
‘He saw a caribou.’

- (6) a. nukappiaqqa-p issiavi-it sana-vai
 boy-ERG chair-ABS:PL make-IND:3E/3PLA
 ‘The boy made the chairs.’
- b. nukappiaraq issiavin-nik sana-vuq
 boy_{ABS} chair-INS:PL make-IND:3A
 ‘The boy made chairs.’

Bittner (1987) claims that the relation between case and definiteness is only apparent. She points out that absolutive objects may be used ‘out of the blue’, where they introduce a new discourse referent, as in for example (7), in which *fiqiqussuar* is the first mention of any fig tree in the discourse. Sadock, too, qualifies his description of the case-definiteness association with the caveat “that these interpretations are not as strict as the English translations suggest and that under certain contextual circumstances the translation might well require the opposite definiteness from what is given here” (p. 41).

- (7) fiqiqussuar-lu aqqusirnup sanianiit-tuq taku-gamiuk
 fig tree_{ABS}-and of road at its side-IND:3A see-CAUS:3E/3A
 ‘and as he saw a fig tree standing at the side of the road ...’

Bittner demonstrates that the absolutive/instrumental alternation correlates with a scopal alternation. Absolutive objects have wider scope than instrumental objects. Bittner presents the following examples demonstrating that absolutive objects scope above modal operators (8), world creating predicates (9), negation (10) and aspectual operators (11) (among other semantic operators described in her paper), while instrumental objects scope below these operators.

- (8) a. atuartut ilaat ikiur-tariaqar-para
of students one of them_{ABS} help-must-IND:1E/3A
 $\exists x$ [x is one of the students & it is necessary that (I help x)]
- b. atuartut ilaan-nik ikiu-i-sariaqar-punga
of students one of them-INS help-AP-must-IND:1A
It is necessary that ($\exists x$ [x is one of the students & I help x])
- (9) a. Jaaku-p siumukkurmiuq ajugaa-ssa-sur-aa
Jaaku-ERG member of *Siumut*_{ABS} win-FUT-believe-IND:3E/3A
 $\exists x$ [x is a member of *Siumut* & Jacob believes that (x will win)]
- b. Jaaku siumukkurmiu-mik ajugaa-ssa-suri-nnip-puq
Jaaku_{ABS} member of *Siumut*-INS win-FUT-believe-AP-IND:3A
Jacob believes that ($\exists x$ [x is a member of *Siumut* & x will win])
- (10) a. qajaq atur-unnaar-paa
kayak_{ABS} use-no longer-IND:3E/3A
 $\exists x$ [x is a kayak & \neg (he uses x)]
- b. qaanna-mik atur-unnaar-puq
kayak-INS use-no longer-IND:3A
 $\neg\exists x$ [x is a kayak & he uses x]
- (11) a. arnaq franskiq angirlaat-tar-paa
woman_{ABS} french_{ABS} come home with-HAB-IND:3E/3A
 $\exists x$ [x is a French woman and habitually [he comes home with x]]
- b. arna-mik franski-mik angirlaas-si-sar-puq
woman-INS french-INS come home with-AP-HAB-IND:3A
Habitually [$\exists x$ [x is a French woman and he comes home with x]]

Bittner points out that the wide scope readings of the object shown in the *a*-examples, marked by absolutive case, have the effect of introducing a discourse referent. For example, in (10a), where the object scopes above negation, it is not necessary for the kayak mentioned there to have been

mentioned previously in the discourse. Similarly in the other cases. As in (7), then, absolutive case in these examples does not mark discourse anaphoricity, i.e. definiteness. It does, however, mark wide scope with respect to VP-level operators, potentially giving the impression of definiteness in the *a*-examples in (4)-(6).

In a more recent work, Bittner (1994) claims, as Sadock suggests in the quote mentioned above, that not only are indefinite readings available for ergative and absolutive arguments, definite readings are available for instrumental arguments, as in (12), an example attested in an Inuktitut novel, which mentions a bear introduced earlier in a sentence she translates as “About a fortnight after that funeral, a full grown bear came to our village”. In (12), the instrumental marked *nannumik* (*bear-INS*) refers back to that bear. *Miki* is the name of a dog.

- (12) Miki nannu-mik saassus-si-vuq
 Miki bear-INS attack-AP-IND:3A
 ‘Miki attacked the bear.’

In example (12) the definite NP *nannumik* (*bear-INS*) is in the instrumental case, while the indefinite NP *fiqiqussuar* (*fig tree*) in (7) is absolutive. These examples show the opposite correlation of case and definiteness than the examples in (4)-(6) implicate. Collectively, the data discussed above suggest that a common noun NP may be interpreted as either definite or indefinite in any morphological case.

The following section claims that upon closer inspection, ergative and

absolute arguments do indeed display a variety of definiteness that instrumental arguments do not, and that this interpretational attribute correlates with, though it does not fall out from, their VP-external syntactic locus. Before proceeding to that matter, I offer additional evidence that the absolute-instrumental morphological distinction correlates with a genuine scopal distinction, as opposed to a difference in ‘specificity’ with no structural correlate.

Bittner’s examples in (8)-(11) show differential scope correlated with morphological case for an existential quantifier. These data are also compatible with an approach to specificity along the lines of Fodor and Sag (1982), who claim that English indefinites are systematically lexically ambiguous between a quantificational reading and a referential reading. Putative wide scope readings of indefinites are referential readings with no structural adjustment vis à vis the quantificational reading. The data in (8)-(11) might then merely be taken to show that the referential/quantificational distinction is marked by morphological case in Inuktitut, so that for example, absolute *atuartut ilaat* (*one of the students*) in (8a) is understood as referring to a particular student, while its instrumental counterpart *atuartut ilaannik* in (8b) is interpreted as a quantifier. Both occur in the scope of negation, but negation does not interact with the interpretation of the non-quantificational absolute object in (8a).

The data below illustrate a scope differentiation for the quantifier *atausituag* (*only one*), with respect to negation, marked by morphological case.

The expression *only one* is not plausibly construed as individual denoting. The examples in (14) are two possible continuations to the discourse context presented in (13), which mentions five geese (the mood notated PART (for ‘participial clause’) roughly corresponds to the function of English *while*-clauses; the ‘fourth person’ agreement in a dependent clause signifies that its subject is referentially disjoint from that of the matrix clause). Native speakers report that (14a), in which *atausituaq* (*only one*) appears in the absolutive case, entails (15), that four geese were shot. Thus, (14a) asserts that there is only one goose that wasn’t shot. (14b) does not entail (15). It asserts merely that more than one goose was shot, meaning that *only one* in the instrumental case is not interpreted outside the scope of negation, as it is in the absolutive case.

- (13) pita angunasuk-tillugu tallima-nit kangur-nit
 peter_{ABS} hunt-PART:4A five-INS:PL goose-INS:PL
 taku-lauq-tuq
 see-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘While Peter was hunting, he saw five geese.’
- (14) a. atausi-tuaq quki-lau-ngit-tanga
 one-only_{ABS} shoot-PAST-NEG-IND:3E/3A
 ‘He only didn’t shoot one.’
- b. ataus-tuar-mit qukiq-si-lau-ngit-tanga
 one-only-INS shoot-AP-PAST-NEG-IND:3E/3A
 ‘He didn’t shoot only one.’
- (15) pita sitama-nit kangur-nit qukiq-si-qqau-juq
 peter_{ABS} four-INS:PL goose-INS:PL shoot-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘Peter shot four geese.’

Accordingly, (17a) is a felicitous challenge to the statement in (16), since the claim in (17a) that Peter shot two geese is compatible with the claim that he didn't shoot only one goose. However, (17b) is not a felicitous challenge to (16), since the claim in (17b) that Peter only didn't shoot one goose is not compatible with the claim that he shot two. He must have shot four. The felicity judgments in (17a) and (17b) confirm the entailment judgments in (14a) and (14b) (for (15)).

- (16) pita angunasuk-tillugu tallima-nit kangur-nit
 peter_{ABS} hunt-PART:4A five-INS:PL goose-INS:PL
 taku-lauq-tuq, kisianili atausi-tuar-mit qukiq-si-lauq-tuq
 see-PAST-IND:3A but one-only-INS shoot-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 'While Peter was hunting, he saw five geese, but he only shot one of them.'
- (17) a. atausi-tuar-mit qukiq-si-lau-ngit-tuq. marrung-nit
 one-only-INS shoot-AP-PAST-NEG-IND:3A two-INS:PL
 qukiq-si-lauq-tuq
 shoot-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 'He didn't shoot only one. He shot two.'
- b. # atausi-tuaq quki-lau-ngit-tanga. marrung-nit
 one-only_{ABS} shoot-PAST-NEG-IND:3E/3A two-INS:PL
 qukiq-si-lauq-tuq
 shoot-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 '#He only didn't shoot one, he shot two.'

The phrase *atausituaq (kanguq)* (*only one (goose)*) cannot be construed as individual-denoting in (17b), since the claim that Peter did not shoot the particular goose that *atausituaq* putatively refers to would not determine how many geese he *did* shoot. But in fact (17b) does say something about

how many geese he shot. It asserts he shot four.

Additional evidence that the absolutive-instrumental alternation differentiates scope comes from the behavior of the negative polarity item *lunniit*, meaning *even*. In negative sentences, this suffix may associate with an instrumental object but not an absolutive object. For example, (19a) is a grammatical and sensible continuation of (18), but (19b) is ungrammatical. In affirmative sentences, the suffix may not associate with even an instrumental object (20), meaning *lunniit* is a true negative polarity item (not a focus particle as is *even* in English).⁴

(18) pita tallima-nit kangur-nit
 peter_{ABS} five-INS:PL goose-INS:PL
 qukiq-si-qqau-ngit-tangit
 shoot-AP-PAST-NEG-IND:3E/3_{PLA}
 ‘Peter didn’t shoot five geese.’

(19) a. qukiq-si-qqau-ngit-tuq kangur-nit pingasu-ni-lunniit
 shoot-AP-PAST-NEG-IND:3A goose-INS:PL three-INS:PL-even
 ‘He didn’t even shoot three geese.’

b. *qukiq-qau-ngit-tangit kangu-it pingasu-lunniit
 shoot-PAST-NEG-IND:3E/3_{PLA} goose-ABS:PL three_{ABS}-even
 ‘He even didn’t shoot three geese.’⁵

(20) *qukiq-si-qqau-juq kangur-nit pingasu-ni-lunniit
 shoot-AP-PAST-IND:3A goose-INS:PL three-INS:PL-even
 ‘He shot even three geese.’

Note lastly that like *tuaq* (*only*), the term *amisuit* (*many*) shows a truth-conditionally non-trivial scope differentiation with respect to negation correlating with morphological case. (22a) is a felicitous follow-up to (21), but

(22b) is not. In Inuktitut as in English, the assertion *many P Q* is compatible with the assertion *many P not Q*, but contradicted by *not many P Q*. In Inuktitut the scope of *many* with respect to negation is indicated by case, with the absolutive object showing wide scope and the instrumental object showing narrow scope.

(21) pita-up amisu-it kangu-it qukiq-qau-jangit
 peter-ERG many-ABS:PL goose-ABS:PL shoot-PAST-IND:3E/3_{PLA}
 ‘Peter shot many geese.’

(22) a. kisianili amisu-it qukiq-qau-nngit-tangit
 but many-ABS:PL shoot-PAST-NEG-IND:3E/3_{PLA}
 ‘But many he didn’t shoot.’

b. # kisianili amisu-nit qukiq-si-qqau-nngit-tuq
 but many-INS:PL shoot-AP-PAST-NEG-IND:3A
 ‘#But he didn’t shoot many.’

2.1 The Role of Context in the Emergence of Definiteness in the Ergative and Absolutive Case

Having verified that the absolutive-instrumental case alternation marks the scope of the object with respect to negation and other operators, this section observes that the scope distinction correlates with a semantic property similar to definiteness. The discussion below concerns the behavior of ergative, absolutive and instrumental arguments in discourse contexts where a discourse antecedent is available and in contexts where none is available. Variation in the discourse context reveals interpretational properties of the

case frame alternations described in section 2.

For example, (23) presents a question to which (24) presents two possible answers, both of which are grammatical and sensible. (24b) is the antipassive of (24a). In this case, the fact that both answers are possible means that neither an ergative (24a) nor an absolutive subject (24b) is obligatorily indexed to a discourse antecedent, since none is evoked by the question *How did your leg get hurt?* In this context, both the ergative subject in (24a) and the absolutive subject in (24b) introduce a new discourse referent. The data in (23) and (24) confirm Bittner’s report in (7) that an absolutive argument may introduce a new discourse referent. So may an ergative argument. The statement in (23) is in the ‘causative’ mood (CAUS), typically used along the lines of *because*-clauses in English, here with an interrogative use.⁶

(23) qanui-lir-nir-mat nu-it
 be.faulty-PROG-PAST-CAUS:4A leg-your
 ‘How did your leg get hurt?’

(24) a. natsi-up kii-qqau-jaanga
 seal-ERG bite-PAST-IND:3E/1A
 ‘A seal bit me.’

b. natsiq uvannit kii-si-qqau-juq
 seal_{ABS} me_{INS} bite-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘A seal bit me.’

However, changes to the framing context affect the interpretations of ergative and absolutive arguments. Examples (25)-(27) represent a dialog between three individuals. The first speaker utters (25), the second contributes (26), and third continues with either (27a) or (27b). That is, (27a)

and (27b) are two possible follow ups to the information presented in (25) and (26), only one of which, it turns out, is felicitous in that context.

- (25) qimmiq qilu-qqau-juq
 dog_{ABS} bark-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘A dog was barking.’
- (26) qimmi-up kii-qqau-jaanga
 dog-ERG bite-PAST-IND:3E/1A
 ‘The dog bit me.’
- (27) a. # pitu-giaqa-liq-pakka
 tie-MUST-PROG-IND:1E/3_{PLA}
 ‘I have to go tie them up.’
- b. pitu-giaqa-liq-para
 tie-MUST-PROG-IND:1E/3A
 ‘I have to go tie it up.’

The fact that the continuation *pitugiaqaliqqakka* (*I have to go tie them up*) is infelicitous after the discourse in (25)-(26) indicates that that discourse does not invoke two different dogs, but only one. Accordingly, the continuation in (27b), which refers back to a singular dog, is felicitous. This pattern indicates that, when following an occurrence of the word *qimmiq* (*dog*), the ergative marked *qimmiup* (*dog-ERG*) must refer back to that previously mentioned dog. If it had the option of introducing a new dog, the follow up in (27a) would be grammatical, since two dogs would be discourse salient at the time (27a) is uttered. This pattern indicates that when an NP in the ergative case is uttered in the context of a prior occurrence of that same NP, it must refer back to the discourse referent introduced by that prior occurrence.

The same is true of an NP in the absolutive case. The discourse in (28)-(30) differs from that in (25)-(27) only in that the ergative marked occurrence of *qimmiup* (*dog*-ERG) in (26) is replaced with an absolutive marked occurrence in (29) (with the verb in the antipassive).

- (28) *qimmiq qilu-qqau-juq*
 dog_{ABS} bark-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘A dog was barking.’
- (29) *qimmiq uvannit kii-si-qqau-juq*
 dog_{ABS} me_{INS} bite-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘The dog bit me.’
- (30) a. # *pitu-giaqa-liq-pakka*
 tie-MUST-PROG-IND:1E/3_{PLA}
 ‘I have to go tie them up.’
- b. *pitu-giaqa-liq-para*
 tie-MUST-PROG-IND:1E/3A
 ‘I have to go tie it up.’

The judgments in (30) are as in (27), meaning that absolutive subjects behave semantically like ergative subjects in that, in the context of a prior occurrence of the same NP, they must refer back to the discourse referent introduced by that prior occurrence.

The interpretational characteristics of absolutive case illustrated above hold regardless of whether the absolutive argument occurs as subject or object. The dialog in (31)-(32) is similar to that in (28)-(29) except that while absolutive *qimmiq* (*dog*) occurs as subject in (29), it occurs as object in (32). Here too, the absolutive argument obligatorily refers back to the discourse

referent introduced by the previous occurrence of *qimmiq*, in evidence in the infelicity of the plural pronoun in (33a).

- (31) qimmiq qilu-qqau-juq
 dog_{ABS} bark-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘A dog was barking.’
- (32) qimmiq taku-qqau-jara
 dog_{ABS} see-AP-PAST-IND:1E/3A
 ‘I saw the dog.’
- (33) a. # pitu-giaqa-liq-pakka
 tie-MUST-PROG-IND:1E/3_{PLA}
 ‘I have to go tie them up.’
- b. pitu-giaqa-liq-para
 tie-MUST-PROG-IND:1E/3A
 ‘I have to go tie it up.’

An NP qualifies as a potential antecedent for a later occurrence of an ergative or absolutive NP only if it expresses a compatible description. The effect demonstrated in (27), (30) and (33) fails when the antecedent description is not identical to the NP seeking an antecedent.

- (34) qimmiq qirniq-taq qilu-qqau-juq
 dog_{ABS} black-ADJ bark-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘A black dog was barking.’
- (35) qimmiq qauluq-taq uvannit kii-si-qqau-juq
 dog_{ABS} white-ADJ me_{INS} bite-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘A white dog bit me.’
- (36) a. pitu-giaqa-liq-pakka
 tie-MUST-PROG-IND:1E/3_{PLA}
 ‘I have to go tie them up.’

- b. # pitu-giaqa-liq-para
 tie-MUST-PROG-IND:1E/3A
 ‘I have to go tie it up.’

Here the plural pronoun in (36a) is felicitous, meaning that the plural pronominal object of *tie up* is able to find an antecedent in the preceding discourse context, meaning that more than one dog has been introduced. This is the case when the absolutive subject *qimmiq qauluqtaq* (*white dog*) in (35) is a description nominally distinct from its only potential antecedent *qimmiq qirniqtaq* (*black dog*) in (34), even though they share the stem *qimmiq* (*dog*). The singular pronoun in (36b) is only plausible in a continuation for (34)-(35) if extralinguistic cues in the context of utterance resolve the ambiguity in the reference of the pronoun. The discourse in (34)-(35) does not itself suffice to resolve the reference of the pronoun in (36b); two dogs are introduced there.

These data indicate that in the context of a potential antecedent, ergative and absolutive arguments in Inuktitut display a characteristic property of definiteness, namely discourse anaphoricity. They display another property characteristically associated with definiteness as well, namely uniqueness.

- (37) taku-qqau-junga pingasu-nit qimmi-nit
 see-PAST-IND:1A three-INS:PL dog-INS:PL
 ‘I saw three dogs.’

- (38) a. # qimmiq uvannit kii-si-qqau-juq
 dog_{ABS} me_{INS} bite-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘The dog bit me.’

- b. (pingasu-it) qimmi-it uvannit kii-si-qqau-juit
 (three-ABS:PL) dog-ABS:PL me_{INS} bite-AP-PAST-IND:3_{PLA}
 ‘The (three) dogs bit me.’

In the context of the prior mention of *pingasunit qimminit* (*three dogs*), the absolutive singular *qimmiq* (*dog*) in (38a) cannot refer back either to the group of three dogs mentioned previously nor to one of the three dogs (that this latter interpretation is blocked means that absolutive arguments are clearly definite, not ‘specific’, i.e. definite partitive, in the sense of Eng 1991). That is, it is interpreted just as *the dog* is interpreted in English, as requiring a unique singular antecedent, which is not available in the context in (37). The plural (*pingasuit*) *qimmiit* (*(three) dogs*) in (38b) does find an antecedent there.

In summary, in the context of a potential discourse antecedent, established by a prior occurrence of the same NP, an absolutive or ergative NP behaves like a definite expression in English. It must refer back to the discourse antecedent and induces ungrammaticality otherwise. However, if no potential discourse antecedent presents itself, then, unlike definite expressions in English, an absolutive or ergative NP simply introduces a novel discourse referent with the description denoted by the NP. That is, absolutive and ergative NPs behave like definite descriptions in the context of a potential antecedent, and otherwise revert to a ‘default’ existential usage.

Russell (1905) claims that sentences containing definite NPs are interpreted as in (39). (39) asserts that there is an individual *x* of description

C (e.g. *is King of France*) and there is only one such individual, i.e., any individual of description C is x .

$$(39) \quad \exists x C(x) \wedge \forall y [C(y) \rightarrow y = x]$$

Subsequent developments in the semantics of definiteness have revealed that although Russell is right in claiming that definiteness is a complex concept—comprising an existence component and a uniqueness component—the two components are not assertions but presuppositions, since they project out of various kinds of opaque contexts (Strawson, 1950, 1952; Heim, 1982, 1990; Elbourne, 2005). In English, it is a precondition on the valuation of sentences containing definite descriptions that a referent for a definite description be given in the discourse context and that the discourse context contain no more than one entity with the property specified by the definite description.

In Inuktitut, an ergative or absolutive argument must refer back to a discourse antecedent *if there is one*. Otherwise, it introduces a new discourse referent. This behavior is precisely that expected under Russell’s original proposal that definiteness is an existential assertion with a uniqueness restriction. Such an expression introduces a new discourse referent with property C . If any previously mentioned individual exists with property C , the new discourse referent is identified with it, imposing discourse anaphoricity in that case. If no previously mentioned individual exists with property C , the uniqueness restriction is satisfied by the new discourse referent itself,

without establishing any relation to the previous discourse.

Consider the Russellian denotation in (40) for ergative- or absolutive-marked *qimmiq* (*dog*), here characterized as a generalized quantifier based on Russell’s analysis. If no dog has been previously mentioned, *qimmiq* introduces a dog x to the discourse, and requires that it be the only dog. This is the default existential interpretation of ergative and absolutive arguments that licenses the sentences in (24) in the context presented in (23).

$$(40) \quad \lambda C \exists x \text{dog}(x) \wedge C(x) \wedge \forall y [\text{dog}(y) \rightarrow y = x]$$

If the discourse context contains a previously mentioned dog, then the use of *qimmiq* defined in (40) obligatorily refers back to it by virtue of the assertion that every previously mentioned dog is identical to the newly introduced dog. Hence, the use of *qimmiq* in (29) fails to introduce a dog distinct from the one previously mentioned in (28). Consequently, the plural pronoun in (30a) does not find a plural antecedent in the discourse context, and is infelicitous.

The uniqueness assertion in (40) not only links the dog introduced by *qimmiq* to any previously mentioned dog, it enforces the uniqueness of the previously mentioned dog, since if there is more than one previously mentioned dog in the discourse, (40) requires that they all be identical with the dog introduced by the instance of *qimmiq* at hand. If the discourse context already contains a plurality of dogs, the assertion that they are identical to the newly introduced dog is contrary to fact. This is what generates the

infelicity of (38a) in the context presented in (37).

The data described in this section indicate that bare ergative and absolutive arguments indeed inherit, by virtue of their grammatical function, a semantic property akin to definiteness in English. Definiteness in Inuktitut is a weaker property than in English, in that the two presuppositions that comprise definiteness in English are assertions in Inuktitut, giving rise to a default existential use of definite expressions that English does not exhibit. The uniqueness restriction accompanies ergative and absolutive NPs, and not instrumental NPs, as described in more detail below, meaning that semantic properties of NP interpretation are indeed contingent on the NP's case, as Kleinschmidt (1851) and others claim. However, the property in question is not discourse anaphoricity *per se*, but a uniqueness restriction that is vacuous when no description-identical antecedent is accessible, which agrees with Bittner's (1987) observations.

In addition to property-denoting NPs such as *qimmiq* (*dog*), semantically referential NPs also occur in the ergative and absolutive cases, such as names (41a), demonstrative pronouns (41b) and possessive constructions with referential possessors (41c). Hence, the quantificational denotation shown in (39) does not appear to characterize all ergative and absolutive NPs, more on which in section 3.

- (41) a. taivit tuku-mit taku-qqau-juq
david_{ABS} caribou-INS see-PAST-IND:3A
'David saw a caribou.'

- b. uvanga tuktu-mit taku-qqau-junga
I_{ABS} caribou-INS see-PAST-IND:1A
‘I saw a caribou.’
- c. ataata-ga tuktu-mit taku-qqau-juq
father-my caribou-INS see-PAST-IND:3A
‘My father saw a caribou.’

The following section compares the interpretation of ergative and absolutive NPs discussed above with that of instrumental objects.

2.2 On Instrumental Case

An NP in the instrumental case may introduce a new discourse referent, as (42) and (43) demonstrate. In contrast to ergative and absolutive NPs, instrumental objects are not obligatorily anaphoric in the context of a potential antecedent.

- (42) a. qimmiq qilu-qqau-juq
dog_{ABS} bark-PAST-IND:3A
‘A dog was barking.’
 - b. qimmir-mit taku-qqau-junga
dog-INS see-AP-PAST-IND:1A
‘I saw a dog.’
 - c. pitu-giaqa-liq-pakka
tie-MUST-PROG-IND:1E/3_{PLA}
‘I have to go tie them up.’
- (43) a. pita natsir-mit taku-qqau-juq ammalu miali
peter_{ABS} seal-INS see-PAST-IND:3A and mary_{ABS}
natsir-mit taku-qqau-mi-juq
seal-INS see-PAST-also-IND:3A

‘Peter saw a seal and Mary saw a seal, too’

- b. natsi-it qimat-si-qqau-juit taku-tuar-matta
seal-ABS:PL flee-AP-PAST-IND:3_{PLA} see-just-CAUS:4_{PLA}
pita-mit ammalu miali-mit
peter-INS and mary-INS
‘The seals fled as soon as they saw Peter and Mary.’

The continuation with the plural pronoun in (42c) is felicitous in the context presented in (42), meaning that the discourse in (42) may introduce two distinct dogs, meaning that the instrumental object *qimmirmit* (*dog*-INS) in (42b) may introduce a dog distinct from that which *qimmiq* (*dog*) introduces in (42a). Similarly, each singular use of *natsirmit* (*seal*-INS) in (43a) introduces a new seal discourse referent. The pair of seals so introduced provides a referent for the plural term *natsiit* (*seal*-ABS:PL) in (43b) (compare with (31)-(33))

Examples such as Bittner’s (12) discussed in section 2, in which the instrumental use of *nannumik* (*bear*-INS) refers to a bear that has been previously mentioned, suggest at first glance that the instrumental object receives a definite interpretation there. However, the interpretation of (12) is compatible with the standard semantics for indefinites, since the disjointness of a new discourse referent with the previous context is not semantically inevitable. For example, if the disjointness of the discourse referent introduced by the second instance of *a girl* in (44a) were an entailment of the indefiniteness of *a girl*, the follow up in (44b) would be contradictory.

- (44) a. Stephan danced with a girl, and Derrick danced with a girl, too.

b. It turned out they danced with the same girl.

This fact leads Grice (1975) to claim that the disjointness of reference of the discourse referent introduced by an indefinite with any previously established discourse referent is a defeasible ‘conventional implicature’, derived from the listener’s rationalization that, in (44) for example, if the speaker intended to refer to the same girl twice, he or she would have used the unambiguous definite article or the pronoun *her* in the second instance. By Grice’s reasoning, what therefore distinguishes definite from indefinite expressions is that an indefinite may introduce a new discourse referent, while a definite *must not* introduce a new referent (in English). This pattern accords with dynamic semantic models of reference, which define discourse structures as true when there is a satisfying assignment of variables to individuals, which may be many-to-one (Kamp, 1981; Heim, 1982; Groenendijk and Stokhof, 1991; Chierchia, 1995).

Since the disjointness of the referent the indefinite introduces from the discourse context is defeasible, the use of an NP to refer to a previous discourse referent does not identify it as definite. What identifies an NP as definite is that the referent it introduces must not be disjoint from the set of pre-established referents. There are no contexts in Inuktitut in which a common noun in the instrumental case is obligatorily co-referential with an antecedent.

Further, the proposal that a definite interpretation is available to instrumental objects conflicts with the facts reported in (8)-(11) and (13)-(22),

which show that an instrumental object obligatorily falls in the scope of an operator. A definite reading for the instrumental object would place it outside the semantic scope of the operator, where it would be expected to license a subsequent pronoun (Karttunen, 1968; Montague, 1969). But no *de re* reading is available to an instrumental object in the context of a semantic operator, as (45) demonstrates (for negation). The subject pronoun in (45b) finds no antecedent, in spite of the previous occurrence of the instrumental NP *natsirmit* (*seal-INS*). As expected, the absolutive object in (46a) outscopes negation and licenses the subsequent pronoun (46b).

- (45) a. pita qukiq-si-qqau-ngit-tuq natsir-mit
 peter_{ABS} shoot-AP-PAST-NEG-IND:3A seal-INS
 ‘Peter didn’t shoot a seal.’
- b. # qimat-si-qqau-juq pita-mit qukiuti-nga-nit
 flee-AP-PAST-IND:3A peter-ABL gun-his-INS
 saku-li-gasua-liq-tillugu
 cartridge-make-try-PROG-PART:4A
 ‘It fled from Peter while he was trying to put a cartridge in his gun.’
- (46) a. pita-up qukiq-qau-ngit-tanga natsiq
 peter-ERG shoot-PAST-NEG-IND:3E/3A seal_{ABS}
 ‘Peter didn’t shoot a seal.’
- b. qimat-si-qqau-juq pita-mit qukiuti-nga-nit
 flee-AP-PAST-IND:3A peter-ABL gun-his-INS
 saku-li-gasua-liq-tillugu
 cartridge-make-try-PROG-PART:4A
 ‘It fled from Peter while he was trying to put a cartridge in his gun.’

These facts indicate that common nouns in the instrumental case are

strictly indefinite, denoting an existential quantifier with no uniqueness restriction (47). The denotation for instrumental *natsirmit* (*seal*-INS) is shown in (47). Compare with the absolutive counterpart (for *qimmirmit* (*dog*-INS)) in (40), which differs from (47) in the addition of a uniqueness assertion.

$$(47) \quad \lambda C \exists x \text{ dog}(x) \wedge C(x)$$

The scope facts in (8)-(11), (13)-(22) and (45)-(46) support the conclusions of Ludlow and Neale (1991), who claim, following Russell (1905) and Kripke (1977) but contra Fodor and Sag (1982), that indefinite NPs are not semantically ambiguous between a referential and a quantificational denotation, but show only a quantificational denotation that may occur in a variety of scopal configurations, some of which give the appearance of referentiality. If a referential interpretation were available to e.g. *natsirmit* (*seal*-INS) in (45), the pronoun in (45b) should be able to pick up its referent, as it may in analogous English examples.

- (48) a. Peter didn't shoot a seal.
 b. It fled while he was loading his gun.

As Fodor and Sag point out, the felicity of the putatively referential interpretation of an indefinite tends to increase as more descriptive material is added, as this extra material disambiguates in favor of the referential reading. (49) therefore reads more naturally than (48).

- (49) a. Peter didn't shoot a redish-brown seal with black spots.

- b. It fled while he was loading his gun.

In Inuktitut, extra descriptive material leads to no increase in felicity. The pronoun in (50b) is as helpless to find an antecedent as that in (45b).

- (50) a. pita qukiq-si-qqau-ngit-tuq natsir-mit
 peter_{ABS} shoot-AP-PAST-NEG-IND:3A seal-INS
 kajuu-qau-juq ammalu qirniq-taugalau-luni-lu
 red/brown-PAST-IND:3A and black-spotted-PART:3A-CONJ
 ‘Peter didn’t shoot a red-brown seal with black spots.’
- b. # qimat-si-qqau-juq pita-mit qukiuti-nga-nit
 flee-AP-PAST-IND:3A peter-ABL gun-his-INS
 saku-li-gasua-liq-tillugu
 cartridge-make-try-PROG-PART:4A
 ‘It fled from Peter while he was trying to put a cartridge in his gun.’

These facts indicate that indefinite NPs in Inuktitut have only a quantificational interpretation available to them, as Ludlow and Neale claim for English. The scope of indefinites is more restricted in Inuktitut than in English, since scope in Inuktitut is directly tied to the case the NP bears. As expected in Ludlow and Neale’s scope shifting account, extra descriptive material that pragmatically promotes the wide scope reading of an indefinite in English has no effect in Inuktitut, where scope is fixed by case.

As in the ergative and absolutive cases, referential objects may occur in the instrumental case (as Bittner 1987 and Bok-Bennema 1991 report), e.g. names (51a), demonstrative pronouns (51b) and possessive constructions with referential possessors (51c).

- (51) a. qimmiq taiviti-mit kii-si-qqau-juq
 dog_{ABS} David-INS bite-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘A dog bit David.’
- b. qimmiq uvannit kii-si-qqau-juq
 dog_{ABS} me_{INS} bite-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘A dog bit me.’
- c. qimmiq ataata-nit kii-si-qqau-juq
 dog_{ABS} father-my_{INS} bite-AP-PAST-IND:3A
 ‘A dog bit my father.’

3 External Case as Uniqueness Trigger

The association of ergative and absolutive case with a uniqueness restriction in Inuktitut is a root clause phenomenon. Ergative and absolutive NPs in subordinate clauses do not show obligatory discourse anaphoricity. Harper (1974) describes three common types of subordinate clauses in Inuktitut: (1) ‘conditional’ clauses, corresponding to *if*-clauses in English, (2) ‘causative’ clauses, corresponding to *because*-clauses, and (3) ‘participial’ clauses, corresponding to absolute, or *while*-clauses. Ergative and absolutive NPs in such contexts do not carry a uniqueness restriction.

Suppose, for example, that (52) represents an exchange between two individuals, in which one interlocutor’s utterance of (52a) provides the conversational background for the other’s response in (52b). The use of *nanuq* (*bear*) in the *if*-clause in (52b) does not refer back to the bear introduced in (52a), even though it occurs in the absolutive case in the context of the

previous mention of a bear. Rather, it is interpreted as an indefinite (here ‘just any bear’). The text in (52) does not entail (53) (assuming here that (52a) is uttered by someone named James). (53) explicitly asserts that Miki attacked the bear that James saw.

- (52) a. *ippatsaq taku-lauq-tunga nanur-mit ungasiktumit*
 yesterday see-PAST-IND:1A bear-INS in the distance
 ‘Yesterday I saw a bear in the distance.’
- b. *nanuq uvattin-nut qagli-guni miki-up*
 bear_{ABS} us-DAT approach-COND:3A miki-ERG
paa-langa-janga
 attack-FUT-IND:3E/3A
 ‘If a bear comes near us, Miki will attack it.’ (not: ‘If the bear comes near us...’)
- (53) *miki paa-langa-juq nanur-mit james-up*
 miki attack-FUT-IND:3A bear-INS james-ERG
taku-lauq-tanga-nit ippatsaq
 see-PAST-IND:3E/3A-INS yesterday
 ‘Miki will attack the bear that James saw yesterday’

For comparison, note that replacing *nanuq* (*bear*) in (52b) with a pronoun, shown in (54), entails (53). Pronouns, again, are non-overt in Inuktitut, but reflected in the agreement morphology.

- (54) *uvattin-nut qagli-guni miki-up paa-langa-janga*
 us-DAT approach-COND:3A miki-ERG attack-FUT-IND:3E/3A
 ‘If it comes near us, Miki will attack it.’

Similarly, the occurrence of *nanuq* (*bear*) in the *because*-clause in (55b) does not refer to the bear mentioned previously in (55a), though it occurs

in the absolutive case in the context of the previous mention of a bear. It is interpreted as indefinite (here ‘some bear’). The text in (55) does not entail (56), that Miki was frightened because the bear that James saw approached, again assuming that (55a) is uttered by a certain James.

- (55) a. *ippatsaq taku-lauq-tunga nanur-mit ungasiktumit*
 yesterday see-PAST-IND:1A bear-INS in the distance
 ‘Yesterday I saw a bear in the distance.’
- b. *miki kappiasuq-qau-juq nanuq*
miki_{ABS} frightened-PAST-IND:3A bear_{ABS}
qalliq-qau-rmat
 approach-PAST-CAUS:4A
 ‘Miki was frightened because a bear approached.’ (not: ‘... because the bear approached’)

- (56) *miki kappiasuq-qau-juq qalliq-qau-rmat nanuq*
miki frightened-PAST-IND:3A approach-PAST-CAUS:4A bear_{ABS}
james-up taku-lauq-tanga ippatsaq
 james-ERG see-PAST-IND:3E/3A yesterday
 ‘Miki was frightened because the bear that James saw yesterday approached’.

Again in contrast, replacing *nanuq* in (55b) with a pronoun, shown in (57), does entail (56).

- (57) *miki kappiasuq-qau-juq qalliq-qau-rmat*
miki frightened-PAST-IND:3A approach-PAST-CAUS:4A
 ‘Miki was frightened because it approached.’

Similarly, the use of *nanuq* in the participial clause in (58b) does not refer to the bear mentioned in (58a), though it occurs in the absolutive case in the context of the previous mention of a bear. The text in (58) does not

entail (59), that Miki was frightened seeing the bear that James saw, again assuming that (58a) is uttered by James. In contrast, the pronominal subject in (60) entails (59).

- (58) a. *ippatsaq taku-lauq-tunga nanur-mit ungasiktumit*
 yesterday see-PAST-IND:1A bear-INS in the distance
 ‘Yesterday I saw a bear in the distance.’
- b. *miali iqaluk-siuq-qau-juq nanuq*
mary_{ABS} fish-hunt-PAST-IND:3A bear_{ABS}
qagli-li-tillugu miali-mut
approach-PROG-PART:4A mary-DAT
 ‘Mary was fishing, while a bear approached her’ (not: ‘while the bear approached her.’)
- (59) *miali iqaluk-siuq-qau-juq qagli-li-tillugu*
mary_{ABS} fish-hunt-PAST-IND:3A approach-PROG-PART:4A
miali-mut nanuq james-up taku-lauq-tanga ippatsaq
mary-DAT nanuq_{ABS} james-ERG see-PAST-IND:3E/3A yesterday
 ‘Mary was fishing, while the bear that James saw yesterday approached her.’
- (60) *miali iqaluk-siuq-qau-juq qagli-li-tillugu*
mary_{ABS} fish-hunt-PAST-IND:3A approach-PROG-PART:4A
miali-mut
mary-DAT
 ‘Mary was fishing, while it approached her.’

The observations in sections 2.1 and 2.2 demonstrate that in matrix clauses, the interpretation of a common noun NP in Inuktitut is contingent on the case it bears. The scope facts reported in (8)-(11), (13)-(22), and (45)-(46) indicate that ergative and absolutive are VP-external cases, outscoping negation and other operators, while instrumental is a VP-internal case. The

fact that definiteness in Inuktitut is correlated with VP-external case suggests that, rather than being tied to case directly, as the definitions for absolutive (40) and instrumental (47) quantifiers above suggest, definiteness is configurationally conditioned. The fact that the effect is limited to matrix clauses lends credence to this view. NPs in Inuktitut are definite when they are external to the configurationally highest VP in the sentence in which they occur.

The denotation of matrix ergative and absolutive NPs is just that of instrumental NPs (an existential quantifier), plus a uniqueness restriction that is contributed by the syntactic context. This state of affairs is reminiscent of Diesing’s (1992) claim that VP-external indefinite NPs inherit a presupposition from their syntactic context. Diesing demonstrates that in English and other languages, VP-external indefinites inherit an existence presupposition on their domain. In Inuktitut, matrix VP-external NPs show a uniqueness assertion (though no presuppositions), and are otherwise interpretationally identical to VP-internal NPs. These facts suggest that the basic interpretation of common noun NPs is existential, but that matrix VP-external NPs inherit a uniqueness assertion from their syntactic context, as formalized in (61). The definition below characterizes the matrix VP-external domain as the phase of the root complementizer C_{ROOT} (Chomsky, 1995, 2001)

(61) **Inuktitut Syntax-Semantics Mapping Principle**

If, for any ϕ , the expression $[\exists x\phi]$ occurs in the C_{ROOT} phase, conjoin to ϕ the expression $[\forall y \phi(y) \rightarrow y = x]$

The operation in (61) appends a uniqueness restriction onto matrix VP-external existential expressions, but ignores referential NPs (because they are not of the form $\exists x\phi$), whose distribution is unrestricted, as observed in sections 2.1 and 2.2. On this view, there is no difference in the base denotation of absolutive and instrumental NPs. They are both interpreted as existential quantifiers as shown for the instrumental NP in (47). But a uniqueness assertion is appended to absolutive existential quantifiers because they are VP-external. By virtue of (61), NPs that show matrix VP-external scope are interpreted as definite in the sense of carrying a uniqueness restriction. VP-external scope is marked in Inuktitut by the ergative and absolutive cases.

4 Conclusion

The data presented here resolve a factual unclarity about the correlation between definiteness and case in Inuktitut. The apparent correlation between ergative/absolutive and definiteness reported in Kleinschmidt (1851) and elsewhere is not unwarranted. Ergative and absolutive NPs indeed receive an interpretation akin to definiteness, but lacking presuppositions. Bitner's (1987) claim that ergative and absolutive NPs may be used existentially is therefore also not unwarranted, since such NPs do make an existential assertion. Instrumental NPs have a strictly indefinite interpretation. The phenomenon observed here displays a certain derivational monotonicity: the syntactically low instrumental interpretation of NP is contained in the

syntactically high ergative/absolutive interpretation. This fact suggests that a derivational principle is at work in Inuktitut, that attaches a uniqueness restriction in the ergative/absolutive case to the basic existential signification found in the instrumental case.

Inuktitut therefore presents a situation in which a semantic effect not reducible to wide scope nonetheless lines up with the scope hierarchy. That definiteness is found in wide scope contexts and indefiniteness in narrow scope contexts agrees with Hopper and Thompson's (1980) observation that 'high transitivity' properties, including wide scope and definiteness (which they group together under the rubric 'individuation of the object'; see p. 256), tend to cluster cross-linguistically, i.e., tend to be expressed by the same morphosyntactic processes. The facts reported here also support Ludlow and Neale's defense of the quantificational view of indefiniteness. When the scope of an indefinite is fixed VP-internally by its case, no referential reading is available to the indefinite, suggesting that cross-linguistically, scope shifting mechanisms are critical to the derivation of *de re* readings of indefinites.

Notes

¹The works cited above treat the related Inuit language Kalaallisut, a.k.a. West Greenlandic, which is identical to Inuktitut in the relevant respects.

²The phonetic values of the characters of the romanized orthography of Inuktitut are mainly those of their IPA equivalents, except: <ng>=[ŋ], <nng>=[ŋŋ], <g>=[ɣ], and <r>=[ʁ]. Double vowels are long. <j> is pronounced [j] between vowels and [ɕ] else-

where. Affixes commonly exert a morphophonemic effect on the final consonant of the preceding morpheme, typically either deletion (e.g., /*niviaqsiq+up*/ (*girl+ERG*) becomes [*niviaqsiap*]), or assimilation. There is dialectal variation on these matters. See Dorais (1986) for details. As there is no phonemic uvular nasal in the language, there is no corresponding character in the alphabet, so [N], when it arises through assimilation of [q] to a nasal, is written <r> (the character for the uvular fricative). Thus, /*qimmiq+mut*/ (*dog+DAT*) is pronounced [*qimmɪnmʊt*] and written <*qimmirmut*>.

³Historical *-mik* has merged with the ablative suffix *-mit* in the dialect spoken by my consultant.

⁴The facts of Inuktitut are slightly different from the behavior reported by Bittner (1994) of the Kalaallisut cognate *luunniit*. Although it only occurs in negative clauses, *luunniit* may affix to ergative and absolutive NPs. Bittner claims that such NPs reconstruct under negation, an operation apparently not available in (my consultant's dialect of) Inuktitut.

⁵The Inuktitut sentence in (19b) is worse than the English translation given there as a continuation of (18). It corresponds more precisely to the ungrammaticality of **It was even three geese that he didn't shoot*.

⁶Inuktitut makes use of several past tense markers, including *niq* for an unperceived past event (here with nasal assimilation of /q/), *lauq* for a perceived past event, and *qqau* for a recent past event. All are glossed 'PAST' here. The use of fourth person in this discourse-initial context suggests that in causative clauses as in the participial clauses described by Pittman (2005), third person is anaphoric while fourth person is default.

References

- Knut Bergsland. *A Grammatical Outline of the Eskimo Language of West Greenland*. Skrivemaskinstua, Oslo, 1955.
- Maria Bittner. On the semantics of the Greenlandic antipassive and related constructions. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 53:194–321, 1987.
- Maria Bittner. *Case, Scope, and Binding*. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1994.
- Reineke Bok-Bennema. *Case and Agreement in Inuit*. Foris, Berlin, 1991.
- Gennaro Chierchia. *Dynamics of Meaning*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995.
- Noam Chomsky. *The minimalist program*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995.
- Noam Chomsky. Derivation by phase. In Michael Kenstowicz, editor, *Ken Hale: A Life in Linguistics*, pages 1–52. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001.
- Robin Cooper. The role of situations in generalized quantifiers. In Shalom Lappin, editor, *The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory*, volume 65-86. Blackwell, Oxford, 1996.

- Molly Diesing. *Indefinites*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992.
- Louis-Jacques Dorais. Inuktitut surface phonology: A trans-dialectal survey. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 52(1):20–53, 1986.
- Paul D. Elbourne. *Situations and Individuals*. MIT Press, 2005.
- Mürvet Enç. The semantics of specificity. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 22(1):1–27, 1991.
- Janet D. Fodor and Ivan A. Sag. Referential and quantificational indefinites. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 5:355–398, 1982.
- Michael Fortescue. *West Greenlandic*. Croom Helm, London, 1984.
- Paul Grice. Logic and conversation. In Peter Cole and Jerry Morgan, editors, *Syntax and Semantics, vol. 3: Speech Acts*, pages 41–58. Academic Press, New York, 1975.
- J. Groenendijk and M. Stokhof. Dynamic predicate logic. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 14:38–100, 1991.
- Kenn Harper. *Some Aspects of the Grammar of the Eskimo Dialects of Cumberland Peninsula and North Baffin Island*. National Museums of Canada, Ottawa, 1974.
- Irene Heim. *The Semantics of Definite and Indefinite Noun Phrases*. PhD thesis, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1982.

- Irene Heim. E-type pronouns and donkey anaphora. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 13(2):137–178, 1990.
- Paul Hopper and Sandra Thompson. Transitivity in grammar and discourse. *Language*, 56(2):251–299, 1980.
- Hans Kamp. A theory of truth and semantic representation. In J. Groenendijk, editor, *Formal Methods in the Study of Language*. Mathematical Center, Amsterdam, 1981.
- Lauri Karttunen. What do referential indices refer to? Technical Report P-3854, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Cal., 1968.
- S. Kleinschmidt. *Grammatik der Grönländischen Sprache*. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1851.
- Saul Kripke. Speaker’s reference and semantic reference. In Howard Wettstein Peter French, Theodore Uehling, editor, *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, pages 319–359. University of Minnesota Press, Morris, Minnesota, 1977.
- Peter Ludlow and Stephen Neale. Indefinite descriptions: In defense of Russell. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 14:171–202, 1991.
- Richard Montague. On the nature of certain philosophical entities. *The Monist*, 53(2):159–194, 1969.

- Christine Pittman. Non-canonical switch-reference in inuktitut. In Claire Gurski, editor, *Proceedings of the 2005 Linguistic Association Annual Conference*. <http://ling.uwo.ca/publications/CLA-ACL/CLA-ACL2005.htm>, 2005.
- Bertrand Russell. On denoting. *Mind*, 14:479–493, 1905.
- Jerrold Sadock. *A Grammar of Kalaallisut (West Greenlandic Inuttut)*. LINCOM Europa, Munich, 2003.
- Bettina Spreng. Antipassive morphology and case assignment in Inuktitut. In Alana Johns, Diane Massam, and Juvenal Ndayiragije, editors, *Ergativity: Emerging Issues*, pages 247–270. Springer, Dordrecht, 2006.
- P. F. Strawson. On referring. *Mind*, 59(235):320–344, 1950.
- P. F. Strawson. *Introduction to Logical Theory*. Methuen, London, 1952.