

Object Reduction in Aleut

BERGE, Anna
Alaska Native Language Center

Aleut does not appear to have antipassive constructions, as the related Eskimo languages so ubiquitously do. This lack may be the result of fundamental changes in the Aleut inflectional system, as suggested by Bergsland (1989, 1997). However, antipassivization is not the only possible means of decreasing valency by means of object-reduction, and a close examination of Aleut suggests at least three strategies for doing so. These include the use of a valency-decreasing suffix, simple omission, and reflexivization. In this paper, I explore the uses of each of these strategies.

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1. Introduction

Aleut is part of the Eskimo-Aleut language family and is spoken from the eastern coast of the Russian Far East to Greenland. The two branches of the family are quite distinct, and the Eskimo branch is bigger and more complex than the Aleut branch. All languages in the family share characteristics such as polysynthesis, with a complex and productive derivational morphology; a highly inflectional morphology, including verbal portmanteau morphemes for mood, person, and number, and the possibility of both subject and object agreement on the verb; and clause chaining, with sentences typically consisting of strings of dependent (subordinate) clauses headed by an independent clause. However, there are some fundamental syntactic differences that must have an effect on methods of manipulating valency. For example, although both languages share cognate inflectional morphology, Eskimo is ergative-absolutive while Aleut is not; and, perhaps consequently, Eskimo has antipassive structures while Aleut does not. Antipassives are structures that involve a decrease in the valency of a two-place predicate by removing the patient, or direct object, from its direct relationship with the verb phrase. They are generally found in ergative languages (cf. Keenan and Dryer 2007:359; although see also Polinsky 2011, suggesting that there is no direct correlation between ergativity and antipassives). If we

admit that Aleut is not an ergative language, then we might not expect antipassives in Aleut. However, the Aleut case system is thought to be the result of radical changes from a system that must have closely resembled the current Eskimo ergative system; indeed, traces of the old ergative system persist in Aleut (cf. Bergsland 1989, 1997a, 1997b). If Aleut had antipassives at one point, it is possible that they were lost as a result of these system changes. However, the loss of one means of manipulating information in discourse should entail some compensatory effects elsewhere in the grammar. It is therefore of rather more than passing interest to examine Aleut valency-changing strategies, and more particularly object reduction strategies. Bergsland (1989, 1997a) has provided basic descriptions of Aleut valency markers and some comparison of valency in Eskimo and Aleut; he also finds traces of possible antipassive forms (Bergsland 1997a:347), but no detailed investigation of what might have replaced antipassives in Aleut, assuming the language did indeed lose these structures.

In this paper, I focus specifically on object reduction strategies, since antipassive structures effectively demote objects of transitive clauses, although clearly a full treatment of the matter must involve a broader examination of valency-changing techniques in Aleut. I begin with a brief description of valency and especially of antipassives in Eskimo, as the most likely state of affairs from which Aleut must have sprung (section 2). I then present the relevant characteristics of the Aleut anaphoric system that replaced a presumably canonical ergative system, argument identification in various clause structures, and an overview of valency-changing operations in Aleut (section 3). I discuss three types of object reduction or removal (section 4) and end with some speculations as to the origins of differences in the use of the antipassive between Eskimo and Aleut.

2. Antipassives in Eskimo

The majority of Eskimo stems are exclusively transitive or intransitive, and changes in valency are effected both through derivational morphology on the verb and through one and two argument verbal inflection. Some verb stems may be ambitransitive, i.e. either transitive or intransitive without addition of valency-changing suffixes, in which case verbal inflection indicates the transitivity of the verb. These are called agentive verbs if the same semantic argument is the subject in both intransitive and transitive uses, and patientive if the absolutive argument of transitive structures is the subject of the intransitive structure.

All common valency changing devices are represented: there are causative and applicative constructions for increasing verbal valency, and there are both passive and antipassive constructions for decreasing verbal valency. In discourse, Eskimo prefers

transitive structures to antipassive structures, and although passive structures are relatively common in the eastern arctic, they are far less common in the west (cf. Mithun 2000 and Miyaoka 2011 for valency in Central Alaskan Yup'ik; Fortescue 1984 for valency in Greenlandic; Berge 2011 for relative preference of some clause structures over others). Despite its attenuated importance in narrative discourse, the antipassive construction is one of the most well-studied constructions in Eskimo.

As definitions of canonical antipassives vary slightly in the literature, for the purposes of this discussion, I follow Dixon and Aikhenvald (2000:7) and assume that in a typical antipassive structure, a) the antipassive verb is derived from the transitive verb, typically by means of an antipassivizing morpheme; b) the antipassive verb typically has a formally intransitive agreement pattern, e.g. it agrees with the subject only, as opposed to subject and object agreement found in the corresponding transitive structure; and c) the demoted object may be either suppressed or expressed as an oblique noun phrase, while the subject acquires intransitive subject case marking. Eskimo has antipassives that fulfill all three of these requirements, as well as some that only fulfill two of them. All Eskimo antipassives have intransitive marking on the verb, and instrumental case marking (in Inuit) or ablative case marking (in Yupik) on the demoted object. However, verbs fall into several classes (cf. Fortescue 1984:85-86, West Greenlandic; Miyaoka 1996:343 Central Alaskan Yupik):

1. (usually exclusively transitive and patientive) verbs that require an antipassive suffix¹
2. (usually agentive) verbs that do not take an antipassive suffix (and antipassive status is therefore indicted by b) and c) above)
3. verbs that appear to have different class memberships in the language and therefore may or may not take an antipassive suffix

Examples (1)-(2) illustrate the use of an obligatory antipassive suffix on a transitive stem. Examples (3)-(5) illustrate the use of an optional suffix or of no suffix (Fortescue (1984:86) writes that the stem *taku-* 'to see' can be either transitive only or an agentive stem in the modern language). In all cases, the antipassive structure has intransitive verb inflection and instrumental marking on the demoted object (examples from Fortescue 1984:86):

- (1) Transitive
- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Inu-it</i> | <i>toqup-pai</i> |
| person-PL.ABS | kill-3SG/3PL.IND |
| ‘He killed the people.’ | |

¹ Patientive verbs require an antipassive suffix in order to form an antipassive clause; however, they may take intransitive inflection without an antipassive suffix. In this case, the clause is semantically medio-passive but not antipassive (e.g. *napivaa* ‘he broke it’ vs. *napivoq* ‘it is broken,’ Fortescue 1984:85, cf. also Miyaoka 1996:343)

3. Aleut clause structure and valency changing morphology

There are some important differences between Aleut and Eskimo inflectional marking in clauses that necessarily affect the expression of valency. In particular, core arguments are generally marked the same way in Aleut; Aleut verbal inflection does not indicate transitivity; and with one negligible exception, there is no antipassive morphology. All of these limit the possibility of an antipassive structure, as defined above.

Aleut clause structure is relatively strictly SOV. When all core arguments are overt, they are inflected for what is called absolutive case in the traditional literature, for both historical and comparative reasons, and verbal inflection indicates mood and person/number of the subject. Most Aleut verb stems are either lexically intransitive or transitive, although some verbs are ambitransitive (Bergsland 1997a:115ff). Some verbs can take objects indicating the place of the activity (Bergsland calls these local objects), and some can take what Bergsland calls a ‘predicate noun’ in addition to a patient; these are all inflected for absolutive. Oblique objects are generally followed by a postposition and are inflected as part of a postpositional phrase ([NP-REL PP-case]). Some of these basic sentence types are illustrated in examples (10)-(15):

(10) Intransitive

Aniqdu-uda-â *qidu-ku-â*.
child-DIM-ABS cry-IND-3SG

‘The baby is crying.’ (Pribilofs, MB 2005_10_19)

(11)

Mariiya-â *Piitra-m* *ngaan* *ayaga-â²-ku-â*
Mary-ABS Peter-REL DAT.3SG wife-be.had.as-IND-3SG

‘Mary is a wife to Peter.’ (Pribilofs, MB 2012_06_04)

(12) Transitive

Piitra-â *asxinu-â* *kidu-ku-â*.
Peter-ABS girl-ABS help-IND-3SG

‘Peter is helping the girl.’ (Atkan; variations on this example are found in Bergsland and Dirks 1981:9)

(13) Transitive with Local Object³

Asxinu-â *chigana-â* *chali-ku-â*.
girl-ABS creek-ABS fish.with.line.from.land-IND-3SG

² Bergsland (1994:506) defines this as a passive morpheme ‘to be had as;’ however, etymologically he derives it from the absolutive ending *-â* and the verb *a-* ‘to be’ (Bergsland 1997:349). If so, it is either merely an intransitive active construction with a dative object, with no elegant translation in English except in its passive form: ‘Peter is married to Mary, Mary is Peter’s wife;’ or it is historically transitive construction, with the direct object being incorporated into the verbal structure.

³ Bergsland (1997:147) calls this a semantically intransitive verb with a local object; however, the clause may be regarded as transitive, cf. English ‘the girl is fishing the creek.’

‘The girl is fishing in the creek.’ (cf. *Asxinuĕ chalikuĕ* ‘The girl is fishing,’ Bergsland 1997a:147; Bergsland and Dirks 1981:11)

- (14) Ditransitive: Direct Object, ‘Predicate Noun’⁴

Anġaġina-s *Piitra-ĕ* *tuku-ĕ* *hiti-ku-s*.
 person-PL Peter-ABS leader-ABS make/turn.into-IND-3PL

‘The people made Peter a leader.’ (Atkan, Bergsland 1997a:148; Bergsland and Dirks 1981:11)

- (15) Ditransitive: Direct Object, Indirect Object

Ada-ĕ *kamgada-m* *asa-a*
 priest-ABS Christian-REL name-3SG.POS.ABS

aman *aniqdu-uda-m* *ngaan* *asaasa-da-ku-ĕ*.
 that child-DIM-REL DAT.3SG give.as.name-HAB-IND-3SG

‘The priest gives a Christian name to that baby.’ (Pribilofs, MB 2005_10_19)

In sentences with a non-overt object or possessor (example (16)) or in complex sentences (examples (17)-(18)), however, the inflection will also indicate person and/or number of an anaphoric element, regardless of the semantic transitivity of the verb or the argument status of the anaphoric element. The verbal inflection, therefore, does not reflect transitivity (Berge 2010a:10):

- (16) *Piitra-m* *kidu-ku-u*.
 Peter-REL help-IND-3SG.AN
 ‘Peter is helping her.’ (Atkan)

- (17) *Hla-s* *tunum-kada-ku-z-iin* *ting* *saġani-na-q*.
 boy-PL talk-CESS-IND-PL-ENCL 1SG go.to.sleep-PART-1SG
 ‘When the boys stopped talking, I went to sleep.’ (Atkan)

- (18) *Tunum-kada-ku-z-iin* *ting* *saġani-qa-ning*.
 talk-CESS-IND-PL-ENCL 1SG go.to.sleep-PART.AN-1SG/3PL.AN
 ‘When they stopped talking, I went to sleep.’ (Atkan, Bergsland, 1997a:248)

This unusual anaphoric system probably came from an original ergative-absolutive one, presumably present in Proto-Eskimo-Aleut; it developed as a result of the loss of final syllables on nouns, affecting noun cases and consequently the interpretation of the verbal inflection, and very probably the rise in the use of postpositions (Bergsland 1989, 1997b). The case system itself is no longer canonically ergative, despite the morphological traces left in anaphoric structures (e.g. relative marking on the subject and anaphoric object

⁴ I have not been able to elicit this structure from Pribilovian speakers; an alternative morphologically causative construction is preferred.

marking on the verb in anaphoric constructions). The combination of anaphoric marking and the reinterpretation of the function of case marking on both core and oblique arguments means the Eskimo strategy of decreasing valency by using intransitive inflection on the verb is not available, nor is there an equivalent transitive-antipassive pair of clauses in Aleut (compare examples (12) and (16) with examples (3)-(4); nominal inflection in example (12) does not suggest a demoted object).

This system is also unusual in its use of these structures in discourse. It is widely accepted that ergative subjects tend to be a locus of given information, and that new information is introduced through absolutive objects (Du Bois 1987);, and this is also valid for Eskimo (Berge 2011).⁵ In Aleut, however, subject noun phrases in anaphoric constructions (i.e. the erstwhile ergative subjects) introduce tangential material, including material new to the discourse, and topical material is often left unexpressed without resulting in an anaphoric structure. Anaphoric inflection, meanwhile, is often manipulated for discourse purposes and does not necessarily correlate with transitivity (Berge 2009). Aleut has a high degree of tolerance for referential ambiguity, which, although perhaps not immediately apparent, is relevant to the discussion of object reduction (see section 4.2).

At least some syntactic indication of transitivity is available through valency increasing and decreasing derivational suffixes. There are a large number of these suffixes, although there is a very clear bias toward adding or removing subjects rather than objects (Table 1); and in fact, subject-removing strategies do not necessarily result in object promotion. Again, we see that antipassive structures are not encouraged by the available morphology: today, there is only one obvious object-removing suffix, *-(ġ)kaġi-*. Bergsland (1997a:347) suggests the possibility that other antipassive suffixes once existed in Aleut. Thus, a few intransitive verbs have the otherwise transitivizing suffix *-t-*, while their transitive counterparts have a suffix *-i-* (e.g. intransitive *six̂-t-* ‘to break, go to pieces,’ transitive *six̂-i-* ‘to break, smash to pieces’). He hypothesizes that the latter may be cognate with the Eskimo *-i-*, which is generally an antipassivizing suffix but has adversative uses when not used to detransitivize a verb (although Fortescue, et. al. (2010:438) propose a relationship between Eskimo *-i-* Aleut *-ġi-* ‘to have’). He further suggests that this state of affairs in Aleut might have arisen from a previously antipassive construction, e.g. *ukuusxi-x̂ six̂i-na-x̂* ‘he broke a/the window.’ This is, however, highly speculative, and assumes that the antipassive construction was the norm at some point. All that can be said at this point is that there are a small number of verbs that have clear intransitive and transitive pairs,

⁵ Precisely what role ergative subjects play in discourse is still debated. Du Bois shows that ergative subjects tend to represent given information. Others associate them with topics, however in Berge (2011), I show that they are not primary topics in Eskimo languages.

involving some derivation that is now opaque. It also still leaves the question of what happens to objects synchronically. This is the subject of the following section.

Table 1: valency-changing suffixes

suffix	meaning	reflexive use
Addition of subject: Causatives		
<i>-(i)chxi-</i>	‘to have, make, let x to V’	
<i>-ni-</i>	‘to cause to V, to make smb V’	‘to start V-ing, to become V’
<i>-nisa-</i>	‘to wait for X to V, to cause to V’	
<i>-t-</i>	‘to cause to become V, to make V’	‘to become V, to start V-ing’
<i>-ta-, -(x)ta-</i>	‘to have made V, to keep V-ed’	‘to have become V, to have started V-ing’
<i>(i)dgu-</i>	frequentative of <i>-t-</i>	‘to become V, to get V’
<i>-(a)ya-</i>	‘to try to make V’	
<i>-qalgi-</i>	‘to make V-ing’	‘to become V-ing, more V-ing’
<i>-i-</i> (restricted)	‘to cause change of state’	
<i>-mi-</i> (restricted)	‘to let, make V’	
<i>-aaġu-</i> (restricted)	‘to expect to V, to wait for X to V’	
Addition of object: Applicatives		
<i>-usa-</i>	‘to V with, toward, along, by’	idiomatic?
<i>-aata-</i>	‘to have the V of, to be as V as’	
Removal of subject: Passives		
<i>-lga-</i>	passive of all sorts of verbs, including intransitive ones; also nominal stems (p. 117)	
<i>-ġa-</i>	passive of <i>-(x)ta-</i> ‘continuous state’	
<i>-ula-</i>	passive of <i>-usa-</i>	
<i>-(a)ġi-</i>	‘to be V-ed, to be in state of having V-ed’ ⁶	
<i>-naġi-</i>	‘to be V-ed’ (have a V-er)	

⁶ Golovko (1988) calls this an object resultative suffix and differentiates it from the passive

Removal of subject: impersonals		
<i>-chi-</i>	‘one ought to V, to be good, the right time to V’ also in perfect ‘ought to be V-ed...’	
<i>-na-</i>	‘to be such that one may or must V, to be V-able’	
<i>-aatuna-</i>	‘to be such that one wants to V, to be good to V’	
<i>-suna-</i>	‘to be good to V, to be easy to V’	
<i>-suda-</i>	‘to be good to V’	
Removal of object: impersonal object		
<i>-(ĝ)kaĝi-</i>	‘to V somebody or something’	
Combinations		
<i>-usa-chĕi-</i>	addition of object and subject	
<i>chĕi-t-lga</i>	addition and removal of subject ⁷	
<i>-usa-qaĝi-</i>	addition and removal of object	
<i>-chĕi-qaĝi-</i>	addition of subject and removal of object	
<i>-ula-</i>	addition of object and removal of subject	
<i>-qaĝi-lga-</i>	removal of object and subject	

4. Removal of objects in Aleut

At first glance, objects appear to be somewhat undervalued in Aleut. On closer inspection, however, they are frequently being manipulated, but not usually with the use of valency-changing suffixes. We can identify at least three strategies for removing them from a direct relationship with the action expressed by the verb: a valency-decreasing suffix, simple omission, and reflexivization.

4.1. Valency-decreasing suffix *-(ĝ)kaĝi-*

The valency decreasing suffix *-(ĝ)kaĝi-* is not an important means for removing objects in Aleut. In fact, is essentially nonexistent in my data. It does not admit an object and is

⁷ Addition and removal of a subject, or in the following case, an object, should be interpreted as sequential. Thus, *chĕi-* adds a new subject, a causer, and the old subject becomes the new object. Then *-sxa-* (*-t-lga-* > *-sxa-*) removes the new subject:

qa- ‘eat,’ *qakuĕ* ‘X eats’

qa- chĕi- ‘to make eat, to feed,’ *qachĕikuĕ* ‘Y makes X eat, Y feeds X’

qa- chĕi-sxa- ‘to be fed’ *qachĕisxakuĕ* ‘X is made to eat, X is fed’

used to indicate an impersonal/indefinite object. Etymologically, it is from the participial suffix *-qa-* and the intransitive verbalizing suffix *-ġi-* ‘to have’:

- (19) *asxat-* ‘to kill’
asxat-xaġi-laga-da
 kill-VAL.DEC-NEG-IMP.2SG
 ‘do not kill (anybody), do not commit murder’ (Bergsland 1997a:346)

Because of the peculiarities of the Aleut case system, this is not an antipassivizing suffix: since Aleut verbal inflection does not indicate the relative transitivity of a construction, and since no object is expressed, it is simply an intransitive construction.

4.2. Omission

The most important strategy appears to be simple omission of the object; and most cases of omission are licensed by discourse, that is, the omitted object is definite and known from context. This is a typical Aleut strategy for leaving unsaid what is already obvious. There are a number of contexts that frequently allow omission:

4.2.1. Imperatives

The object of the imperative is omitted:

- (20) *Su-laga-da*
 take-NEG-IMP.2SG
 ‘Don’t take [it]!’ (Bergsland 1997:96)

4.2.2. Reflexives

The reflexive pronoun is left out; in (21), the reflexive pronoun *txin*, otherwise required by the structure, is omitted:

- (21) *Ana-a* *asxinu-un* *chula-chxi-ku-x̂*
 mother-3SG.POS.ABS daughter-4SG.POS.ABS dress-CAUS-IND-3SG
 ‘The (her) mother let her daughter dress [herself]’ (cf. *Asxinuu txin chulaku-x̂* ‘her daughter is dressing herself,’ *txin* ‘self’) (Bergsland and Dirks 1981:82)

- (22) *Asxinu-x̂* *ana-am* *ngaan* *txin*
 daughter-ABS mother-4SG.POS.REL DAT.3SG self

chula-chxi-na-x̂
 dress-CAUS-PART-3SG
 ‘The girl let her mother dress her’ (Bergsland and Dirks 1981:82)

4.2.3. Omission with applicatives

The dative object added by the applicative is left out. In the following, the sentence is understood in the context of a teacher actually teaching Aleut and telling the class they will continue to learn (as a result of the teacher's instruction); it is otherwise grammatically incorrect, as the applicative requires a dative object:

- (23) *Unangam Tunuu achiga-asa-li-ku-n*
 Unangam Tunuu, Aleut learn-APL-still/more-IND-3PL
 'We're learning more Aleut' (said by teacher teaching Aleut) (cf. *Unangam Tunuu ngiin achigaasalikun* 'we are still learning Aleut, we are still teaching ourselves Aleut,' *ngiin* 'to ourselves') (Pribilofs, MB 2011_06_04)

4.2.4. Omission as a result of focus constructions

Structurally, the focused noun phrase is outside of the clause, but semantically, this may not really be omission:

- (24) *wan pisma-x̂ amay,*
 this letter-ABS and
 'This letter,'

Pirug(a-m) tagada-a sux̂ta-kan (or sux̂ta-lix)
 pen-REL new-3SG.POS.ABS hold-CONJ.AN (or hold-CONJ)

aluġu-laana-q(ing)
 write-recent.past-1SG

'I wrote (it) with a (my) new pen' = 'This is the letter that I wrote with my new pen' (Pribilofs, MB 2011_06_07)

4.2.5. Omission in clause chains

It is extremely common in clause chains for an object recoverable from context to be omitted in dependent clauses. In clauses headed by the conjunctive, an already defective verb mood in that it doesn't always specify the subject, the verb can omit anaphoric reference as well (and therefore object reference):

- (25) *chamchux-six ali-x̂ta-ku-qing-aan qa-x̂*
 fish.from.land-CONJ still.be-CONT-IND-1SG-ENCL fish-ABS

dux̂ta-ng adġa-ku-ġ-aan ting amani-lix
 hook-1SG.POS.ABS bite-IND-3SG-ENCL 1SG startle-CONJ
 'a fish bit my hook and startled me.'

chamchxi-ng qangli-ng kanga-n aġ-six
 fish line-1SG.POS.ABS shoulder-1SG.POS.ABS top-LOC put-CONJ
 'Putting my fish line on my shoulder'

nung *idgi-xtusa-lix* *akuunusa-lix*
 to.1SG pull.out-INTNS-CONJ take up-CONJ
 ‘Pulling [it] up to me, I took [it] up’

chuguulġu-n *ku-ngin* *aġa-asa-ku-qing-aan*
 gravel-PL on.top-LOC.PL put-with-IND-1SG-ENCL
 ‘I placed [it] on the gravel/beach.’ (Eastern, transcribed by Dirks, 1984, 2004)

In all of these examples, Aleut leaves out a definite/specified/known object. This is a very different process from most antipassive/object demotion strategies: For Greenlandic, I argued that antipassive serves to introduce a new topic, and that there are relatively few antipassives in narratives (Berge 2011). Object omission here is largely a result of discourse saliency, that is, of its known status and recoverability, not of the introduction of new information, and it is quite frequent in discourse. It should also be noted that object omission is not a common Eskimo strategy, and some of these structures would be considered ungrammatical in Eskimo.

4.3. Reflexivization

Finally, the third strategy for removing objects from a clause is through the use of reflexivization. Straightforward reflexive structures are not, in and of themselves, examples of object removal; rather, they indicate that the agent and patient of an activity are the same. While some verbs in Aleut are obligatorily reflexive, most transitive verbs can be used reflexively, with the reflexive pronoun being in the object position, either in reference to the subject of the clause or to the subject of the following clause (Bergsland 1997a:101). Aleut transitive verbs with a reflexive pronoun are analogous to Eskimo transitive verbs with intransitive inflection (Bergsland 1997a:345-6; compare examples (26) and (27) with examples (6) and (8);). However, reflexivization can also, under certain circumstances, result in object removal, in particular through object promotion and through semantic detransitivization of a verb.

(26) *Iqya-an* *aġuti-ku-x̂.*
 kayak-4SG.ABS hide-IND-3SG
 ‘He hid his kayak.’

(27) *txin* *aġuti-ku-x̂.*
 self hide-IND-3SG
 ‘He hid himself.’ (Bergsland 1997a:346)

4.3.1. Reflexivization, verb class, and object promotion

Verb class may play an important role in the use of reflexives, although this requires more thorough investigation. As we see from examples (26) and (27), transitive verbs reflexivize easily; ambitransitive verbs, in general, are not typically described as prone to

reflexivization. According to Bergsland (1997a:346), agentive and patientive verbs have different morphological instantiations in Aleut, so that only agentive ambitransitive stems are actually found (e.g. *qa-* ‘to eat,’ as in *qaġ qakuqing* ‘I am eating fish’ vs. *qakuqing* ‘I am eating’). Patientive verbs were apparently lost as a category together with the loss of the ergative construction and the oblique cases of the nouns. Instead, they are normally intransitive roots, and the transitive counterpart is derived with a causative suffix:

- (28) *Satmalix* *aġa-ku-ġ*
 door.ABS open-IND-3SG
 ‘The door is opening/open.’
- (29) *Satmalix* *aġa-ti-ku-qing*
 door.ABS open-CAUS-IND-1SG
 ‘I opened the door.’ (Pribilofs, NL 2011_06_13)

However, there is clearly more to say about verb classes in Aleut. Verbs are not strictly classified according to semantic categories. For example, while *aġa-* ‘open’ is an intransitive stem and does not have a reflexive construction (with the same meaning), *chachi-* ‘close’ is a transitive stem, and it allows a reflexive (as in example (31)).⁸

- (30) *Satmalix* *chachi-ku-q(ing)*
 door.ABS close-IND-1SG
 ‘I closed the door.’ (examples (30)-(32) Pribilofs, NL 2011_06_13)
- (31) *Satmalix* *txin* *chachi-ku-ġ*
 door.ABS self close-IND-3SG
 ‘The door closed.’
- (32) *Satmalix* *chachi-ġi-ku-ġ*
 door.ABS close-PASS-IND-3SG
 ‘The door is/was closed.’ (a resultative construction, cf. Golovko 1988)

More interestingly, however, ambitransitive stems do allow reflexivization. For example, the verb *unalix* ‘to cook’ is normally agentive, but in the last line of example (33), *unalix* is reflexive and the pronominal subject refers to the patient ‘meatballs.’⁹

- (33) *Taġ* *chadu-ġ* *skuurvida*¹⁰-ġ *nagan* *txin* *chingli-t(i)-na-gan*
 so oil-ABS pan-ABS inside self be.hot-CAUS-PART-3SG.REL

⁸ The stem *chachi-* is not one with an intransitive counterpart in *-t-* and is not assumed to have the unproductive derivational morpheme *-i-* discussed at the end of section 3.

⁹ Note that plural and possessive concord are notoriously flexible in Eastern Aleut, cf. Bergsland (1997) and Berge (2010b). In the second to last clause, *aman* is in absolutive case, although it modifies relative *chaduu*, and in the last clause, the singular verb inflection is not unusual in reference to previous plural arguments.

¹⁰ *skuuvrudaġ* in Bergsland (1997:367).

‘So when the oil in the frying pan has gotten hot (lit. has caused itself to get hot)’

ama-kun *miichi-n* *agu-na-txin* *aman* *chadu-u*
that-PL ball-PL make-PART-2SG that.ABS oil-REL

nagan *una-kin*¹¹
inside cook-CONJ.AN.PL

‘Those balls that you made, cook them in that oil...’

ataqan *ada-a* *txin* *una-na-x̂* *ukux̂ta-gu-umin*
one side-ABS self cook-PART-3SG see-COND-2SG

a-q(a)da-gu-min-ulux,
AUX-CESS-COND-2SG-NEG

‘after you have seen that one side has cooked (itself)’

tataam *ama-kun* *miichi-n* *imi*¹²-*lix* *tataam* *amaadaa*
again that-PL ball-PL turn.over-CONJ again other.side/far.side

‘turning those balls over again to the other side’

txin *una-laangta-duu-ku-x̂* *agachiida*
self cook-a.little.more-FUT-IND-3SG only
‘it will cook just a little bit more...’ (SM 2007_05_30)

In example (33), all but the clauses in the second line involve reflexives in which the original object is now a subject. In fact, reflexivization can have an effect on the valency of a clause: reflexivizing a transitive (e.g. the derived transitive *chinglit-* ‘to heat’) or an ambitransitive verb (e.g. *una-* ‘to cook’) may result in an object being promoted to subject without passivization, rather like an anticausative process. Passivization in Aleut allows the subject to be removed, and this may or may not involve the promotion of the object to subject.¹³ Reflexivization does not involve passive morphology.

The use of reflexives for object promotion does not appear to be limited to ambitransitive stems, as we see from the use of the reflexive with *chinglit-* ‘to get hot’ in example (33). However, their use with ambitransitive stems does seem to be significant. *Yu-* is, exceptionally, a patientive ambitransitive root in Eastern Aleut;¹⁴ as a transitive, it means ‘to pour out, spill’ as in example (34); as an intransitive, it is patientive, as in example (35). In example (36), however, the subject is neither strictly agentive nor patientive, and a reflexive construction is used.

¹¹ The conjunctive verb *unakin* was also repeated in its non-anaphoric form *unalix*.

¹² *imdu-lix* in Bergsland (1997:196)

¹³ Passive structures do not traditionally allow the expression of the demoted subject (i.e. an equivalent of the English *by*-phrase), unlike Eskimo passives.

¹⁴ The root *yu-* in Eastern Aleut does not have a causative suffix for the transitive form (Bergsland 1997:345-6).

- (34) *Chaaska-m taanga-a yu-x̂ta-ku-q(ing).*
 cup-REL water-ABS spill/pour-PERF-IND-1SG
 ‘I spilled (my) cup of water.’ (examples (34)-(36) Pribilofs, NL 2011_06_17)
- (35) *Chaaska-(m) naga-an taanga-x̂ yu-x̂ta-ku-x̂.*
 cup-REL inside-ABL water-ABS spill/pour-PERF-IND-3SG
 ‘Water spilled from the cup.’
- (36) *Qila-x̂ chix̂ta-x̂ chaaska-x̂ adan txin*
 morning-ABS rain-ABS cup-ABS to/toward self

yu-x̂ta-ku-x̂
 spill/pour-PERF-IND-3SG
 ‘In the morning rain filled (i.e. had poured itself into) the cup’
 = ‘In the morning, the cup was filled with (rain) water.’

4.3.3. Reflexivization and semantic detransitivizing of the verb

Reflexivizing the verb in combination with object omission may result in the semantic detransitivizing of the verb; in this case, the effect of reflexivization is not so much on the object but on the activity itself. The object becomes indefinite. In the following set of examples, the stem *achiga-* ‘learn’ can take a locative oblique object or a direct object indicating the thing that is learned (patient), or both (example (37)). When a beneficiary is present, the verb stem means ‘teach’ (example (38)); however, the verb cannot then also have a patient. For a patient to be present, the derived verb *achigaasa-* ‘learn-APL’ = ‘teach’ must be used, and the beneficiary is dative (example (39)). When the reflexive pronoun is present, the meaning of the verb is ambiguous (example (40)); the reflexive is in the role of beneficiary, and there is no direct object indicating what is learned, which is understood to be indefinite:

- (37) *(skuula-m ilan) (Unangam Tunuu) achiga-amin ee?*
 school-REL in Unangam Tunuu learn-INTEN.2SG INTER.PRT
 ‘Are you going to learn (Aleut) (in school)?’ (examples (37)-(40) Pribilofs, MB 2011_06_04)
- (38) *Ayagaada-m anaada-a ting achiga-atu-ku-x̂.*
 girl-REL mother-3SG.POS.ABS 1SG teach-want-IND-3SG
 ‘The girl’s mother wants to teach me something.’
- (39) *Ayagaada-m anaada-a Unangam Tunuu*
 girl-REL mother-3SG.POS.ABS Unangam Tunuu
 ‘The girl’s mother wants to teach me Unangam Tunuu’

- (40) *Aniqdu-n* *skuula-m* *ilix*¹⁵ *txichin* *achiga-ku-n*.
 child-PL school-REL in self.3PL learn-IND-PL
 ‘The children are teaching themselves something/learning in school.’

Some reflexivization of this nature may be idiomatic, although it is now difficult to obtain or identify idioms:

- (41) *quyxi-l* *txin* *haqaasa-l*
 cough-CONJ self come.with/bring-CONJ
 ‘coming along coughing’ (*haqa-asa-* ‘come-APL’ = ‘bring’) (Bergsland 1994:93;
 cf. *hingan xliibax ngus haqaasada* that/bread/to me/bring ‘bring me that bread,’
 Bergsland, 1997a:161)

Semantic detransitivizing of the verb may appear to be analogous to the Eskimo antipassive in that it results in an indefinite object. In support of this is the observation that, typologically, it is not unusual for antipassives to have the same morphology as other detransitivizing operations such as reflexivization (Polinsky 2011). On the other hand, this does not appear to be a very frequent strategy, and there are many ways of expressing indefiniteness in Aleut, such as the manipulation of word order and the use of focusing constructions:

- (42) *Qalgada-x̂* *stuuluġ-im* *kugan* *a-ku-x̂*.
 food-ABS table-REL on be-IND-3SG
 ‘The food is on the table.’ (examples (42)-(43) Bergsland 1997a:151, Bergsland
 and Dirks 1981:32)
- (43) *Stuuluġi-m* *kugan* *qalgada-x̂* *a-ku-x̂*.
 table-REL on food-ABS be-IND-3SG
 ‘There is food on the table.’

5. Concluding remarks

It turns out, therefore, that determining what happened to antipassives in Aleut is much more revealing and complicated than might have been foreseen. There are at least three strategies for decreasing the valency of a verb by removing the object: with a valency-decreasing suffix, by means of object omission, and by means of reflexivization. Only the latter appears to result in a structure that may be analogous to the Eskimo antipassive, but this structure is not a common means of expressing indefiniteness in Aleut, as the antipassive appears to be in Eskimo.

Underlying much of the discussion here are the assumptions that because Aleut was at one point an ergative language, it should have had antipassive structures analogous to

¹⁵ The form *ilix* appears to be a Pribilovian variant of *ilan* ‘in.’

those in Eskimo languages; that because of extensive changes in its case system, it has lost those antipassives; and that because there are traces of the erstwhile ergative system, there might be traces of the old antipassives, or at least some evidence of compensatory expression thereof. This seems like a reasonable set of assumptions, especially since the loss of antipassives should not be surprising. Antipassives produce accusative-like core arguments, which is one reason they may be as rare as they are in non-ergative (esp. accusative) languages, including Aleut (cf. Beach 2003, who argues that antipassives in the Inuit dialect Tarramiutut act syntactically as if they are accusative-like core arguments of the verb; Bok-Bennema 1991 has suggested that Inuktitut is in fact nominative-accusative, with the antipassive construction actually being nominative-accusative and the so-called ergative construction a genitive-nominative case pairing).

However, the lack of antipassives in Aleut may have a different explanation altogether. The change in ergativity is just one of several factors that has affected valency in Aleut, and certainly does not by itself account for the lack of antipassive constructions in Aleut. While there is some suggestion that Aleut has greatly reduced its stock of productive derivational morphemes (Bergsland, 1997b:9), both Bergsland (1989) and Fortescue (1998:98) nevertheless assume that Proto-Eskimo-Aleut must have been less polysynthetic, and that Aleut is conservative in this respect while Eskimo languages have innovated. Traces of erstwhile free forms of currently bound derivational morphemes are still found in Eskimo, while the free form equivalents are found in Aleut (e.g. copula *-(ŋ)u-* in Eskimo and *a-* (Attuan dialect *u-*) in Aleut). Person inflection on verbs is assumed to have been an innovation in Eskimo, whereas personal pronouns in Aleut are independent (although subject pronouns are typically cliticized to verbs; cf. Bergsland 1989). The rise of polysynthesis in Eskimo almost certainly affected the indication of valency, including the set of antipassive suffixes (the antipassive suffix *-nik-*, *-nig-* is only found in Inuit, for example, Fortescue, et. al. 2010:459). As we have seen, it is far from clear that Aleut had the rich derivational antipassive morphology that Eskimo does, despite some speculative observations discussed above. Furthermore, the Eskimo antipassives do not merely function as valency-decreasing suffixes, but also have additional semantic effects (cf. Bittner 1987, for aspectual differences on verbs with antipassive suffixes), and there has been no systematic comparative investigation of this in Eskimo-Aleut. Aleut may, therefore, never have had a true antipassive construction.

There are clearly some fundamental differences in Aleut and Eskimo syntactic preferences, including valency-changing strategies. For example, both reflexive and passive constructions have assumed a much greater role and broader scope of use in Aleut than they have in Eskimo; and although Aleut does not have antipassives, it may have

something approximating an anticausative. A thorough comparative analysis of valency in Eskimo-Aleut remains to be done.

Abbreviations

ABS = absolutive, ALL = allative, AN = anaphoric, ANTIP = antipassive, APL = applicative, AUX = auxiliary, CAUS = causative, CESS = cessative, COND = conditional, CONJ = conjunctive, CONT = continuative, DAT = dative, DEM = demonstrative, DIM = diminutive, ENCL = enclitic, ERG = ergative, FUT = future, HAB = habitual, IMP = imperative, INCH = inchoative, IND = indicative, INST = instrumental, INT = interrogative, INTEN = intentional, INTER.PRT = interrogative particle, LOC = locative, NEG = negative, PART = participial, PASS = passive, PL = plural, POS = possessive, PRT = particle, REL = relative, SG = singular, VAL.DEC = valency decreasing

Data

Data were collected from Elders of St. George and St. Paul islands (the Pribilof Islands).

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