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Two Passive Markers in Cape Dorset Inuktitut?

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Introduction

This paper investigates passive constructions in the Cape Dorset dialect of Inuktitut (henceforth CDI). The question that has motivated this research is: how is the passive voice expressed in CDI, a split-ergative language?

Case is a particularly interesting aspect of voice alternations in CDI, so special attention will be paid to this issue. Particular consideration is also paid to distributional facts of the passive marker(s) within the verbal morphology, and general repercussions of passivity in a split-ergative language like Inuktitut. We will first consider the passive voice from a theoretical perspective. Then the interaction of case marking with the passive and active voices will be reviewed. Finally, we will consider possible explanations for the two basic constructions used to signal passive voice.

I will conclude that CDI may have two ways to signal the passive voice, only one of which is a true passive marker. The other marker, *–za/-ta*, phonetically very similar to the passive *–zau/-tau* but distributionally quite different, is a past tense detransitivation marker that pairs with the patient argument of a verb. It is a way to transform a transitive verb into an unaccusative. This *–za/-ta* morpheme deceptively behaves like passivization in that it privileges the patient argument of a transitive verb when that verb appears with only one argument.

This explanation gives the desirable outcome whereby the passive marker never appears with ergative case.

The Passive Voice

In the passive voice, the patient thematic role, which is the direct object of the verb in an active sentence, is upgraded to the subject position. This voice is normally restricted to languages

that mark case in a Nominative/Accusative manner. The passive voice is thought not to exist in Ergative/Absolutive case-marking languages. CDI has both Nom/Acc and Erg/Abs case-marking. The counterpart to passivization in ergative languages is anti-passivization, a process that privileges the agent of a sentence. Passivization privileges the patient.

Let's consider some examples to further explicate the passive voice. In (1) and (2) are English examples of active and passive sentences, respectively, with the case-marking and thematic roles specified. Likewise, in (3) and (4) are examples of CDI active and passive sentences, respectively, with the case marking and thematic roles specified.

1) Active:
   The boy kissed the girl
   Subj.$_{NOM}$ Obj.$_{ACC}$
   Agent   Patient

2) Passive:
   The girl   was kissed (by the boy).
   Subj.$_{NOM}$
   Patient   (Agent)

3) Active:
   Oleekie-Ø pirosiaq-nik nuchi[1]-zu-vini-q
   Oleekie-$_{ABS}$ plant-$_{SEC}$ move-$_{PAST-REALIS-3SG}$
   Agent   Patient
   "Oleekie moved the plant"

4) Passive:
   Pirosiaq-Ø (Oleekie-mut) nut-ta-vini-q
   Plant-$_{ABS}$ (Oleekie-by) move-$_{PASSIVE-REALIS-3SG}$
   Patient   (Agent)
   "The plant was moved by Oleekie"

In nominative-accusative languages, one of the ways to explain the nature of passive constructions is to look at case. In an active construction nominative case is assigned to the subject and accusative case is assigned to the object. In passive constructions the object of the active construction is found in subject position with nominative case and the former subject is either not present, or reduced to a prepositional adjunct. Compare the active sentence in (1) to the passive 'equivalent' in (2).

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[1] This verbal root changed when the voice changed. This is unusual (roots normally remain stable, except perhaps the last phoneme) and could indicate that there is more happening in these sentences than I am aware of.

Another approach to passive constructions is to think of them as constructions that hide agency. The thematic agent is not overtly represented in the sentence, merely implied. In examples (1) and (2), we see the difference in the case-marking as well as the absence of the overt agent in the passive construction in (2). The correlation of agentive thematic role with nominative marking in an active sentence in lost, and instead we see a correlation of *patient* thematic role with nominative case marking in the passive.

In example (3) the agent is marked with the unmarked case, which is *absolutive* in CDI. The patient is marked with secondary case, -nik[2]. In example (4), the passivized counterpart of (3), we get *pirosiaq* marked with absolutive case and *Oleekie* demoted to an optional adjunctival phrase with *–mut*. As you can see, these sentences behave very similarly to the Nom/Acc English sentences when it comes to voice alternation.

Passive Constructions in Cape Dorset Inuktitut:

In this section the bulk of the data on passive constructions will be presented. We will look at the basic morphemes, the person paradigms, and passivization in the different tenses. The passive construction is not restricted in its usage but is rather a highly productive voice in CDI.

It will be useful to discuss some general properties of Inuktitut before delving into the passive. Consider the following examples:

5) a. anguti-Ø   kii – za-vini-q   qimmiq – mut
      man-_{ABS}   bite – PASSIVE-REALIS-3SG   dog – DAT
      "The man was bitten by the/a dog"

   b. kii – za – vini-q
      bite-PASSIVE-REALIS-3SG
       "S/He was bitten"

By comparing examples (5a) and (5b), both arguments of the verb need not be overtly mentioned in CDI for a sentence to be grammatical. We will not discuss this at length but presume that this is possible because the verbal morphology is so rich. "Inuktitut could be called a pro-drop language, in the sense that overt pronominal agreement on the verb signals the role of non-overt arguments both in ergative and intransitive sentences." (Spreng, 248) A sentence can

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[2] Secondary case marking appears as *–nik* or *–mik*.

be just the verb and its affixes. The final element of the verbal morphology is the pronominal element which may agree with one or two of the verbal arguments.

6)   Kuni-tau-lauq-tunga
       Kiss.passive.past.1sg
       I was kissed

In (6) the verb *kunitaulauqtunga* is equivalent to the English sentence "I was kissed". We get the particle, *-tau*, marking the passive. The English translation of (6) is a simple passive with no overt agent, only an implied agent. The Inuktitut example seems to be a relatively exact translation. We are confident of the meanings of the other suffixal morphemes on the verb, so it seems clear in this example that the *–tau* is what represents the passivity of the sentence. This example nicely isolates the passive morpheme. It also implies an agent. In a way, the tau behaves as one of the arguments of the verb, or signals a missing agent. But agents can be missing anyway in Inuktitut.

The passive in CDI seems to be, like many things in Inuktitut, encoded in the verbal morphology by a passive marker. In order to isolate the passive markers, active and passive minimal pairs (with and without passive marker) such as the following examples were elicited.

7) Active:
   niri-zu-viniq
   eat-PAST(LAST WEEK)[3]-REALIS.3SG
   "He/She/It ate"

8) Passive:
   niri-za-viniq
   eat-PASS-REALIS.3SG
   "He/She/It was eaten"

9) Active:
   kii-qqau-zunga
   bite-PAST-1SG
   "I bit myself" (earlier today)

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[3] This form only appears in active sentences but we are not sure of its exact function, later in the paper I will present a hypothesis. Michael Barkey analyses this morpheme as a past marker meaning "last week."

10) Passive:
    kii-zau-qqau-zunga (qimmiq-mut)
    bite-PASS-PAST-1SG   (dog-DAT)
    "I was bitten (by a dog)" (earlier today)

As can be seen in examples (7) and (8), where only *–zu* and *-za* vary in the morphology, the *–za* marker can be isolated as a passive marker in CDI. Similarly, in (9) and (10) the passive marker *–zau* appears. In (7) there is a single argument of the verb, while in (8) the passive marker adds a second implied argument. The same is essentially true for (9) and (10) however (9) has an implied reflexive meaning[4]. In (10) the passive marker signifies the agentive role.

We can conclude that the passive in CDI is always a suffix on the verb, but that it can take one of two forms, -tau/-zau and –ta/-za[5]. The *–zau* form attaches directly to the root, while the *–za* form precedes realis-marking and pronominal inflection. The major question that arises is: when do we find the *–ta/-za* passive marker and when do we find the *–tau/-zau* passive marker? Sammons (1993) identifies the *passive participle* as *–ta* and the *passive marker* as *-tau*. Are these really different elements? Is it plausible to collapse them into one form, following Beach (2003) in identifying the *–u* in *–tau* as a separate morpheme? Later on in the paper we will discuss differences between these two forms of passive marking.

The passive voice can show up with all grammatical persons in CDI. Notice that the verb in the sentences in (11) agrees only with the patient argument. The dative argument is overt in all these sentences, but could just as easily be omitted and grammaticality maintained.

11) a. kii-**zau**-qqau-zunga marruu-nnut qimmi-nut   *1st singular*
    bite-PASS-PAST-1SG   two-DAT   dog-DAT
    "I got bitten by two dogs"

    b. kii-**zau**-qqau-zutit qimmiq-mut   *2nd singular*
    bite-PASS-PAST-2sg   dog-DAT
    "You(sg) got bitten by a dog"

    c. kinikkiaq   kii-**za**-vini-q   qimmiq-mut   *3rd singular*
    somebody bite-PASS- REALIS-3SG dog-DAT
    "Somebody got bitten by a dog"

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[4] There is an overt reflexive marker, *imminik,* in CDI. This marker is not present in this sentence which is why I have chosen to consider this merely an implied reflexive. I assume that the reflexive reading is by default, and is not signalled by anything in the verbal morphology.

[5] [t] and [z] are allophones, in other dialects of Inuktitut this segment is [j].

d. anaana-ga   kii-**zau**-qqau-zuq qimmiq-mut   *3rd singular*
   mother-$_{POSS1SG}$ bite-$_{PASS-PAST-3SG}$ dog-$_{DAT}$
   "My mother got bitten by a dog"

e. kii-**zau**-qqau-zuguk qimmiq-mut   *1st dual*
   bite-$_{PASS-PAST-1DU}$ dog-$_{DAT}$

f. kii-**zau**-qqau-zugut qimmiq-mut   *1st plural*
   bite-$_{PASS-PAST-1PL}$ dog-$_{DAT}$

g. kii-**zau**-qqau-zuutik qimmiq-mut   *2nd dual*
   bite-$_{PASS-PAST-2DU}$ dog-$_{DAT}$

h. kii-**zau**-qqau-zusi qimmiq-mut   *2nd plural*
   bite-$_{PASS-PAST-2PL}$ dog-$_{DAT}$

i. kii-**zau**-qqau-zuuk qimmiq-mut   *3rd dual*
   bite-$_{PASS-PAST-3DU}$ dog-$_{DAT}$

j. kii-**zau**-qqau-zuit qimmiq-mut   *3rd plural*
   bite-$_{PASS-PAST-3PL}$ dog-$_{DAT}$

The passive voice is not restricted to specific tenses, but can show up in past and non-past sentences. There has been discussion that Inuktitut is a tenseless language (Nowak 1994, Shaer 2003, Bittner 2005). I am following Hayashi&Spreng (2005) in assuming that Inuktitut does indeed have tense and that the tense marking appears after the *–zau* passive morpheme, but prior to the *–za* passive morpheme. The following is a comprehensive, but not complete, list of different tenses in the passive voice in CDI.

12) Present:
     a. kii-zau-Ø-zunga
       bite-$_{PASS-PRES-1SG}$
       "I am being bitten"
   Past:
     b. Aŋuti-Ø   kuni-tau-**qqau**-zuq   *Past, recent*
       man-$_{ABS}$ kiss-$_{PASS-PAST1-3SG}$
       "The man was kissed (this morning)"

     c. Aŋuti-Ø   kuni-tau-**lauq**-tuq   *Past, yesterday*
       man-$_{ABS}$ kiss-$_{PASS-PAST2-3SG}$
       "The man was kissed (yesterday)"

d. Aŋuti-Ø   kuni-tau-**zu**-zuq   *Past, last week*
    man-ABS   kiss-PASS-PAST3-3SG
    "The man was kissed (last week)"

e. Aŋuti-Ø   kuni-tau-**laursima**-zuq   *Past, distant*
    man-ABS   kiss-PASS-PAST4-3SG
    "The man was kissed (last month/year)"

Future and Conditional tense markers:

f. niri-zau-**langa**-zu-tit   *Close Future*
    eat-PASS-FUT1-?-2SG
    "You will be eaten"

g. pairnguq-tau-**laaq**-tutit   *Distant Future*
    miss-PASS-FUT2-2SG
    "You will be missed"

h. niri-zau-**sima**-**langa**-zuq iqaluk-Ø   *Future Perfect*
    eat-PASS-PERF-FUT-3SG   fish-ABS
    "The fish will have been eaten"

i. niri-zau-**sima**-**langa**-zu-**vini**-q   iqaluk-Ø   *Conditional Perfect*
    eat-PASS-COND-FUT-PAST-REALIS-3SG fish-ABS
    "The fish would have been eaten"

Past with –*viniq* and –*vininga*[6]:

j. aapu-Ø   niri-za-**vini**-q
    apple-ABS eat-PASS-REALIS-3SG
    "The apple was eaten"

k. aapu-Ø   niri-za-**vini**-nga   qitunga-up
    apple-ABS eat-PASS-REALIS-GEN1SG   child-ERG
    "The apple was eaten by the child"

The passive voice frequently appears with the realis marker –*vini*. However, only the –*za*, and not the –*zau*, passive marker seems to appear with the realis marker. Realis is a possible analysis of –*viniq/-vininga* meaning the event described by the verb is real, and thus has happened, this would be why we only see these forms in the past tense. Micheal Barkey pointed this distinction out to us, he cites Comrie 1985: 49, referenced in Swift 2004: 23.

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[6] Due to forms like –*zu-viniq* (*anguti niri-za-viniq turu-zu*-viniq – "The man who was eaten, died"), where –*zu* may be the past tense marker, we are hesitant to consider –*viniq* and –*vininga* as tense markers, although they only appear in the past tense. They are more accurately glossed as *realis* markers.

The *–za* immediately precedes *–vini*. Realis marking indicates that the verbal event is known, as opposed to unknown (irrealis). A corollary of this marking is that for something to be known it must have already come to be. Therefore it is only possible to get a past tense reading from a *realis* verb.

The *–viniq* and *–vininga* forms can appear in non-passive constructions as well, and they may appear on both verbs and nominals. On nominals, they indicate "former"-beings. Thus, -*viniq* on an animal indicates a dead animal (14). And *–vininga*, which has possessive qualities, indicates a formerly owned animal/thing (15). Why *–viniq* and *–vininga* appear so frequently with the passive marker *–za*, and only with *–za* and not *–zau*, is still to be considered.

13) igalaa-viniq
    window-REALIS
    "Broken Window" (Sandrine Tailleur)

14) nanuq-viniq
    Polarbear-REALIS-3SG
    "Former polarbear/ Dead polarbear"

15) nanuq-vini-nga
    Polarbear-REALIS-1SG.POSS
    "My former (previously-owned) polarbear"

When sentences are in the passive voice, the verb does not agree with the agent but with the patient. In (16) and (17), despite number change of the agent, the verbal pronominal inflection remains the same, agreeing with the 1PL patient/subject. This is in contrast to the active sentence in (18), where the pronoun agrees with both arguments.

16) kii-zau-qqau-zugut qimmiq-mut
    bite-PASS-PAST-1PL   dog-DAT
    "We(pl) got bitten by a dog"

17) kii-zau-qqau-zugut qimmir-asarnut
    bite-PASS-PAST-1PL   dog-DAT
    "We(pl) got bitten by many dogs"

18) Diari-up   savik-Ø   tigumia-tanga
    Derek-ERG knife-ABS hold-3SG.3SG.
    "Derek is holding a knife"

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Case marking on Passive Arguments:

Following Beach (2003) and Hayashi&Spreng (2005), we identify *–up* as the ergative case marker, *-Ø* as the absolute case marker, *–mut* as the dative case marker, and *–mik* as a secondary case marker (which would be equivalent to the accusative case in a Nom/Acc language) (Dorais 1990, Johns 1996).

Both the morphemes *-up* and *-mut* can appear on the agent of a passive construction (the agent is a *by*-phrase type agent). However, there are restrictions on which case marking appears on the argument based on the morphological marking on the verb. Consider the following examples:

19) a. kii-**za**-vini-**nga**   qimmi-**up**
     bite-PASS- REALIS-GEN.1SG dog-ERG
     "I got bitten by a dog" (just now)

   b. *kii-**za**-vini-**nga**   qimmi-**mut**
      bite-PASS- REALIS-GEN.1SG dog-DAT

20) a. kii-**za**-vini-**q**   qimmir-**mut**
     bite-PASS-REALIS-3SG dog-DAT

   b. *kii-**za**-vini-**q**   qimmir-**up**
      bite-PASS-REALIS-3SG   dog-ERG

21) a. kii-**zau**-qqau-zunga qimmir-**mut**
     bite-PASS-PAST-1SG   dog-DAT
     "I got bitten by a dog" (earlier today)

   b. *kii-**zau**-qqau-zunga qimmir-**up**
      bite-PASS-PAST-1SG   dog-ERG

In (19a) *–zavininga* pairs with ergative case marking, in (19b) we see that it is ungrammatical if *–zavininga* appears with dative case marking. In (20a) we see that, opposite to the examples in (19), -zaviniq appears with dative case marking but is ungrammatical with ergative case marking (20b). This suggests that *–nga* and *–q* are what determine what case marking can appear on the argument of the verb, or vice versa. The morpheme *–nga* matches with ergative case, *-up*, and the morpheme *–q* matches with dative case, *-mut*.

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Now let's consider the case marking when the passive marker is *-zau* as opposed to *–za* (21). We have been unable to elicit sentences with *–zau* and ergative case marking on the agent. The passive marker *–zau* appears to only be able to pair with dative case-marked arguments (*-mut*). Why would the *–u* in *–zau* block the ergative case marking on the agent? Or, why would *–u* require that the agent of the verb receive dative case marking?

According to Johns (2006) the Eastern Dialects of Inuktitut, to which CDI belongs, are in the process of transforming from Erg/Abs languages to Nom/Acc languages. This was apparent during elicitation sessions with our consultant, where the default sentence given was normally with Nom/Acc case marking. Erg/Abs counterpart sentences were also possible.

The unmarked case, absolutive, is of particular interest in CDI. In transitive sentences that are not overtly marked with ergative (*-up*) case the subject/agent of the sentence in marked with absolutive (-Ø) case. The direct object is marked with secondary case, as in examples (22) and (23). However when there is overt ergative case marking, it is the patient that it marked with absolutive case, as in example (24).

22) Nominative Transitive:

piaraq-Ø aapu-mik niri-zuq

child-_{ABS} apple-_{SEC} eat-_{3SG}

"The child is eating the apple"

23) Nominative Transitive:
Oleekie-Ø pirosiaq-nik nuchi-zu-vini-q
Oleekie-_{ABS} plant-_{SEC}   move-_{PAST-REALIS-3SG}
 "Oleekie moved the plant"

24) Ergative Transitive:
Diari-up savik-Ø tigumia-tanga
Derek-ERG knife-ABS hold-3SG.3SG.
"Derek is holding a knife"   (Colin Gorrie, Monique Proulx)

The unmarked case, -Ø, behaves both as an absolutive marker in that it marks the object of a transitive verb and the subject of an intransitive verb, and as a nominative marker in that when the object of a transitive verb is marked with secondary case it marks the subject.

Passive sentences necessarily occur only with transitive verbs, and the sole argument of the verb is the patient. The secondary case marker, *-mik*, cannot appear with the passive voice

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(fact seconded by Beach (2003: 5)), compare the antipassive sentence in (25) and the passive in (26).

25) aniapi-ga   niqi-**mik** niri-zuq[7]
    brother-POSS1SG meat-SEC eat-3SG
    "My brother is eating the meat"

26) niqi-Ø niri-za-nga aniapi-mma
    meat-ABS eat-PASS-3SG brother-POSS1SG
    "The meat is being eaten by my brother"

The possessive *–ma* (1SG) is in complementary distribution with the ergative marker *–up,* examples (27), (28), and (29).

27) aapu niri-za-vini-nga   qitunga-**up**
    apple eat-PASS-REALIS-GEN1SG child-ERG
    "The apple was eaten by the child(known to the speaker)"

28) aapu niri-za-vini-nga   qitunga-**mma**
    apple eat-PASS-REALIS-GEN1SG child-POSS1SG
    "The apple was eaten by my child"

29) aapu niri-za-vini-q   qitunga-**up**
    apple eat-PASS-REALIS-3SG   child-ERG
    "The apple was eaten by some (any) child"

Are *–za/-ta* and *–zau/-tau* the same?

Is it plausible to collapse both passive markers, *–zau* and *–za,* into one form, following Beach (2003) in identifying the *–u* in *-zau* as a separate morpheme? The two forms consist of the same underlying phonemes except for the *–u*. If these are the same except for *–u*, what does the *–u* mean and when does it appear? Beach (2003) glosses the passive *–zau* as *–za* (passive)+ *-u* (be). We have not been able to find conclusive meaning differences between the two forms, however, consider (30) and (31) where the meaning of the sentences is very similar – a person was bitten by a dog – but when the person is non-definite (*somebody*) as opposed to definite (*you*), the *–za-viniq* form appears.

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[7] This sentence is in the antipassive construction; *-mik* seems to appear frequently in antipassive constructions (Beach 2003, Johns 2006).

30) kii-**zau**-qqau-zutit qimmiq-mut
  bite-_{PASS-PAST-2sg} dog-_{DAT}
  "You(sg) got bitten by a dog"

31) kinikkiaq kii-**za**-vini-q   qimmiq-mut
  somebody bite-_{PASS- REALIS-3SG} dog-_{DAT}
  "Somebody got bitten by a dog"

Distributionally, -*zau* and -*za* behave quite differently. Above, when we discussed tense and case, we saw that there was restrictions on the co-ocurrence of certain tenses and cases with –*zau* and –*za* (for example, recall that –*za* is the only form that can appear with the realis marker). In most sentences it will appear as though they both attach to the root, however, when tense, modality, and causation are considered, the distribution becomes more apparent. In (32a) we see that –*tau* appears after causation, and before negation. In (32b) we see that –*tau* precedes modality (-*vallai*) and modality precedes tense (-*qqau*). In (32c) we see that modality precedes negation. The two examples given in (33) show that while –*zau* precedes tense marking, -*za* follows tense marking. Also, -*za* always immediately precedes realis marking.

32) a. piaraq-Ø niri-**kar**-*tau*-**ningit**-tuq
   child-_{ABS} eat-**_{CAUS}**_{-PASS-}**_{NEG}**_{-3SG}
   "The child was not fed"

  b. kuni-*tau*-**vallai**-qqau-zunga
   kiss-_{PASS-MAYBE-PAST-1SG}
   "I might have been kissed"

  c. misi-**gunna-ngit**-tunga
   jump-_{CAN-NEG-1SG}
   "I can't jump"

33) a. niri-*zau*-**sima-langa**-zu-vini-q iqaluk-Ø
   eat-_{PASS-COND-FUT-PAST-REALIS-3SG} fish-_{ABS}
   "The fish would have been eaten"

  b. niri-**sima-langa-***za*-vini-q iqaluk-Ø
   eat-_{COND-FUT-PASS-REALIS-3SG} fish-_{ABS}
   "The fish was going to be eaten"

From the above data I have concluded that the passive markers *–za* and *–zau* differ in their distribution. Considering the template I have devised in (34), *-zau/-tau* seems to appear in VOICE1, while *–za/-ta* seems to appear in VOICE2.

34) Possible Order of Verbal Morphology
   V – CAUS-**VOICE1** - MODALITY - TENSE - NEG - **VOICE2** - REALIS - PRONOMINAL INFLECTION

It is not at all ideal to have two voice positions, but as of yet the difference between the two passive forms is unresolved. Movement may resolve this issue. Perhaps the passive markers are the same, **-za**, and when *–u* is present, *-za* must move to a position higher in the tree (35).

35) *-zau* as za+u:
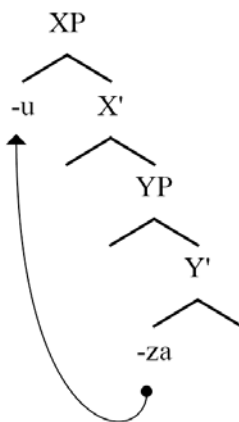
However, Hayashi and Spreng (2005) claim that tense *never* precedes "valency changing morphemes such as the passive" (1). If this is true, the passive marker cannot be base generated in VOICE2 as VOICE2 follows tense. Are there possibly two related (because of phonological similarity), but not the same, passive markers in CDI?

It may be relevant to recall that we were unable to elicit sentences with ergative case marking and *–zau*. If ergative case marking is theoretically incompatible with passive verbal morphology is it accurate to consider the passive marker a passive marker when the agent is case-marked for ergative? If it is true that ergativity and passivity are incompatible (Alana Johns,

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Diane Massam[8]), the true passive marker may be *–zau*. What then is *–za*? Reconsidering the data in (36) and (37), *-za* is in complimentary distribution with *–zu*. Is it more plausible to compare *–za* as a variant of *–zu* rather than a variant of *–zau*? If so, why do we get a passive reading for *–za*??

36) Active:
    niri-zu-viniq
    eat-PAST(LAST WEEK)-REALIS.3SG
    "He/She/It ate"

37) Passive:
    niri-za-viniq
    eat-PASS-REALIS.3SG
    "He/She/It was eaten"

I would like to hazard a guess that *–zu* is a past tense marker, but one that pairs with the agentive argument of a verb. And *–za* is a past tense marker that pairs with the patient argument of a verb. This would make it so (36) has the English active translation, and (37) has the English passive translation. This mechanism of agreement (*-za*) would have the same effect as passivization in that it would privilege the patient of a transitive verb when that verb appeared with only one argument. It would be a way to make a transitive verb into an unaccusative. While *–zu* would be a way to make a transitive verb into an unergative.

The true passive marker, *-zau*, cannot appear with ergative arguments, only with a dative by-phrase argument as expected of the solely Nom/Acc function of passivization. This then distinguishes *–zau* from *–za*.

Conclusion:

Cape Dorset Inuktitut, a split-ergative language, has passive constructions with morphology and case-marking similar to that of a Nom/Acc language. We appear to get passivized verbs appearing with overt ergative arguments, these are however, I propose, not true passives but verbs that have been rendered unaccusative. This would maintain the conviction that ergative case and passive voice are incompatible.

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[8] Personal conversations

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