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An Outline of Valency-Reducing Operations in Chukchi

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An Outline of Valency-Reducing Operations in Chukchi

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This paper is an exploration of the valency-reducing operations in Chukchi. Our purpose is to deepen our theoretical understanding of the voice system in Chukchi, focusing on the morphological processes that mark the relationship between intransitive verbs and transitive verbs: the antipassive, the reflexive and the anticausative.

In Chukchi, noun incorporation is also related to valency-reducing operations. When an object is incorporated into the verb stem, the number of core arguments the verb takes is reduced by one, and the verb is detransitivized. So, we will also briefly introduce object incorporation in Chukchi.

Key words: Chukchi, transitive, intransitive, antipassive, anticausative, reflexive, object incorporation

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1. Introduction

Chukchi,¹⁾ belonging to the Chukchi-Kamchatkan language family, is spoken by about 6400 people living mainly on Chukotka and its adjacent areas in far northeast Siberia, of the Russian Federation.

In the present paper, I will examine the valency-reducing operations in Chukchi, that is to say to outline the relationship between intransitive and transitive verbs. Data are from my

fieldwork on Chukchi.

The valency-increasing operation is more than a valency-reducing operation. The morphological causative not only applies to intransitive verbs, but also applies to transitive verbs. Besides transitive formation from intransitive verbs, there are two ways to increase valency: the morphological causative and the analytic causative. The morphological causative is the most productive.

Previous studies have described and discussed the antipassive, such as Nedjalkov (1979) and Kozinsky *et al.* (1993), but little substantial work has been done on the anticausative so far. I have described the valency-increasing operations in detail, but only briefly touched upon valency-reducing operations (Kurebito 2008a and 2008b).

Chukchi has valency-reducing derivations as well as valency-increasing ones. There are three types of valency-reducing derivations in Chukchi: the antipassive, the reflexive, and the anticausative. These forms are derived by adding the prefix *ine-* (its allomorphs are *ine-/ena-*), and the suffixes *-tku* (its allomorphs are *-tku/-tko*), *-twa* and *-et* (its allomorphs are *-et/-at*) to a transitive verb stem.

2. Chukchi as a polysynthetic language

Chukchi is an absolutive-ergative language. The subject of an intransitive verb and the direct object of a transitive verb take the absolutive case, while the subject of a transitive verb takes the ergative case. Chukchi does not have a distinct ergative marker. The instrumental case marker has the same form as the ergative case marker.

Intransitive verbs in Chukchi agree with the subject (S), and transitive verbs agree with the subject (S/A) and object (O/IO)² in person and number. Agreement is shown by prefixes, suffixes and circumfixes which may indicate person, number, and mood, as well as subject and object features.

Chukchi is a polysynthetic language, structurally very complex. Two or more word stems can combine into one word, or many affixes may occur in a single word. Sometimes a word in Chukchi may be the functional equivalent of a whole sentence in another language. See the following two examples.

- (1) *t-ə-kuk-iməl-nilu-y?ek-Ø*
 1SG.S-E-pot-water-wash-1SG.S-PAST
 ‘I washed out the pot with water.’
- (2) *n-ə-lye-ra-ŋaw-ə-n-rayt-an-ŋ-ə-qen*
 IMPF-E-very-want-woman-E-TR-go home-TR-want-E-3SG.S
 ‘He really wants to bring the woman home.’

In (1), the transitive object *kuk* ‘cookpot’ and the instrument *iməl* ‘water’ are incorporated into the transitive verb *nilu* ‘wash’. This incorporative complex verb is inflectable as an intransitive. (2) also has the core argument reduced, with the whole complex word inflectable as an intransitive. But its structure is different from (1): to the basic verb stem *rayt* ‘go home’

the circumfix *r-...-an* (< *r-...-at*) is added, and the transitive verb ‘to bring’ is derived, with the object noun *ŋaw* ‘woman’ incorporated into the new transitive verb. Moreover, the lexical circumfix *ra-...-ŋ* ‘to want’ is added to this incorporative complex word.

In Chukchi, there are some affixes which express substantive concrete verbal meanings, such as the circumfix *ra-...-ŋ* ‘to want’ above, that in other languages would occur as independent words. In the following example, *-ŋərke* ‘gather’ functions as a free-standing verb.

- (3) *ləye-wəej-ŋərke-lʔet-γʔet-Ø*
 very-grass-gather-much-3PL-PAST
 ‘They gathered a lot of grass.’

3. Verb classes

Chukchi has three classes of verbs: intransitive verbs, which are inflectable only as intransitives, but can be used transitively when they take valency-increasing morphological marking (e.g., *jəlqet* ‘sleep’); transitive verbs, which are inflectable only as transitives, but can be used intransitively when they take valency-reducing morphological marking (e.g., *piri* ‘catch’); and ambitransitives (or labile verbs), which are inflectable either way, and can be used as transitives and intransitives without morphological change (e.g., *mle* ‘break’). (4) and (5) are examples of verbs that have been made intransitive/transitive by the addition of morphological marking.

- (4) *ŋinqej* *ats-ə-γʔe-Ø*
 boy.(ABS.SG) hide-E-3SG.S-PAST
 ‘The boy hid.’
- (5) *ŋinqej* *t-ə-r-ats-ə-ŋat-γʔan-Ø*
 boy.(ABS.SG) 1SG.S-E-TR-hide-E-TR-3SG.O-PAST
 ‘I made the boy hide.’

Chukchi does not have a benefactive marker. But intransitive verbs can be used as transitive verbs when they have to express a beneficiary meaning. Compare the following two sentences.

- (6) *əllʔa* *puture-γʔi-Ø*
 mother.(ABS.SG) sing-3SG.S-PAST
 ‘The mother sang a song’
- (7) *əllʔa-ta* *puture-nin-Ø* *nenenə*
 mother-ERG dance-3SG.S/3SG.O-PAST child.(ABS.SG)
 ‘The mother danced for the child.’

In (6), *puture* ‘dance’ is an intransitive verb, but if the speaker needs to express a benefi-

Table 1

Intransitive-only verbs			
<i>ejsyit</i>	'wave'	<i>melew</i>	'be cured'
<i>j?et</i>	'be cloudy'	<i>jalyt</i>	'nomadize'
<i>jlqet</i>	'sleep'	<i>melew</i>	'be cured'
<i>?eqiml</i>	'drink vodka'	<i>qametwa</i>	'eat'
<i>ikwisi</i>	'drink (water)'	<i>uwi</i>	'boil'
<i>tip?ejje</i>	'sing'	<i>puture</i>	'dance'
Transitive-only verbs			
<i>piri</i>	'catch'	<i>jl</i>	'give'
<i>tm</i>	'kill'	<i>pnr</i>	'hand, give'
<i>jp</i>	'waer' (clothes)	<i>qewi</i>	'get, receive'
<i>apat</i>	'boil'	<i>ru</i>	'eat'
<i>pl</i>	'drink (water)'	<i>rytku</i>	'scratch'

ciary meaning such as (7), the verb can be inflected as a transitive.

What must be noted is that not all intransitive verbs can be inflected as transitives to express a beneficiary meaning. So we must determine what kind of intransitive verbs can express beneficiary meaning and what kind of intransitive verbs can not express a beneficiary meaning.

See the examples of intransitive and transitive verb in Table 1 above.

Note that Chukchi has suppletive verb pairs which are synonymous. Their only difference is that one stem is transitive and the other is intransitive. Examples are listed in Table 1 above. For example, *qametwa* 'eat (intr)' vs. *ru* 'eat (tr)', *ikwisi* 'drink (intr)' vs. *pl* 'drink (tr)', *qt* 'go (intr)' vs. *jt* 'go (tr)', *waje* 'sew (intr)' vs. *tmi* 'sew (tr)', and *uwi* 'boil (intr)' vs. *apat* 'boil (boil)' are all synonymous, differing only in transitivity. These suppletive verbs cannot change their transitivity by adding morphological affixes as shown in the following two examples (8) and (9).

- (8) *q-ə-qametwa-ye*
 IMPR.2SG-E-eat-2SG.S
 'You eat.'

- (9) *q-ə-nu-γən*
 IMPR.2SG-E-eat-2SG.S/3SG.O
 'You eat it.'

Table 2 shows a group of ambitransitive verbs in Chukchi. As we mentioned above, Chukchi transitive verbs and intransitive verbs are inflected differently from each other. So, these ambitransitive verbs can be identified as transitive or intransitive by their inflectional affixes.

The following two examples of the ambitransitive verb *mle* 'break' show this verb

Table 2

Ambitransitive (labile) verbs			
<i>iw</i>	'say'	<i>tulʔet</i>	'steal'
<i>peylatko</i>	'knock'	<i>winret</i>	'help'
<i>mle</i>	'break'	<i>walom</i>	'hear'
<i>ejp</i>	'close'	<i>rrʔəlet</i>	'move'
<i>ir</i>	'hit'	<i>male</i>	'wipe'
<i>ʔir</i>	'cross'	<i>ilytew</i>	'wash'

inflected as an intransitive in (10), and inflected as a transitive in (11).

- (10) *ott-ə-lyən* *mle-yʔi-Ø*
 stick-E-ABS.SG break-3SG.S-PAST
 'The stick broke.'
- (11) *t-ə-mle-yʔen-Ø* *ott-ə-lyən*
 1SG.S-E-break-3SG.O-PAST stick-E-ABS.SG
 'I broke the stick.'

According to Kozinsky *et al.* (1988: 660), the ambitransitive (labile) verbs comprise about 15% (ca. 300 items) of the Chukchi verbal lexicon.

4. Object incorporation and valency change

As we mentioned above, the noun incorporative formation is very productive in Chukchi. Object incorporation is the most frequent type. When an object is incorporated into the verb stem, losing the status of a syntactic argument, the number of core arguments the verb takes is reduced by one, and the whole incorporative complex predicate takes an intransitive marker. Compare the following transitive sentence (12a) and intransitive sentence (12b).

- (12a) *ʔətt-e* *piri-nin-Ø* *melota-lyən*³⁾
 dog-ERG catch-3SG.S/3SG.O-PAST hare-ABS.SG
 'The dog caught the hare.'
- (12b) *ʔətt-ə-n* *milute-piri-yʔi-Ø*
 dog-E-ABS.SG hare-catch-3SG.S-PAST
 'The dog caught a hare.'

In (12a), the object *melota* 'hare' takes the absolutive case, while the subject *ʔətt* 'dog' takes the ergative case. But in (12b), the object *milute* 'hare' is incorporated into the verb *piri* 'catch'. So the valency has changed, and the verbal complex is inflected as an intransitive. Compare the following two causative sentences.

5. Valency-reducing operations

Chukchi does not have passives, but there are three types of valency-reducing operations: the antipassive, the reflexive and the anticausative. These are formed by adding the prefix *in(e)-*, the suffix *-tku*, the suffix *-twa* and the suffix *-et* to a transitive verb stem. We will demonstrate the details below.

5.1. Antipassive

Antipassive is most common in Chukchi. There are two ways to mark antipassive: the prefix *-in(e)* and the suffix *-tku*. See the examples in Table 3 below.

In an antipassive (intransitive) sentence, the subject is in the absolutive case, while the object is in an oblique case (instrumental, locative or dative). See the transitive sentences and the corresponding antipassive sentences below.

- (16a) *tumy-e* *rəlwen-nin-Ø* *nely-ə-n*
 friend-ERG burn-3SG.S/3SG.O-PAST skin-E-ABS.SG
 ‘The friend burned the skin.’
- (16b) *tumyətum* *ine-nlwet-γʔi-Ø* *nely-e*
 friend.(ABS.SG) AP-burn-3SG.S-PAST skin-INS
 ‘The friend burned a skin.’
- (17a) *ally-e* *kənʔu-nin-Ø* *peswaaq*
 father-ERG catch-3SG.S/3SG.O-PAST female.reindeer.(ABS.SG)
 ‘The father caught the female reindeer.’

Table 3

Transitive		Antipassive	
<i>ejmit</i>	‘catch’	<i>ine-ejmi</i>	‘catch (intr)’
<i>rlwet</i>	‘burn’	<i>ine-rlwet</i>	‘burn (intr)’
<i>piri</i>	‘clutch’	<i>ine-piri</i>	‘clutch (intr)’
<i>ʔemet</i>	‘pull’	<i>ine-ʔemet</i>	‘pull (intr)’
<i>lʔu</i>	‘find’	<i>ine-lʔu</i>	‘find (intr)’
<i>knʔu</i>	‘catch’	<i>ine-knʔu</i>	‘catch (intr)’
<i>penr</i>	‘rush’	<i>penr-tku</i>	‘rush (intr)’
<i>tenti</i>	‘tread on’	<i>tenti-tku</i>	‘tread on (intr)’
<i>ilytew</i>	‘wash’	<i>ilytew-tku</i>	‘wash (intr)’
<i>pelo</i>	‘nibble’	<i>pelo-tku</i>	‘nibble (intr)’
<i>kpl</i>	‘hit’	<i>kpl-tku</i>	‘hit (intr)’
<i>ukwet</i>	‘kiss’	<i>ukwet-tku</i>	‘kiss (intr)’
<i>swi</i>	‘cut’	<i>swi-tku</i>	‘cut (intr)’

- (17b) *ally-ə-n* *ine-kənʔu-γʔi-Ø* *peswaaq-ə-k*
 father-E-ABS.S AP-catch-3SG-PAST female.reindeer-E-LOC
 ‘The father caught a female reindeer.’

Although (16a) and (17a), which are transitive sentences, and (16b) and (17b) which are antipassive sentences with *ine-* are similar in meaning, there are a few pragmatic differences: the most obvious difference is that the transitive has a definite meaning and the antipassive has an indefinite meaning. Why these two examples marked by different case marking is a yet unsettled question.

In the following pair of examples, the transitive sentences are in (18a), (19a) and the corresponding antipassive sentences are found in (18b), (19b) with *-tko*. There are also a few pragmatic differences between the transitive sentence and the antipassive sentence as for the antipassive with *in(e)-*.

- (18a) *ʔəttʔ-e* *penr-ə-nen-Ø* *melota-lyən*
 dog-E-ERG rush-E-3SG.S/3SG.O-PAST hare-ABS.SG
 ‘The dog rushed the hare.’
- (18b) *ʔəttʔ-ə-n* *penr-ə-tko-γʔe-Ø* *melota-ytə*
 dog-E-ABS.SG rush-E-AP-3SG.S-PAST hare-DAT
 ‘The dog rushed to a hare.’
- (19a) *qora-ta* *tenti-nin-Ø* *rewəmrew*
 reindeer-ERG tread-3SG.S/3SG.O-PAST stone.(ABS.SG)
 ‘The reindeer trod on the stone.’
- (19b) *qora-ηə* *tenti-tku-γʔi-Ø* *rewəm-ə-k*
 reindeer-ABS.SG tread-AP-3SG-PAST stone-E-LOC
 ‘The reindeer trod on stone.’

In Chukchi, the causative formation can use the circumfix *te...-η*⁶, etymologically related to ‘make’. The use of this circumfix as a causative marker is semantically parallel the English analytic causative ‘make’ and French ‘faire’. However, this circumfix cannot be added to a transitive verb stem directly. Note that *te...-η* must be added after the transitive prefix *r-* is first added to the intransitive verb stem. For example, *wakʔo* ‘sit down’ vs. *te-r-wakʔo-η* ‘make to sit down’, *jlqet* ‘sleep’ vs. *te-r-jlqet-η* ‘make to sleep’.

It is interesting that there is another antipassive in Chukchi. Thus antipassive marker *in(e)-* and the causative marker *te...-η* are added to the intransitive verb stem. This antipassive functions causatively but is not as strong as the normal causative. See Table 4 for some examples of the causative formation and the antipassive formation.

In the following examples, (20a) and (21a) in an antipassive (intransitive) sentence, the subject is in the absolutive case, while the object is in an oblique case. See the transitive sentences (20a) and (21a) and the corresponding antipassive sentences which function causa-

Table 4

Intransitive		Causative	Antipassive
<i>wakʔo</i>	‘sit down’	<i>te-r-wakʔo-ŋ</i>	<i>te-ine-r-wakʔo-ŋ</i>
<i>jet</i>	‘come’	<i>te-r-jet-ŋ</i>	<i>te-ine-r-jet-ŋ</i>
<i>ikwisi</i>	‘drink’	<i>te-r-ikwisi-ŋ</i>	<i>te-ine-r-ikwisi-ŋ</i>
<i>jlqet</i>	‘sleep’	<i>te-r-jlqet-ŋ</i>	<i>te-ine-r-jlqet-ŋ</i>
<i>waje</i>	‘sew’	<i>te-r-waje-ŋ</i>	<i>te-ine-r-waje-ŋ</i>
<i>qametwa</i>	‘eat’	<i>te-r-qametwa-ŋ</i>	<i>te-ine-r-qametwa-ŋ</i>
<i>uwi</i>	‘boil’	<i>te-r-uwi-ŋ</i>	<i>te-ine-r-uwi-ŋ</i>

tively in (20b) and (21b), respectively.

- (20a) *allʔa-ta te-n-waje-y-nen-Ø⁷⁾* *ŋeekək*
 mother-ERG CAUS-TR-SEW-CAUS-3SG.S/3SG.O-PAST daughter.(ABS.SG)
 ‘The mother made her daughter (to) sew.’
- (20b) *allʔa t-ena-n-waje-ŋ-yʔe-Ø* *ŋaakka-γtə*
 mother.(ABS.SG) CAUS-AP-TR-SEW-CAUS-3SG.S-PAST daughter-DAT
 ‘The mother had her daughter (to) sew.’
- (21a) *alləy-e te-n-jen-ŋ-ə-rk-ə-nin-Ø* *ekək*
 father-ERG CAUS-TR-COME-CAUS-E-PRES-3SG.S/3SG.O son.(ABS.SG)
 ‘The father makes his son come.’
- (21b) *alləy-ə-n t-ine-n-jen-ŋ-ə-rkən* *akka-γtə*
 father-E-ABS.SG CAUS-AP-TR-COME-CAUS-3SG.S-PRES son-DAT
 ‘The father had his son come.’

5.2. Reflexive

An other type of valency-reducing derivation is the canonical reflexive. The reflexive is formed by adding the suffix *-et* and *-tku* to a transitive verb stem, just as with the antipassive construction. See examples in Table 5.

An example of a transitive sentence is seen in (22a), with its corresponding reflexive sentence in (22b), with the added morpheme *-tku*.

- (22a) *t-ə-lpiw-yʔen-Ø* *ottə-lyən*
 1SG.S-E-CUT-3SG.O-PAST wood-E-ABS.SG
 ‘I cut the wood.’
- (22b) *t-ə-lpiw-tku-yʔek-Ø*
 1SG.S-E-CUT-REFL-1SG.S-PAST
 ‘I cut myself.’

Table 5

Transitive		Reflexive	
<i>qetw</i>	'stab'	<i>qetw-et</i>	'stab (oneself)'
<i>ejup</i>	'prick'	<i>ejup-et</i>	'prick (oneself)'
<i>lpw</i>	'cut'	<i>lpw-tku</i>	'cut (oneself)'
<i>ittil</i>	'hit'	<i>ittil-tku</i>	'hit (oneself)'
<i>tenʔe</i>	'wash'	<i>tenʔe-tku</i>	'wash (oneself)'
<i>piw</i>	'stab'	<i>piw-tku</i>	'stab (oneself)'

5.3. Anticausative

Another type of valency-reducing derivation is the anticausative. These forms are derived by adding the prefix *-ine* (its allomorphs are *-ine/-ena*), and the suffixes *-tku* (its allomorphs are *-tku/-tko*), *-twa* and *-et* (its allomorphs are *-et/-at*) to a transitive verb stem, see Table 6 below.

Originally, *-twa* is free-standing verb and means 'to be'. The following example clearly shows that this is not a suffix but a free-standing verb.

- (23) *minʔkə n-ə-twa-tore*
 where IMPF-E-be-2PL.S
 'Where are you (PL) ?'

The following examples, (24a) and (25a) are transitive sentences. In contrast, in (24b) and (25b), the agent is removed from the structure and the sentences become intransitive.

- (24a) *əllʔa-ta uwi-rk-ə-nin ənneen*
 mother-ERG boil-PRES-E-3SG.S/3SG.O fish.(ABS.SG)
 'The mother in cooking the fish.'

- (24b) *ənneen owe-twa-rk-ə-n*
 fish.(ABS.SG) boil-AC-PRES-E-3SG.S
 'The fish is cooked.'

Table 6

Transitive		Anticausative	
<i>jme</i>	'hang'	<i>jme-twa</i>	'hang (intr)'
<i>jl</i>	'give'	<i>jl-twa</i>	'give (intr)'
<i>rpʔaw</i>	'dry'	<i>rpʔaw-twa</i>	'dry (intr)'
<i>piri</i>	'hold'	<i>piri-twa</i>	'hold (intr)'
<i>uwi</i>	'boil'	<i>uwi-twa</i>	'boil (intr)'
<i>ret</i>	'bring'	<i>ret-twa</i>	'bring (intr)'
<i>jp</i>	'wear'	<i>jp-twa</i>	'wear (intr)'
<i>piŋku</i>	'put out'	<i>piŋ-twa</i>	'go out'

Table 7

Transitive		Anticausative	
<i>pela</i>	'leave'	<i>pela-et</i>	'leave (intr)'
<i>ejp</i>	'close'	<i>elp-et</i>	'close (intr)'
<i>tejwŋ</i>	'divide'	<i>tejwŋ-et</i>	'divide (intr)'

(25a) *allenjut-e* *jəp-rk-ə-nen* *yəm-nin* *məsəkʷ-ə-n*
 younger.brother-ERG wear-PRES-E-3SG.S/3SG.O I-POSS shirt-E-ABS.SG
 'The younger brother is wearing my shirt.'

(25b) *yəm-nin* *məsəkʷ-ə-n* *jəp-ə-twa-rk-ə-n*
 I-POSS shirt-E-ABS.SG wear-E-AC-PRES-E-3SG.S
 'My shirt is being worn (by somebody).'

So far, we have found just three transitive verbs that may appear as anticausative verbs formed by adding the suffix *-et*. These are shown in Table 7.

See the following examples where (26b) and (27b) — as with (24b), and (25b) — the agent is removed from the structure and the sentences become intransitive.

(26a) *t-ə-pela-γʔen-Ø* *ekək-Ø*
 1SG.S-E-leave-3SG.O-PAST SON-ABS.SG
 'I left the son.'

(26b) *ekək-Ø* *pela-t-γʔe-Ø⁸⁾*
 SON-ABS.SG leave-AC-3SG.S-PAST
 'The son stayed.'

(27a) *t-ejp-γʔen-Ø* *qeryəsʔ-ə-n*
 1SG.S-close-3SG.O-PAST window-E-ABS.SG
 'I closed the window.'

(27b) *qeryəsʔ-ə-n* *ejp-et-γʔi-Ø*
 window-E-ABS.SG close-AC-3SG.S-PAST
 'The window closed.'

6. Final remarks

In this paper, I have examined the valency-reducing operations in Chukchi. Chukchi has valency-reducing derivations as well as valency-increasing ones. There are three valency-reducing derivations: antipassive, reflexive and anticausative. The antipassive appears to be unique in that it originates in the causative form while also retaining a weakened causative meaning.

The data presented in this paper seems sufficient to provide a direction in the study of voice in Chukchi. Through our study of valency-reduction in Chukchi, we can deepen our theoretical understanding of the voice system of Chukchi, and thus, increase our knowledge of morphosyntactic processes. Further data and analysis will definitely provide more insights.

Abbreviations

ABS	absolute	INS	instrumental
AC	anticausative	LOC	locative
AP	antipassive	O	object
AUX	auxiliary verb	PAST	past time
CAUS	causative	PL	plural
DAT	dative	POSS	possessive
E	epenthesis	PRES	present time
ERG	ergative	S	subject
IMPF	Imperfective	SG	singular
IMPR	imperative	TR	transitivizer

Notes

- 1) The phonemic inventory of Chukchi is as follows: Short vowels: /i, e, a, o, u, ə/, Long vowels: /ii, ee, aa, oo, uu/, Consonants: /p, t, k, q, ʔ, s, ʃ, w, j, r, l, m, n, ŋ/. Chukchi has vowel harmony. Leaving aside the neutral vowel /ə/, the vowels can be divided into two groups on the basis of vowel harmony, by using the articulatory feature of high vs. low. In vowel harmony, the lower of a pair of vowels is ‘dominant’, and the higher of a pair of vowels is ‘recessive’, as seen here: Dominant vowels: /e, a, o, ee, aa, oo/, Recessive vowels: /i, e, u., ii, ee, uu/. If a word contains at least one morpheme with dominant vowels, then all morphemes with recessive vowels must be changed into the corresponding dominant ones (*i>e, e>a, u>o*), irrespective of whether they are root or affix (see Kurebito 2008a: 61–70 for details).

Morphophonological processes are also numerous, which create an environment for various assimilations, dissimilations and metatheses of consonants, as well as insertion and deletion of the neutral vowel ə at morphological boundaries.

- 2) Hereafter, I will use Subject to refer to Subject or Agent, and Object to refer to Direct Object or Indirect Object.
- 3) In this word, the absolutive marker *-lyən* is a dominant morpheme. So, the noun stem *milute* ‘hare’ following the vowel harmony rule, changes to the dominant morpheme *melota*.
- 4) In this word, the verb stem *teryä* ‘cry’ is a dominant morpheme. So, following the vowel harmony rule, the morpheme *ŋinqej* ‘boy’ changes to *ŋenqaj*.
- 5) In this word, the dative case *-ytə* is a dominant morpheme. So, the noun stem *nenenə* ‘child’ following the vowel harmony rule, changes to the dominant form *nanana*.
- 6) For details, see Kurebito (2008b).
- 7) The transitive marker *r-* changes to *n-* when in medial position.
- 8) To avoid a vowel sequence, the *ə/a* of *-et/-ta-* is deleted when affixed to a stem ending in a vowel.

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