Detecting the Effects of a Covert *a*P Layer in Polysynthetic Words in Inuit

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1. Introduction

A central goal of syntactic research is to discover which properties of language are universal and which are subject to variation. While there is obviously a great deal of debate as to what specifically is universal and what varies, Evans & Levinson (2009) have made the rather bold claim that linguistic universals are a myth and that Universal Grammar (UG) does not exist. Among their arguments is the claim that lexical categories are not universal. Specifically, they point to Salish as an example of a language that lacks a categorial distinctions; in particular, the noun-verb distinction. While Mathewson (2013:329) points out that this characterization of Salish is incorrect, citing evidence for distinguishing nouns and verbs, this still leaves open the possibility that other languages could validate their claim.

In addition to nouns and verbs, another potential universal lexical category is that of adjectives. Baker (2004) and Dixon (2004) have both claimed that all languages possess an adjective class. And yet, many languages are still described as lacking adjectives, including Inuit. I argue here that Inuit data provide evidence for distinguishing a class of verb-like adjectives: adjectives masquerading as verbs. I also briefly discuss some implications regarding UG and the identification of lexical categories.

2. Background
2.1. Polysynthesis

Inuit (Eskimo-Aleut) is a highly polysynthetic language in which verbal complexes can contain an array of optional elements corresponding to modals, adverbials, and restructuring verbs, in addition to often obligatory elements such as tense, mood, and agreement, as illustrated below.

(1)   Puijjuraa(q)-gunna(q)-ngaa(q)-lauq-sima-nngit-tu-q.   (South Baffin Inuktitut)
        swim-can-instead-DIST.PAST-PERF-NEG-DECL-3SG
        'He/she was not able to swim instead.'

2.2. Traditional view of lexical categories in Eskimo-Aleut

The traditional description of Eskimo-Aleut languages divides words into three classes; nouns, verbs, and "particles" (see Bergsland, 1997; Jacobson, 1995; de Reuse, 1994; Lowe, 1985, 2001; Dorais, 2010; Sadock, 2003). This classification corresponds to the behaviour of inflectional morphology in the language, insofar as "noun words" take case and possessor marking, "verb words" inflect for tense, person, mood, negation, etc., and "particles" take neither nominal nor verbal inflection.

At a basic level, the noun-verb contrast is quite correct. The language clearly distinguishes between noun roots and verb roots, as argued by Sadock (1999:385), who shows that nouns can combine directly with case and possessor marking, but verbs cannot:[1]

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[1] Or, stated in terms of Distributed Morphology; some roots combine with a nominal category head *n*, others with a verbal category head *v*, and only some can combine with either.

(2) a. illu-tsinnut   (West Greenlandic)
         house-ALL.1PL
         'to our house'
     b. *pisuk-tsinnut
         walk-ALL.1PL

Conversely, verbs can combine directly with mood marking, negation, modals, etc.:

(3) a. pisussinnaa-...   (West Greenlandic)
         pisuk-sinnaa-...
         walk-be.able-...
         'able to walk'
     b. *illu-sinnaa-...
         house-be.able-...

Consequently, the noun-verb distinction in Inuit is well supported (see Sadock, 1999, for more arguments). But the idea that nouns, verbs, and particles are the only lexical categories is based on the Lexicalist Hypothesis (Selkirk, 1982; Anderson, 1982, *inter alia*). Essentially, this is the idea that morphological rules build words and then syntax manipulates these fully-built words. For Inuit, however, this would mean that utterances such as (1) above or (4) below are simply "verbs":

(4) illu-jjua(q)-raalu(k)-mu(t)-u(q)-laur-sima-nngi(t)-nama=li=ttauq   (Nunavik; Dorais, 1988:8)
     house-big-really-ALL.SG-go-DIST.PAST-PERF-NEG-(NEG).BECAUSE.1SG=but=also
     'but also, because I never went to the really big house'

If lexical categories are things that words belong to, this is the result for Inuit. However, with the advent of theories such as Distributed Morphology (in which syntax and morphology are essentially the same system and syntactic structure extends into words), the possibility emerges that additional categories can be found word-internally. I argue here for such a word-internal class of adjectives (i.e., $\sqrt{} + a°$): a class of verb-like adjectives whose external syntax resembles that of verbs.

3. Evidence for verb-like adjectives

On the surface, meanings frequently instantiated as adjectives in other languages often exhibit the behaviour of intransitive verbs in Inuit. For instance, in the Baffin dialect verb-like adjectives behave like verbs in many respects:, exhibiting the same range and exponence of person marking, as in (5), the same range and exponence of mood marking, as illustrated in (6), and the same range and exponence of tense marking, as in (7) (albeit modulated by the aspectual properties of the predicate):[2]

(5) a. sinik-tu-nga
         sleep-DECL-1SG
         'I am sleeping'
     b. sanngi-ju-nga
         strong-DECL-1SG
         'I am strong'

(6) a. ani-git
         go.out-IMPER.2SG
         '(You sg.) go out!'
     b. sukka-git
         fast-IMPER.2SG
         '(You sg.) be fast!'

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[2] For example, a punctual verb in Inuktitut without overt tense marking is interpreted as immediate past, while a durative without overt marking receives a progressive interpretation (Hayashi & Spreng, 2005). While West Greenlandic has been claimed to lack tense, Hayashi (2011) shows Inuktitut has genuine tense.

(7) a. niri-lauq-tu-q
         fast-DIST.PAST-DECL-3SG
         'He/she ate.'
     b. sanngi-lauq-tu-q
         strong-DIST.PAST-DECL-3SG
         'He/she/it was strong.'

Even comparatives and superlatives nominalizers treat both types of predicates the same:

(8) a. Miali   taki-niqpaa(q)-ngu-ju-q   asivaqti-nit
         Mary(ABS.SG) tall-[SUPER.NOMZ]-COP-DEC-3SG hunter-ABL.PL
         'Mary is the tallest of the hunters.'
     b. Miali   sinik-niqpaa(q)-ngu-ju-q   asivaqti-nit
         Mary(ABS.SG) sleep-[SUPER.NOMZ]-COP-DEC-3SG hunter-ABL.PL
         'Mary slept the most of (all) the hunters.'

Based on this type of evidence, the literature on Inuit concludes that there is no adjective category.

However, a number of phenomena differentiate verb-like adjectives from verbs: (i) the ability to undergo nominalization under a modal or restructuring verb; (ii) in Nanuvik (Arctic Quebec), compatibility with first and second person and with moods other than declarative; (iii) antonym pairs created by the negative morpheme *-it-* that exist for adjectives, but not for verbs; (iv) in Kangiryuarmiut (Western Canadian) the comparative marker *-tqi-* is compatible with adjectives, but not verbs; and (v) in Siglit (Western Canadian) the exponence of the declarative mood is sensitive to the φ-features of genuine (intransitive) verbs but not of verb-like adjectives. I examine these phenomena below.

3.1. Nominalization under modals and restructuring verbs

While both verb-like adjectives and genuine verbs can combine directly with tense, mood, negation, and person-marking—without the need for a copula or linking verb—they nevertheless exhibit differences with respect to their compatibility with copular constructions. Only adjectives can appear as the root in the following frame alongside declarative (participial) mood, the copula, and a modal or verb-incorporating restructuring verb (South Baffin):

(9) $\sqrt{}$ + DECL + COP + modal/restructuring verb . . .

(10)   VERB-LIKE ADJECTIVES
       a. taki-ju-u-qu-guviuk   taki-ju-u-gunnaq-tu-q
           tall-[DECL-COP-want]-COND.2SG.3SG tall-[DECL-COP-can]-DECL-3SG
           'If you'd like it to be tall, it can be tall.'
       b. akitu-ju-u-qu-guviuk   akitu-ju-u-gunnaq-tu-q
           expensive-DECL-COP-want-COND.2SG.3SG expensive-DECL-COP-can-DECL-3SG
           'If you want it to be expensive, it can be expensive.'

Genuine verbs, on the other hand, combine directly with verb-incorporating verbs like *-qu-* 'want, ask, tell' and modals like *-gunnaq-* 'can':

(11)   GENUINE VERBS
       a. sini-qu-guviuk   sini-gunnaq-tu-q
           sleep-want-COND.2SG.3SG sleep-can-DECL-3SG
           'If you want him/her to sleep, he/she can sleep.'
       b. pukta-qu-guviuk   pukta-gunnaq-tu-q
           float-want-COND.2SG.3SG float-can-DECL-3SG
           'If you want it to float, it can float.'
       c. qaujima-qu-guviuk   qaujima-gunnaq-tu-q
           know-want-COND.2SG.3SG know-can-DECL-3SG
           'If you want him/her to know, he/she can know.'

However, unlike adjectives, genuine verbs cannot be nominalized in this way (with declarative mood and a copula) when embedded under a modal or restructuring verb:

(12) GENUINE VERBS (CONT.)

    a. *sini-ju-u-qu-guviuk   sini-ju-u-gunnaq-tu-q
         sleep-DECL-COP-want-COND.2SG.3SG sleep-DECL-COP-can-DECL-3SG

    b. *pukta-ju-u-qu-guviuk   pukta-ju-u-gunnaq-tu-q
         float-DECL-COP-want-COND.2SG.3SG float-DECL-COP-can-DECL-3SG

    c. *qaujima-ju-u-qu-guviuk   qaujima-ju-u-gunnaq-tu-q
         know-DECL-COP-want-COND.2SG.3SG know-DECL-COP-can-DECL-3SG

If both types of predicates are verbs, we would not expect some of them tolerate this type of nominalization under modals and restructuring verbs while others do not.[3]

3.2. Person/mood restrictions in Nunavik dialect

Dorais (1988:114-115) states that the Nunavik dialect of Inuktitut does not possess adjectives, but goes on to show that "qualifying name giving words" behave differently from both nouns and verbs. Such forms seem at first to inflect like verbs in the third person of the declarative mood:

(13)   a.   piu-ju-q   (Nunavik)
         good-DECL-3SG
         'he/she/it is good'

    b.   piu-ju-t   (Nunavik)
         good-DECL-3PL
         'they are good'

However, he notes that they cannot support "other persons or modalities"—i.e., first or second person and other moods. In such cases, both the declarative marker and the copula are required (alongside the desired mood and agreement marking):

(14)   a.   piu-ju-u-ju-nga   (Nunavik)
         good-| DECL-COP |-DECL-1SG
         'I am good.' (Dorais's original gloss: 'I am someone good')

    b.   piu-ju-u-gamik   (Nunavik)
         good-| DECL-COP |-BECAUSE.3PL.SAME.SUBJECT
         'because they are good'

Furthermore, he states that "if the whole sentence solely consists of expressing the ascription of a quality, infix -*u*- ('to be'), followed by a proper ending shall be added", as illustrated below (p. 115):

(15)   illu   aupar-tu-u-vu-q   (Nunavik)
      house(ABS.SG) red-DECL-COP-INDIC-3SG
      'the house, it is something red (the house is red)'

(16)   illu-it   aupar-tu-u-va-t?   (Nunavik)
      house-ABS.PL red-DECL-COP-INTERR-3PL
      'the houses, are they something red (are the houses red)'

Dorais attributes the need for the copula to these being nouns (his "name giving words"), but in fact they pattern differently from both nouns and verbs. To be used predicatively, NOUNS must be followed by the copula before mood and agreement (p. 12):

(17)   anguti-**u**-vu-q   (Nunavik)
      man-| COP |-INDIC-3SG
      'He is a man.'

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[3] Note that in other contexts the declarative mood is capable of nominalizing either type of predicate.

Predicative VERBS can combine directly with all moods/agreement (p. 69):

(18)   taku-**vu**-q   (Nunavik)
         see-⬚INDIC⬚-3SG
         'He/she sees'

Only predicative ADJECTIVES seem to ever require both declarative mood and the copula in order to mark others moods or first or second person agreement (example repeated from above):

(19)   illu   aupar-**tu-u**-vu-q
         house(ABS.SG) red-⬚DECL-COP⬚-INDIC-3SG
         'the house, it is something red (the house is red)'

Why in this dialect would the "verbs" that instantiate prototypically adjectival meanings be incompatible with first and second (i.e., [participant]) φ-features and moods other than declarative?

3.3. Antonym pairs with -it- negator

Another difference between verb-like adjectives and genuine verbs is that there exist a number of antonym pairs created by the morpheme *-it-*, which Fortescue et al. (1994:419) describe as the "contrary neg[ator] of 'adjectival' bases" (cf. the verbal negator *-nngit-*) (examples from Spalding's 1988 dictionary of the Aivilik dialect):

(20)   a.   sikkik-tu-q   (Aivilik)
               clear-DECL-3SG
               'it is clear; it is clean and sparkling (as glass, water)'
         b.   sikki-it-tu-q
               clear-NEG-DECL-3SG
               'it is clouded or muggy'

The morpheme *-it-* can also incorporate nouns, roughly yielding the meaning 'N-less':[4]

(21)   a.   tipi   (Aivilik)
               'flavour; scent; aroma; odour (taste and smell)'
         b.   tipa-it-tu-q
               flavour-NEG-DECL-3SG
               it is flavourless or tasteless; it is odourless

But *-it-* does not modify verb roots directly. In cases where it appear appear to do so, it is actually modifying an adverbial element or operator inside the verbal complex—not the verb itself:

(22)   a.   pi-gajuk-tu-q   (Aivilik)
               do-frequently-DECL-3SG
               'he does s.t. or gets s.t. frequently or always'
         b.   pi-gaju-it-tu-q
               do-frequently-NEG-DECL-3SG
               'he does s.t. or gets s.t. hardly ever or seldom'

I am not aware of any antonym pairs formed by combining *-it-* directly with a verb root. In sum, *-it-* is compatible with verb-like adjective roots and noun roots, but not genuine verb roots. If verb-like adjective were actually just a sub-type of verb, such a pattern is unexpected.

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[4] The vowel alternation between *tipi* and *tipa* is due to the fact that Proto-Eskimo possessed a fourth vowel, ə, and this vowel occurred in the proto-form *təpə 'smell' (Fortescue et al. p.342). In dialects that have lost this vowel it normally underwent surface neutralization with [i] but in some phonological environments it became [a]. Dorais (2003) notes that *ə "has generally merged with /i/ when followed by a consonant, with /a/ when followed by a vowel, and it has disappeared when occurring in word-final position, after consonant /t/".

3.4. Comparatives in the Kangiryuarmiut Inuinnaqtun dialect

While the nominalizing comparatives and superlatives mentioned above for the Baffin dialect treat both verbs and verb-like adjectives the same, in the Kangiryuarmiut dialect we find a comparative that actually differentiates the two. The comparative marker *-tqi-* is compatible with verb-like adjectives:

(23) VERB-LIKE ADJECTIVES   (Kangiryuarmiut)

    a.   miki-tqi-jaa
        small-COMPARATIVE-DECL.TR.3SG.3SG
        'he/she/it is smaller than him/her/it'

    b.   angi-tqi-jaa
        big-COMPARATIVE-DECL.TR.3SG.3SG
        'he/she/it is bigger than him/her/it'

...but it is not compatible with genuine verbs:

(24) GENUINE VERBS   (Kangiryuarmiut)

    a.   *sini-tqi-jaa
        sleep-COMPARATIVE-DECL.TR.3SG.3SG
        Intended: 'he/she sleeps more than him/her'

    b.   *pupta-tqi-jaa
        float-COMPARATIVE-DECL.TR.3SG.3SG
        Intended: 'he/she/it floats more than him/her/it'

    c.   *ilihima-tqi-jaa
        know–COMPARATIVE-DECL.TR.3SG.3SG
        Intended: 'he/she know more than him/her'

Once again, this difference with respect to comparison would be unexpected if these were all just verbs.

3.5. Form of the declarative mood marker in Siglitun

While none of the Inuit dialects I have discussed thus far make any inflectional distinction between genuine verbs and verb-like adjectives, the Siglit dialect in fact does. In Siglit the form of the intransitive declarative marker varies depending on the φ-features of the predicate—but only for verbs:

(25) GENUINE VERBS: (Siglit; Lowe 2001)

    a.   pukta-jua-q
        float-DECL$_V$-3SG
        'is floating'

    b.   sinik-tua-q
        leave-DECL$_V$-3SG
        'is sleeping'

(26) VERB-LIKE ADJECTIVES: (Siglit; Lowe 2001)

    a.   nakuu-ju-q
        good-DECL$_{ADJ}$-3SG
        'is fine, good'

    b.   ipik-tu-q
        sharp-DECL$_{ADJ}$-3SG
        'is sharp'

While the form of the intransitive declarative marker on genuine verbs is *-jua-/-tua-* in the first and third persons and *-ju-/-tu-* in the second person, with verb-like adjectives it is *-ju-/-tu-* across all persons (adapted from Lowe 1988:119–120,261–267):

Figure 1: INTRANSITIVE DECLARATIVE paradigm in Siglit (vowel final root)

	VERB 'tired'	ADJECTIVE 'big'
1SG	jara-**jua**-mi	angi-ju-mi
2SG	jara-ju-tin	angi-ju-tin
3SG	jara-**jua**-q	angi-ju-q
1DU	jara-**jua**-ngni	angi-ju-ngni
2DU	jara-ju-tik	angi-ju-tik
3DU	jara-**jua**-k	angi-ju-k
1PL	jara-**jua**-nni	angi-ju-nni
2PL	jara-ju-si	angi-ju-si
3PL	jara-**jua**-t	angi-ju-t

Note that the actual exponence of φ-features is the same for both verbs and adjectives—it's the form of the intransitive declarative marker that varies:

Figure 2: Forms of the INTRANSITIVE DECLARATIVE marker in Siglit

	GENUINE VERBS	VERB-LIKE ADJECTIVES
1st	-jua-/-tua-	
2nd	-ju-/-tu-	-ju-/-tu-
3rd	-jua-/-tua-	

This conditioning seems unexpected if these were all just intransitive verbs. Now, one might suspect that the difference in mood marking could be due to aspectual differences between verbs and not a categorial distinction. For instance, perhaps the distinction is between stative and non-stative, since adjectives are typically thought to be stative. However, (what appear to be) stative verbs in Siglit still bear the verbal form of the declarative mood marker:

(27)   STATIVE VERBS
   a.   tusu-jua-q
        envy-DECL$_V$-3SG
        'envies someone, is envious'
   b.   nalu-jua-q
        not.know-DECL$_V$-3SG
        'doesn't know'
   c.   uinga-jua-q
        not.understand-DECL$_V$-3SG
        'doesn't understand, is not bright'

One might also suspect that the differential marking could be due to the contrast between STAGE-level predicates (which express more temporary qualities) and INDIVIDUAL-level predicates (which express more permanent or inherent qualities) (see Carlson 1977). However, both (prototypically) stage-level and individual-level verb-like adjectives can exhibit the adjectival version of the declarative marker:

(28)   STAGE-LEVEL ADJECTIVES: (Siglit; Lowe 2001)
   a.   aripa-ju-q
        wet-DECL$_{ADJ}$-3SG
        'is wet'
   b.   umin'nga-ju-q
        blocked.up-DECL$_{ADJ}$-3SG
        'is blocked up, stuffed up (of a person's nose)'

(29)   INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL ADJECTIVES: (Siglit; Lowe 2001)

    a.   qubjuq-tu-q
       blond-DECL_{ADJ}-3SG
       'is blond'

    b.   ipik-tu-q
       sharp-DECL_{ADJ}-3SG
       'is sharp, cutting'

In sum, the difference does not seem to be aspectual or due to the stage/individual-level distinction. The difference cannot be due to aspect, since verbs that are stative (like adjectives) still bear the verbal form of the declarative marker, nor can it be due to stage/individual-level distinctions, since both types of adjective bear the adjectival form of the declarative marker. While we could simply say that these are two declension classes of verbs (e.g., *-er* and *-ir* verbs in French), that wouldn't explain why it's roughly the same set of verbs exhibiting distinct mood-marking as were susceptible to the phenomena discussed earlier.[5]

It is also noteworthy that the form of mood on verbs is sensitive to person distinctions—first/third versus second—while the form of mood on adjectives is not. This aligns with Baker's (2008) observations that while adjectives can participate in agreement, "they do so more modestly". Again, the data points to a categorial distinction between verbs and adjectives.

3.6. Summary of evidence for verb-like adjectives

The following table summarizes the ways in which verb-like adjectives in Inuit pattern differently from genuine verbs:

	GENUINE VERBS	VERB-LIKE ADJECTIVES
DECL-COPULA-*modal* constructions:	✘	✓
COPULA in 1st/2nd/non-DECL in Nunavik:	✘	✓
antonym pairs formed by *-it-* in Aivilik:	✘	✓
Kangiryuarmiut *-tqi-* comparative:	✘	✓
unique 1st/3rd INTR.DECL forms in Siglit:	✓	✘

4. Discussion

I propose that these differences can be accounted for if verb-like adjectives in Inuit are actually a set of roots selected for by a phonologically null categorizing little *a*. Following Compton & Pittman (2010), there are only DP-sized and CP-sized words in Inuit, since only these phases spell out as phonological words. Consequently, adjectives (*a*Ps) cannot be words on their own. However, an *a*P can act as a predicate by merging with a null PRED head (see, e.g., Baker 2004)—i.e., a covert counterpart of the overt copula in the language.[6]

Thus, externally these adjectives have the syntax of verbs, most of the time. However, as exemplified here by a variety of phenomena across the dialect continuum, the ability to project additional functional

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[5] It is worth noting that this distinction in the form of the mood marker appears to be a local development and not part of proto-Inuit. For instance, in the neighbouring Iñupiaq the *-jua-/-tua-* form of declarative marker marks past tense—in both verbs and adjectives across all persons. This may be its source in Siglit.

[6] Such an analysis is in fact supported by two parallel strategies for nominal predication, one involving a null copula (restricted to stative present interpretation), and another employing the overt copula (which can thus host tense, aspect, negation, etc.):

(i)   a.   uvanga Saila
           1SG.ABS S.
           'I'm Saila.'

       b.   Saila-u-ju-nga
   S.-COP-DECL-1SG
           'I'm Saila.'

structure, be selected for by functional heads, or check φ-features of arguments appears to vary between little *a*, covert PRED, overt PRED, and little *v*: (i) covert PRED in Nunavik can't license participant features or project non-declarative ForceP (i.e., moods other than declarative); (ii) little *v* in Siglit triggers different exponents of mood, conditioned by φ-features, but covert PRED cannot; (iii) the contrary negator *-it-* and the Kangiryuarmiut comparative select *a*P but not *v*P; and (iv) covert PRED, but not little *v*, permits nominalization under a modal/restructuring verb.

A final piece of evidence for such an analysis involves the copula in Siglit. Assuming the following (simplified) structures, in which genuine verbal roots combine with a category-defining little *v* head while adjectival roots combine with little *a* and a covert PRED (i.e., a null copula) which allows them to act as predicates, we might also expect overt copulas to pattern with adjectives.
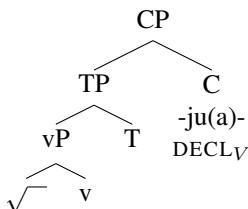
(30) GENUINE VERBS: (31) VERB-LIKE ADJECTIVES:
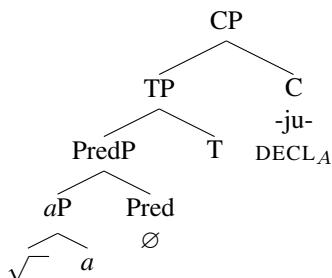
This is indeed the case—Siglit's overt copula also takes the adjectival form of the declarative marker:

(32)   taapkuat   aqidjgi(q)-u-ju-t
       these.ABS.PL ptarmigan-COP-DECL$_A$-3PL
       'these (pl.) are ptarmigans' (Lowe 2001:347)

(33)   arvaa(q)-ngu-ju-q
       young.bowhead.whale-COP-DECL$_A$-3SG
       'it is a young bowhead'

And crucially, this isn't simply a property of incorporating verbs. Notice that other incorporating verbs like *-ruaq-* 'have' take the verbal form of the mood marker:

(34)   iglu-ruaq-tua-q
       house-have-DECL$_V$-3SG
       'he owns a house'

This supports an analysis in which the adjectival forms contain an underlying PRED head analogous to the copula.

5. Conclusion

I have argued for a class of verb-like adjectives in Inuit, with data from Arctic Quebec, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories all converging on the same set of predicates. I've also proposed that despite their external syntax, which often resembles that of verbs, a collection of phenomena across the dialect continuum point to an internal category difference: a covert little *a* categorizing head whose presence is (mostly) obscured by a covert PREDP. Two important points about categories emerge. First, once we assume a theory like Distributed Morphology, there is no *a priori* reason why we should preclude the possibility that a lexical category will only ever occur word-internally—especially in polysynthetic languages. It is also important to note that while exhibiting a distinct inflectional paradigm might constitute a sufficient condition for positing a lexical category, it is certainly not a necessary condition. Notice that if we take away the data from the Siglit dialect, all of the remaining evidence for adjectives in Inuit is distributional in nature—not inflectional.

Regarding language universals, I've argued that Inuit is consistent with the hypothesis that lexical categories are universal—in particular the hypothesis that adjectives are universal. While this alone does

not confirm or disprove the universalist hypothesis regarding lexical categories, it reduces the search radius: any exceptions, if they indeed exist, will need to be found elsewhere.

Finally, regarding the larger debate surrounding universals and UG, I think this topic highlights Matthewson's (2013) arguments that UG is the appropriate null hypothesis in examining the nature of language. On the surface—and especially if we look only at any single dialect of Inuit—we don't find anything that immediately resembles prototypical adjectives; some look like verbs, others (not discussed here) look like "derivational morphemes", and neither can stand on their own (as adjectives) as separate words. And yet, armed with the expectation of underlying universality we can test the null hypothesis, and potentially discover new things about a language that are not apparent on the surface.

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