KALAALLISUT: ESKIMO-ALEUT
Selected from
Piaasup pania Ronja
(Ronia, The Robber’s Daughter)

RONIA (children’s literature):
Ronia, who lives with her mother Lovis, father Matt, and his band of robbers in a castle in the woods befriends the son of a rival robber chieftain. Selected passages from:
Also consulted:

TRANSCRIPTION, GLOSSES & BACK-TO-ENGLISH TRANSLATION by Maria Bittner (9/20/2005).

Kalaallisut uses these fields roughly as follows:
*if*: anaphoric link to prior discourse and/or set up the primary topical referent (*T*);
*ib*: elaborate *T* and/or:
   (i) set up a secondary topical referent (*T’*), or (ii) set up a backgrounded referent (*⊥*);
*mf*: background information about main verbal comment;
*fb*: main verbal comment about current topic(s) (*if-T* & *ib-T’* if present; otherwise *T* from last S)
*ff*: elaborate and/or set up a new backgrounded referent (*⊥’*) to be picked up by the upcoming *if*.
Only *fb* must be instantiated (by the main verb or complex predicate NV); all other topological fields are optional and, if instantiated, may be multiply instantiated (unlike syntactic nodes).

Passage A. Ronia practices not being frightenened.

“Now you know what gray dwarfs are,” said Matt when they were sitting in front of the fire, warming Ronia’s cold feet.
“Yes, now I know what grey dwarfs are,” said Ronia.
“But what you don’t know is how to deal with them,” Matt said. “If you’re frightened, they can feel it a long way off. That’s when they get dangerous.”

§1. ENGLISH TRANSLATION (p. 17)
(1) “Yes,” said Lovis, “that’s true of all sorts of things. (2) So the safest thing is not to be frightened in Matt’s Forest.”
(3) “I’ll remember that,” Ronia said.
(4) Matt sighed and hugged her tightly. (5) “But do you remember what I told you to watch out for?”
§1. KALAALLISUT TRANSLATION (p. 22)

(1a) “Ilu-muur-pu-q.,”1 interior-head.for-IND.IV-3s “That/he’s right.”

(1b) Lovis ila-li-i-vu-q. Lovis part-add.to-apass-IND.IV-3s …added Lovis.

(2) “Tassa=mi that.is=emph “That is,

suna=luunniit mianirsu-u-ssa-ssa-sariaqar-pu-q. what=or/even watch.out-for-x.want-stop.habit-have.to-IND.IV-3s …with anything, one has to [practice until] one stops feeling the urge to watch out.

(3) Taamaattumik therefore Therefore…

Mattisi-p urpip-passui-ni=il-lu-ni ib Matt-sg.ERG tree-big.lot-pl.LOC=be-ELA→-3s→ …when one is in Matt’s Forest

pingaar-nirsaa-vu-q irsi-ngin-ni-ssa-q.” fb, ff be.important-most-IND.IV-3s be.afraid-not-v\n\n\n\nprospective-sg. …it is most important not to be afraid.”

(4a) “Tamanna iqqa-ama-ssa-va-ra.” if, fb that recall-result-x.expect-IND.TV-1s.3s “I’ll remember that,”

(4b) Ronja niriursu-i-vu-q if, fb Ronia promise-apass-IND.IV-3s …Ronia promised.

1 This is one of several idioms that reveal that Eskimos viewed truth as a goal of a quest, not an attainable end: (see also text m’, §1.(4) for an example of paa-si-):

• paa-si-va-a entrance-find-IND.TV-3s.3s (lit. ‘he found an entrance to it.’) ‘he figured it out.’

• ilu-muur-pu-q interior-head.for-IND.IV-3s (lit. ‘this/he is heading for the interior.’) ‘this/he is correct, right.’

• nassu-iar-pa-a fog-clear-IND.TV-3s.3s (lit. ‘he defogged it.’) ‘he explained it.’
(5) Taama=lu uqar-iar-m-at anguta-ata if, ib
thus=and say-stage-FCT⊥-3s⊥ father-3s⊥.sg.ERG
And when she said that, her father...
pakku-taar-luar-pa-a. fb
hug-give-well.IND.TV-3s.3s
…gave her a big hug.

(6) “Mannakkum=mi iqqa-sinnaa-lir-pi-git if, fb
now=emph remember-can-begin-QUE-2s.3p
“But will you now be able to remember
suu-t mianirsur-vigi-ssa-llu-git?” ff
what-pl watch.out-loc.of-x.want-ELA⊥-3p⊥
…what [we] want [you] to watch out for?”

§2. English translation (p. 17), corrected based on the Danish translation (p. 23):
(1) Yes, she remembered that. (2) And in the days that followed, Ronia watched out for what was dangerous and practiced not being frightened. (3) She was to be careful not to fall into the river, Matt had said, so she hopped, skipped, and jumped warily over the slippery stones along the riverbank, where the river rushed most fiercely. (4) She couldn’t very well stay in the forest and practice watching out not to fall into the river. (5) If the practice were to be of any use, it had to be by the rushing river and nowhere else. (6) To reach the rushing waterfalls, she had to climb down Matt’s Mountain, which fell in a sheer drop to the river. (7) That way she could also practice not being frightened. (8) The first time it was difficult; she was so frightened that she had to shut her eyes. (9) But bit by bit she became more daring, and soon she knew where the crevices were, where she could place her feet, and where she had to cling with her toes in order to hang on and not pitch backward into the rushing water.

§2. Kalaallisut translation (p. 22–23)
(1) Tassami, mannakut Ronja-p if, ib
sure now Ronia-ERG
Sure, now Ronia
suu-t mianirsur-vigi-ssa-llu-git iqqa-ama-sinnaa-lir-pa-i. mf, fb
what-pl watch.out-loc.of-x.want-ELA⊥-3p⊥ recall-result-can-begin-IND.TV-3s.3p
…was able to remember what she was supposed to watch out for.

(2) Mattisi-p uqar-vigi-sima-va-a if, fb
Matt-sg.ERG say-to-prf.IND.TV-3s.3s
Matt had said to her
kuum-mut nakkar-ni-ssa-q mianirsur-vigi-ssa-ga-a. ff
river-sg.DAT fall-v\n-prospective-sg watch.out-loc.of-x.want-ELA⊥.TV-3s⊥.3s
…that she was to watch out lest [she] fall into the river.
(3) Taamaattumik

Therefore,

kuu-p sina-a-ni
river-sg.ERG side-3s.sg-LOC
…on the banks of the river

ujaqqa-t manil-luinnar-tu-t aamma=lu
stone-pl.ERG smooth-absolutely-iv\cn-pl.ERG also=and

kuu-p qurlurtu-isa uluria-nar-tu-t
river-sg.ERG waterfall-3s.pl.ERG fear-inducing-iv\cn-pl.ERG

iqqa-an-ni
vicinity-3p.pl-LOC
…in places with completely smooth stones and dangerous waterfalls

uluria-nar-nir-siu-i-llu-ni
fear-inducing-most-scan.for-apass-ELA_1-3s_1
…she [would] next.line look for the most dangerous of the lot and

pissig-ar-suataar-tar-pu-q,
jump-keep-with.all.might-habit-IND.IV-3s
…keep jumping around with all her might

nakka-nga-ssi-ni sungiu-sar-lu-gu.
fall-not-v\n-prospective-3s_1.sg get.used.to-act.to.cause-ELA_1-3s_1
…practicing not falling in.

(4) Urpip-pasuar-ni=il-lu-ni

tree-big.lot-pl.LOC=be-ELA_1-3s_1
While staying in the forest,

kuum-mut nakka-ngin-ni-ssa-q
river-sg.DAT fall-not-v\n-prospective-sg

ilin-niar-sinnaa-ngi-la-a.
learn-try-can-not-IRR-3s.3s
…she couldn’t practice to learn [how] not to fall into the river.

(5) Ilin-nia-ga-ssa-q ili-kka-ssa-gu-ni-uk
learn-try-7\n\n-prospective-sg learn-completely-x.want-HYP-3s_1-3s
If one wanted to learn this skill fully,

mianirsur-va-ssa-q tikil-lu-gu
watch.out-loc.of-prospective-sg come.to-ELA-3s

ilin-niar-tariaqar-pu-q,
learn-try-have.to-IND.IV-3s
…one had to go where one had to watch out to try to learn it
alla-mi pi-nna-ni.  
other-sg.LOC do.that-NON$_T^{-3}s_T$  
…not [try to learn it] anywhere else.

(6) Kuu-p qurlurtu-a tiki-ssa-gu-ni-uk  
river-sg.ERG waterfall-3s$_\perp$.sg come.to-x.want-HYP$_T^{-3}s_T^{-3}s$  
If she wanted to reach the waterfall,
Mattisi-p Qaqqa-ati-gut innaa-qqis-su-kkut  
Matt-sg.ERG Mountain-3s$_\perp$.sg-VIA cliff-have.good-iv\cn-sg.VIA

tikit-tariaqar-pa-a.  
come.to-have.to-IND.TV-3s.3s  
…she had to reach it via Matt’s Mountain, which was very steep.

(7) Taama-tut sungiu-sar-nir-mi-gut  
thus-EQU get.used.to-act.to.cause-v\n-3s$_T$.sg-VIA  
By practicing in this way
irsi-nggin-ni-ssa-q aamma  
be.afraid-not-v\n-prospective-sg also
sungiu-sar-pa-a.  
get.used.to-act.to.cause-IND.TV-3s.3s  
…she also practiced not being afraid.

(8) Siullir-mik am-mu=kaq-qaar-a-mi  
first-sg.MOD bottom-sg.DAT=go-first-FCT$_T^{-3}s_T$  
The first time she climbed down
nangia-ngaar-a-mi  
be.dizzy.with.fear-very.much-FCT$_T^{-3}s_T$  
…she was so dizzy with fear that
siqunngir-lu-ni am-mu=kar-sima-vu-q.  
shut.eyes-ELA-3s bottom-sg.DAT=go-prf-IND.IV-3s  
…she climbed down with her eyes shut.

(9) Kisianni  
but  
But [then]
sapiil-li-saar-tuar-lu-ni  
daring-get.more-keep.acting.to-always-ELA$_T^{-3}s_T$  
am-mu=kar-tar-nir-mi-gut  
bottom-sg.DAT=go-habit-v\n-3s$_T$.sg-VIA  
…in the course of her ever more daring climbs to the bottom
paasi-lir-sima-va-a $\textit{fb}$

understand-begin-prf-IND.TV-3s.3s

…she figured out

salliarna-t miki-su-nnnguu-galui-l=luunniit su-mi=in-nir-i, $\textit{ff}$
crevice-pl be.small-iv\&n-little…but-pl=even what-sg.LOC-be-\text{-v}\text{n}-3p\&.pl

…where all the crevices where, even tiny little ones,

taama=lu isikka-mi-nut

thus=and foot-3s\&.pl-DAT

akimmi-vvi-ssa-tut atur-sinaa-sa-ni,
push.against-loc.of-prospective-EQU use-can tv\text{-}3s\&.pl

…and so could use them as footholds,

imaluunniit putukku-ni

or big.toe-3s\&.sg

salliarna-aqqa-mut surlir-mut najumma-tsir-tis-sinnaa-llu-gu
crevise-tiny.sg.DAT which-sg.DAT cling.tight-bit.by.bit-cause-can-ELA\&-3s\&

…or to which crevices she could cling with her big toe while climbing,

qurlurtu-mut qaput-tu-innar-mut

waterfall-sg.DAT foaming-iv\&n-V-sg.DAT

nivir-lu-ni nakka-rusu-ngaikku-ni.

fall.backwards-ELA\&-3s\& fall.want.not-v\-prospective-1s.sg

…if she didn’t want to pitch backwards into the waterfall all [white] with foam.

§3. ENGLISH TRANSLATION (p. 17)

(1) What luck, she thought, to find a place where she could both watch out that she didn’t fall in and practice not being frightened!

§3 KALAALLISUT TRANSLATION (p. 23)

(1a) Ila manna nassari-sima-ga-kku if

isn’t.it? here discover-prf-FCT-1s.3s

iluatsitsi-sima-ngaar-a-ma,

get.lucky-prf.very.much-FCT-3s\&

Wasn’t I lucky to find this place here so

imaallat kuum-mut nakkar-naviirsar-ni-ssa-ra ib

what.luck! river-sg.DAT fall.try.not.to-v\text{-}n-prospective-1s.sg

aamma=lu irsi-naviirsar-ni-ssa-ra

also=and be.afraid.try.not.to-v\text{-}n-prospective-1s.sg

ta-maa-ni ilin-niar-pa-ra, $\textit{mf, fb}$

ana-here-LOC learn.try-IND.TV-1s.3s

…lucky me is now practicing both not falling into the river and not being afraid.
(1b) unin-nga-til-lu-ni
    if
stop-result-DUR-ELA_T-3s_T

    taama-tut iqqarsar-pu-q.
    mf, fb
thus-EQU think-IND.IV-3s

…she thought during a pause.

§4  ENGLISH TRANSLATION (p. 17)
(1) So her days passed. (2) Ronia watched out and practiced more than Matt and Lovis knew, and in the end she was like a healthy little animal, strong and agile and afraid of nothing. (3) Not of grey dwarfs, not of wild harpies, not of getting lost in the forest, and not of falling into the river. (4) So far she had not begun to watch out for Hell’s Gap, but she planned to start soon.

§4  KALAALLISUT TRANSLATION (p. 23)
(1) Tassa Ronja-p ullu-i
    if, ib
so Ronia-sg.ERG day-3s_T.pl

    taama-tut ingirla-sar-pu-t.
    mf, fb
thus-EQU go.on-habit-IND.IV-3p

So Ronia’s days passed in such pursuits.

(2) Angajuqqav-isa nalu-a-at
    if, fb
parent-3s.pl.ERG not.know-IND.TV-3p.3s
Her parents didn’t know

    pani-tsik qanuq
    ff
daughter-3p_T.sg how

    mianirsur-ni-ssa-mut
watch.out-\n\n-prospective-sg.DAT

    sungiu-sar-luar-tigi-nir-su-q.
get.used.to-act.to.causes.well-that.much-x.wonder-ELA_T-3s_T
…how well their daughter had been practicing watching out.

(3) Maannakkum=mi
    if
now=for
For by now

    assigi-lir-pa-a
    fb
resemble-begin-IND.IV-3s.3s
…she had become like

    uumasu-ningua-q nukit-tuu-q, iqa-at-su-q
    ff
animal-little-sg strength.with.much-sg stiff-contrary-iv\cn-sg
…a little animal, strong, agile

    su-nil=luunniit irsigi-sa-qa-ngit-su-q.
what-pl.MOD=or/even fear-tv\n\n-have-not-iv\cn-sg
…and without fear of anything whatsoever.
(4) Inu-arullikka-t qasir-tu-t,  
*person-unusually.small-pl grey-iv\cn-pl,*  
Grey dwarfs,  
urpip-passui-t arnaq-qua-ssaav-i,  
*tree-big.lot-pl.ERG woman-ugly.old-big-3p\_pl*  
...forest harpies,  
urpip-passuar-ni tammar-ni-ssa-q  
*tree-big.lot-pl.LOC get.lost-v\n-prospective-sg*  
...the prospect of getting lost in the forest  
kuum-mul=luunniit nakkar-ni-ssa-q  
*river-sg.DAT=or/even fall-v\n-prospective-sg*  
...or (even) the prospect of falling into the river,  
irsigi-unaar-luinnar-sima-va-i.  
*fear-cease-totally-prf-IND.TV-3s.3p*  
...she had totally ceased to fear them.

(5) Nakkar-naviirsaar-nir-mi  
*fall-try.not.to-v\n-sg.LOC*  
When practicing not falling,  
sungiu-sa-nngi-sa-tua-a  
*get.used.to-act.to.causing-not-tv\rm-only-3s\_sg*  
the only exercise she had not (yet) practiced  
tassa-a-vu-q  
*that-be-IND.IV-3s*  
...was  
Asirur-sima-vvi-up Quuru-a-nut nakkar-naviirsaar-ni-ssa-q.  
*break-prf-loc.of-sg.ERG gap-3s\_sg-DAT fall-try.not.to-v\n-prospective-sg*  
...to try not to fall into Hell’s Gap. (*lit. Breakup Gap*)

(6) Iqqarsaatig-a-a=lu  
*think.about-IND.TV-3s.3s=and*  
And she was thinking about it,  
irniinnaq taak-un=nar-umaar-lu-ni  
*soon there-DAT=go-x.hope-ELA\_3s*  
...hoping to go there soon  
mianirsur-ni-ssa-q ilin-niar-iartur-lu-gu.  
*watch.out-v\n-prospective-sg learn-try.go.to-ELA\_3s\_sg*  
...to practice watching out [for danger].