

KALAALLISUT: ESKIMO-ALEUT

**Mitinnguaq**

"Little Eider"

MYTH2: D. Sommer et al, eds, 1976, *Kalaallisut Ilinniutit 2*, pp. 8–9, Ministeriet for Grønland.  
TRANSCRIPTION, GLOSSES & TRANSLATION by M. Bittner (9/18/2005): Transcription and glosses as in Bittner (2005) 'Future Discourse in a Tenseless Language' *Journal of Semantics* 22(4). Paragraphs (§) as in the original.

TOPOLOGY: *if* initial field, *ib* initial boundary, *mf* middle field, *fb* final boundary, *ff* final field. Kalaallisut uses these fields roughly as follows:

*if*: anaphoric link to prior discourse and/or set up the primary topical referent ( $\top$ );

*ib*: elaborate  $\top$  and/or:

(i) set up a secondary topical referent ( $\top'$ ), or (ii) set up a backgrounded referent ( $\perp$ );

*mf*: background information about main verbal comment;

*fb*: main verbal comment about current topic(s) (*if*- $\top$  & *ib*- $\top'$  if present; otherwise  $\top$  from last S)

*ff*: elaborate and/or set up a new backgrounded referent ( $\perp'$ ) 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).

**§1.**

- (1) Qanga=guuq *if*  
*long.ago=x.say*  
Long ago, they say,...
- kujataa-miu-t      Ikkamiu-nut      avannar-par-m-ata *ib*  
*south-inhabitant-pl Ikkamiut<sub>pl</sub>-pl.DAT north-go- FCT $\top$ -3p $\top$*   
...when some southerners moved up north to Ikkamiut
- Appamiu-ni      anguti-qar-pu-q *mf, fb*  
*Appamiut<sub>pl</sub>-pl.LOC man-have- IND.IV-3s*  
...there was a man in Appamiut
- qajaq-qis-su-rsuar-mik. *ff*  
*kayak(man)-be.good-iv\cn-great-sg.MOD*  
...who was very good with a kayak.
- (2) Taanna  
*that*  
He...
- Miti-nngua-mik      ati-qar-pu-q *mf, fb*  
*eider-little-sg.MOD name-have-IND.IV-3s*  
...was called Little Eider.

- (3a) Ukiu-mi if  
*winter-sg.LOC*  
In winter time...  
kipi-ssa-na-ni                  avanna-mik    anur-li-lir-aang-at  
*stop-x.expect-NON<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub> north-sg.MOD wind-weather.with-begin- HAB<sub>L</sub>-3s<sub>L</sub>*  
...when the north wind would start blowing non-stop  
nui-ni                          qimal-lu-gu ib  
*bird.spear-3s<sub>T</sub>.sg leave- ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>L</sub>*  
...he would leave his bird spear [behind] and...  
qajar-tur-lu-ni                  appa-nniar-tar-pu-q mf, fb  
*kayak-use-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub> auk-hunt-habit-IND.IV-3s*  
...go auk hunting in his kayak.
- (3b) tikit-tar-u-q if  
*come-habit-IND.IV-3s*  
...and he would come back...  
qaan-ni                          ulikkaa-vis-sima-llu-gu. mf, fb  
*kayak-3s<sub>T</sub>.sg fill-really-prf- ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>L</sub>*  
...with his kayak absolutely full.
- (4) Nuna-q-qata-isa if  
*homeland-have-fellow-3s<sub>L</sub>.pl.ERG*  
His countrymen...  
paasi<sup>1</sup>-niq                          sapir-tar-pa-at fb  
*figure.out-tv\ñ be.unable-habit-IND.TV-3p.3s*  
...could never figure out [how it was]  
paata-annar-nik                  sakku-qar-lu-ni ff  
*paddle<sub>pl</sub>-just-pl.MOD weapon-have-ELA-3s*  
...[that]<sub>next.line</sub> with just a paddle for a weapon  
taama    pi-sa-qar-tigi-sar-m-at.  
*thus get-tv\ñn-have-to.that.deg-habit-FCT<sub>L</sub>-3s<sub>L</sub>*  
...he always got so many.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 r*, A§1.(1a) for an example of *ilu-muur-*)

- 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.’

§2.

- (1) Ilaanni if  
*once*  
 One [day]...
- kujataa-miu-t            ila-ata            Ikkarmiur-miu-p ib  
*south-inhabitant-pl.ERG part-3p.sg.ERG Ikkamiut<sub>pl</sub>-inhabitant-sg.ERG*  
 ...one of the southerners [now] living in Ikkamiut
- qaanna-kkut    unammi-rusu-lir-pa-a. mf, fb  
*kayak-sg.VIA compete.against-desire-begin-IND.TV-3s.3s*  
 ...took a fancy to challenge him to a kayak race.
- (2) Appamiu-nut    pi-vu-q if, fb  
*Appamiut-pl.DAT get-IND.IV-3s*  
 He came to Appamiut...
- sunavva    Miti-nngua-q    suli    tikis-sima-nngit-su-q. ib  
*aha!    eider-little-sg    still    come-prf-not-ELA<sub>1</sub>-3s<sub>1</sub>*  
 ...but Little Eider hadn't come back yet.
- (3) Aasiit if  
*yet.again*  
 As usual...
- avanna-mik    anuri-rsua-r-pu-q mf, fb  
*north-sg.MOD wind-great-char.activity-ELA<sub>1</sub>-3s<sub>1</sub>*  
 ...the north wind was blowing up a gale.
- (4) Taama=il-lu-ni    Miti-nngua-q if, ib  
*thus=be-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub>    eider-little-sg*  
 In that [storm],    Little Eider...
- irsir-pu-q fb  
*appear-IND.IV-3s*  
 ...came into view
- puisi-ta-ni ff  
*seal-attached-3s<sub>T</sub>.sg*  
 ...with his seal catch
- alir-mi-nik    qaanna-mi-nut    nirmus-sima-llu-gu.  
*rope-3s<sub>T</sub>.sg-MOD kayak-3s<sub>T</sub>.sg-DAT wind.around-prf-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>1</sub>*  
 ...securely tied down to his kayak with his kayak rope.



§3

- (1) Kujataa-miu-p tamanna taku-galuar-lu-gu *if*  
*south-inhabitant-sg.ERG that see-...but-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>⊥</sub>*  
 When the southerner saw that...
- unammi-ni-ssa-mut pi-rusu-ir-pu-q *mf, fb*  
*compete-v\η-prospective-DAT do.so-desire-no.more-IND.IV-3s*  
 ...he lost the desire to compete
- angirla-annar-lu-ni=lu. *ff*  
*go.home-just-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub>=and*  
 ...and just went home.
- (2) Ikkamiu-nut=li utir-m-at *if*  
*Ikkamiut-pl.DAT=but return-FCT<sub>⊥</sub>-3s<sub>⊥</sub>*  
 But when he returned to Ikkamiut...
- nuna-q-qata-isa *ib*  
*homeland-have-fellow-3s<sub>⊥</sub>.pl.ERG*  
 ...his countrymen
- kanngu-saar-pa-at *fb*  
*be.ashamed.of-try.to.cause-IND.TV-3s.3s*  
 ...made fun of him
- unammi-artu-qqu-llu-gu=lu. *ff*  
*compete-go.to-tell-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>⊥</sub>=and*  
 ...and told him to go and compete [*as he had bragged he would*].
- (3) Unammi-artur-tu-q Appamiu-nut tiki-qqim-m-at *if*  
*compete-go.to-iv\cn-sg Appamiut-pl.DAT come-again-FCT<sub>⊥</sub>-3s<sub>⊥</sub>*  
 When the challenger again came to Appamiut,...
- Miti-nngu-up *ib*  
*eider-little-sg.ERG*  
 Little Eider...
- qaja-vis-suar-mut alla-mut *mf*  
*kayak(man)-real-great-sg.DAT other-sg.DAT*  
 ...[told]<sub>last.line</sub> another champion kayakman,
- Tiggam-mik ati-lim-mut  
*alpha.seal-sg.MOD name-with-sg.DAT*  
 ...named Alpha (*lit. dominant male seal*),
- sukka-niul-lu-tik unammi-qqu-a-a. *fb*  
*move.fast-compete-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3p<sub>T</sub> compete.against-tell-IND.TV-3s.3s*  
 ...to race him.

- (4) Aatsaa=nnguuq sapir-p-a-gu *if*  
*first=x.say lose.against-HYP<sub>1</sub>-3s<sub>1</sub>-3s*  
First if he lost the race, he said,
- Mitinngu-up namminiq *ib*  
*eider-little-sg.ERG self*  
...[would]<sub>next.line</sub> Little Eider himself
- unammi-umaar-pa-a. *fb*  
*compete.against-be.promised-IND.IV-3s.3s*  
...compete against him.  
[This, of course, is an insult, showing utter contempt for the challenger.]
- (5) Taama=il-lu-ni=mi *if*  
*thus=be-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub>=so*  
So with that [understanding],
- kujataa-miu-r=lu aalla-qa-u-t *mf, fb*  
*south-inhabitant-sg=and set.off-very-IND.IV-3p*  
...[Alpha] took off with the southerner like a shot.
- §4**
- (1) Sukka-qi-ga-mik *if*  
*move.fast-very-FCT<sub>T</sub>-3p<sub>T</sub>*  
They went so fast that...
- kujataa-miu-p qaja-a *ib*  
*south-inhabitant-sg.ERG kayak-3s.sg*  
...the southerner's kayak
- nappar-sima-vu-q *fb*  
*stand.up-prf-IND.IV-3s*  
...stood up,
- niu-isa nala-at tiki-vil-lu-gu *ff*  
*leg-3s<sub>1</sub>.pl.ERG vicinity-3p<sub>1</sub>.sg come.to-really-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>1</sub>*  
imma-mut tun-nga-na-ni.  
*sea-sg.DAT touch-result-NON<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub>*  
...not [even] touching the sea right up to his legs.

§5

- (1) Tiggak *if*  
*alpha.seal*  
Alpha,  
paati-mi-nik imaq qaput-tu-inna-nngur-lu-gu *ib*  
*paddle-3s<sub>T</sub>.pl-MOD sea.sg foam-iv\cn-just-turn.into-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>⊥</sub>*  
...churning up the sea into pure foam with his paddle,  
kussar-lu-ni aallar-sima-vu-q. *mf, fb*  
*with.head.down-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub> set.off-prf-IND.IV-3s*  
...had taken off with his head down.
- (2) Isiginnaar-tu-t suaar-tar-pu-t:  
*look-iv\cn-pl shout-habit-IND.IV-3p*  
The spectators kept shouting:
- (3) “Suli Tiggaa-p paata-i *if, ib*  
*still alpha.seal-sg paddle<sub>pl</sub>-3s<sub>⊥</sub>.pl*  
“As yet, Alpha’s paddle  
irsig-unnaa-nngi-lla-t, *fb*  
*be.visible-cease-not-IRR-3p*  
hasn’t become invisible,  
aallar-luar-aanga-mi taama=it-tar-aluar-mi-ga-mi. *ff*  
*set.off-well-HAB<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub> thus=be-habit-...but-watch.out!-FCT<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub>*  
...watch out for that when he really gets going.”
- (4a) Aallaq-qaar-a-mik *if*  
*set.out-first.stage-FCT<sub>T</sub>-3p<sub>T</sub>*  
When they first set out,  
ingirla-qati-giig-inaar-aluar-pu-t *fb*  
*travel-fellow-rcp-just-...but-IND.IV-3p*  
...they just kept even, going head to head,
- (4b) nuna-l=lu tunga-a-nut uti-lir-iar-m-ata *if*  
*land-sg.ERG=and direction-3s<sub>⊥</sub>.sg-DAT return-begin-quick.stage-FCT<sub>⊥</sub>-3p<sub>⊥</sub>*  
...but when they began to head back toward land  
isiginnaar-tu-t *ib*  
*look-iv\cn-pl*  
...the spectators  
suaar-ta-lir-pu-t: *fb*  
*shout-habit-begin-IND.IV-3p*  
...started shouting:

- (5) “Aarit, Tiggaa-p paata-i *if, ib*  
*sure.enough alpha.seal-sg paddle<sub>pl</sub>-3s<sub>pl</sub>*  
“There it is! Alpha’s paddle  
irsig-unnaar-pu-t.” *fb*  
*be.visible-cease-IND.IV-3p*  
...has [now] become invisible,”
- (6) Taava Tiggak *if, ib*  
*then alpha.seal.sg*  
Then Alpha  
sukka-qa-lu-ni siu-ar-pu-q *mf, fb*  
*move.fast-very-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub> front-move.to-IND.IV-3s*  
...shot up to the front  
aapp-i=lu kaajallal-lu-gu. *ff*  
*mate-3s<sub>T</sub>.sg=and keep.circling-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>pl</sub>*  
...and started circling around his competitor.
- (7) Suli taama=iliur-tu-q *if*  
*still thus=do-ELA<sub>pl</sub>-3s<sub>pl</sub>*  
He was still doing that when  
uti-mut apuup-pu-t. *mf, fb*  
*back.to.start-sg.DAT arrive-IND.IV-3p*  
...they got back to the starting point.
- (8) Uti-mut apuuti-tsia=innaq *if*  
*back.to.start.point-sg.DAT arrive-have.just=just*  
The moment they got back  
kujataa-miu-q *ib*  
*south-inhabitant-sg*  
...the southerner  
angirlar-lu-ni taama aallar-pu-q. *mf, fb*  
*go.home-ELA<sub>T</sub>-3s<sub>T</sub> enough! set.off-IND.IV-3s*  
...had had enough and just headed back home.