

## CHAPTER 2

### Some Theoretical Considerations and Innu-aimun Grammar

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework and Assumptions

The theoretical framework of generative grammar is adopted throughout this thesis, meaning that constraints imposed by, for example, the Theta Criterion (Chomsky 1982), the Projection Principle (Chomsky 1981, 29) and X-bar Theory (Chomsky 1986) are observed.

Within the framework of generative grammar Case is divisible into abstract Case and morphological Case. Abstract Case is a universal property while morphological Case, the overt realization of abstract Case, varies from language to language. For example, accusative Case in Latin does not have the same morphological realization as accusative Case in German; however, within the framework of generative grammar it is assumed that abstract Case is assigned at Surface Structure, i.e. a pre-phonological level. All overt NPs require abstract Case but morphological Case may or may not appear, depending on the language. Innu-aimun, in fact, does not have morphological Case.

A minimal number of assumptions require stating in

advance of discussing an Algonquian language within a generative framework. Generative grammar accounts for language-specific features as parametric variation within a set of universal principles. It must be assumed, therefore, that these universal principles apply to the Algonquian language family.<sup>i</sup> The following assumptions therefore hold throughout this thesis:

that Algonquian languages are Configurational, meaning that there is hierarchical phrase structure in accordance with X-bar theory. This assumption presupposes that Algonquian has an underlying unmarked word order. Following Jelinek (1984) and Halle and Marantz (1992), I assume that Configurationality is within the verb complex and that the word order flexibility observed in Innu-aimun is irrelevant to the present discussion. For this reason no discussion of Scrambling Rules is included in this thesis;<sup>ii</sup>

that Case, although not morphologically realized in Algonquian languages, is required to license arguments within the verb complex (i.e. abstract Case), and that Case assignment is dependent on the hierarchical relations which hold between Case assigners and recipients;

that theta-role assignment is dependent on hierarchical relations which hold between theta-role assigners and theta-role recipients, and that theta-roles are assigned in accordance with the Theta Criterion: 'Each Argument bears one and only one theta-role, and each theta-role is assigned to one and only one Argument;' (Chomsky 1981, 36)<sup>iii</sup>

that both Case and theta-roles are assigned to morphology within the verb complex in order to meet the requirements of principles such as the Theta Criterion.

These assumptions are intended to serve as points of reference, rather than to restrict the scope of investigation.

## 2.2 The Theory of Incorporation and Case Parameterization

Applicative constructions can be found in a wide range of language families.<sup>iv</sup> While all applicatives have in common the characteristic features by which they are defined (extra verbal morphology and two non-subject NPs), there is some cross-linguistic variation. For example, in the previous section I said that the theme of an Innu-aimun

applicative does not behave like an object and that it is misleading to use the term 'double object construction' for this reason. This is not however true of applicatives in all languages. There are languages which have applicative constructions which could accurately be called 'double object constructions'. Baker (1988, 174) cites the example of the Bantu language, Kinyarwanda, for example. Either the theme or the benefactive NP can trigger object agreement in this language. Assuming that an NP which receives structural Case will display object properties, Kinyarwanda verbs must have two structural Cases available. By the same reasoning, Innu-aimun verbs must have only one structural Case available.

Baker (1988, 264ff) proposes that the cross-linguistic variation observed in the behaviour of constructions derived by valency-changing processes in general is not evidence for the existence of different rules. Baker (1988, 162) rejects, for example, the claim made in Gibson (1980) that there must be at least two causative rules in the world's languages. Baker (1988, 161ff) proposes that the number and type of Cases a verb can assign in any given language is parametrically determined.

This theory of Case Parameterization is dependent on the assumption that the complex verb resulting from any type of Incorporation can only assign as many structural Cases as a simple verb in that language could do. Thus, the incorporating verb in a causative construction loses its ability to assign structural Case. The incorporating preposition in an applicative construction also loses its Case-assigning properties. This principle is formalized as follows.

#### The Case Frame Preservation Principle

A complex  $X^0$  of category A in a given language can have at most the maximal case assigning properties allowed to a morphologically simple item category A in that language. (Baker 1988, 122)

For this reason, the addition of, for example, a benefactor (applicative construction) or a causee (causative construction) creates a Case-assignment crisis: one extra Case assigner is required. If no Case is available to license an additional NP, the structure will not be permitted. The absence of, for example, applicative constructions in a language is indicative of limited Case-assigning strategies. On the other hand, where applicative constructions are permitted in a language, the syntactic

properties of each of the non-subject NPs provides information as to the types of Case available. In this way, Baker (1988, 264) has identified three Case Parameters.

Baker (1988, 264) claims that three major classes of languages can be identified, defined by means of their Case systems:

(i) Double Accusative Languages. Verbs can assign up to two structural Cases, for example, Kinyarwanda. Applicative constructions are permitted, and both non-subject NPs show object properties.

(ii) Partial-Double Object languages. Verbs can assign a maximum of one structural Case. In an applicative construction in, for example, Swahili or Innu-aimun, only one of the two non-subject NPs shows object properties. However, a second non-subject NP is permitted. Baker (1988, 181) proposes that the NP which lacks object properties may be licensed by inherent Case.<sup>v</sup> Case to the second object is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five of this thesis, following the presentation of relevant data.

(iii) Non-Double Object languages. Verbs in languages such as French or Italian assign a maximum of one Structural Case and have no other means available to license a second non-subject NP. These languages therefore lack applicative constructions.

Each of these three classes is regarded as a Case Parameter; the Case-assignment crisis caused by valency-increase processes can be dealt with in one of three ways, resulting in variation in the derived constructions. Specifically, in Baker's theory of Incorporation and Case Parameters, the range of syntactic behaviour observed in applicative and causative constructions is accountable for in terms of principles and parameters.

### 2.3 An Outline of Innu-aimun Grammar

The following outline is necessarily selective, presenting and discussing only those properties which will be relevant to the rest of the discussion. Verbs and nouns are the only two major grammatical categories that appear in this thesis.

#### 2.3.1 Verbs

In Algonquian languages, verbs are traditionally

classified on the basis of transitivity (after Bloomfield 1946). Transitive verbs are further subdivided depending on whether agreement is with an animate or inanimate object. A Transitive Animate (TA) verb agrees with an animate object and a Transitive Inanimate (TI) verb agrees with an inanimate object. An Animate Intransitive (AI) verb agrees with an animate subject, and Inanimate Intransitive (II) agrees with an inanimate subject. However, this traditional classification does not account for all types of Algonquian verb. One of these exceptions, the Pseudo-Transitive (TI<sup>2</sup>) verb, features prominently among the data presented in this thesis. TI<sup>2</sup> verbs have AI morphology but, having an inanimate object, they are syntactically transitive. Thus, while being morphologically intransitive, they are syntactically comparable to TI verbs. Each of these five classes of verb is now presented. In all cases, the NPs are optional.

#### 2.3.1.1 Transitive Animate Verbs

Example (3) shows a TA verb.<sup>vi</sup>

- (3) **Nimaakumaut atimut.**  
 ni-maaku-am-aa-u-at atimu-at  
 1-bite-TAfin-TAth-SUBsg/OBJ3-OBJpl:TA dog-PROX\_AN\_PL  
 'I bite the dogs.'



Some discussion of the morpheme gloss is required as much of the terminology is specific to Algonquian linguistics. Going left to right, the morphemes are as follows. The prefix ni- 'I' will be treated in this thesis, following Halle and Marantz (1992, 27), as a pronominal clitic.

The 'TA final' -am (TAfin) follows the verb root. All Algonquian verbs require a morpheme referred to as a final. Finals are not regarded as part of the inflectional morphology. In some cases they contribute a semantic component. For example, the TA final -am in (3) indicates 'facial involvement'. Transitive finals are paired, so that for each TA final there is a TI final. The pairs are always morphologically related, and sometimes identical. Intransitive verbs also have finals. Piggott (1989) argues that finals are affixes which provide the verb root with features such as animacy and transitivity (via feature percolation). While nothing in this thesis contradicts this hypothesis, being outside the scope of this work it is not explored further.

What is traditionally referred to as the 'direct TA

theme sign' (TAth) -aa (see, for example, Wolfart (1973)) follows the TA final. Throughout this thesis, following ideas proposed for Warlpiri in the work of Jelinek (1984, 44) and for Potawatomi in Halle and Marantz (1992, 27), I propose that the TA theme sign is a nominal affix which satisfies argument requirements within the verb complex. In other words, Case and theta roles are assigned to morphology within the verb complex which is optionally associated with an independent nominal adjunct. This accounts for the optionality of overt NPs in Algonquian languages, as well as for the lack of ordering restrictions imposed on major constituents.

Accounting for the optionality of overt NPs in Warlpiri, Jelinek (1984, 52) formalizes the relationship between pronominal clitics and nominal adjuncts in terms of Case compatibility. The mechanism by which nominal adjuncts and pronominal clitics are 'linked' in Innu-aimun is not examined in this thesis. Case is not overtly marked in Algonquian languages and Jelinek's 'Linking Rule' for Warlpiri, expressing the relationship between Grammatical and Lexical Case, is not readily transferable to Innu-aimun. Nevertheless, I shall assume that in Innu-aimun there is a

'Linking Rule' which associates verb-internal arguments with the optional nominal adjuncts in a non-random way. Thus, where nominal adjuncts appear, they reflect properties, such as animacy and Case, of the nominal affixes with which they are 'linked'. Specifically, I assume that the TA theme sign (-aa if the object is third person, or -e if the object is obviative) is in fact an affix representing the animate object within the verb complex.<sup>vii</sup> In other words, -aa receives structural Case and a theta role from the verb and only an animate adjunct such as atimut in (3) can be associated with it. The constituent order in (3) is therefore Subject ni-, Verb makuam, Object -aa. Parallel to this, I shall show that there is evidence that the TI theme sign is an inanimate argument within a TI verb complex which can only be associated with an inanimate nominal adjunct.

The TA inflectional suffix -u follows the TA theme sign in (3) above. The gloss SUBsg/OBJ3 indicates that the subject is singular and that the object is third person. Object number agreement in this case is represented by the final suffix -(a)t.

Substituting the 'inverse TA theme sign' -ik<sup>u</sup> for -aa,



The pronominal clitic ni- appears in the same preverbal position as it does in TA verbs. However, there is a TI -amt final instead of a TA final -am seen in (3) and the TI theme sign, non-third -e, is different. The third person TI theme sign is -am.

Parallel to TA theme signs, I shall assume that the TI theme sign is an affix which represents an inanimate nominal within the verb complex. It may be associated only with an inanimate NP such as napataat in (5).

Because only the subject is animate, there is no need for an inverse theme sign; the roles of agent and theme are not interchangeable. There seems to be a restriction prohibiting the assignment of the agent role to an inanimate argument in Algonquian languages in general. Consider, for example, 'The potato bites the man'. This example would be unacceptable in most languages because of the semantics. However, even examples which are possible in, for example, English, such as 'The tree broke the window' or 'The wind knocked the man over', are ruled out grammatically in Innu-aimun.



Since II verbs never have an animate subject, there can be no first or second persons in this paradigm. Consistent with the discussion so far, I assume that utaapaan-(a) is associated with the third person inanimate argument ∅-.

I am proposing that the pronominal clitic -∅ in (6) can only be linked with an animate nominal, and that the same clitic in (7) can only be linked with an inanimate nominal.

There must therefore be some means of linking the feature of animate or inanimate. The only other extra morphology contained in the verb in examples (6) and (7) are the finals. If the animate and inanimate intransitive finals provide animacy features, this would be consistent with

hypothesis proposed by Piggott (1989).  
[Finals] that distinguish between animate and inanimate subjects' of intransitive verbs ... can be accounted for only by assuming that some intransitive finals are specified [+animate] and others [-animate]. (Piggott 1989, 187)

#### 2.3.1.5 Pseudo-Transitive (TI<sup>2</sup>) Verbs

These verbs are peculiar for two reasons. Firstly, there is an apparent mismatch between morphology and syntactic behaviour, and, secondly, at least a large









analysis is discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis; at this point in the thesis, the discussion is not relevant.

### 2.3.2 Nouns

#### 2.3.2.1 Gender, Number and Person

##### (i) Gender

As mentioned above, in Innu-aimun, as in all Algonquian languages, nouns are divided into two grammatical categories, animate and inanimate.

- |               |        |             |
|---------------|--------|-------------|
| (14) miinuush | 'cat'  | (animate)   |
| akuup         | 'coat' | (inanimate) |

Although logical and grammatical animacy always coincide in the case of animate nouns, a small number of logically inanimate nouns are grammatically animate.<sup>xi</sup>

- |                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| (15) tshishtemaau | 'pipe'   |
| apui              | 'paddle' |

To avoid confusion, whenever animacy is referred to in this thesis, unless specified otherwise, it should be understood as grammatical animacy.

##### (ii) Number

In their singular form, nouns have no affixes to distinguish gender. They take different plural suffixes,

however: -at is the animate plural suffix, and -a forms the inanimate plural. Thus, the plural of miinuush 'cat' (animate) is miinuushat, and the plural of akuup 'coat' (inanimate) is akuupa. In addition, the animacy of the noun determines both the form of the obviative suffix, and the circumstances in which it is required. Animate NPs marked obviative have no number distinction.

(iii) Person - Morphological Form

There are three persons in Innu-aimun, morphologically marked on verbs and possessed nouns. As mentioned earlier, first and second persons, as either verbal arguments (examples (16a) and (16b)) or possessors (examples (16c), (16d)), are represented by the prefixes ni- and tshi-.

- (16a)     **Nimuupin.**  
ni-muup-i-n-∅  
1-visit-AI<sub>fin</sub>-SUB<sub>non3</sub>-SUB<sub>sg:AI</sub>  
'I am visiting.'
- (16b)     **Tshimuupin.**  
tshi-muup-i-n-∅  
2-visit-AI<sub>fin</sub>-SUB<sub>non3</sub>-SUB<sub>sg:AI</sub>  
'You are visiting.'
- (16c)     **Nitakuup.**  
ni-t-akuup-∅  
1-EP-coat-PROX\_SG(inan)  
'My coat.'

- (16d) **Tshitakuup.**  
 tshi-t-akuup- $\emptyset$   
 2-EP-coat-PROX\_SG(inan)  
 'Your (sg) coat.'

Although historically present, and still found in languages such as Ojibwa, no third person prefix u- now appears on Innu-aimun verb stems; third person arguments are represented in this thesis as  $\emptyset$ -.

- (17) **Muupu.**  
 $\emptyset$ -muup-i-u- $\emptyset$   
 3-visit-AI<sub>fin</sub>-SUB<sub>non3</sub>-SUB<sub>sg:AI</sub>  
 'S/he is visiting.'

However, in contrast to the third person form of the verb, the prefix u- does appear on a third person possessee.

- (18) **Utakuup.**  
 u-t-akuup- $\emptyset$   
 3-EP-coat-PROX\_SG(inan)  
 'His/her coat.'

Following Halle and Marantz (1992), I am treating ni-, tshi- and  $\emptyset$ -/u- as pronominal clitics and assuming that they attach to a fully inflected verb stem and that they are not part of the derivational or inflectional morphology. As mentioned above, I also assume that these pronominal clitics receive case and theta roles and that they are linked, by some means which remains unspecified in this thesis but

which most likely involves matching Case and animacy features, to an adjunct, the purpose of which is to provide supplementary semantic content.

#### 2.3.2.2 Obviation

There are certain circumstances in which a distinct set of suffixes are added to third person nominals. Within a clause obviative suffixes encode a system of obligatory disjoint reference. Cross-clausal obviation is traditionally viewed as a discourse feature of Algonquian (Bloomfield 1957, Wolfart 1973). However, as none of the examples cited in this thesis display cross-clausal obviation, it is not relevant to the present discussion. For the same reason, verbal obviative suffixes are not discussed here. An animate noun possessed by a third person always requires the animate obviative suffix -a.

- (19) **Paatiniik umiinuushima.**  
Paatiniik        u-miinuush-im-a  
Patrick-PROX    3-cat-POSS-OBV\_AN  
'Patrick's cat/s.'

The animate obviative marker -a is indifferent to number, and the possessive suffix -im is required.<sup>xii</sup> Throughout this thesis traditional terminology is used: the nominal to which the obviative form attaches is called the obviative

form, and the non-obviative form is called the proximate form.

An inanimate noun with a third person possessor requires neither an obviative suffix, nor the possessive suffix *-im*.

(20) **Paatiniik utakuup.**  
Paatiniik            u-t-akuup-∅  
Patrick-PROX    3-EP-coat\_PROX\_SG(inan)  
'Patrick's coat.'

The majority of obviative examples which appear in this thesis appear do so because there is more than one third person in the same clause. Obviation is obligatory in this case. For example, two third persons appear in all the applicative examples presented here.<sup>xiii</sup> The following examples show the three obviative suffixes that appear in this thesis: respectively, animate, inanimate singular and inanimate plural.

(21a)        **Maani mueu namesha.**  
Maani-∅            ∅-mu-e-u-∅  
Mary-PROX        3-eat-TAth-SUBsg/OBJ3'-SUBsg:TA  
  
namesh-a  
fish/es-AN\_OBV  
  
'Mary eats fish/es.'

- (21b) **Maani mishkam<sup>u</sup> assiikunu.**  
 Maani-∅            ∅-mishk-am-<sup>u</sup>-∅  
 Mary-PROX        3-find-TIth-SUB3-SUBsg:TI
- assiik<sup>u</sup>-inu-∅  
 pot-OBV\_INAN\_SG
- 'Mary finds a pot.'
- (21c) **Maani mishkam<sup>u</sup> assiikunua.**  
 Maani-∅            ∅-mishk-am-<sup>u</sup>-∅  
 Mary-PROX        3-find-TIth-SUB3-SUBsg:TI
- assiik<sup>u</sup>-inu-a  
 pot-OBV\_INAN\_PL
- 'Mary finds some pots.'<sup>xiv</sup>

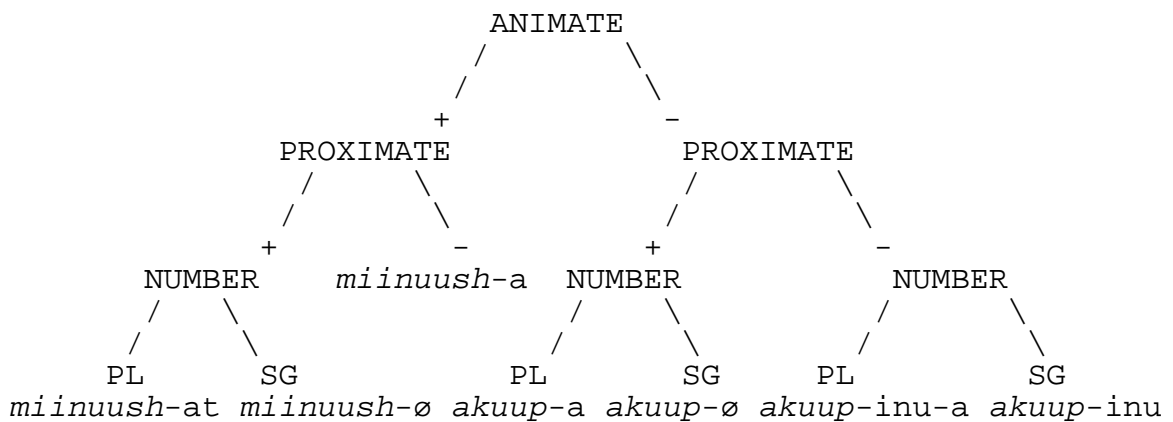
As discussed above, following Jelinek (1984) and Halle and Marantz (1992) I propose that the arguments within the verb complex are linked with nominal adjuncts by Case and that other features such as animacy have to match up. It seems likely that the features obviative/proximate which appear on a nominal adjunct must also be determined by the person features assigned to the nominal affix to which it is linked.

The obviative forms of animate and inanimate nouns differ, as do the circumstances in which obviation is required. Obviation is a complex grammatical feature of Algonquian which has generated a considerable amount of



literature (for example, Cowan 1985, Dahlstrom 1991, Ford 1981, Grafstein 1984). The brief description of obviation provided in this section is intended to introduce the suffixes which occur throughout this paper, attached to the nominal adjuncts. Figure 2.1 offers a hierarchically organized summary of these.

Figure 2.1: Summary of nominal suffixes which appear in this thesis.



#### 2.4 Innu-aimun and Configurationality

Algonquian languages are often described as being non-Configurational (for example, Dahlstrom (1987) for Fox).<sup>xv</sup> The definition of a non-Configurational language is one which lacks hierarchical organization of constituents.

Among the classic properties associated with non-Configurational languages, those relevant to the present discussion are:

- (i) complex verbs
- (ii) optional NPs
- (iii) free ordering of (at least) major constituents

However, the above properties are predictable if Configurationality within the verb complex is assumed. I shall discuss each of the above properties in turn:

(i) Algonquian verbs are morphologically complex. In the brief discussion so far of applicatives and causatives I have suggested that prepositions and additional verbs may be contained within the verb complex. I have also proposed that both TA and TI theme signs are affixes to which case and theta roles are assigned and that there is strict ordering of major constituents within the Innu-aimun verb complex. The free word order appearance of Innu-aimun is not therefore reason to classify it as non-Configurational.

(ii) Assuming Configurationality within the verb complex accounts for the fact that overt NPs are optional in Innu-aimun, and in Algonquian languages in general. This optionality is shown in the examples in (22).

(22a) **Penute mishkueu Tshaana.**  
Penute mishku-eu Tshaan-a  
Penute find-TA John-OBV  
'Penute finds John.'

(22b) **Mishkueu.**  
∅-mishkau-eu  
3-find-TA  
'S/he finds him/her.'

(iii) Also accounted for is the lack of ordering restrictions on major constituents (see, for example, Starks 1987). Since subject, verb and object are all represented within the verb, and since their order is strictly determined, further order restrictions would be redundant. Within a clause in Innu-aimun, a nominal adjunct may appear in any position relative to the verb complex without altering the meaning, so that the constituent order appears to be any combination of subject, verb, object.<sup>xvi</sup>

FOOTNOTES

- i.. Some of these assumptions are controversial in theoretical frameworks other than generative grammar: for example, to assume an underlying fixed order for major constituents when there are no surface ordering restrictions; to assume obligatory case assignment in the absence of overt evidence.
- ii.. It is proposed that Scrambling Rules applying post-syntactically within clauses (Mellow 1988, for example), scrambling constituent order and thus accounting for the surface word order flexibility displayed by, for example, Algonquian languages.
- iii.. By 'theta role' I mean, for example, 'agent', 'theme', 'beneficiary'.
- iv.. For example, Chamorro (Austronesian), Chichewa, Chimwiini and Kinyarwanda (Bantu), Mohawk and Onondaga (Iroquoian), and Tzotzil (Mayan). Baker (1988, 444-5)
- v.. Inherent Case is usually associated with a particular thematic role and it is assigned at D-structure. (Chomsky 1986)
- vi.. A final -(a)t represent a plural object where the subject is either first or second person. Where the subject is a third person, a final -(a)t represents a plural subject. The plural marker varies between -at and -t; the latter appears when it follows a verb or noun ending in 'u'.
- vii.. It should be noted that the -aa-/-e- suffix only represents a 3rd person subject/obviative animate object; it is not found, for example, in TA verbs involving 1st person subjects and 2nd person objects (nor vice versa). In order to restrict the extent of this thesis, 1st person/2nd person data has not been included.
- viii.. I have not yet found any TI<sup>2</sup> verbs which do not contain the causative morpheme.

The causative morpheme for inanimate objects is pronounced either as -iit or -it, depending on the phonological environment and the ordering of the rules. At an earlier stage in the development of Innu-aimun, the morpheme was -iht and in most environments the vowel underwent lengthening before the h, was then dropped. After n however, the vowel was elided before the lengthening took place, and then the h was dropped.

ueuesh- <u>iht</u> -aa-w	pimipani- <u>iht</u> -aa-w	
	pimipan <u>hta</u> aw	Vowel elision
ueueshi <u>hta</u> aw		Vowel lengthening
ueueshi <u>iita</u> aw	pimipant <u>a</u> aw	h-drop

ix.. To form a causative construction which has an animate object, such as example (10), the morpheme -i is used. -i(i)t only occurs where the object of the causative construction is inanimate.

x.. Obviation is discussed in section 2.3.2.2 of this thesis.

xi.. Piggott (1989, 206), for example, claims that semantics does not determine the classification of nouns. It would seem, however, that the grammatical category of nouns is in fact determined by their logical animacy in all but a very small number of cases.

xii.. The possessive suffix -im is attached to most possessed animate nouns, regardless of the person of the possessor. Inalienably possessed animates ("dependent" stems in traditional Algonquian terminology) do not always display this suffix. A small number of possessed inanimate nouns also require -im. These nouns usually end in a diphthong:

**nishuuniaam**

ni-shuuniaau-im-ø

1p-money-POSS-PROX\_SG(an)

'My money.' (Clarke 1986, 21)

xiii.. Note that applicative constructions need not contain two third persons, but that I have restricted my examples in order to restrict the scope of this thesis. There are always at least two third persons in every applicative construction shown here. This avoids introducing examples which have a second person argument and for which another set of inflectional endings is required.

xiv.. This reading is strictly non-coreferential. Suppression of the inanimate obviative marker, singular or plural, following a third person subject TI verb gives a co-referential reading ('She finds her own pots/s'). This grammatical feature is not relevant to this thesis.

xv.. Non-configurational languages are also called Free Word Order languages (Mellow 1988).

xvi.. Note that the appearance of a nominal adjunct may entail differences in pragmatic meaning, or differences in topic or focus.