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A NOTE ON THE ORIGIN OF THE ABLATIVE CASE IN MODERN TUNUMIISUT (EAST GREENLANDIC)*

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Abstract

According to modern descriptions of Tunumiisut (East Greenlandic), the ablative case ending is *-minngaanii(t)*. There is no record of such an ending in the early documentation of the language from around the turn of the twentieth century. This brief contribution attempts to reconcile these two facts by proposing that the ablative in modern Tunumiisut is an innovation that resulted from the interaction of the noun and the demonstrative declensions which is facilitated by well-known mechanisms in the history of the Inuit-Yupik languages.

1. Introduction

Kalaallisut ([K], aka Kitaamiusut, or West Greenlandic), Tunumiisut ([T], aka East Greenlandic) and Inuktun ([I], aka Polar Eskimo, or North Greenlandic) belong to the Inuit (aka Eastern Eskimo) group of the Inuit-Yupik-Unangax (aka Eskimo-Aleut, Eskaleut or Unangax-Yupik-Inuit) language family. The three are spoken in Greenland. Kalaallisut and Tunumiisut are closely related, whereas Inuktun is on a different taxonomic level, one perhaps in-between the Kalaallisut-Tunumiisut node and the Inuit cluster of languages spoken across Canada and northern Alaska. For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to all three collectively as “Greenlandic”.

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Eight cases are traditionally distinguished in the noun declension of the standard language – which is based on central dialects of K – namely, absolutive, ergative = relative, instrumental, allative, locative, ablative, vialis, and aequative.¹ In this brief contribution, I will focus on the historical interaction in T of the ablative *-mit*, e.g. K SG *illumit* ‘from the house’, PL *illunit* ‘from the houses’ (from *illu* ‘house’), and the instrumental *-mik*, e.g. K SG *savimmik* ‘with a knife’, PL *savinnik* ‘with (the) knives’ (from *savik* ‘knife’),² and the outcome of such an interaction, whereby a new ablative ending emerged to clearly distinguish it from the instrumental.

The organization of the paper is simple. I survey the available documentation of T starting with the early research by Thalbitzer (section 2) up to the modern descriptions by Dorais, Mennecier, and Tersis (section 3). An attempt at reconciling the significant differences between these two historical layers is made in section 4.

2. Tunumiisut data in Thalbitzer’s works

William Thalbitzer (1873–1954) worked and collected language and ethnographic data near Ammassalik from 1905 to 1906. He published the results of his research in a bulky two-volume study some years afterwards.

Thalbitzer (1921: 132 §40) notes that the K noun ablative suffix *-mit* “[...] is unknown” in T,³ where the functions of the ablative are carried out by the instrumen-

¹ Regarding case terminology, specialists use a wide array of alternative names. The most common variations are: ablative = distantialis, séparatif; instrumental = modalis; allative = terminalis, directif; vialis = perulative, translative, prosecutive; aequative = conformative, equalis, simulatif.

² The opposition *m : n* indicates the contrast between singular (SG) and plural (PL). The *n*-endings are also associated with possession: ablative *illuanit* ‘from 3SG’s house’, instrumental *illuanik* ‘(with) 3SG’s house’, etc. The reader is kindly asked to bear this fact in mind (the opposition itself is irrelevant to the purposes of this paper).

³ He adds to this that “[...] in many instances the W[est]Gr[eenlandic]. allative case [...] is also unused, as the very frequent instrumentalis is preferred in verbs of movement to designate the goal of the movement (or sometimes its starting point)”. Curiously enough, he makes mention (1921: 408–409, fn. 3) of a T text recorded by Holm where “[...] the words for ‘grass’ and ‘Greenland seal’ are added in the ablative case”. It is not entirely clear what Thalbitzer had here in mind, and, unfortunately, I have not seen Holm’s original T texts. Note however that Holm’s text was translated by Petersen, who spoke K, and therefore many interferences can be expected (e.g. Holm’s Navagijak vs. Thalbitzer’s Niwaanijak, etc.). Be that as it may, Thalbitzer provides his own collected version of the same text on p. 410, where we read: <qim-ikajea isimakaim-e-ŋ toqukae-p-on iwim-un arnarqip-on [...] naliŋinnarmun arnarpon> ‘[t]he poor dog died voluntarily. Then [the soul] crept into a blade of grass. [...] He crept into a Greenlandic seal’ (the English translation of the passage in question can be found on p. 411), where the (nasalized) allative *-mun* (= K *-mut*), rather than the instrumental, let alone the ablative, can be easily identified on *iwiq* ‘(blade of) grass’ and *naliŋinnnaq* ‘seal’ (the former, from Proto-Inuit-Yupik *əvəy ‘grass’, seems to have fallen out of use, cf. RD 132b: T *piitsaq* vs K *ivigaq* ‘blade of spear-grass’, cf. Tersis (2008: 135) *iwiq* ‘(cabin) biscuit’; as for the latter, see RD 135b: T *nalanginnaq* (*Phoca groenlandica*) vs K *aataaq* ‘Greenland seal, harp seal’, cf. Tersis (2008: 176b) *natanyinnaq*, which is derived from a form *naliŋinnaq* ‘any (-body or -thing), common’ [CED 230b], which is a perfect match for the form registered by Thalbitzer). We can still see the instrumental in the adverbial form <isimakaim-e-ŋ> {isima-kaik-mik} ‘voluntarily’,

tal.⁴ In essence, in K the ablative (“[...] the inverse of allative”, in Bergsland’s words [1955: 80–82]) marks actual or figurative source (“from/since...”), the standard of comparison (“than X”), or the agent of a passive sentence, whereas the instrumental indicates “by means of”, adverbs of the *ingly*-type derived from the active participle of stative verbs, and the complement in an antipassive sentence. Table 1 offers a comparative overview of noun endings in Greenlandic, that is, in the standard language (i.e. K), in T as recorded by Thalbitzer (which I call “T1”), and for the sake of illustration, in I as well.⁵ Note the instrumental-ablative syncretism in T1.

Table 1. Noun endings in Greenlandic

	K	T1	I
ABSOLUTIVE	∅	∅	∅
RELATIVE	-(u)p	-(I)p ~ -(I)m	-(u)p
INSTRUMENTAL	-mik	-mIk ~ -mIŋ	-mik
ABLATIVE	-mit / -miit		-mit
ALLATIVE	-mut	-mun	-mut
LOCATIVE	-mi	-me	-mi
VIALIS	-kkut	-kut ~ -gin	-kkut
AEQUATIVE	-tut / -sut	—	-hut

Sources: K = Bjørnum (2003: 85), T1 = Thalbitzer (1921: 130–133), I = Fortescue (1991: 169).

In subsequent sections, Thalbitzer (1921: 144 §64) explains that the same particularity occurs in the declension of the personal pronouns (Table 2).

However, in the section on the demonstrative pronouns and the demonstrative adverbs – in the Inuit-Yupik-Unangax languages, these adverbs can be inflected for some cases – we learn that in the latter there is a distinctive ablative case (Thalbitzer 1921: 145 §66). The set of endings that we find in the demonstrative adverbs (Table 4) is smaller – only the four so-called spatial cases – and differs slightly from those that we find in the noun declension. The same holds true for the demonstrative pronouns (Table 3). The proper segmentation of these forms, which at this point may not seem self-evident, will become clearer in the discussion that follows.

lit. ‘with little thought’ (from *isima-* ‘to think, mind’ and *isimaq* ‘thought, mind’). Note that the uvular nasal *ŋ* in the text fragments from Thalbitzer is phonotactic.

⁴ The ablative-instrumental case syncretism is common crosslinguistically (see e.g. Kuteva 2019: 37–38, 315).

⁵ Throughout this paper various spelling conventions will be adopted depending on the tradition and the author, hence the frequent use of, among others, the correspondences “ng = ŋ” & “nng = ɲŋ”.

Table 2. 1SG pronoun inflection in Greenlandic

	K	T1	I
ABS.-REL.	<i>uanga</i>	<i>uwaŋa ~ o-a</i>	<i>uanga</i>
INSTRUMENTAL	<i>uannik</i>	<i>uwán-ij</i>	<i>uannik</i>
ABLATIVE	<i>uannit</i>		<i>uannit</i>
ALLATIVE	<i>uannut</i>	<i>uwán-orj</i>	<i>uannut</i>
LOCATIVE	<i>uanni</i>	<i>uwané</i>	<i>uanni</i>
VIALIS	<i>uakkut</i>	—	— ^a
AEQUATIVE	<i>uattut</i>	—	<i>uattut</i>

Sources: K = Bjørnum (2003: 103), T1 = Thalbitzer (1921: 144), I = Fortescue (1991: 171).

^a According to Fortescue (1991: 172), the vialis is not used with such bases.

Table 3. Demonstrative pronoun ‘this; 3SG’ in Greenlandic

	K	T1	I
ABSOLUTIVE	<i>una</i>	<i>una</i>	<i>una</i>
RELATIVE	<i>uuma</i>	<i>o-ma</i>	<i>uuma</i>
INSTRUMENTAL	<i>uuminnga</i>	<i>o-miŋa</i>	<i>uuminnga</i>
ABLATIVE	<i>uumannga</i>	—	<i>uumannga</i>
ALLATIVE	<i>uumunnga</i>	—	<i>uumunnga</i>
LOCATIVE	<i>uumani</i>	—	<i>uumani</i>
VIALIS	<i>uumuuna</i>	—	—
AEQUATIVE	<i>uumatut</i>	—	<i>umatut</i>

Sources: K = Bjørnum (2003: 107), T1 = Thalbitzer (1921: 145), I = Fortescue (1991: 172).

Table 4. Demonstrative adverb ‘here’ in Greenlandic

	K	T1	I
ABLATIVE	<i>uannga</i>	<i>úwaŋa</i>	<i>uannga</i>
ALLATIVE	<i>uunga</i>	<i>o-a</i>	<i>uunga</i>
LOCATIVE	<i>uani</i>	<i>úwanè</i>	<i>uani</i>
VIALIS	<i>ugguuna</i>	<i>uko-na</i>	<i>uguuna</i>

Sources: K = Bjørnum (2003: 122–123), T1 = Thalbitzer (1921: 145), I = Fortescue (1991: 173).

The merger of the ablative and the instrumental⁶ drew the attention of Thalbitzer (1921: 132 §40), who pointed out to a particular feature of the language that could account for it. He points out that “[...] the endings of the three actual cases [ablative, ablative, instrumental. – JAAF] pass into each other in a manner often rather confusing, partly on account of the indistinct pronunciation or downright change in pronunciation (not only $t > n$ and $k > \eta$, but even $n > \eta$)”. More than half a century ago Kleinschmidt (1851: 6–7 §7, cf. Fortescue 1983: 17, fn. 32) remarked that in some instances [k] may be occasionally heard instead of [t] in final position (cf. Thalbitzer 1904: 177).⁷ This is the earliest hint we have about the ultimate reason why the ablative and the instrumental merged in T: weakening of final consonants – more specifically, the absence of release burst in the case of stop consonants (as one of the reviewers kindly pointed out) – leading to their confusion and, as we can see today, total loss in the speech of some speakers.⁸ There are few examples of the same k/t -confusion in the Tunumiisut texts published by Thalbitzer:

- (1) a. ⟨sumiŋ⟩ (p. 273)
 ⟨sumin⟩ ‘where from’ (pp. 436–437)
 b. ⟨tim·nin/ŋ⟩ ‘from...’ (p. 468)
 c. ⟨tará·ŋamin/ŋ⟩ ‘when...’ (p. 482)

Furthermore, we find numerous examples of T *-mik* ~ *-miŋ* where function-wise we need the ablative in K (Table 2).

- (2) a. ⟨ila·niŋ⟩
 ‘than other people’ standard of comparison (p. 310)
 b. ⟨qernertimik⟩
 ‘by the raven’ agent of a passive sentence (p. 210)
 c. ⟨to·rna·rticsanik⟩
 ‘by the aid of their toornaartik’ adverb (p. 478)
 d. ⟨qarqartiwarme⁹⟩
 ‘from the high mountain’ source (p. 226)

There are two remarkable aspects of the corpus of T texts that Thalbitzer published in 1931: (1) it is a bilingual edition, so that we have at our disposal both the K and the T versions displayed face-to-face; (2) the nature of the texts – some of them belong

⁶ This development has occurred only in T. Elsewhere within the Inuit sphere the ablative ending is robustly documented, e.g. (Nunavik Inuktitut) nominal *-mit* in absolutive *nuna* ‘land’, ablative *nuna-mit*, cf. the possessive ablative *nuna-nga-nit* ‘3SG’s land’, and the demonstrative adverbial *-nngat* in locative *maani*, ablative *maanngat* (e.g. Dorais 2010: 83, 281), etc. In both cases, the ending exhibits final *-t*, which is absent from the adverbial ending in Tunumiisut.

⁷ The connection between the two sounds is well understood and should not detain us here. For examples and references on previous scholarship, see Chu et al. (2023).

⁸ The perhaps most explicit statement regarding the drop of final consonants can be found in the Tunumiisut data collected by the French scholar Paul-Émile Victor during various campaigns on Greenland between 1934 and 1937. In the glossaries (Victor, Robert-Lamblin 1993a: 299, 1993b: 411) the final consonants */-t/*, */-q/* are indicated ⟨ʼ⟩ and ⟨ʻ⟩, respectively, or they are not written at all, e.g. *atteq* vs [ate], *saaqit* vs [cāqiʼ], *imeq* vs [imeʼ], *qaaq* vs [qā], etc.

to the *serrat*, PL *serratit* type⁹ – allows for the speculation that they may preserve potential archaic features that otherwise have disappeared from more recent varieties of T. In the examples below (3), where I have replaced ⟨k⟩ for ⟨q⟩, we can observe that there are three different historical outcomes: (a) retention of the allative and instrumental case endings in T, without trace of the ablative; (b) K -t : T -k ~ -ng, i.e. the confusion of the ablative with the instrumental (and sometimes even the allative due to the *i*-effect, whereby some vowels change into /i/ under certain circumstances) as described by Thalbitzer above; (c) loss of final consonants.

	K	T	
(3) a.	<i>sigssamut</i>	<i>sittamun</i>	(p. 45)
	<i>qeqertamut</i>	<i>qêrtamôn</i>	(p. 49)
	<i>sumut</i>	<i>cumut ~ cumun</i>	(p. 50)
	<i>nánumik</i>	<i>nánimik</i>	(p. 21)
	<i>avataujungnartumik</i>	<i>avatâinartimik</i>	(p. 69)
	<i>qâinamik</i>	<i>qâinaming</i>	(p. 82)
	<i>púsuinik</i>	<i>puttuaning</i>	(p. 21)
b.	<i>nunamut</i>	<i>nunamung</i>	(p. 45)
	<i>ivigkangnut</i>	<i>ivikannung</i>	(p. 75)
	<i>atânut</i>	<i>atâning</i>	(p. 45)
	<i>ilingnut</i>	<i>ilinning</i>	(p. 48)
	<i>avdlâinarnut</i>	<i>attânarnik</i>	(p. 70)
	<i>-mit</i>	<i>-meng</i>	(p. 52)
	<i>agtainit</i>	<i>attâning ~ attânik</i>	(p. 24)
	<i>nuliangnit</i>	<i>nuliævnik</i>	(p. 73)
	<i>imânit</i>	<i>imâning</i>	(p. 45)
c.	<i>imânut</i>	<i>imâne</i>	(p. 45)
	<i>tungânit</i>	<i>tuâne</i>	(p. 34)
	<i>tungânit</i>	<i>toâne</i>	(p. 34)
	<i>kisimik</i>	<i>kisime</i>	(p. 28)
	<i>natserssuarqamik</i>	<i>nêniartivaqami</i>	(p. 49)
	<i>kingânik</i>	<i>kêngâni</i>	(p. 18)
	<i>qânik</i>	<i>qâiani</i>	(p. 24)

The examples gathered in (3) show in unambiguous terms the drastic changes that the T declension underwent due to the combined action of phonological erosion (loss of final consonants) and the *i*-effect (loss of the “u vs i”-opposition in some case endings).

3. Modern Tunumiisut

Much unlike the language data collected by Thalbitzer, modern descriptions of Tunumiisut include an ablative case ending of the general shape *-miŋŋaaniit* or

⁹ “Magic words and spells [...], which were regarded as addressed to or as invoking the dead, who then gave their help” (Rasmussen 1938: 71).

the like. Examples showing the typical use of the ablative can be readily found in actual texts,¹⁰ starting with those collected in 1935 by Paul-Émile Victor (1907–1995) in the Ammassalik area:

- (4) a. *nakkaajartittarpoq qilamminngaaniit*
 ‘er faldet ned fra himlen. / est tombé du ciel.’ (Victor 1991: 224b)
 b. *qaaniqminngaaniit qitaattuaaik amuwaat*
 ‘ils prirent le petit tambour de dessous la plate-forme.’ (Tersis 2017: 143)¹¹

Tables 5–8 incorporate the information provided in modern descriptions of Tunumiisut to the general picture offered in the previous section, and update tables 1–4, respectively. Note that “T2” refers to Mennecier, “T3” to Tersis, and “T4” to Robbe and Dorais. Note that in the following tables, the em dash (“—”) indicates that the sources are silent regarding the ending in question, and no explanations are provided for the gap(s) in the data.

None of the modern descriptions makes mention of the fact that this extended version of the ablative was not documented by Thalbitzer.¹²

Last but not least, in T there is the N-to-V postbase *-minṅaaniiq-* (Tersis 2008: 9, 315b), for which we know of near parallels like, e.g. *-minṅaaq-* ‘come from N’ in the Copper dialect of Western Canadian Inuit, or the synonymous *-miṅṅaq-* in the North Slope dialect of Iñupiaq (cf. CED 455b: “[...] the [ablative] case ending for nouns followed by that form [demonstrative] bases” followed by **-q-* ‘to go’). Interestingly enough, K *-meer-* exists alongside the extended variant *-minṅaanneer-*, which is tacitly assumed to come from the extended ablative *-minṅaaniit* (see examples in, e.g. Lennert Olsen, Hertling 2011: 44–45). Nielsen (2019: 58–59) even makes mention of the *k*-variants of the ablative case(s) in K: *-miik-*, *-minṅaanniik-*, etc. (see below for the apparent “m > n” change), in accordance with the merging discussed above. Be that as it may, K *-minṅaanneer-* and *-minṅaaniit* perfectly replicate T *-minṅaaniiq-* and *-minṅaaniit*. Note, however, that in K the use of the ending *-minṅaaniit* is restricted – in modern usage, it means ‘comes from’ or ‘originates in/from’, reflecting its adverbial origin – and, perhaps more importantly, there is no trace of the various nominal formations (revisit Tables 5–8) which according to our scenario lead to the creation of the new reinforced ablative in T. To account for the particularity of the documentation, we are confronted with various possibilities:

¹⁰ In the Tunumiisut-Kalallisuut bilingual collection of children’s stories told by Elisa Maqe (1916–2007), from Kuummiut, near Ammassalik (Maqe, Rosing 1994; stories are translated into Danish and English as well) we find parallels like the following: T *tunumiisuuminṅaaniit* = K *tunumiiumiit* ‘from Tunumiisut’ (on p. [4]), T *tappuanṅaaniit* = K *tappavanna*, from [taC=pava] ‘in- or upwards, east’ (demonstrative adverb, cf. CED 515) (on p. 26), or T (*tattanṅaaniit*) *nunaqarpianninṅaaniit* = K *nunaqarfimminniit* ‘to the settlement’ (on p. 68).

¹¹ For an alternative version see Tersis (2019): ‘ils tirèrent le petit tambour de dessous la plate-forme’ [French, on p. 37] = *qaanermiṅṅaaniit qilaattuaaik amuwaat* [Tunumiisut, on p. 68].

¹² As far as I can see, there are no unambiguous examples of this extended ablative. Forms like <wiwit-uarmiṅ-e-q> ‘from Uwewak’, on p. 195 – showing the well-known *n*-loss in internal position like in T <im-e-ṅ> vs. K <im-inik> ‘from the lakes’, on p. 255 – are plausible candidates.

Table 5. Noun endings in Greenlandic

	K	T1	T2	T3	T4	I
ABSOLUTE	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
RELATIVE	-(u)p	-(l)p ~ -(l)m	-p	-p	-(u)p	-(u)p
INSTRUMENTAL	-mik	-mik ~ -mlŋ	-mi	-mi(k)	-mi(k)	-mik
ABLATIVE	-mit / -miit		-minngaaniit	-minngaaniit	-minngaaniit ^a	-mit
ALLATIVE	-mut	-mun	-mut	-mut	-mu(t)	-mut
LOCATIVE	-mi	-me	-mi	-mi	-mi	-mi
VIALIS	-kkut	-kut ~ -gin	-kkut	-kkit	-kkit / -kkut	-kkut
AEQUATIVE	-tut / -sut	—	-sut	-sut	-sut	-hut

Sources: K = Bjørnum (2003: 85), T1 = Thalbitzer (1921: 130–133),¹³ T2 = Mennecier (1995: 252), T3 = Tersis (2008: 30, 32–33, 339b),¹⁴ T4 = Robbe and Dorais (1986: 3), I = Fortescue (1991: 169).

^a The same *t*-less variant in Dorais (2017: 207–208) has short final vowel, e.g. *numaminngaani* SG vs *numaminngaani* PL, etc.

¹³ In the texts collected and analyzed by Mennecier (1995: 473–566, glosses and translation on pp. 507–566) we find numerous variants: SG /-minŋaaniit/ (on pp. 509, 565) ~ /-minŋaaniitiit/ (on pp. 473, 508, 518, 544, 558), PL /-minŋaaniitiit/ (on p. 558), cf. /-minŋaaniitiit/ (on p. 552), /ta-ppua-ŋpaaniitiit/ (on p. 522) vs /tatta-ŋpaaniitiit/ (on p. 525), sometimes in the same context, e.g. on p. 552 *isiqtu-minŋaaniitiit* vs *isiqtu-minŋaaniitiit* ‘d’Isertoq’ on p. 558, etc.

¹⁴ There are numerous examples scattered through the dictionary section, e.g. *kutus-u-minŋaaniit* ‘from Kulusuk’ (on p. 52 = 218a) or *dammaqki-minŋaaniit* ‘from Denmark’ (on p. 97b), *sugsunniqsuaq-minŋaaniit* ‘after World War Two’ (on pp. 315–316, 571), *tasita-minŋaaniit* ‘than Tasillaq’ (comparative construction, on p. 45 = 200b), *qimmi-minŋaaniit* ‘by the dog’ (agent construction, on p. 316b), etc.

Table 6. 1sg pronoun inflection in Greenlandic

	K	T1	T2	T3	T4	I
ABS.-REL.	<i>uanga</i>	<i>uwaŋja ~ o-a</i>	<i>uaŋa</i>	<i>uaŋa</i>	<i>uvarnga</i>	<i>uanga</i>
INSTRUMENTAL	<i>uannik</i>	<i>uwán-iy</i>	<i>uannut^a</i>	—	<i>uvannu</i>	<i>uannik</i>
ABLATIVE	<i>uannit</i>		<i>uannuyŋaaniit</i>	<i>uannuyŋaaniit</i>	<i>uannunngaanii</i>	<i>uannit</i>
ALLATIVE	<i>uannut</i>	<i>uwán-oy</i>	<i>uannut</i>	<i>uannut</i>	<i>uvannu</i>	<i>uannut</i>
LOCATIVE	<i>uanni</i>	<i>uwané</i>	<i>uannut</i>	—	<i>uvannu</i>	<i>uanni</i>
VIALIS	<i>uakkut</i>	—	<i>uannut</i>	—	<i>uvarngasut</i>	— ^b
AEQUATIVE	<i>uattut</i>	—	<i>uattut</i>	—	<i>uattut</i>	<i>uattut</i>

Sources: K = Bjørnum (2003: 103), T1 = Thalbitzer (1921: 144), T2 = Mennecier (1995: 273), T3 = Tersis (2008: 28, 30, 281b), T4 = Robbe and Dorais (1986: 8), I = Fortescue (1991: 171).

^a Mennecier (1995: 273) does not include the instrumental, but he gives an example containing it on p. 311.

^b According to Fortescue (1991: 172), the vialis is not used with such bases.

Table 7. Demonstrative pronoun ‘this; 3sg’ in Greenlandic

	K	T1	T2	T3	T4	I
ABSOLUTE	<i>una</i>	<i>una</i>	<i>una</i>	<i>una</i>	<i>una</i>	<i>una</i>
RELATIVE	<i>uuma</i>	<i>o-ma</i>	<i>uuma</i>	<i>uuma</i>	<i>uuma</i>	<i>uuma</i>
INSTRUMENTAL	<i>uumingna</i>	<i>o-miŋa</i>	<i>uumiŋga</i>	<i>uumiŋga</i>	<i>uumiŋga</i>	<i>uumiŋga</i>
ABLATIVE	<i>uumannga</i>	—	<i>uayŋaaniiit</i>	<i>uayŋaaniiit</i>	<i>uvanŋaaniiit</i>	<i>uumannga</i>
ALLATIVE	<i>uumuunnga</i>	—	<i>uua</i>	<i>uua</i>	<i>uvua</i>	<i>uumuunnga</i>
LOCATIVE	<i>uumani</i>	—	<i>uani</i>	<i>uani</i>	<i>uvani</i>	<i>uumani</i>
VIALIS	<i>uumuuna</i>	—	<i>ukkuuna</i>	<i>ukkuuna</i>	<i>ukkuuna</i>	—
AQUATIVE	<i>uumatut</i>	—	—	—	<i>unasut</i>	<i>umatut</i>

Sources: K = Bjørnum (2003: 107), T1 = Thalbitzer (1921: 145), T2 = Mennecier (1995: 266–268), T3 = Tersis (2008: 559), T4 = Robbe and Dorais (1986: 9), I = Fortescue (1991: 172).

Table 8. Demonstrative adverb ‘here’ in Greenlandic

	K	T1	T2	T3	T4	I
ABLATIVE	<i>uanga</i>	<i>úwapa</i>	<i>uappaaniit</i>	<i>uappaaniit</i>	<i>uvannaanii</i>	<i>uanga</i>
ALLATIVE	<i>uunga</i>	<i>o·a</i>	<i>uua</i>	<i>uua</i>	<i>uvua</i>	<i>uunga</i>
LOCATIVE	<i>uani</i>	<i>úwanè</i>	<i>uani</i>	<i>uani</i>	<i>uvani</i>	<i>uani</i>
VIALIS	<i>ugguuna</i>	<i>uko·na</i>	<i>ukkuuna</i>	<i>ukkuuna</i>	<i>ukkuuna</i>	<i>ugguuna</i>

Sources: K = Bjørnum (2003: 122–123), T1 = Thalbitzer (1921: 145), T2 = Mennecier (1995: 265–266), T3 = Tersis (2008: 560), T4 = Robbe and Dorais (1986: 10), I = Fortescue (1991: 173).

1. the same formations in T existed also in K, but were over the course of the time removed through internal (unrecoverable?) mechanisms, and/or
2. the lack of documentation may be due to such factors as purism or a bad case of chance;
3. the forms in K are easternisms (for the migrational context, see e.g. Fortescue 1986: 420, etc.). From this standpoint, the fact that Kleinschmidt (1871: 430b) only gives K *-meer-* (cf. Schultz-Lorentzen 1927: 285b) would be congruent with the apparent gap in the data shown in Tables 5–8. It would also account for the marginal status of *-minngaaniit* in K;
4. only modern T *-minḡaaniit* is a westernism, i.e. it has been taken over from K, whereas the other nominal formations discussed in previous sections are independent developments that emerged in its sphere of influence.

Irrespective of the possibility we choose to be the most likely (common inheritance in options 1–2, independent development *cum* borrowing in options 3–4), the main contribution of this paper is to contextualize Thalbitzer’s data within the historical evolution of Tunumiisut.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The language data presented in sections 2 and 3 tell two different things about the ablative case ending. Thalbitzer speaks of a merging with the instrumental case, whereas modern descriptions give a highly marked ending. In this section I will try to account for this remarkable discrepancy.

Tersis is the only author I am aware of who has taken a look at the issue. Tersis (2008: 560) argues that the noun ablative is somehow linked with the demonstrative ending *-nngaaniit* (“Pour le séparatif, *-ḡaaniit* est a relier au cas directif *-minḡaaniit* en tunumiisut”). Unfortunately, Tersis does not explain where the latter comes from. The historical record favours the assumption that the extended ablative is of secondary origin. I put forward the working hypothesis that T *-minngaaniit(t)* is a hypercharacterized formation containing two ablative endings that emerged after a two-step development. The first step involved the export of the noun ablative **-mi(i)(t)*¹⁵ to the demonstrative declension yielding the new ablative ending *-ḡaaniit(t)*, like in the formations shown in Tables 7 and 8. The bridge between nouns and demonstratives is the virtual identity of the locative case ending, which is the same in both declensions. In the second step the new ablative ending *-ḡaaniit(t)* of the demonstratives spread to the noun declension when phonological processes caused the confusion of the allative, ablative and instrumental case endings.

¹⁵ I do not have a satisfactory explanation about why speakers targeted the long vowel variant of the ablative, whatever the origin of the long vowel is – rather either the unexpected assimilation of ***|-mi-u-t|*, lit. ‘be from’ or(/and?) emphatic lengthening to distinguish the ablative from the instrumental when the final consonant is blurred or even loss – beyond the naively superficial descriptive fact that it is more distinctive than the short vowel variant.

As for the sequence /*ŋŋa*/ found in the demonstratives, Bergsland (1989: 26–27 §3.2.4., 70 ft. 68) considered it an Inuit innovation (cf. K *uumanna* ‘this.ABL’ vs Central Alaskan Yup’ik *uumek*, K *uanna* ‘here.ABL’, i.e. ‘from here’ vs CAY *waken*, etc.). In it we can identify the final consonant of the noun case ending, i.e. the /*k*/, which is here phonotactically /*ŋ*/, in Central Alaska Yup’ik *-mek*, followed by the *a*-vocalism that characterizes the demonstrative adverbs (see e.g. CED 497b). Put differently, the original adverb form **uv-a-kən* ‘here.ABL’ became **uv-a-kŋ-a* in Inuit,¹⁶ which yields the more familiar segment *-ŋŋa-* in Greenlandic (cf. demonstrative ABLATIVE *-kŋa* in Iñupiaq, etc.). Failure to have the adverbial *a*-vocalism attached to the LOCATIVE may have been caused by an early reanalysis *ua-ni* → *u-a-ni* after locative 3SG/SG (non-referential) possessive forms like e.g. *itti-a-ni* ‘in his house’ (= K *illu-a-ni*), as suggested by Tersis (2008: 560).¹⁷ The by-product of this reanalysis, i.e. the sequence /*ani*/, seems like a good candidate to explain the long vowel /*a*/ in the extended ablative. Bear in mind that this reanalysis might extend to the other cases because the loss of final consonants leads to a situation where the ablative *-mi(t)* and the instrumental *-mi(k)* formally look like the locative *-mi* (cf. Mennecier 1995: 255, etc.)

Table 9 summarizes the zig-zag development that led to the modern state of affairs. The sound change “*m* > *n*” in Stage II results from the analogical extension of the possessive reanalysis, which demands the use of the *n*-ending. Note that Stages I and III reflect the language data documented by Thalbitzer and available for modern Tunumiisut, respectively, whereas Stage II does not seem to be attested:

Table 9. Evolution of the ablative markers in Tunumiisut

	DEMONSTRATIVE		NOUN
I	<i>-ŋŋa</i>	vs	<i>-mi(i)(t)</i> , POSS.3SG/SG <i>-a-ni(i)(t)</i>
II	<i>-ŋŋaaniit</i>	←	<i>-mi(i)(t)</i> , POSS.3SG/SG <i>-a-ni(i)(t)</i>
III	<i>-ŋŋaaniit</i>	→	<i>-miŋŋaaniit</i>

The resulting extended ablative resembles typical examples of pleonasm where a given formant appears twice, e.g. double plurals in German (e.g. *Junge-n-s* ‘boys’), Spanish *conmigo* ‘with me’ < Latin *cum mecum*, etc. (Gardani 2015).

As for the motivation behind this new formation, there are plenty of examples that show similar solutions to what appear to be identical initial conditions. A conspicuous example comes from the evolution of the Early Middle Indo-Iranian nominal system. The loss of final consonants in Sanskrit led to a situation where

¹⁶ See other demonstrative formations: RELATIVE.sg CAY *uum* vs. K *uumaa*, ABSOLUTE/RELATIVE.PL CAY *ukut* |*u-ku-t*| vs K *uku(a)*, cf. Western Canada Inuktitut *ukuat* |*u-ku-a-t*|, etc. (see e.g. CED 526).

¹⁷ One might also posit a purely phonological development, i.e. **...*a-ni-a* > **...*a-ni-i*, which would have most likely led back to |*-a-ni*|, which would in any case have been subject to morphological reanalysis.

the nominative plural and the ablative singular became homophonous (Table 10). In the words of Hewson and Bubenik (2006: 114), “[...] the synthetic morphology of the Ablative became insufficient”. Pronominal and adverbial material was adopted to provide the ablative with a more distinct ending.

Table 10. Origin of the ablative endings in Pāli

	Old Indo-Iranian Sanskrit	Old Prākritis Pāli
NOM.SG	<i>devaḥ</i>	<i>devo</i>
NOM.PL	<i>devāḥ</i>	<i>devā</i>
ABL.SG	<i>devāt</i>	a. <i>devā</i>
	[pronominal <i>tasmat</i> →]	b. <i>devasmā ~ devamhā</i>
	[adverbial <i>-tas</i> →]	c. <i>devato</i>

A related phenomenon that may serve to strengthen the scenario put forward in the previous paragraphs is double case marking in demonstrative adverbials, which is not unheard of in Inuit-Yupik. The examples in (5) include languages from both branches: (a) comes from the Malimiut Coastal dialect of Iñupiaq (Lanz 2010: 118–122); (b) and (c) illustrate the phenomenon in Central Siberian Yupik (de Reuse 1994: 229) and Central Alaskan Yup’ik (Miyaoka 2012: 811), respectively. In all cases I give the authors’ original segmentation.

- (5) a. *qama-ni-aṅa-ni*
‘in there (not visible, distal)’
- b. *taakwa-ni-(ng)ani*
‘lately, recently; later on, after some time; sometimes’
- c. *ma-a-ni-tun*
‘like here’

De Reuse (1994: 228) explains that “[...] double inflection in [Central Siberian Yupik] probably involve[s] only the addition of the [locative 3SG/SG.POSS] ending *(ng)ani* to a [demonstrative adverb] which is already inflected for the [locative] case.” Miyaoka (2012: 808–812) or Lanz (2010: 119), however, show that in Central Alaska Yupik (cf. ex. [5c] above with the combination LOCATIVE/AEQUATIVE), and Iñupiaq there is the possibility of various types of combinations.¹⁸ Table 11 illustrates them by means of the demonstrative adverb *amma* ‘over there (not visible, distal)’ in Iñupiaq:

¹⁸ It is my understanding that this is what Lanz (2010: [iii]) had in mind when she claimed that double case marking as described for Iñupiaq has been “[...] previously undocumented in Eskimo-Aleut”.

Table 11. Double case marking in Iñupiaq (Malimiut Coastal dialect)

ALLATIVE	<i>ama-uŋa</i>
ALLATIVE-ALLATIVE	<i>ama-uŋa-tmun</i>
ABLATIVE	<i>ama-kŋa</i>
PERLATIVE	<i>ama-uuna</i>
LOCATIVE	<i>ama-ni</i>
LOCATIVE/LOCATIVE	<i>ama-ni-aŋa-ni</i>
LOCATIVE/ALLATIVE	<i>ama-ni-aŋa-nun</i>
LOCATIVE/ABLATIVE	<i>ama-ni-aŋa-niñ</i>
LOCATIVE/PERLATIVE	<i>ama-ni-aŋa-gun</i>

As for the element *-aŋa-* in Iñupiaq, which corresponds to the optional *ng-*segment in Central Siberian Yupik and does not exist in Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Lanz (2010: 119 ft 4) explains that “[t]his as-yet unidentified suffix is presumably a suffix used for ligature of multiple cases [...]. It does not appear in any synchronic sources or the [CED].” Lanz seems to be unaware of Bergsland’s work of 1989.

It is imperative to make clear that double case marking and the extended ablative ending in T are not directly connected. We are rather dealing with parallel developments that grew organically through similar mechanisms from the same source materials. Put differently, the stacking of cases, whatever the origin of the intervening *ŋ-*formative may be, have precedents in the history of these languages.

The foregoing discussion shows that the ablative case included in modern descriptions of T is secondary. It was created following patterns and mechanisms that are well documented in Inuit-Yupik, and the motivation behind it, i.e. avoiding lack of distinctiveness, is rather universal.¹⁹

As a final note, the most cursory inspection of Tables 5–8 reveal that there are numerous issues that warrant further elaboration in regard to the history of Greenlandic. The main goal of this contribution was to take the first step in that direction.

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¹⁹ This may be seen as a curious fact given general observations from the field of typology. Blake (2001: 155–160) presents arguments to show that the ablative is a highly marked case among the less essential ones. This means that typical functions associated to the ablative are expressed analytically or via syncretism.

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