

Icelandic *let*-causatives and case¹

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Abstract

The verb *láta* ‘let/make’ in Icelandic provides a unique opportunity to understand the behavior of symmetric versus asymmetric DAT-NOM constructions. In this paper, I take a close look at *láta* and examine a set of cases where DAT-NOM verbs are embedded under *láta*, resulting in the otherwise nominative object becoming accusative in some cases and remaining nominative in others. I analyze this in terms of a phase-based dependent case theory (cf. Marantz 1991/2000, 2007), where locality domains are the primary factor determining whether dependent accusative is available.

1 Introduction

Like many Germanic languages, Icelandic has a light verb like *láta* ‘let/make’ which takes a bare infinitive complement of the following sort.

- (1) Þeir létu mig drekka lýsi.
 they.NOM let me.ACC drink cod.liver.oil.ACC
 ‘They made me drink cod liver oil.’ (Thráinsson 2007:436)

Most Scandinavian languages, including Icelandic, use ‘let’ for both ‘allow’ (like English *let*) and ‘force’ readings (like English *make*; cf. Thráinsson 1979:442), and it is not entirely clear at present what conditions the choice between the two readings, but they do not seem to be completely interchangeable.

The syntax of *láta* and *láta*-causatives raises a number of interesting and difficult problems. In this paper, I present an analysis of *láta* and *láta*-causatives

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with the goal of developing a better understanding of nominative and accusative case marking. The primary phenomenon of interest is the case-marking patterns of dative-nominative (DAT-NOM) constructions embedded under *láta*.

DAT-NOM constructions have long posed difficult analytical problems, and in recent years have grown in importance in the development of the ‘Minimalist Program’, Icelandic in particular playing an important role in works such as Chomsky (2001), Koopman (2006) and Marantz (2007), among others. One major issue has been to understand sentences like (2), where the finite verb agrees with the nominative object, which otherwise shows demonstrable ‘object’ behavior, when there is a dative that shows demonstrable ‘subject’ behavior.

- (2) Mér **hafa** alltaf nægt **tvennir skór**.
 me.DAT have.3PL always sufficed two.pairs shoes.NOM
 ‘I have always made do with two pairs of shoes.’

I contend in this paper that an understanding of nominative case on the object requires an understanding of what happens when DAT-NOM verbs are embedded under *láta*. Interestingly, DAT-NOM verbs do not react to *láta* in a uniform way; with some verbs, such as *nægja* ‘suffice’, the nominative argument becomes accusative and nominative is no longer possible.

- (3) Ég lét mér nægja { * **tveir miðar** / **tvo miða** }.
 I let me.DAT suffice { * two tickets.NOM / two tickets.ACC }
 ‘I let myself make do with two tickets.’

However, with other verbs, such as *líka* ‘like’, the nominative argument preferably stays nominative, and accusative is quite odd.

- (4) Ég læt mér ekki líka { **svona dónaskapur** / ?? **svona dónaskap** }.
 I let me.DAT not like { such rudeness.NOM / ?? such rudeness.ACC }
 ‘I don’t let myself like such rudeness.’

This difference in case marking apparently correlates with another property which distinguishes among DAT-NOM constructions: *nægja*-type verbs allow either the

dative or the nominative to raise to the subject position, whereas *líka*-type verbs allow only the dative to raise to the subject position (as will be shown below). I will propose that the same operation which makes both arguments of *nægja*-type verbs available for A-movement is also responsible for accusative case in (3). I implement this in terms of a phase-based dependent case theory which allows domain-extending head-movement along the lines of den Dikken (2006, 2007a,b).

The basic idea will be that an applicative head, which introduces the dative and takes the nominative object as a complement, undergoes head movement in the *nægja* ‘suffice’-type verbs, but not in the *líka* ‘like’-type verbs. When head movement does take place it makes both the dative and the nominative equidistant for A-movement; in addition, it extends the object’s phase so that the nominative subject of *láta* causatives becomes visible. This ‘visibility’ conditions accusative case on the object. When domain-extending head-movement does not take place, the nominative subject of *láta* is not visible when the lower object is spelled out, so rather than dependent accusative case, it is nominative.

In order to develop an understanding of these facts, we must first understand certain aspects of the syntax of *láta* in general. After introducing the theoretical framework in sections 2 and 3, I situate *láta* within the landscape of (causative) light verbs in Icelandic and English in section 4. I present an analysis of causative *láta* in section 5 and extend this to DAT-NOM constructions in section 6. In section 7, I discuss (but do not resolve) some issues related to ECM verbs such as *telja* ‘believe’. In section 8, I discuss other instances of accusative case which will ultimately be important for a full understanding of case marking. Section 9 concludes.

2 Preliminaries

Before presenting the phenomena of primary interest to this paper, a brief background of the framework assumed here is necessary. I adopt the general frame-

work of phase-based cycles developed in Chomsky (2001, 2007, 2008), with some modifications from work in Distributed Morphology (Embick and Marantz 2008; Marantz 2007, 2008). In this framework, a ‘verb’ is a functional head v , which may or may not be modified by a category-neutral root. (Certain ‘light’ verbs are arguably not lexical roots in the same way, but rather morphophonological exponents of v ; see below.) Adopting the general position from Kratzer (1996), maintained in most work within the Minimalist Program, external arguments are not introduced by this v , but rather by a functional head ‘Voice’.

The intuition behind the label ‘Voice’ is that the properties of the head introducing the external argument will be involved in voice alternations that involve the expression of the external argument, such as ‘passive’. However, the passive is a complex set of properties, rather than a single property which could be related to a single functional head. The canonical Germanic-type passive, which often involves an auxiliary and participial morphology, has been analyzed in a framework similar to this one as involving a functional head ‘Asp(ect)’ on top of Voice (Embick 1997, 2004). This conclusion has been argued for in distinct (but related) frameworks as well. For example, Collins (2005) and Sigurðsson (2011) both analyze this type of passive as involving a functional head higher than the one introducing the external argument. In this paper, the Voice head is the head involved in introducing the external argument, but not the sole head involved in encoding active/passive alternations.

In Chomsky (2008), there is a close relationship between Voice and v (see also Marantz 2007:207).³ Voice is the phase head and enters the derivation with an Edge Feature [EF] as well as unvalued ϕ -feature bundle with an [EPP] (sub-)feature (see Adger and Svenonius 2011 for discussion). Upon completion of a phase, Voice transfers its ϕ -feature bundle to v , which then probes its c-command domain for a DP with which it enters into an Agree relation. When a successful Agree relation has been established, the [EPP] feature on v triggers internal merge of the

³Chomsky uses v/v^* for Voice; in this paper, I will transpose the terminology for expositional clarity.

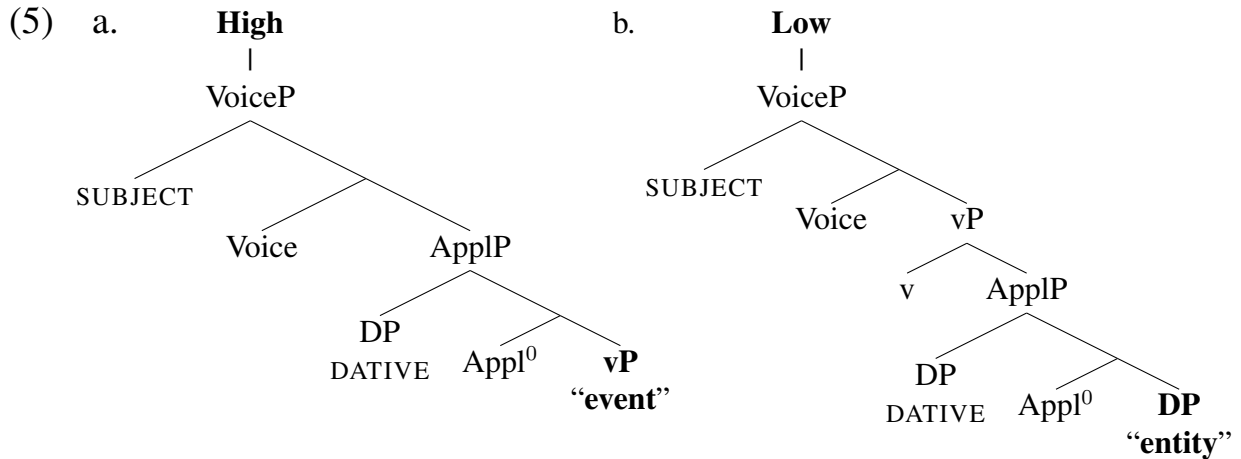
DP to its edge, SpecvP.⁴ The [EF] remains on Voice, however; it can be satisfied by external merge of, say, an external argument, or by internal merge to the edge of VoiceP. This latter operation is basically free, though subject to various constraints at the interfaces.

Turning to ‘Case-licensing’, I adopt in this paper the position that the conditions involved in determining morphological case features on a DP are distinct from those involved in licensing DPs in the Case-theoretic sense (though not necessarily completely unrelated) (Marantz 1991/2000; Sigurðsson 2000, 2009a,b). On this approach, there is still a place for DP licensing—valuation of uT on D in the system of Pesetsky and Torrego (2007) (see also Sigurðsson (2009a) on ϕ -licensing). But these valuation relations are not what determine case values on DPs directly. Below, I will present an account of the ‘direct’ cases, structural nominative and accusative.

Turning to double object constructions, a sizeable literature has developed treating the two internal arguments as involving particular kinds of functional heads, often called applicatives.⁵ Generally, there are considered to be at least two kinds of applicatives: ‘high’ applicatives which relate the dative argument to an eventive complement, and ‘low’ applicatives which relate the dative to an entity argument. The most common case of low applicatives is with ‘give’-type verbs, which involve caused possession (but not necessarily ‘transfer’ of possession, cf. Rappaport Hovav and Levin 2008).

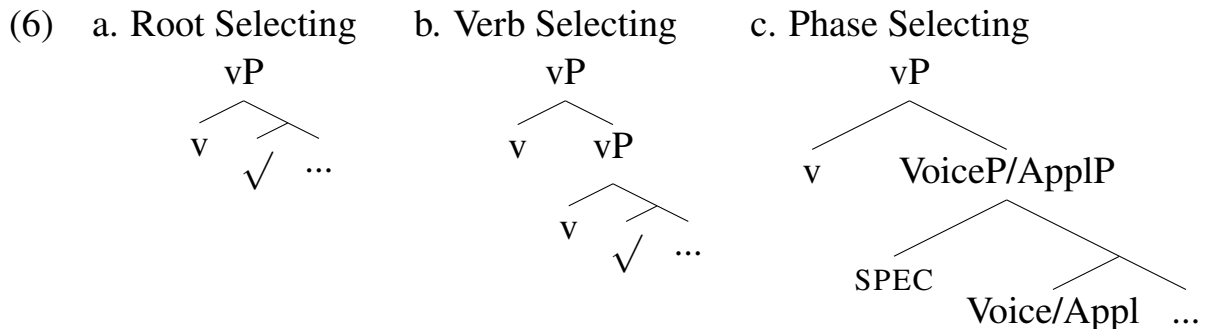
⁴However, in recent lectures, Chomsky has argued that no ‘specifier’ with a label is created, but that labeling takes place prior to this movement, making ‘SpecvP’ a misnomer.

⁵See Marantz (1989, 1993, 2009a,b), Pylkkänen (2002, 2008), Cuervo (2003), Schäfer (2008), McGinnis (2008), and Bosse et al. (2010), among others. This terminology came from work on Bantu languages, where the addition of an argument co-occurs with the addition of a morpheme on the verb.



In Pylkkänen (2002, 2008), it is claimed that languages with high applicatives should allow applicatives on unergative constructions, so that *He ran her.DAT* could mean ‘He ran for her’. Since Icelandic does not have such constructions productively, I will assume that Icelandic datives are generally not introduced by a high applicative. In Wood (2010), I provide a further argument in favor of this conclusion on the basis of differences between Icelandic and German benefactives and ‘unintentional causer’ constructions. The assumption that Icelandic dative subjects in dative-nominative constructions are uniformly introduced in the specifier of a (structurally) low applicative will drive the analysis in a certain way.

Pylkkänen (2002, 2008) found a correlation between a number of properties of causatives which she attributed to the size of the embedded predicate. Her typology is shown in (6).



The locus of parametric variation in causative constructions is in the selectional properties of the causative light verb *v*. All of these have in common that they take a complex event structure which expresses a causation relation between two

events, but they differ in the size and structural complexity of those events. I will discuss each of these cases further below.

In sum, the basic skeletal clause structure I will be assuming for the purposes of this paper is given below.⁶

- (7) [VoiceP SPEC [Voice_[EF] [vP SPEC [v_{u ϕ [EPP]} {DP/pP/vP/ ApplP/VoiceP}]]]]

External arguments are introduced in SpecVoiceP, satisfying the [EF] of Voice. When an external argument is not present, as in passives and unaccusatives, an internal argument may move to Voice to check its [EF]. SpecvP is filled by internal merge of the DP with which the uninterpretable ϕ -feature establishes an Agree relation. The complement of v can be any of the bracketed constituents shown above, all of which will be discussed below; other kinds of constituents are possible in this position as well, as will be seen below.

3 Phase-based dependent case

It is usually assumed that a completed phase does not spell out until a higher phase head is merged or a higher phase is complete. Moreover, the domain or complement of a phase-head is inaccessible to operations outside of that phase. At most, the head and specifier of a phase is accessible. The following account of the timing of phasal spellout is adapted from Marantz (2008), a more explicit version of the system outlined in Marantz (2007).

- (8) a. **Spellout:** When the phase of a phase head π is complete, all phase heads π' in the complement domain of π , and the complements of π' , are sent to spellout.
- b. **Agree:** The phase head π transfers its ϕ -features (with [EPP] features) to the head of its immediate complement, which probes its c-command domain for a goal, establishing Agree relations which drive A-movement.

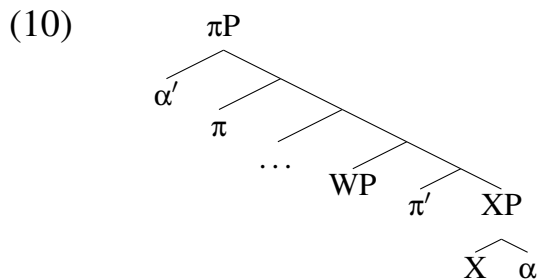
⁶In this system, lexical roots may start out attached to v in some cases, and DP in others; in the latter case, it will subsequently raise to v. The syntax of lexical roots will not generally be crucial in this paper (though see discussion surrounding the trees in (60)).

On a phase-based dependent case analysis, ‘direct’ cases (structural nominative and accusative) are established at spellout, on DPs being spelled out, before Agree takes place.⁷ The ‘dependent case’ analysis of nominative/accusative alternations was originally proposed in pre-phase theoretic terms in Marantz (1991/2000).⁸

- (9) **Direct case assignment:** If a DP α has no case feature at spellout, it is assigned accusative iff there is some other DP α' which is visible to α and where (a) α' has no case feature and (b) α' c-commands α . Otherwise, α will be nominative.

Notice that this allows α to be sensitive to the presence of a DP α' in a higher phase, even when the higher phase head will not be able to Agree with α .

Consider the schema in (10), where WP is externally merged in the specifier of π' . When π P is complete, the phase head π' and its complement, XP, is sent to spellout. Since α' is visible to α (having been present in the structure when α in XP was sent to spellout), α will get accusative case if α' is unmarked for case (or ‘bound for direct case’), or nominative if α' is some other case, such as dative.

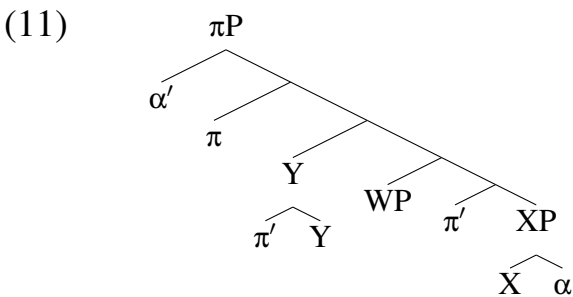


Now consider what happens when the phase-head π' has head-moved to a higher non-phase head Y, as illustrated in (11). Exactly how to interpret a structure like (11) with respect to the timing of spellout outlined above depends on

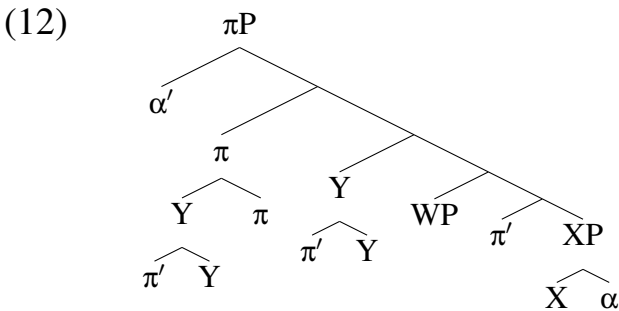
⁷The algorithm for direct case in (9) presupposes that non-direct cases, such as dative on indirect objects, are established ‘prior’ to spellout. This supposition might be wrong, in which case some other way of distinguishing between ‘direct’ cases and ‘non-direct’ cases is needed. A way of restating the definition that does not presuppose a particular way of looking at ‘non-direct cases’ (but maintains the distinction) would be to replace “has no case feature” with “is bound for direct case”. The core of the claims here would not change much either way.

⁸A conceptually similar idea was pursued in Yip et al. (1987), though see Marantz (2000:26) for some differences.

the phrase-structural status of head-movement. Assuming a view where head-movement happens in the syntax and creates two segments of the target head, the lower copy would be seen as a ‘discontinuous element’, and would not count as a completed phase in the complement domain of π .⁹ The phase head π' and its domain is extended to Y; therefore, WP is now spelled out with π' —it is no longer at the ‘edge’ of the phase. In order for it to be a possible goal for a probe on the higher phase head π , it would have to move to the edge of the extended phase, namely SpecYP.



Now consider what happens if π' moves all the way up to the higher phase head π .



By the reasoning above, there are in this structure no phases to send to spellout in the complement domain of π . This is because π' has formed a single complex structure with the head that would have otherwise triggered its spellout; it is a ‘discontinuous element’ and thus not a completed phase in that domain. π P and

⁹The moving head c-commands its copy if c-command only applies to categories, not to segments, as proposed in Kayne (1994:16) (citing May 1985 and Chomsky 1986; see also den Dikken 2007a:152). The idea of a moved element being seen as ‘discontinuous’ as spellout comes from Chomsky (2010). The notion of domain-extending head-movement is developed in the context of phase theory in den Dikken (2006, 2007a,b) (see also Kupula 2010) and has been exploited in pre-phase theories of locality in Chomsky (1995) and Collins and Thráinsson (1996). A conceptually very similar idea is developed in Marantz (1993).

π/P will now spellout as part of the same phase.

This kind of head-movement also has an effect on locality for A-movement. I adopt for the purposes of this paper the definition of closeness and minimal domain from den Dikken (2006:114).

- (13) The *domain* $\delta(\text{CH})$ of $\text{CH}=(\alpha,t)$ is the set of categories included in $\text{Max}(\alpha)$ that are distinct from and do not contain α or t .
- (14) The *minimal domain* $\delta_{\text{MIN}}(\text{CH})$ of $\text{CH}=(\alpha,t)$ is the largest subset S of $\delta(\text{CH})$ such that none of S 's members is dominated by any member of $\delta(\text{CH})$.
- (15) The *minimal domain* $\delta_{\text{MIN}}(\text{CH})$ of a chain resulting from head-adjunction of α to β is $\delta(\alpha) \cup \delta(\beta)$.

Based on these definitions, I adopt a set-based understanding of ‘closeness’, taken from Chomsky (1995:356) (also cited in den Dikken 2006:114), where K can be thought of as the probe in this case:

- (16) If β c-commands α and τ is the target of raising, β is closer to K than α unless β is in the same minimal domain as (a) τ or (b) α .

(16a) allows any DP in the minimal domain of a head which has head-raised to Y to move to SpecYP ; (16b) allows any two XPs in the same minimal domain to be equidistant to outside c-commanding positions.¹⁰

4 Periphrastic causatives and light verb constructions

In this section, I will discuss the causative verb *láta* in the context of a broader picture of periphrastic and synthetic (i.e. affixal) causative constructions. I first motivate the idea that *láta* forms a class of its own, in that it exhibits behavior distinct from other ECM or control verbs. I then show various uses of *láta*, comparing it to other ‘light’ verbs in Icelandic, English and Italian. Finally, I situate

¹⁰This notion of closeness is a version of the ‘Minimal Link Condition’ and is independent of other factors which may constrain when a DP can move to some position (such as if the DP has already been spelled out).

láta within the typology developed by Pylkkänen (2002, 2008) for affixal causative constructions cross-linguistically.

4.1 *Láta* and other ECM verbs

While *láta* and its cognates in Scandinavian are often studied in the context of other ECM verbs (Thráinsson 1979; Platzack 1986; Sigurðsson 1989; Hedlund 1992; Johnson and Vikner 1995), it has been observed that *láta* behaves uniquely in Icelandic grammar (and probably in other Scandinavian grammars as well) (Thráinsson 2005:425).¹¹

First, unlike other ECM verbs, *láta* never takes a complement headed by *að* ‘that’ (Thráinsson 1979:438). Perception verbs (e.g. *sjá* ‘see’ and *heyra* ‘hear’) and ‘believe’-type verbs do. Second, as pointed out by Thráinsson (1979), *láta* also differs from perception verbs and ‘believe’ in being unable to take a pronoun *það* as an anaphoric complement to refer to another small clause. Note that object control verbs behave like *láta* in this respect, though they behave differently from *láta* in a number of other ways.

- (17) a. Ég tel Maríu hafa farið og Ólafur telur það líka.
I believe Mary have gone and Olaf believes it too
‘I believe Mary to have gone and Olaf does too.’
- b. Ég sá Maríu fara og Ólafur sá það líka.
I saw Mary go and Olaf saw it too
‘I saw Mary go and Olaf did too.’
- c. *Ég lét Maríu fara heim og Jón lét það líka.
I let Mary go home and Olaf let it too
- d. *Ég skipaði Maríu að fara og Ólafur skipaði það líka.
I ordered Mary to go and Olaf ordered it too

(Thráinsson 1979:340,440)

¹¹Felser (1999) makes this point for English; perception verbs, which are like *make/have/let* in their causative uses in allowing a bare infinitive complement, nonetheless exhibit very different behavior from and probably should not be collapsed with the causative verbs.

Thráinsson (1979:440) points out that the ungrammaticality of (17c) cannot be attributed to the impossibility of *það* referring to a bare infinitive complement of *láta*. The sentence in (18) shows *það* referring to the infinitive complement of *láta* when *leyfa* ‘allow’ is used.

- (18) Ég ætlaði að láta Maríu fara með þeim en mamma hennar leyfði
I intended to let Mary go with them but mom her allowed
 það ekki.
 it not
 ‘I meant to make Mary go with them but her mom didn’t allow it.’

The problem with (17c) is apparently that *láta* itself does not allow anaphoric *það*. This is a difference between *láta* and other ECM verbs.

Third, in the Scandinavian languages, the cognates of *láta* differ from other ECM verbs in allowing a subjectless complement. There is variation across varieties of Scandinavian as to the word order of the embedded verb and object (Thráinsson 2007:454). While Icelandic and Swedish allow only the word order in (19a), Danish allows only the order in (19b); Norwegian and Faroese allow both orders. Some properties of this use of *láta* will be discussed further below.

- (19) a. Hún lét byggja húsið.
 she.NOM let build the.house.ACC
 ‘She made (someone) build the house.’
 b. * Hún lét húsið byggja.
 she.NOM let the.house.ACC build (Thráinsson 2007:454)

English causative verbs do not allow this with a bare infinitive (20a), though it is possible with a participial form to have the theme preceding the verb (20c). Interestingly, English does appear to have at least one verb with a pattern superficially similar to (19a), namely *help* (20b), which I will not discuss any further.

- (20) a. * John made/let/had build the house.
 b. John helped build the house.
 c. John got/had the house built.

These differences motivate a treatment of *láta* as a functional, rather than a lexical verb. If it were a lexical verb, it would be surprising for it to manifest grammatical properties unattested anywhere else in the language.¹² I will pursue the hypothesis that *láta* is the default exponent (i.e. realization) of a particular little *v* head when the latter is not modified by a root or spelled out by some more specific exponent. This idea is presented in the next section.

4.2 The light verb *láta*

In work on Japanese causatives, a long-standing issue dealt with the distinction between ‘lexical causatives’ and ‘syntactic causatives’ (Harley 1995; Pytkänen 2002, 2008). The analysis within Distributed Morphology has been that the ‘cause’ head undergoes allomorphy which is sensitive to a list of particular roots. If the root is not listed, then the default *-sase* is spelled out. This always applies in syntactic causatives because the root is not visible—it is buried within the complement phase.

Languages vary somewhat idiosyncratically, but not entirely randomly, with respect to other uses of the verbs which appear in periphrastic causative constructions with bare infinitive complements.¹³ In English, the verb *make*, in addition to its causative uses with verbs (21a) and adjectives (21b), can be used to express creation (21c).

- (21) a. John made me leave.
 b. John made me angry.
 c. John made a new hat.

¹²Though as will be seen below, unlike English *let/make/have*, *láta* can be passivized in its causative use. This property follows in the present analysis, since passive is built higher than *v*. Possibly in English-like languages, which do not allow passive, these verbs are higher functional elements, such as exponents of Voice, a possibility I set aside for now.

¹³Note that in Icelandic, Italian, and many other languages, the term ‘bare’ infinitive is a bit misleading, since infinitives take particular morphology, usually *-a* in Icelandic and *-r(e)* in Italian, for example.

In many languages, such as French and Italian, verbs which are usually translated as ‘do’ take a bare infinitive complement in its causative use.

(22) Italian

- a. Che hai fatto?
 what have.2SG done
 ‘What did you do?’
- b. Il temporale ha fatto affondare la nave.
 the storm has done sink.INF the ship
 ‘The storm has made the ship sink.’ (Kayne 2010:154-5)

In Icelandic, *gera* ‘do’ is used to express the equivalent of Italian *fare* in (22a) as well as English *make* in (21c). It also has a causative use, when the embedded predicate is an adjective, like English *make* in (21b).

- (23) a. Hvað gerðir-ðu?
 what did.2SG-you
 ‘What did you do?’
- b. Jón gerði nýjan hatt.
 John did new hat
 ‘John made a new hat.’
- c. Jón gerði mig glaðan.
 John did me happy
 ‘John made me happy.’

Marantz (2009a) proposes that activity light verbs may underlie the expression of causation (see also Kayne 2010:155). That is, when an activity verb takes an eventive complement (including stative eventualities), it is construed in the semantics as the activity bringing about the event denoted by the complement.¹⁴ In

¹⁴Similarly, in the system developed in Ramchand (2008), an (unbounded) process with a stative result complement is construed as the process ‘leading to’ that result. She generalizes this ‘leads to’ relation to agents/initiators, saying that they have a stative semantics; a stative subevent taking a process complement is construed as agency/initiation. Note that this probably does not underlie all causation, since sentences like *The bad weather gave me a cold* do not obviously involve an activity. With (stative) eventive causers, possibly a stative *v* expresses this relation, but I set the issue aside for now.

that system, a sentence like (24a) would have a structure like (24b) (where v_{DO} refers to (agentive) activity v).

- (24) a. Hann gladdi mig.
 he gladdens me
 ‘He makes me glad.’
- b.
-
- ```

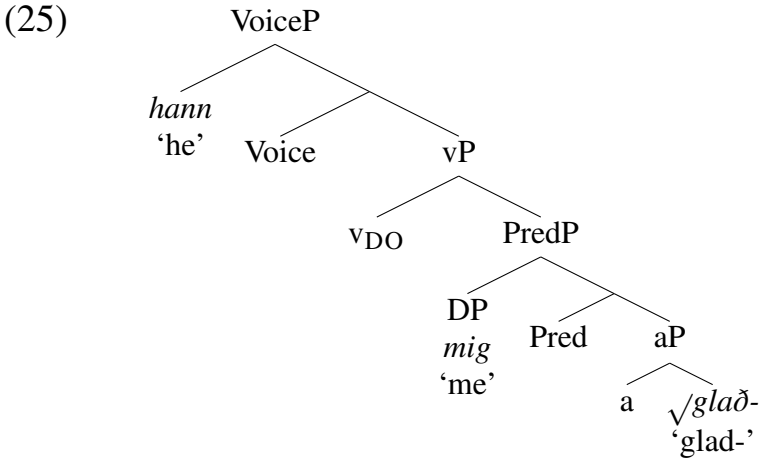
graph TD
 VoiceP --> hann["hann
‘he’"]
 VoiceP --> Voice
 Voice --> vP
 vP --> vDO
 vP --> DP
 DP --> glad["√glað-
‘glad-’"]
 DP --> mig["mig
‘me’"]

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Here, the constituent containing the root *glað-* ‘glad-’ and the object DP denotes a resultant state subevent and  $v_{DO}$  denotes an activity. Since the activity takes a(n) (stative) eventive complement, it is understood as causative. The root will then raise to  $v_{DO}$  (categorizing it as a ‘verb’), to Voice, and presumably on to T, creating a complex head. The morphophonology of the verb-root complex will be determined at spellout on the basis of regular allomorphic conditioning, sensitive to root identity, the featural properties of Voice, T, etc. (see Embick and Marantz 2008 and especially Embick 2010 for details; see Sigurðsson 1989:254-5 on the morphophonology of such alternations in Icelandic).

Suppose, however, that the root *glað-* ‘glad-’ merges with an adjectival head and takes a predicative subject, and this stative event is the complement of  $v_{DO}$  (25).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>I will assume for expositional purposes that adjectival predication is mediated by a predicative head Pred, but this is not particularly crucial. All that is crucial is that  $v_{DO}$  be sensitive to the adjectival nature of its complement.



In this case, assuming that Pred and little *a* (possibly as a pair) form a cyclic domain, it is plausible to imagine that the adjectival root will not raise to  $v_{DO}$ .<sup>16</sup> If it does not,  $v_{DO}$  can be spelled out as *gera* ‘do’ (or whatever form it would take based on tense, aspect, and so on).<sup>17</sup>

This treatment amounts to saying that the phonological realization of light verbs like *gera* ‘do’ is the result of allomorphy of functional heads;  $v_{DO}$  can be silent or take other forms in other contexts, but spelled out as *gera* ‘do’ in contexts such as this one. This relates sentences like (24a) and (23c) in that both involve the object modified by the property ‘gladness’, and both have a subevent ( $v_{DO}$ ) causing this; but it does not relate them so closely that one is simply an incorporated version of the other.<sup>18</sup>

The cross-linguistic regularities and differences, on this approach, would amount to different subsets of similar or identical structural configurations being spelled out by different vocabulary items. This view can shed light on the underlying syntax in various ways. If Language A uses the same light verb for uses X and Y, whereas Language B has two light verbs, one for X and one for Y, we can de-

<sup>16</sup>Languages will likely have to vary in this respect, just like some languages have productive affixal causative morphemes to a much greater extent than other languages.

<sup>17</sup>Light verbs of this sort are more likely to take completely suppletive morphology, but they need not; Icelandic *gera* ‘do’ does not have suppletive allomorphs.

<sup>18</sup>There is also a certain amount of lexical idiosyncrasy in this domain; not all adjectives which can appear in sentences like (23c) can also appear in sentences like (24a). For example, there is no transitive verb ‘bore’ next to *Hann gerði mig leiðan* ‘He made me bored’. This can be stated in the grammar as a property of *v* selecting which roots it is compatible with.



duce that structures X and Y are similar enough that an underspecified vocabulary item might be blind to the difference between the two (Language A), but that they cannot be identical, because it is possible for a vocabulary item to be sensitive to some difference between the two (Language B).<sup>19</sup>

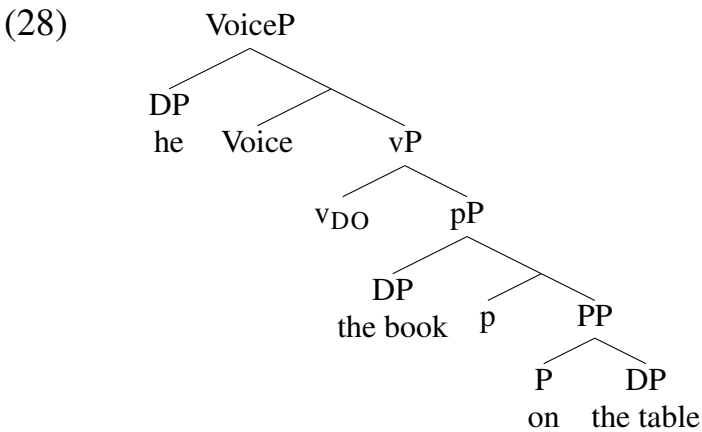
To provide a concrete example, English has a light verb *put*, which is a bit limited in its uses. It has some rather idiosyncratic uses which are close to being causative.

- (26) a. He put me up to it.  $\approx$  ‘He made me do it.’  
 b. He put me to work.  $\approx$  ‘He made me work.’

Mostly, though, it is used for ‘caused location’ (and its metaphorical extentions).<sup>20</sup>

- (27) a. He put the book on the table.  
 b. He put away his bike.

Suppose that prepositional predication is mediated by a functional head *p* (Svenonius 2003, 2007; Lundin 2003).



<sup>19</sup>This would be incompatible with the view that the ‘allow’ and ‘force’ readings of *láta* and its cognates in Scandinavian are the result of pragmatic inference, as Lundin (2003) suggests.

<sup>20</sup>However, it is not clear that ‘location’ has some basic status in language from which ‘metaphorical extentions’ are derived, given that there seems to be no natural language phenomena or lexical items which are strictly ‘locational’. Richard Kayne (p.c.) asks about words like *place*, but even *place* has uses which are not obviously locational: *I never even thought of that in the first place, He came in second place, I placed an order, Use this in place of that, He knows his place in society, If I were in your place*, etc.

Assuming that the pP here denotes a state, this would be analogous to the caused state constructions above. Here, we would say that English has an exponent ‘put’ which spells out just in case its complement is headed by p.<sup>21</sup>

In Icelandic, however, there appears not to be a light verb quite like ‘put’. Instead, *láta* is used—the same light verb used in the causative constructions that are the main focus of this paper.<sup>22</sup>

- (29) Láttu bókina á borðið.  
 let.IMP.2SG book.the.ACC on table.the.ACC  
 ‘Put the book on the table.’ (www.snara.is)

Arguably, the same structures are involved in Icelandic and English ‘put’ constructions (modulo independent differences between the languages), but English has a specific allomorph of  $v_{DO}$  in this case, whereas the Icelandic allomorph for  $v_{DO}$  in this case is a far more general one.

The idea that *láta* is the realization of a light activity verb is even more plausible given the fact that it has uses which are pure activities in a way that is much more productive than activity uses of English *let*.<sup>23</sup>

- (30) a. Hún lét sem hún heyrði þetta ekki.  
 she let as she heard this not  
 ‘She acted like she didn’t hear this.’  
 b. Hún lét eins og fífl.  
 she let like fool  
 ‘She acted like a fool.’  
 c. Hún lét fíflalega.  
 she let foolishly  
 ‘She acted foolishly.’

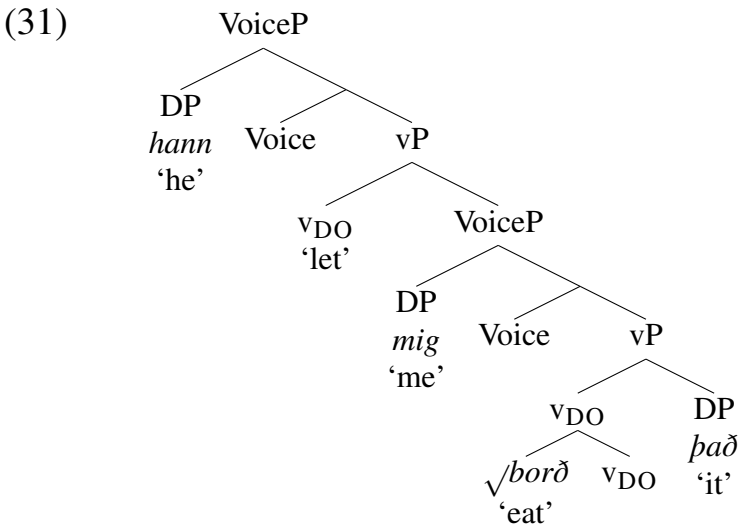
<sup>21</sup>This is compatible with the proposal in Svenonius (2003) that with shifting particles such as those in (27b), the DP object (*his bike*) would be the sole argument of a little p. The latter then has something in common with unergatives, in having an external argument but no internal argument (or, more likely, and ‘understood’ internal argument).

<sup>22</sup>Though like English, Icelandic does have verbs like *lay* and *set*, as in *Leggðu/Settu bókina á borðið* ‘Lay/Set the book on the table.’

<sup>23</sup>Though in English, we have examples like *He let on as though he knew what he was talking about*, with a meaning fairly close to ‘act’.

In these cases,  $v_{DO}$  would have no (result) state complement, so its interpretation is that of a non-causative, unbounded activity.<sup>24</sup>

Returning to causative uses, I will propose below that English and Icelandic have structures where  $v_{DO}$  takes a VoiceP complement. In English,  $v_{DO}$  is spelled out as ‘make’ in these circumstances (as in many other circumstances), and Icelandic as *láta* ‘let/make’.<sup>25</sup>



Categorizing light verbs in terms of contextually conditioned allomorphy allows a paradigmatic understanding of their distribution across and within languages in a way that is potentially subject to the subset principle; less specific contexts follow more specific contexts in allomorph choice. Though I unfortunately do not have any clear-cut examples of the subset principle in the relevant domain yet, the distribution of certain classes of light verbs points in this direction.

<sup>24</sup>In English, there are unbounded activity uses of *make*, but they have a rather idiomatic interpretation conditioned by other elements, such as *make out* ‘kiss’, *make do* ‘manage’, *make believe* ‘pretend’, *make merry* ‘have fun’, or *He made as if to leave* ‘He acted like he was going to leave’.

<sup>25</sup>It is unfortunately unclear where English *let* fits in; possibly it does not have the activity or causative properties in the same way; that is, it involves a different  $v$  than  $v_{DO}$ . The meaning of ‘let’ seems to be something like ‘X agentively does nothing to stop what X knows will happen on its own if X does nothing to stop it’; possibly a stative  $v_{BE}$  could get this right, with some further assumptions, and then we would assume that Scandinavian grammars ignore this subcategorical distinction at spellout. For lack of a better understanding of English *let*, I set these interesting complications aside. Interestingly, according to Lundin (2003), Swedish ‘let’ only has the ‘induce/make’ reading in the construction in (19).

## (32) Icelandic

$$v_{\text{DO}} \leftrightarrow \sqrt{\text{GER- 'do'}} / \_ \{ \text{PredP, DP, ... } \}$$

$$v_{\text{DO}} \leftrightarrow \sqrt{\text{LÁT- 'let'}} / \_ \{ \text{VoiceP, pP, ... } \}$$

## (33) English

$$v_{\text{DO}} \leftrightarrow \sqrt{\text{MAKE}} / \_ \{ \text{PredP, DP, VoiceP, ... } \}$$

$$v_{\text{DO}} \leftrightarrow \sqrt{\text{PUT}} / \_ \{ \text{pP, ... } \}$$

When some lexical root is adjoined to  $v_{\text{DO}}$ , the latter will be spelled out null, or affixally, perhaps under general principles governing the realization of categorizing heads (cf. Marantz 2010).

## 5 Causative Constructions

In this section, I turn to causative constructions with *láta*, motivating a structural analysis of them along with an account of their case-marking properties. I begin with causatives embedding canonical intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive structures, and provide an analysis of them in terms of the assumptions outlined above. I then turn to embedded DAT-NOM constructions, and show how a number of complex facts regarding their case-marking and word order can be understood in terms of a phase-based dependent case analysis which allows phase extension by head-movement.

### 5.1 vP-selecting causatives

In the previous section, I proposed that Icelandic *láta* is a functional light verb, an exponent of  $v$ , which normally denotes an activity but which is interpreted as causative when it takes an eventive (or stative) complement. Depending on the categorial nature of its complement, it alternates with other light verbs, with some cross-linguistic overlap in such alternations.

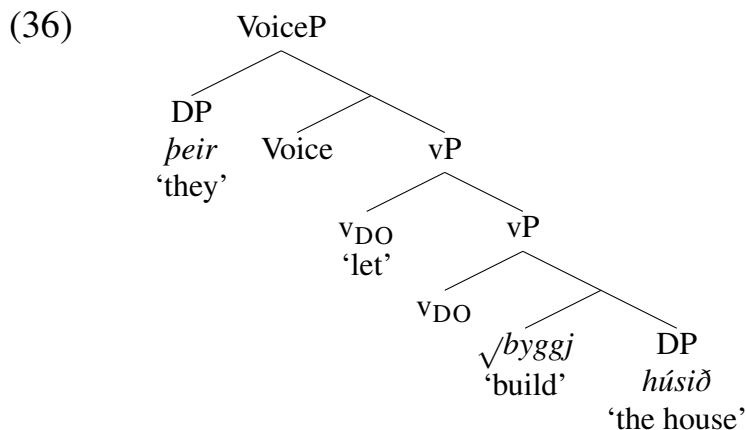
One type of eventive complement *láta* is able to take is an embedded vP with no external argument, as in (19) above. Evidence in favor of this analysis is that while manner modifiers are possible (34a), agentive modifiers are not (34b);

note that by-phrases are also not possible (34c) (cf. Jónsson 2009b:294), contrary to the situation in Danish and Norwegian (along with varieties of Romance) (see Taraldsen 1983, 1984; Platzack 1986; Vikner 1987).

- (34) a. Þeir létu byggja húsið fljótt.  
 they.NOM let build house.the.ACC quickly  
 ‘They made (someone) build the house quickly.’
- b. \*Þeir létu byggja húsið af kappi.  
 they.NOM let build house.the.ACC enthusiastically  
 INTENDED: ‘They made (someone) build the house enthusiastically.’
- c. \*Þeir létu byggja húsið af mér.  
 they.NOM let build house.the.ACC by me  
 INTENDED: ‘They made the house get built by me.’

In contrast, when the embedded subject is projected, manner modifiers and agentive modifiers are both possible. The contrast between (34) and (35) is explained if the structure of (19) is (36).

- (35) a. Þeir létu mig byggja húsið fljótt.  
 they.NOM let me.ACC build house.the.ACC quickly  
 ‘They made (someone) build the house quickly.’
- b. Þeir létu mig byggja húsið af kappi.  
 they.NOM let me.ACC build house.the.ACC enthusiastically  
 ‘They made me build the house enthusiastically.’



Voice is the locus of the external argument and the attachment point for agentive

modifiers such as ‘enthusiastically’, while *v* is the locus of eventive semantics and the attachment point for manner adverbs; such modifiers are diagnostics for presence of Voice/*v* layers in the system adopted here from Pylkkänen (2002, 2008) (see also Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 2004, Alexiadou et al. 2006, Schäfer 2008, and references therein).

Turning first to the case marking, since the embedded *v*P is not a phase (absent Voice), the DP in SpecVoiceP will be present when the theme is spelled out. When the next phase head is merged, whether it is a second Voice (if (36) is itself embedded in a causative structure), C, or some other phase head, the higher *v*P will be sent to spellout. Since the DP in SpecVoiceP is present and visible at this point, and is not ‘marked’ for some non-direct case, the embedded DP will be marked with dependent accusative.

The word order restrictions in Icelandic (see (19)) can be accounted for as follows. Recall that *v* inherits its  $u\phi$ -feature, with an [EPP] sub-feature, from Voice. The lower *v*P has no Voice from which it can inherit this  $u\phi$ -feature. However, we might expect the higher *v*, which does inherit the appropriate features, to Agree with the lower DP and attract it to its specifier. To prevent this, suppose that *v* always comes with a ‘defective’  $u\phi$ -feature, and that what it inherits is a full  $u\phi$ -feature set with the [EPP] feature. The lower *v* would then Agree with the DP, and serve as an intervener for the higher probe; the latter would establish an Agree relation with the lower *v* (which has the right  $\phi$ -features).<sup>26</sup> As for the [EPP] feature on the higher *v*, it could either be the case that the entire *v*P raises to its specifier (the word order being restored when the higher *v* moves to Voice), or that the [EPP] does not apply equally to all categories. The latter is probably independently necessary to account for non-movement of certain indefinite DPs (cf. Sigurðsson 2010), but I leave the choice open for now.

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<sup>26</sup>There is an issue about whether the lower *v* should be able to  $\phi$ -license the lower DP. If it is really ‘defective’, then presumably it should not. In the system of Pesetsky and Torrego (2007), when the higher *v* Agrees with the lower *v*, which itself has established an Agree relation with the lower DP, then the  $uT$  feature on the DP would be valued automatically, licensing the DP in situ. See also Sigurðsson (2009a) on inherited  $\phi$ -licensing.

The lack of a Voice head and concomitant lack of an [EPP] feature on the embedded *v* is supported by the fact that embedded ditransitives such as *gefa* ‘give’ would require both objects to remain post-verbal.

- (37) a. Bjartur lét **gefa** yfirmanninum bókina.  
 Bjartur.NOM let give supervisor.the.DAT book.the.ACC  
 ‘Bjartur made (someone) give the supervisor the book.’  
 b. % Bjartur lét **gefa** bókina yfirmanninum.  
 Bjartur.NOM let give book.the.ACC supervisor.the.DAT

Here, the ditransitive *vP* is embedded under *láta*, and the result is grammatical for all speakers with dative-accusative word order and both internal arguments following the verb. Some speakers allow (37b) with stress on the dative argument. However, for no speakers can the embedded arguments precede *gefa* ‘give’.

- (38) a. \* Bjartur lét yfirmanninum **gefa** bókina.  
 Bjartur.NOM let supervisor.the.DAT give book.the.ACC  
 b. \* Bjartur lét yfirmanninum bókina **gefa**.  
 Bjartur.NOM let supervisor.the.DAT book.the.ACC give  
 c. \* Bjartur lét bókina **gefa** yfirmanninum.  
 Bjartur.NOM let book.the.ACC give supervisor.the.DAT  
 d. \* Bjartur lét bókina yfirmanninum **gefa**.  
 Bjartur.NOM let book.the.ACC supervisor.the.DAT give

Forcing the higher *v* to Agree with the lower *v* in this case has one independently desirable consequence. It has long been noted that structures of the sort in (36) can generally only embed verbs ‘matching’ in transitivity—i.e., unaccusatives which cannot be transitive cannot be embedded, and it is not a priori obvious why.

- (39) a. \* Hún lét deyja Jón.  
 she.NOM let die John.ACC  
 b. Hún lét Jón deyja.  
 she.NOM let John.ACC die

(39b) will be analyzed below as involving a full embedded VoiceP. The question is why (39a) is out, given that *Jón* would be generated as the sole internal argument

of *deyja* ‘die’, generated within vP. However, if the matrix v Agrees with the lower v, then they would plausibly have to be able to Agree in other features; then the Agree dependency between the two v heads would force a restriction on what kinds of v heads can be in the embedded vP, forcing the lower vP to be ‘transitive’, just like the higher vP, as desired.

## 5.2 Voice/phase-selecting causatives

In this section, I turn to embedded transitives that do have subjects. As shown in (35), these sentences do allow agentive modifiers as well as manner modifiers. When we passivize *láta*, we see that the accusative case born by the agent is dependent on the higher clause (and not a special oblique case, as in at least some varieties of Spanish, cf. Torrego 2010).

- (40) a. Hann lét **mig** kyssa **þorsk**.  
 he.NOM let me.ACC kiss cod.ACC  
 ‘He made me kiss a cod fish.’
- b. **Ég** var látinn kyssa **þorsk**.  
 I.NOM was let kiss cod.ACC  
 ‘I was made to kiss a cod fish.’

The simplest analysis would be to introduce the embedded agent in its normal position, SpecVoiceP (checking the [EF] on Voice), and embedding VoiceP under the matrix v, as already shown in (31). When the  $\phi$ -feature bundle on v probes downward, it will establish an Agree relation with the closest goal, in this case the embedded subject, forcing the latter to raise to the matrix SpecvP (due to the [EPP] feature on the probe).

Whether the matrix verb is passive or active, the accusative case on *þorsk* ‘cod’ is expected, since the embedded VoiceP will contain the embedded subject which is marked with ‘direct’ case (nominative or accusative). Here, it does not matter whether the matrix verb, when passive, is a phase or not. Either way, the embedded subject will be ‘visible’ in the structure when *þorsk* ‘cod’ is spelled out,



so the latter will be accusative.<sup>27</sup>

Assuming that unaccusatives such as (39b) involve a Voice head which does not introduce an external argument, the [EF] on Voice needs to be checked by internal merge of the sole argument of the embedded verb (since there is no external argument to do this). Then, the matrix *v* will be able to probe the DP in SpecVoiceP the same as in the transitive cases. The accusative case on the embedded subject of (39b) is expected; even if *Jón* did not raise to the edge of the embedded VoiceP, the subject of the higher VoiceP would be visible when the lower *v*P is sent to spellout, allowing it to condition dependent accusative on the latter.

Recall from the discussion in section 2 that the presence of a VoiceP need not imply the possibility of passive voice embedded in the complement of *láta*. In fact, on most analyses of the passive, we would expect the passive not to be possible, since it arguably involves functional heads higher than Voice. At first glance, this seems to be correct; many speakers find examples like (41) quite bad.<sup>28</sup>

- (41) \* Þeir létu hann vera/verða rekinn.  
 they let him be/become fired

According Christer Platzack (p.c.), Swedish allows passives embedded in *låta*-causatives. Notwithstanding this cross-linguistic variation, however, there are certain contexts where embedded passives improve for some speakers, such as the following, which are based on similar contrasts in Kayne (1984:34).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>If the matrix verb, when passive, is a phase then we can understand the DP movement to SpecTP as involving intermediate movement to the phase edge, independently motivated by the [EF] on Voice, along the lines described immediately below.

<sup>28</sup>Thanks to Erla Skúladóttir, Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson, Jóhanna Barðal, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson, Höskuldur Thráinsson and Thórhallur Eythórsson for discussion of the passive sentences.

<sup>29</sup>Moreover, Höskuldur Thráinsson (p.c.) and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (p.c.) find sentences like (41) to be possible if one is discussing what an author decides for his characters in a play or a novel. Similar remarks hold for certain restrictions on causative *have* in English (though not so much the ‘passive’ restriction), as discussed in Copley and Harley (2009). Also, Thráinsson (1979:445-6) presents examples of passives embedded under *láta* which are marked as acceptable. Possibly, there is microparametric variation here, or else contextual factors and constraints need to be better understood.

- (42) a. ? Góði Guð, láttu hann hafa verið rekinn þegar ég kem til baka.  
 Dear God, let him have been fired when I come back  
 ‘Dear God, let him have been fired when I get back.’
- b. ? Góði Guð, láttu hann verða rekinn.  
 Dear God, let him become fired  
 ‘Dear God, let him be fired.’

Whether either of (41) or (42) causes a problem for the present analysis depends on the correct analysis of the passive (especially concerning the status of *vera* ‘be’), and a better understanding of the facts.

## 6 *Láta* and DAT-NOM constructions

Having set up the analysis of the basic cases of *láta* causatives, I turn in this section to a discussion of what happens when DAT-NOM verbs are embedded under *láta*, as mentioned earlier. First, I discuss symmetric versus asymmetric DAT-NOM constructions, and then turn to what happens when they are embedded under *láta*, followed by a comparison with what happens when they are embedded under other ECM verbs like *telja* ‘believe’.

### 6.1 Symmetric and asymmetric applicatives

It has been observed that across and within languages, certain passivized double object constructions allow either of the two internal arguments to move to the subject position, whereas others require one or the other. Following terminology in the literature, I will call constructions of the first sort ‘symmetric applicatives’ and those of the second ‘asymmetric applicatives’. In Icelandic, both are attested (Zaenen et al. 1985). While the most commonly cited cases of ditransitive asymmetric applicatives in Icelandic involve case-frames such as NOM-DAT-DAT/GEN, NOM-ACC-DAT/GEN, Jónsson (2000) provides some cases of asymmetric applicatives in the more common NOM-DAT-ACC case-frame (see also Maling (2002:59, ex. 46)).

## (43) Symmetric applicative

- a. Ambáttin var gefin konunginum.  
maid.servant.the.NOM was given king.the.DAT
- b. Konunginum voru gefnar ambáttir.  
king.the.DAT were given maid.servants.NOM  
'The king was given female slaves.' (Zaenen et al. 1985:460)

## (44) Asymmetric applicative

- a. ?? Þessi veisla var haldin Jóni.  
this party.NOM was held John.DAT
- b. Jóni var haldin þessi veisla.  
John.DAT was held this party.NOM  
'This party was thrown for John.' (Jónsson 2000:73-4)

As observed in Zaenen et al. (1985), this generally corresponds in active ditransitives to the availability of either dative-accusative or accusative-dative word order.<sup>30</sup>

## (45) Symmetric 'give' verbs IO-DO or DO-IO

- a. Ég gaf konungi<sub>i</sub> ambáttina sína<sub>i</sub>  
I.NOM gave king.DAT his slave.ACC
- b. Ég gaf ambáttina<sub>i</sub> konungi sínum<sub>i</sub>  
I.NOM gave the slave.ACC her king.DAT  
(Zaenen et al. 1985:468-9)

<sup>30</sup>A possible confound in the interpretation of the asymmetric data (44/46) involves the fact that there is a difference in animacy between the two internal arguments. Animacy, definiteness/pronominality, humanness, and possibly other factors all affect the acceptability of one or the other variant in the symmetric data in (43). This is not to say, however, that the two DPs have to be of the same type, as seen by many examples reported in the literature (see references below). This is potentially relatable to information structural properties of the passive, but I will not address these effects here. It suffices that when the examples are sufficiently controlled, verbs like *gefa* 'give' are symmetric, as repeatedly illustrated in the literature (van Valin 1991:183; Holmberg and Platzack 1995:215; Sigurðsson 2000:88, 2011:exs.1d-e; Barðal 2001:58; Maling 2002:54; Thráinsson 2007:135, fn. 44). The empirical facts about passivization of ditransitive 'hold' verbs have not yet been thoroughly investigated enough (cf. Maling 2002:55-6); if they should turn out to be symmetric, then the structures proposed below for asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs below would not be available for them, and we would of course want to understand why.

## (46) Asymmetric 'hold' verbs IO-DO, \*DO-IO

- a. Þeir héldu Jóni þessa veislu  
they.NOM held John.DAT this party.ACC
- b. \* Þeir héldu þessa veislu Jóni  
they.NOM held this party.ACC John.DAT

(Jónsson 2000:73)

The same issue shows up in certain varieties of British English, where we observe the following paradigm.

## (47) Symmetric verbs

- a. He sent the student the book.
- b. He sent the book the student.

## (48) a. The student was sent the book.

- b. The book was sent the student.

## (49) Asymmetric verbs

- a. He baked the student the cake.
- b. \* He baked the cake the student.

## (50) a. The student was baked the cake.

- b. \* The cake was baked the student.

(Neil Myler p.c.)

For speakers of some varieties of English (including myself), all or most verbs behave like (49-50). However, in varieties such as the one in shown in (47-50), the issue of distinguishing between symmetric and asymmetric applicative constructions arises in the same intra-linguistic way as in Icelandic.<sup>31</sup> See Haddican (2010) and Myler (2010) for recent discussion.

With respect to the passivization facts, the important question is how locality can be stated such that in some cases two internal arguments which are hierar-

<sup>31</sup>A further issue is that some varieties of English only allow the theme-goal order with pronouns. Christer Platzack (p.c.) points out that Swedish seems to have symmetric ditransitives as well. In other varieties, such as in German *werden*-passives, Old Swedish and Old English, only the accusative can be promoted to the subject of a passive. For reasons of time and space, I will not be able to address these languages in this paper; informally, they would probably have to be accounted for by making the indirect object inactive for A-movement, along the lines discussed in (McGinnis 2008:1233-4); this is similar to the general approach taken in Platzack (2005).

chically asymmetric are each available for A-movement to the subject position. A similar problem has been discussed with respect to dative-nominative verbs. While DAT-NOM verbs such as *líka* ‘like’ are asymmetric in that only the dative is available for A-movement to the subject position (much like (44)), a sizeable class of verbs such as *nægja* ‘suffice’ allow either argument to move to the subject position (much like (43)) (Platzack 1999, Barðal 1999, 2001, Sigurðsson 2000; 2006b:303-4).<sup>32</sup>

(51) ‘Like’ is asymmetric

- a. Mér hefur aldrei líkað svona dónaskapur.  
me.DAT has never liked such rudeness.NOM  
‘I have never liked such rudeness.’
- b. \* Svona dónaskapur hefur aldrei líkað mér.  
such rudeness.NOM has never liked me.DAT

(52) ‘Suffice’ is symmetric

- a. Mér hafa alltaf nægt tvennir skór.  
me.DAT have.3PL always sufficed two.pairs shoes.NOM
- b. Tvennir skór hafa alltaf nægt mér.  
two.pairs shoes.NOM have.3PL always sufficed me.DAT  
‘I have always made do with two pairs of shoes.’

The alternations in (52) pose the same problem for A-movement locality as those in (43). Sigurðsson (2006b:304) points out that “there has been no generally accepted understanding of how and why an alternation of this sort could possibly arise.”

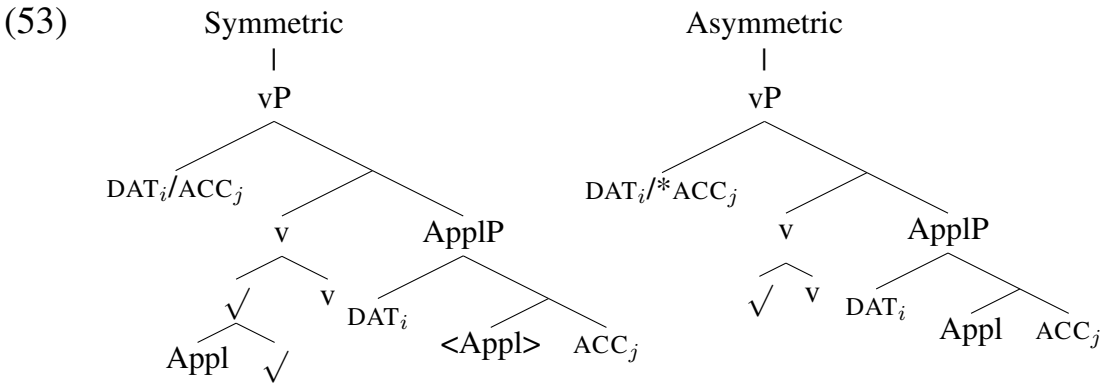
In Cuervo (2003), the applicative analysis of double object constructions is fruitfully extended to a number of other dative constructions, including experiencer constructions. DAT-NOM constructions, then, are the ‘unaccusatives’ of

<sup>32</sup>Note that changing the pronominality of the arguments does not improve examples like (51b):

- (i) a. Þessum prófessorum hefur aldrei líkað hann.  
these professors.DAT have never liked it.MASC.NOM
- b. \* Hann hefur aldrei líkað ({{þessum/neinum/einhverjum}}) prófessorum.  
it.MASC.NOM has never liked ({{these/any/some}}) professors.DAT

ditransitives (cf. Belletti and Rizzi 1988): they share a certain amount of structure with double object constructions, but do not introduce an external argument. I will adopt this understanding of DAT-NOM constructions, and approach (43) and (52) as two instances of the same problem.

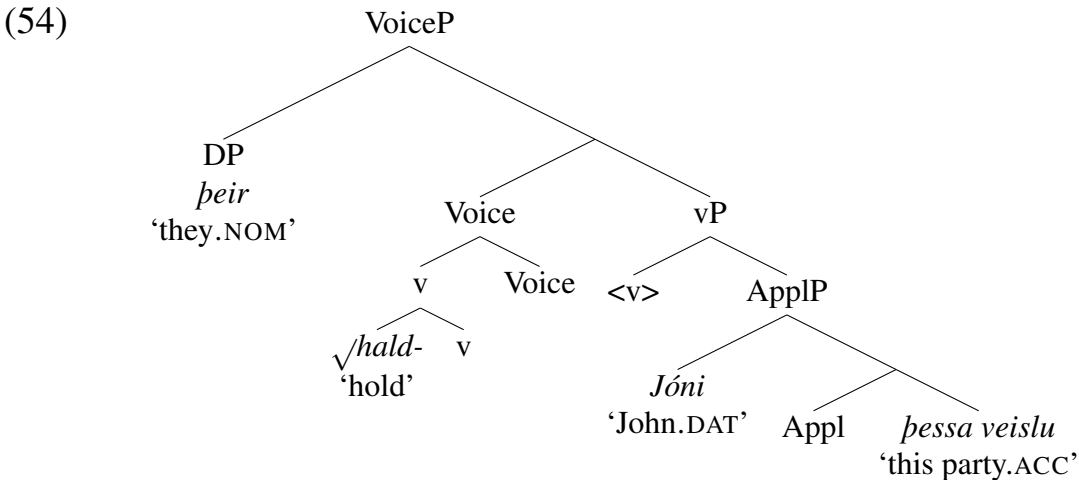
In this paper, I will propose that symmetric applicatives arise when Appl head-raises and makes both its complement and specifier equidistant to certain c-commanding A-positions.



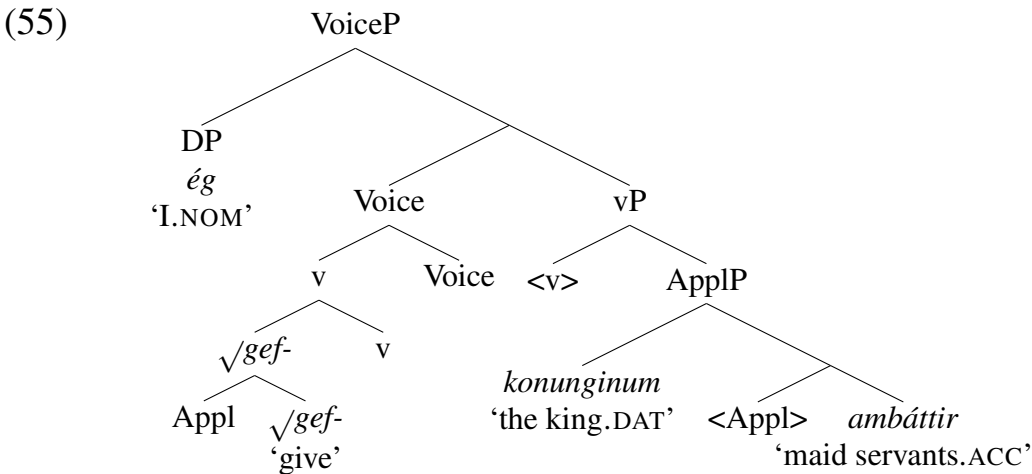
In combination with the assumption adopted above that head-movement of a phase head can extend the domain of a phase, this will yield a close, but not identical, domain for when an argument is available for A-movement and when it can end up in a spellout domain which allows accusative case, capturing a complex set of word order and case-marking facts for DAT-NOM verbs embedded under *láta*.

Turning first to asymmetric ditransitives such as (46), consider the structure in (54). Here, *þessa veislu* ‘this party.ACC’ is in the c-command domain of the phase-head Appl. As an asymmetric applicative, Appl does not raise to v. When the VoiceP phase is complete, Appl and its complement are sent to spellout. The DP complement of Appl receives dependent accusative case. However, in the passive cases, only the dative is available for A-movement, since it is closer to any c-commanding probe than the nominative.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup>As is well known, dative DPs in Icelandic are ‘active’ for A-movement (unlike PPs), undergoing object shift and movement to the subject position.



In symmetric ditransitives such as (45), we can say that Appl head moves to the lexical root or v and adjoins to it.



Movement of Appl to  $\sqrt{-}v$  does two things. First, it puts both *konunginum* 'the king' and *ambáttir* 'maid servants' in the same minimal domain, making them equidistant for A-movement to SpecTP in passive structures. Second, it puts both arguments in the same phase, so that they will spell out at the same time. The case on the dative argument is determined by its being in SpecApplP (though this is only one of many dependencies which will yield dative on a DP), but the theme, as above, will be accusative when there is a DP in SpecVoiceP and nominative otherwise. For A-movement, this can make a difference even in the active ditransitives. In the asymmetric cases, only the dative would be able to move since it is closer. This yields the word order options seen in (45-46). An important question in the

present system is how arbitrary the classes of symmetric and asymmetric verbs are; I return to this question after a discussion of DAT-NOM constructions in the next section.

## 6.2 DAT-NOM verbs under *láta*

Having presented this much, I turn to the case alternations of particular interest here. With asymmetric DAT-NOM constructions embedded under *láta*, the direct object is preferably nominative (56). However, when a symmetric DAT-NOM is embedded under *láta*, the object is obligatorily accusative (57).

(56) ACCUSATIVE bad with *líka* ‘like’ under *láta* ‘let’

- a. Ég læt mér ekki líka **svona dónaskapur**.  
I.NOM let me.DAT not like such rudeness.NOM  
‘I don’t let myself like such rudeness.’
- b. ?? Ég læt mér ekki líka **svona dónaskap**.  
I.NOM let me.DAT not like such rudness.ACC  
‘I don’t let myself like such rudeness.’
- c. Mér líkar ekki **svona dónaskapur**.  
me.DAT likes not such rudeness.NOM  
‘I don’t like such rudeness.’

(57) NOMINATIVE bad with *nægja* ‘suffice’ under *láta* ‘let’

- a. \*Ég lét mér nægja **góður sprettur** í kortér.  
I.NOM let me.DAT suffice good run.NOM for 15.minutes  
‘I let myself make do with a good 15 minute run.’
- b. Ég lét mér nægja **góðan sprett** í kortér.  
I.NOM let me.DAT suffice good run.ACC for 15.minutes  
‘I let myself make do with a good 15 minute run.’
- c. Mér nægði **góður sprettur** í kortér.  
me.DAT sufficed good run.NOM for 15.minutes  
‘I made do with a good 15 minute run.’

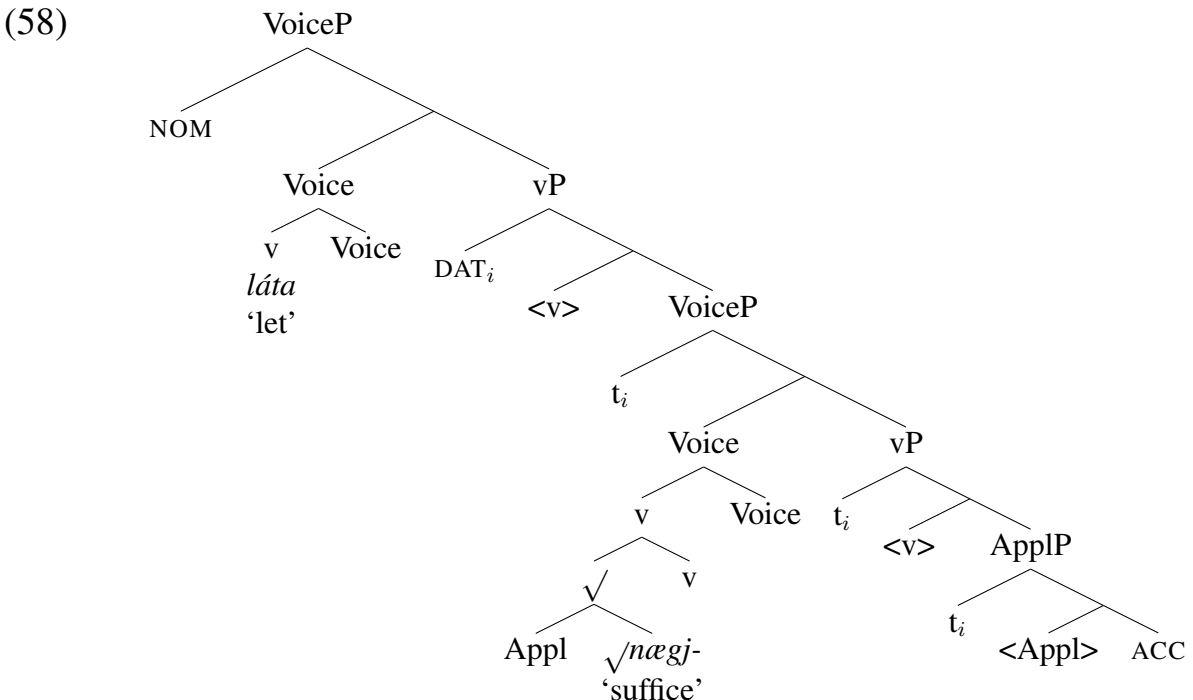
The A-movement options of non-passive dative-nominative constructions are accounted for in the same way as the passives of ditransitives seen in the previ-



ous subsection. The symmetric cases involve head-movement of Appl, whereas the asymmetric cases do not. Therefore, either argument will be available to move to SpecvP and ultimately to SpecTP when Appl moves. Only the dative will be available when Appl does not move. Either way, though, the complement of Appl (the underlying object) will be nominative since there is no structurally case-marked c-commanding DP to condition accusative case.

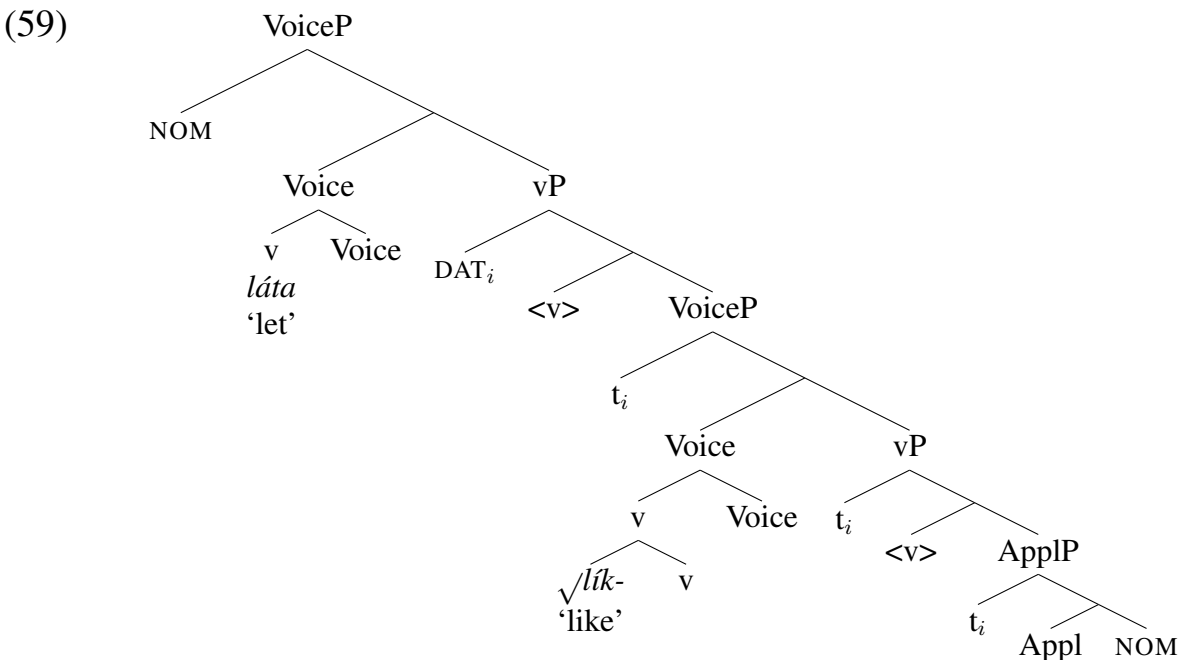
However, case-marking differs when these constructions are embedded under *láta*-causatives. Non-passive asymmetric ditransitives as in (46a) do not result in a nominative object the way that embedded asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs do. This follows from the fact that *láta* is introduced with (or as) an additional little v and concomitant Voice head; thus, it involves introducing an additional phase head, resulting in one more phase head than in ditransitives. The latter involve Voice-v and Appl, whereas when *láta* embeds a DAT-NOM verb, there are two Voice-v pairs in addition to Appl. In this way, nominative case can arise on the object in asymmetric applicatives.

First, consider symmetric applicatives.



To make comparison with asymmetric cases maximally transparent, I will consider a case where the dative moves to SpecvP, though in principle, DAT and ACC are equidistant so either may move to satisfy the [EPP] feature on the  $u\phi$ -feature of  $v$  (inherited from Voice). DAT moves to the edge of VoiceP to check its [EF]. Next, the light causative verb merges along with Voice and the external argument, and  $v$  moves to Voice, as always. Even though Appl defines a phase (according to the assumptions above), it moves up to  $v$  and then Voice and thus extends the phase. When the lower VoiceP phase is complete, it does not send Appl and its complement to spellout. Rather, it is when the higher VoiceP phase is completed that the complement of the lower VoiceP (=vP) is sent to spellout. By that point, the DP in the specifier of the higher VoiceP has been merged into the structure and conditions dependent accusative on the object.

For asymmetric applicatives, however, the situation is different. Consider the tree in (59).



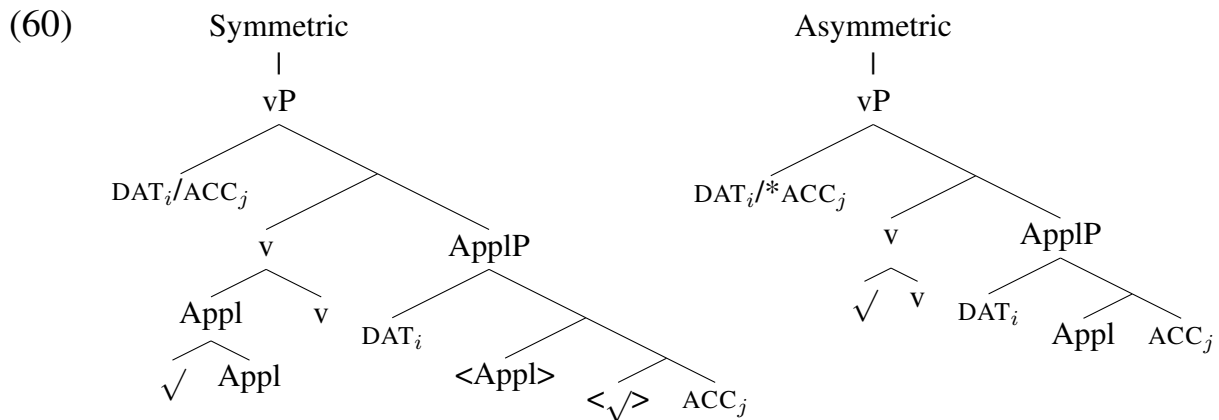
The nominative in SpecVoiceP c-commands the complement of Appl from an A-position. If Appl does not raise up to the root and further to  $v$ , then Appl and its complement DP will be spelled out as soon as the lower phase is complete. But

at this point, the higher VoiceP has not been merged yet, nor has the DP which will be in its specifier. Therefore, it is not visible to the dependent case algorithm. Since the only other DP is marked dative (which is not a ‘direct case’ involved in conditioning dependent accusative case in Icelandic), the lower DP is assigned nominative. Otherwise, the two derivations are basically the same; only the timing of spellout differs.

Returning to the question of how to know when to expect a verb to be symmetric or asymmetric, note first that there is a certain amount of lexical arbitrariness which must be allowed for. Since we do not want to allow lexical items themselves to have the kinds of properties which can be subject to parametric variation (cf. Borer 1984, Chomsky 1995:6, Sigurðsson 2004, Collins 2005:117, and Kayne 2005:278; 2006), arbitrary lexical variation could be stated in terms of properties of the functional head Appl. One way to state this would be to say that Appl contains a list of roots which it may raise to, or which may be base generated adjoined to Appl.

However, it is worth investigating the possibility that symmetric/asymmetric classes are less arbitrary, and relate to the mapping from syntactic structure and event structure. For example, most of the symmetric DAT-NOM verbs listed in Barðal (1999, 2001) involve a root which describes some property of the nominative argument, whereas most of the asymmetric ones describe a property of the event or psychological state. Symmetric verbs like *nægja* ‘be sufficient to’, *henta* ‘please, suit’, and *gagnast* ‘be of use to’ vary in meaning with respect to properties of the nominative theme, rather than the dative experiencer; likewise, symmetric verbs like *dyljast* ‘be not aware of sth’ and *hverfa* ‘be lost to somebody’ involve roots which mean ‘hide’ and ‘disappear’, respectively, both of which modify an end state of an object. In contrast, asymmetric verbs like *líka* ‘like’, *leiðast* ‘bore’, and *heyrast* ‘hear’ involve roots which vary in the psychological state of the experiencer, but not the objects themselves. It may be that when the verbal root is below the applicative (in this case modifying the theme), it has to raise to the applicative

on its way to v; but when the verb starts out in v (e.g. modifying the psychological state), there is no need for Appl to raise to v.



Nevertheless, this hypothesis needs further research. It is not enough to see the gloss and translation of a sentence to know what a root is doing in that sentence. For example, a verb like *smakkast* ‘taste’ is listed as symmetric in Barðal (1999, 2001), but in principle, variation in taste could be variation in the properties of the theme or of the psychological experience. To deduce where Appl is in any given structure, it is important to pay attention to the encyclopedic properties of the root in general, and look carefully at what the root contributes to event structure. Other, in some cases seemingly distinct uses of roots are relevant here.

## 7 Other ECM verbs

With ‘believe’ type ECM verbs, accusative is sometimes possible on the lower object of an embedded DAT-NOM verb, but it is the marked case. Consider the sentences in (61).

- (61) Asymmetric DAT-NOM verb – accusative on DO impossible
- a. Ég tel [ henni hafa leiðst þessi maður ].  
I.NOM believe [ her.DAT have bored this man.NOM ]
  - b. \*Ég tel [ henni hafa leiðst þennan mann ].  
I.NOM believe [ her.DAT have bored this man.ACC ]  
‘He believes her to have been bored by this man.’

These pattern like asymmetric applicatives embedded under *láta*—only nominative is possible on the object. However, with embedded DAT-NOM symmetric verbs, the theme is obligatorily accusative when it comes first, but it is often or usually nominative when the dative comes first.<sup>34</sup> These facts are similar to what we have seen so far, but the major difference is the status of the low nominative; it is impossible under *láta* (see 57a), but preferred under *telja* ‘believe’ (62a).

(62) Dative first – only some speakers accept accusative on theme

a. Ég tel [ henni nægja tveir miðar ].  
I.NOM believe [ her.DAT suffice two tickets.NOM ]

b. % Ég tel [ henni nægja tvo miða ].  
I.NOM believe [ her.DAT suffice two tickets.ACC ]

(63) Theme first – accusative obligatory for all speakers

a. \* Ég tel [ tveir miðar nægja henni ].  
I.NOM believe [ two tickets.NOM suffice her.DAT ]

b. Ég tel [ tvo miða nægja henni ].  
I.NOM believe [ two tickets.ACC suffice her.DAT ]  
‘He believes two tickets to be enough for her.’

From the present perspective, this is not immediately expected, since the complement of ECM verbs is not normally thought to constitute a phase boundary (other than the VoiceP), so we would not expect nominative to be possible. The presence of the dative in the subject position seems to be playing a role here that it does not play in *láta* causatives. When the dative is not present, accusative is obligatory (64c-d); when it is present, nominative is preferred, though some speakers still accept accusative (64a-b).

(64) Ég taldi... ‘I believed...’

a. [ honum hafa verið seldir einhverjir bátar á uppboðinu ].  
[ him.DAT have been sold some boats.NOM at auction.the ]

<sup>34</sup>Here, the accusative seems to be a marked option. Sigurðsson (2000:98) reports accusative to be impossible in a case similar to (62) (with the symmetric verb *henta* ‘suit’).

- b. % [ honum hafa verið selda einhverja báta á uppboðinu ].  
 [ him.DAT have been sold some boats.ACC at auction.the ]
- c. \* [ hafa verið seldir einhverjir bátar á uppboðinu ].  
 [ have been sold some boats.NOM at auction.the ]
- d. [ hafa verið selda einhverja báta á uppboðinu ].  
 [ have been sold some boats.ACC at auction.the ]

Somehow, a dative in the complement of ECM verbs like *telja* ‘believe’ can make the higher nominative ‘invisible’ to the lower argument, preventing it from getting accusative case. Possibly, the dative intervenes here in a way analogous to its occasional intervention for agreement between the verb and the object in transitive-expletive DAT-NOM constructions (Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir 2004; Kučerova 2007; Sigurðsson and Holmberg 2008). The difference between the complements of *láta* and *telja* could have to do with the embedded subject position being more ‘subject-like’ with the latter (e.g. involving an embedded TP rather than just a VoiceP).<sup>35</sup> For now, I leave the difference between (57a) and (62a) for future work.

## 8 Other case-marking patterns

The dependent case approach to accusative case captures a very wide-spread pattern where the presence of a DP with a certain property within a certain domain can condition the case of another DP in that domain. However, dependent accusative is not the only type of accusative. Certain prepositions assign accusative case, and accusative shows up on certain adverbials.

There are also a number of situations where bona fide argumental DPs show up in the accusative case, and are not obviously instances of dependent case. Sentences like (65a) have been called ‘fate accusatives’ since they tend to imply natural

<sup>35</sup>It would be interesting to see, for speakers who accept (64b), whether varying the dative for different types of quantifiers would make a difference, as in Kučerova (2007). Given her results, we might expect some speakers to find accusative acceptable with embedded datives like *einhverjum manni* ‘some man’, but less acceptable or unacceptable with datives like *fáum mönnum* ‘few men’, though I have not yet tested this with speakers who accept (64b).

forces; the ‘psych accusatives’ in (65b-c) are similar in that they and the fate accusatives seem to be a bit idiosyncratic (and that the event is entirely outside the control of the entity referred to by the accusative argument). Here, there are two possibilities in principle. Either these examples involve lexical accusative case, conditioned by the presence of certain verbs/lexical items, or else there is a null argument in the structure conditioning dependent accusative.

- (65) a. Bátinn fyllti á augabragði.  
boat.the.ACC filled in flash  
‘The boat swamped immediately.’
- b. Mig furðar á þessu.  
me.ACC surprises in this  
‘I’m surprised by this.’
- c. Mig vantar peninga.  
me.ACC lacks money.ACC  
‘I lack/need money.’ (Sigurðsson 2006a:19-20)

Another relevant situation is the ‘New Passive’, a construction which has arisen in recent years among younger speakers of Icelandic (Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir 1997; Sigurjónsdóttir and Maling 2001; Maling 2006; Eythórsson 2008; Jónsson 2009b; Sigurðsson 2011). In this construction, the verb takes on a passive form but the object does not A-move to the subject position, and remains accusative. This can even show up in passives of ditransitives, where the dative may either stay low as well or move up to the subject position (Jónsson 2009b).

- (66) a. Það var barið mig.  
EXPL was hit me.ACC  
‘I was hit.’
- b. Það var sýnt þeim bæklinga áður en þau fóru.  
EXPL was shown them.DAT books.ACC before they left  
‘They were shown brochures before they left.’
- c. Var þeim ekki einu sinni sýnt íbúðina fyrst?  
was them.DAT not even shown apartment.the.ACC first  
‘Were they not even shown the apartment?’ (Jónsson 2009b:303)

For speakers of the New Passive, there are a few possibilities. The first is that there is a null argument in the structure which is conditioning accusative case (cf. Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir 1997; Sigurjónsdóttir and Maling 2001; Maling 2006). (This is unlikely to be the expletive, which does not behave like a ‘subject’, even in this variety.) If this is not right, then either these speakers are losing ‘dependent’ accusative in favor of another case-marking system, or else there is a null preposition assigning accusative (cf. Sigurðsson 2011).

In Faroese, DAT-ACC constructions are common where DAT-NOM constructions are common in Icelandic. Jónsson (2009a) has argued that the dative argument here has a covert nominative case. Evidence in favor of this is the fact that many speakers allow the dative subject to control number agreement, something which is impossible in Icelandic.

(67) Faroese

a. % Nógvum kvinnum dáma mannfólk við eitt sindur av Búki.  
     many women.DAT like.3PL men.ACC with a bit of belly

b. Mær dámar føroyskan tónleik.  
     me.DAT likes.3SG Faroese music.ACC  
     ‘I like Faroese music.’

(Jónsson 2009a:142,146)

If there is a covert nominative, or if the dative ‘counts’ for conditioning dependent accusative, then these cases are straightforward.

In addition to these patterns, there are also situations where we might expect dependent case, but do not find it, such as predicative DP structures such as (68a). For these sentences to be compatible with the present system, there either has to be two phase boundaries between the subject and the predicative DP, or the two must form a complex DP, at some level, and get assigned one case before splitting up. That the latter is correct is suggested by sentences like (68b-c), from Zaenen et al. (1985:458)—both are accusative when there is a nominative subject, and both become nominative in the passive.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup>In English, predicative DPs usually show up as objective, which would be compatible with the



- (68) a. Hún heitir Kidda.  
she.NOM is.called Kidda.NOM
- b. Þeir kölluðu hana Kiddu.  
they.NOM called her.ACC Kidda.ACC
- c. Hún var kölluð Kidda.  
she.NOM was called Kidda.NOM

There are also in Icelandic dative (and genitive) direct objects which exhibit dependent-case-like alternations. Such objects become nominative in the ‘-*st* middle’ voice, but stay dative/genitive in the passive (Svenonius 2006a,b; Sigurðsson 2009a; Thráinsson 2007:290).<sup>37</sup>

- (69) a. Ásta splundraði rúðunni.  
Ásta.NOM shattered window.the.DAT  
‘Ásta shattered the window.’
- b. Rúðan splundraðist.  
window.the.NOM shattered-ST  
‘The window shattered.’

This is in contrast to ‘applied’ dative objects, which remain dative in the middle.<sup>38</sup>

- (70) a. Þeir fyrirgáfu honum alla glæpina.  
they.NOM forgave.3PL him.DAT all crimes.the.ACC  
‘They forgave him all crimes.’
- b. Honum fyrirgáfust allir glæpirnir.  
him.DAT forgave.3PL-ST all crimes.the.NOM  
‘He got forgiven all crimes.’ (Thráinsson 2007:290)

idea that they are part of a (remnant) complex DP since the generalization in English is that usually, a pronoun embedded in a complex DP can or must show up as objective, as is the case for many speakers in coordinated DPs (*me and John left*); see Angermeyer and Singler (2003) for a very interesting study of variation in the latter.

<sup>37</sup>There are also various ditransitive case-frames which combine the previous options. Ditransitives where the ‘first object’ is accusative (NOM-ACC-DAT/NOM-ACC-GEN) seem to involve dependent accusative indirect object, with a ‘partially dependent’ direct object. Ditransitives where the ‘first object’ is dative (NOM-DAT-DAT/NOM-DAT-GEN), on the other hand, seem to involve a non-alternating dative indirect object with a ‘partially dependent’ direct object.

<sup>38</sup>See Sigurðsson (1989:270; 2009a:31), Jónsson (2000:89), and Thráinsson (2007:290-292).

These ‘partially dependent’ dative (and genitive) direct objects suggest that probably all or most case marking is best understood as contextually specified ‘dependent’ case (see Svenonius 2006a,b; Sigurðsson 2009a). Still, dependent accusative distinguishes itself among the morphological cases—it is more ‘fragile’, in that it alternates with nominative more easily than other cases. The existence of many other dependencies which lead to accusative—including adverbials, prepositions, and the various psychological and ‘fate’ verbs—should not undermine the importance of this. Nevertheless, there are some especially interesting cases, such as the ‘new passive’ in Icelandic, which looks a possible move away from the ‘dependent accusative’ system, and Faroese DAT-ACC constructions, which look like dependent accusative is being conditioned by a dative.<sup>39</sup>

## 9 Conclusion and implications

Studying the case-marking properties of DAT-NOM verbs embedded under *láta*-causatives provides a unique opportunity to address issues in dependent case theory and in A-movement locality. The domains for A-movement and dependent accusative sensitivity are distinct, as shown by the fact that asymmetric ditransitives can assign accusative case even though that argument is not available for promotion to subject under passivization. Nevertheless, symmetric and asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs differ in the availability of A-movement and in the possibility of accusative case when embedded under *láta*. This correlation has strong implications for even a descriptively adequate account of accusative case, let alone an explanatory understanding of its distribution.

The facts discussed in this paper also provide a further argument that nominative case on objects is structural nominative, rather than a ‘default’ or ‘quirky’ nominative. In addition to triggering agreement and showing up in a structurally definable set of circumstances, nominative objects can also become accusative in the right circumstances—the hallmark of ‘structural’ case alternations. This con-

<sup>39</sup>See also Lavine (2010) on Slavic instrumental constructions.

clusion has implications for our understanding of nominative objects in general (such as their appearance in control infinitives). I have presented an analysis of nominative-accusative alternations in terms of a phase-based dependent case system; while this covers quite a bit of data, there remain some important questions, such as how to understand the differences between *láta*-type causatives and *telja* ‘believe’-type ECM constructions.

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