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Let Causatives and (A)symmetric DAT-NOM Constructions

Jim Wood and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson

Abstract. The verb *láta* ‘let/make’ in Icelandic provides a unique opportunity to understand the behavior of symmetric versus asymmetric DAT-NOM constructions, as well as the nature of nominative-accusative case alternations. In this paper, we 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. We propose that phase extension of an Appl head underlies both the availability of accusative in an embedded DAT-NOM verb and the possibility of A-moving a nominative object past the dative to the subject position. We further hypothesize that the base-generated position of the verbal root in the syntax underlies the lexical difference between symmetric and asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs.

1. Introduction

Both *let* causatives of the sort shown in (1a), and dative-nominative (henceforth DAT-NOM) constructions of the sort shown in (1b) have played an important role in the development of theories of case marking and A-movement.

- (1) a. 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)
- b. 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.’

A number of theoretical issues arise in the analysis of these constructions. With respect to *let* causatives, this includes the case marking of the causee, the possibility of passivizing the matrix and/or embedded verb, the availability of a null causee, and the size of infinitive clauses, among other issues (see Taraldsen, 1983, 1984; Herslund 1986; Christensen 1986; Platzack 1986; Vikner, 1987, 1989; Sigurðsson 1989:chap. 3; Johnson & Vikner 1995; Lundin 2003; and McFadden 2004:200ff., among others).¹ With respect to DAT-NOM constructions, this includes the subjecthood

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¹ On Romance causatives, see also Kayne 1975, Rouveret & Vergnaud 1980, Torrego 2010, and Pitteroff & Campanini 2013, among others.

status of the dative subject, the availability of each argument for A-movement, the long-distance (non-‘spec-head’) agreement of the finite verb with the nominative object, and the status of nominative case, among other issues (see Thráinsson 1979; Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson 1985; Yip, Maling & Jackendoff 1987; Sigurðsson 1996, 2000, 2012a; Platzack 1999; Barðdal, 1999, 2001; Chomsky 2001; Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2004; McFadden 2004; Hiraiwa 2005; Koopman 2006; Marantz 2007; Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008; Ussey 2009; among others).

In this article, we focus on Icelandic, a language where these issues have played a major role. We focus on the status of nominative objects by investigating their behavior when embedded under *let* causatives and how this behavior correlates with the availability of each argument for A-movement. We show that nominative objects are not inherently case-marked, but rather get nominative as an “elsewhere” case whenever it is not local enough to functional structure that would lead to a nonnominative case, most importantly accusative. There are two kinds of DAT-NOM verbs to consider. First, “symmetric” DAT-NOM verbs allow either the dative or the nominative argument to raise to the subject position (see 2a,b). When these verbs are embedded under *lata* ‘let’, the normally nominative object becomes accusative, as shown in (2c).

- (2) a. 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.’
 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.’
 c. Ég læt mér ekki nægja {**þessir leikhúsmiðar* /*þessa leikhúsmiða*}.
 I let me.DAT not suffice these theater.tickets. NOM these theater.tickets.ACC
 ‘I don’t let myself make do with these theater tickets.’

Second, “asymmetric” DAT-NOM verbs allow only the dative to raise to the subject position (see 3a,b). When these verbs are embedded under *lata* ‘let’, nominative is preferred and accusative is quite bad, as shown in (3c).²

- (3) 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

² We should note that there is a certain amount of speaker variation with respect to case-marking patterns in Icelandic. Speakers of a dialect described in Jónsson 1996:177 allow nominative objects to become accusative in a wider range of ECM constructions, so such speakers might not find the accusative in (3c) unacceptable. See Jónsson, & Eythórrson 2005, 2011; Sigurðsson, 2011, 2012a; and Árnadóttir & Sigurðsson 2012 for recent studies of case variation in Icelandic.

- c. Ég læt mér ekki líka {þessi dónaskapur /??þennan dónaskap}.
 I let me.DAT not like this rudeness.NOM this rudeness.ACC
 'I don't let myself like such rudeness.'

We argue that this correlation shows that what governs the choice of case on nominative objects does not have to do with an “inherent” specification of case by the verb, contra what is often tacitly and sometimes explicitly assumed (see, e.g., Sigurðsson 1996:28; Chomsky 2001:27, 48, fn. 56, 2004:126, fn. 28; Hiraiwa 2005:49; Koopman 2006:185). Rather, the choice between nominative and accusative has to do with the structural environment in which a DP appears; in the present case, the availability of accusative case is related to the structural configurations governing A-movement locality. This is not to say that A-movement is required; rather, the same aspects of syntactic structure that allow for the possibility of A-movement past the dative also force accusative case marking under *læta* ‘let’. We analyze this in terms of domain-extending head movement of an Appl(icative) head which applies to symmetric but not asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs. This movement extends the phase containing the “nominative” object, making available to it higher structure which (depending on the structure) can result in accusative case marking or A-movement to the subject position.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we discuss nominative objects in Icelandic and their relevance to our understanding of case. In section 3, we discuss symmetric and asymmetric applicatives in Icelandic, and show that both exist for DAT-NOM constructions. In section 4, we present an analysis of the symmetric–asymmetric distinction in terms of domain-extending head movement. In sections 5 and 6, we show how this analysis accounts for the distinction in case marking embedded under *læta* ‘let’. Section 7 concludes.

2. Nominative Objects

The question of the status of nominative objects has played an important role in syntactic theory in a number of domains.³ One important fact is that finite verbs agree with nominative objects. In (1b), repeated here as (4), we see that the finite verb is third-person plural, agreeing with the nominative object.

- (4) 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.’

The agreement facts are somewhat complicated, since there are a number of restrictions on what the object can be. First- and second-person pronouns tend to be unacceptable in many circumstances, though not across the board (Sigurðsson 1990–

³ We will not discuss or argue for the assumption that nominative objects are syntactically objects, as this has been amply demonstrated in the literature many times. See Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson 1985 and Jónsson 1996, among many others.

1991, 1996; Taraldsen 1994; Schütze 2003; Marantz 2007; Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008).⁴ There are also a number of thematic restrictions on nominative objects (see Maling & Jónsson 1995, Wood 2012). Nevertheless, DAT-NOM constructions do show nonlocal agreement dependencies, as illustrated in examples such as (4). This has in part led to adoption of long-distance Agree, and a widespread rejection of the hypothesis that all syntactic agreement relations require spec-head configurations (though see Koopman 2006 for a different view).

Nominative objects have also played an important role in the development of phase theory. From the perspective of phase theory, agreement with nominative objects has been taken to be a problem since it appears to involve T probing into a phase, possibly in violation of the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC). This tension is discussed by Chomsky in the following quote (see also Chomsky 2008:143).

We find examples of this, for example, with Icelandic quirky Case: a phase-internal nominative object can agree with an external inflection. The example is interesting and merits further inquiry, because it appears to undermine a possible phase-theoretic explanation for some of Vergnaud's account of subjects that cannot appear where Case cannot be assigned, namely, that they are "invisible" because they are in the interior of a phase that has already been passed. In the Icelandic case, the object is not invisible, though the Phase Impenetrability Condition, which prevents any tampering with an earlier phase, blocks extraction. (Chomsky 2005:17)

With respect to the locality of agreement issue, the source of the case of the nominative is not necessarily important; the issue is that there is a dependency between something inside the phase (the nominative) and something outside of it (T).

However, if the nominative case on nominative objects is taken to be a syntactic feature assigned by T, as is widely assumed, this too would involve a potential PIC violation, since a feature from outside the phase is altering an object inside a phase. Thus, in working out the details of how to analyze agreement, a number of researchers have assumed, implicitly or explicitly, that the nominative case on nominative objects is, in some sense, not the "usual" nominative case. Chomsky (2001:27) refers to a nominative direct object as having "quirky Case." Hiraiwa (2005:49) adopts the assumption that "both dative and nominative elements are quirky." Koopman (2006) argues that DAT-NOM constructions are always biclausal, and involve an embedded clause dedicated to assigning nominative in a spec-head relation. She then proposes (185) that "the [substructure licensing nominative case] can be only selected by a *v* shell which introduces a dative experiencer." This is not entirely accurate, as she notes in note 25, since passivized ditransitives also form DAT-NOM constructions. However, by invoking syntactic selection by a dative *v* shell, she makes it explicit that nominative objects appear due to a very local relation with a dative. Nothing higher than the dative should make a difference, if *c*-selection is at issue.

⁴ For example, default agreement on the verb can lead to acceptable first/second-person nominative objects in some DAT-NOM structures, and morphological syncretism between the third person form of the verb and the would-be first or second person agreeing form can improve first/second-person nominative objects quite a bit. See also Árnadóttir & Sigurðsson 2012 for a recent discussion of speaker variation with respect to the status of nominative-object agreement.

Marantz (2007:206–212) discusses nominative objects with respect to locality and phase theory. He argues that long-distance agreement involves an Agree relation between little *v* (or little *v* paired with a Voice head) and the direct object, so that nominative object agreement with finite *T* is actually Agree between *T* and *v*.⁵ Thus, “the licensing of and case determination for the nominative object in such clauses is computed at the vP level and does not wait until a higher case-assigner (tense or ECM little *v*) is merged” (208).

- (5) Ég taldi [henni ekki hafa leiðst þeir /*þá].
 I believed.1SG her.DAT not have bored they.NOM them.ACC
 ‘I believed her not to have found them boring.’

Our question, then, is how it is that in constructions with *láta* ‘let’, the case of the object does seem to depend on something higher.

- (6) a. 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.’
 b. Ég læt mér ekki nægja tvenna skó.
 I let me.DAT not suffice two.pairs shoes.ACC
 ‘I don’t let myself make do with two pairs of shoes.’

On the one hand, these data straightforwardly corroborate Marantz’s position that the case on nominative objects is ordinary nominative; they undergo case alternations, and can be accusative, given the right structural environment. On the other hand, they do raise the question of locality for this case determination—where is it that the decision between nominative and accusative is made?

We will propose that the decision is made at the phase level. Following Marantz 2008 (which is more technically explicit than Marantz 2007), a phase head and its complement spells out when the next highest phase head merges (or, perhaps, when the next highest phase is complete). We propose that the applicative head that introduces the dative also defines a phase, as proposed by Sigurðsson (2012a),⁶ and can force an earlier spellout of the theme, leading to nominative case even under *láta* ‘let’, as seen above and repeated here.

⁵ See Landau, 2004, 2008 for a related approach to control dependencies, which can, in some cases, be mediated by an intermediate functional head. The text claim is compatible with the arguments in Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008 that object agreement arises when *T* raises to a separate functional head *Nr* (number).

⁶ McGinnis (2001) argues that some Appl heads (“high” applicatives) are phases and others (“low” applicatives) are not. We cannot address her proposal in detail, or the cross-linguistic facts that lead her to it. Her approach does not extend naturally to the present data set. In her proposal, high applicatives are phases and allow A-movement past the dative. We would thus expect that the symmetric DAT-NOM verbs (which allow A-movement) to be phases, which should lead to nominative on the theme under *láta* ‘let’ if the phase boundary closed off the domain to higher structure. We would furthermore expect accusative on the asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs under *láta* ‘let’ since asymmetric verbs would not be phases. Thus, the correlation seems to go the wrong way. We do not want to claim that no version of this kind of analysis could be made to work, only that it does not look promising.

- (7) a. Ég læt mér ekki líka þessi dónaskapur.
 I let me.DAT not like this rudeness.NOM
 'I don't let myself like such rudeness.'
- b. Ég læt mér ekki nægja tvenna skó.
 I let me.DAT not suffice two.pairs shoes.ACC
 'I don't let myself make do with two pairs of shoes.'

The difference between (7a) and (7b) is that the lower Appl phase is extended in (7b), whereas the nominative is “trapped” within the Appl phase in (7a). The phase extension of (7b) and not (7a) also underlies the difference between the two in terms of availability of A-movement, independent of *láta* ‘let’ causatives.

Studying the intersection of *láta* ‘let’ causatives and DAT-NOM constructions has implications for the proper analysis of the symmetric–asymmetric applicative distinction, and moreover adds an extra level of granularity to our understanding of phases and the determination of morphological case therein. For the symmetric–asymmetric distinction, the implication is that the properties that lead to the availability of either argument for A-movement to subject manifest themselves even when such movement does not take place. For the locality of case determination, the analysis of *láta* ‘let’ causatives strongly supports a phase-based determination of the nominative–accusative distinction. To show this, we turn in the next section to the symmetric–asymmetric distinction in Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions, followed by their analysis in section 4. In sections 5 and 6, we connect this with the case marking facts under *láta* ‘let’ causatives.

3. Symmetric and Asymmetric Applicatives in Icelandic

It has been observed that across and within languages, certain double object constructions allow either of the two internal arguments to display “direct object” behavior, such as the ability to move to the subject position in the passive, whereas others require one or the other. Following terminology in the literature, we will call constructions of the first sort “symmetric applicatives” and those of the second “asymmetric applicatives” (see McGinnis 2008 and references therein). First, we will discuss this distinction with respect to ditransitives, which have been most frequently discussed, before showing how these extend to DAT-NOM constructions.

In certain varieties of British English, we observe both symmetric and asymmetric applicatives. Consider the following paradigm.

- (8) a. He sent the student the book. Symmetric verbs
 b. He sent the book the student.
- (9) a. The student was sent the book.
 b. The book was sent the student.

- (10) a. I returned the student the book. Asymmetric verbs
 b. ?*I returned the book the student.
- (11) a. The student was returned the book.
 b. ?*The book was returned the student. (Neil Myler, p.c.)

For speakers of the variety of English illustrated in (8)–(11), some ditransitive verbs allow the theme to precede or follow the goal argument, and those verbs also allow either internal argument to move to the subject position when the verb is passive. For speakers of some varieties of English (including the first author), all or most verbs behave like (10)–(11). However, in varieties such as the one in shown in (8)–(11), the issue of distinguishing between symmetric and asymmetric applicative constructions arises in the same intralinguistic way as we will illustrate below for Icelandic.⁷ See Haddican 2010 for recent discussion; see also Myler 2011, 2013.

In Icelandic, both symmetric and asymmetric ditransitives are attested (Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson 1985). The following exemplifies the symmetric–asymmetric patterns. The asymmetric pattern can be illustrated with *skila* ‘return’, which occurs in the NOM-DAT-DAT case frame. Symmetric verbs allow internal arguments in either order (12), while asymmetric verbs do not (13).

- (12) a. Ég gaf konungi_i ambáttina sína_i.
 I.NOM gave king.DAT his slave.ACC
 ‘I gave the king his slave.’
 b. Ég gaf ambáttina_i konungi sínum_i.
 I.NOM gave the slave.ACC her king.DAT
 ‘I gave the king his slave.’ (Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson 1985:468–469)
- (13) a. Mannræninginn skilaði foreldrunum börnunum.
 kidnapper.the.NOM returned parents.the.DAT kids.the.DAT
 ‘The kidnapper returned the kids to the parents.’
 b. *Mannræninginn skilaði börnunum foreldrunum.
 kidnapper.the.NOM returned kids.the.DAT parents.the.DAT
 Intended: ‘The kidnapper returned the kids to the parents.’⁸
 (Thráinsson 2007:132)

⁷ A further issue is that some varieties of English allow the theme-goal order with pronouns only. 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 theme can be promoted to the subject of a passive. For reasons of time and space, we 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 2008:1233–1234; this is similar to the general approach taken in Platzack 2005.

⁸ Of course, this sentence is grammatical on the reading ‘the kidnapper returned the parents to the kids’.

Like the British English variety illustrated above, Icelandic symmetric ditransitives allow either argument to be fronted to the subject position in the passive, whereas asymmetric verbs only allow the first object to be fronted to the subject position.

- (14) a. Ambáttin var gefin konunginum.
maid.servant.the.NOM was given king.the.DAT
'The female slave was given to the king.'
- b. Konunginum voru gefnar ambáttir.
king.the.DAT were given maid.servants.NOM
'The king was given female slaves.'
- (Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson 1985:460)
- (15) a. Foreldrunum var skilað börnunum.
parents.the.DAT was returned kids.the.DAT
'The kids were returned to the parents.'
- b. *Börnunum var skilað foreldrunum.
kids.the.DAT was returned parents.the.DAT
Intended: 'The kids were returned to the parents.'⁹ (Thráinsson 2007:135)

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 hierarchically asymmetric are each available for A-movement to the subject position. A similar problem has been discussed with respect to DAT-NOM verbs. DAT-NOM verbs such as *líka* 'like' are asymmetric in that only the dative is available for A-movement to the subject position. This class is the most widely discussed in the theoretical literature on DAT-NOM verbs. However, a sizeable class of verbs such as *nægja* 'suffice' allow either argument to move to the subject position (much like (14)). The symmetric class was first reported by Bernóðsson (1982) and was later discussed further by Jónsson (1997–1998), Barðdal (1999, 2001), and Platzack (1999).

- (16) 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
- (17) a. Mér hafa alltaf nægt tvennir skór.
me.DAT have.3PL always sufficed two.pairs shoes.NOM
- a. 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.'

⁹ Of course, this sentence is grammatical on the reading 'the parents were returned to the kids'.

Following McGinnis (1998), Cuervo (2003), Schäfer (2008), and Sigurðsson (2012a), we treat the dative experiencer of a DAT-NOM construction as an applicative argument. Thus, the alternations in (17) pose the same problem for A-movement locality as those in (14).

There are a few considerations that are important to keep in mind when establishing whether a DAT-NOM verb is symmetric or asymmetric. First, it is important to control for the verb-second (V2) property of Icelandic. Both word orders in (18) are possible, for example.

- (18) a. *Mér líkar þetta ekki.*
 me.DAT likes this.NOM not
 'I don't like this.' DAT subject
- b. *Þetta líkar mér ekki.*
 this.NOM likes me.DAT not
 'This I don't like.' Topicalization

However, this is because *þetta* 'this' in (18b) has been topicalized, and the V2 property of Icelandic forces the verb to move to the left of the subject. When V2 is controlled for, by using an auxiliary (or a yes–no question), it is clear that *þetta* 'this' in (18a) is not a subject.

- (19) a. *Mér hefur aldrei líkað þetta.*
 me.DAT has never liked this.NOM
 'I have never liked this.' DAT subject
- b. *Þetta hefur mér aldrei líkað.*
 this.NOM has me.DAT never liked
 'That I've never liked.' Topicalization
- c. **Þetta hefur aldrei líkað mér.*
 this.NOM has never liked me.DAT *NOM subject

Example (19c) is ungrammatical because *mér* 'me.DAT' has not moved to the subject position. In contrast, symmetric DAT-NOM verbs allow the dative to stay low and the nominative to raise to the subject position, as illustrated below with the symmetric DAT-NOM verb *henta* 'suit'.

- (20) a. *Mér hefur aldrei hentað þetta.*
 me.DAT has never suited this.NOM
 'This has never suited me.' DAT subject
- b. *Þetta hefur mér aldrei hentað.*
 this.NOM has me.DAT never suited Topicalization
- c. *Þetta hefur aldrei hentað mér.*
 this.NOM has never suited me.DAT NOM subject

Unlike in (19c), (20c) allows the nominative to move to the subject position and the dative can be left low. This is what we mean when we say that *líka* 'like' is an

asymmetric DAT-NOM verb, while *henta* ‘suit’ (like *nægja* ‘suffice’) is a symmetric DAT-NOM verb. Since passives in Icelandic, like in English, (usually) involve an auxiliary, this problem does not arise for passivized ditransitives.

Second, as in Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson 1985, it is important to control for factors like definiteness, animacy, humanness, and so on, which can have an effect on which of the two internal arguments moves to the subject position. Thus, as pointed out by a reviewer, if *ambáttin* ‘the maid servant’ in (14a) is replaced by *hesturinn* ‘the horse’ or *bókin* ‘the book’, the example becomes worse. 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 (and/or the derived subject), but we will not address these effects here, as they warrant a full investigation of their own, which would take us too far afield. It suffices that when the examples are sufficiently controlled, verbs like *gefa* ‘give’ are symmetric, as repeatedly illustrated in the literature since Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson 1985 (van Valin 1991:183; Holmberg & Platzack 1995:215; Maling & Sprouse 1995:180; Sigurðsson 2000:88, 2011:148–149, ex. (1d,e); Barðdal 2001:58; Maling 2002:54; Thráinsson 2007:135, fn. 44).

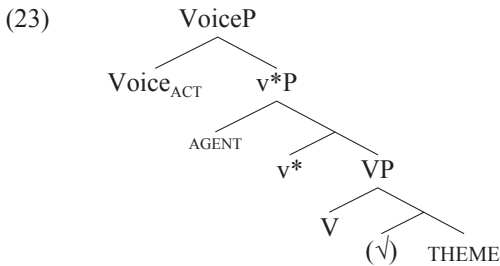
With this in mind, note that neither changing the type of DP of the arguments, nor making the nominative argument human, improves examples like (16b).

- (21) a. Þessum prófessorum hefur aldrei líkað hann.
 these professors.DAT have never liked it.MASC.NOM
 ‘These professors have never liked it.’
 b. *Hann hefur aldrei líkað (þessum / neinum / einhverjum) prófessorum.
 it.M.NOM has never liked these any some professors.DAT
- (22) a. Okkur hefur alltaf leiðst hún.
 us.DAT has always bored she.NOM
 ‘She has always bored us.’
 b. *Hún hefur alltaf leiðst okkur.
 she.NOM has always bored us.DAT

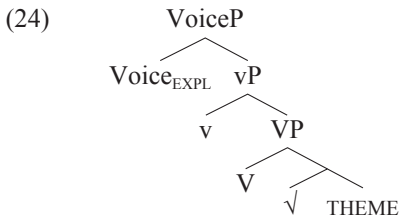
We conclude that Icelandic has both symmetric and asymmetric applicative constructions, and these show up not only in ditransitives, but in DAT-NOM constructions as well (which are our primary focus in this article). When V2 and several factors having to do with the DP arguments are controlled for, either internal argument of an asymmetric applicative can move to the subject position, and this applies to passives of verbs like *give* as well as symmetric DAT-NOM verbs like *nægja* ‘suffice’ and *henta* ‘suit’. In contrast, asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs like *líka* ‘like’ and *leiðast* ‘bore’ only allow the dative to move. In the next section, we present an analysis of this alternation in terms of domain-extending head movement.

4. Analysis of the Symmetric–Asymmetric Distinction

Adopting the proposals of Sigurðsson (2011, 2012a), we assume that in active, agentive constructions, an active Voice head licenses an accusative-assigning functional head v^* (see especially Sigurðsson 2012a and the references there for a finer-grained discussion than is necessary here).¹⁰ Following work in Distributed Morphology (Embick & Marantz 2008, Embick 2010, among others) and other frameworks (e.g., Borer 2005a, Borer 2005b, De Belder 2011, De Belder & van Craenenbroek 2011), we also assume that lexical roots are inherently noncategorical.¹¹ This latter assumption, for the most part, will not matter for the syntactic analysis of the constructions at hand, but will make a difference below in the discussion of how to understand the lexical difference between asymmetric and symmetric DAT-NOM verbs.



Unaccusative constructions are embedded under an expletive Voice, which deletes the accusative-assigning feature of v^* , yielding v . Case is assigned on the basis of matching relations with Voice/ v -type heads, so the theme will be accusative in (23) but nominative in (24).¹²



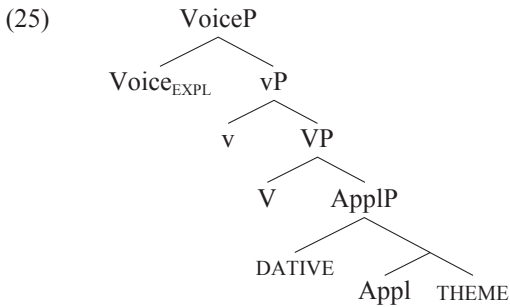
DAT-NOM constructions are also embedded under an expletive Voice. We assume that the dative case marking in these constructions results from a dependency between an Appl(icative) head (see Marantz 1993; Pytkäinen 2002, 2008; Anagnostopoulou

¹⁰ For expository reasons we assume traditional X-bar notations, including specifiers, but nothing important hinges on this. For approaches that do away with bar levels and specifiers see, for example, Chomsky 2010, Sigurðsson, 2012a, b. We also notate silent movement copies with either indexed traces or angled brackets around the copies; this is also purely for presentational convenience.

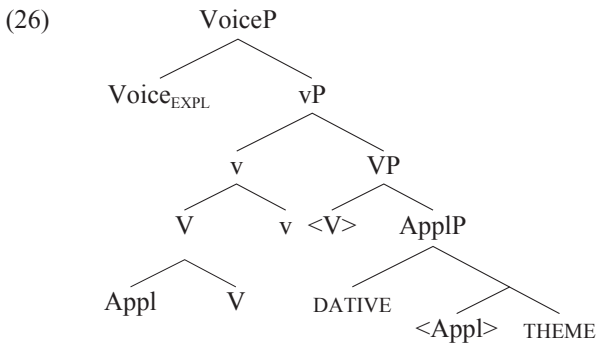
¹¹ See also Sigurðsson 2012b on the emergence of roots in grammars.

¹² The facts are considerably more complex. In this paper, we are concerned primarily with the alternation between accusative and nominative, so we gloss over direct object datives and many other case-marking patterns; see Sigurðsson 2012a for discussion of these.

2003; Cuervo 2003; Schäfer 2008; Sigurðsson 2012a) and the argument it introduces. The theme is nominative because it is embedded under *v*, rather than *v**.¹³



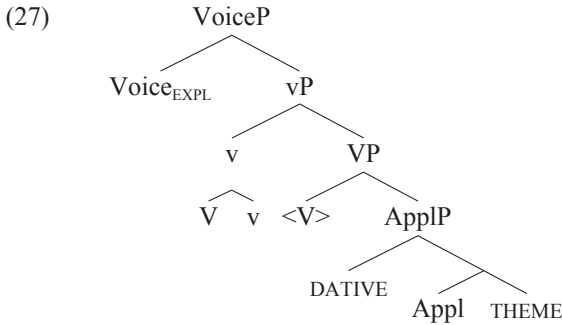
The structure in (25) underlies both symmetric and asymmetric DAT-NOM constructions. The difference between the two of them, we propose, is that in symmetric DAT-NOM constructions, the Appl head raises to V before the latter raises to *v*. This makes the complement of Appl, the theme, equally close to c-commanding heads as the dative (den Dikken 2006, 2007a,b). Hence, either is available to move to the subject position.



With asymmetric DAT-NOM constructions, on the other hand, Appl does not move to V. One consequence of this is that the dative will always be closer to c-commanding heads than the theme. Thus, only the dative is available for A-movement to subject position.¹⁴

¹³ A note on terminology. To simplify the exposition, we will uniformly refer to the nondative argument of a DAT-NOM verb as the “theme”; however, we attach no thematic or theoretical significance to this choice.

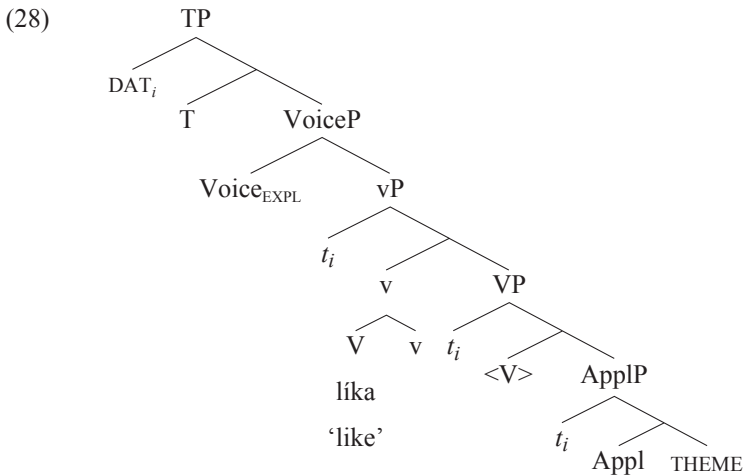
¹⁴ This analysis of the symmetric–asymmetric distinction has been proposed independently by Kupula (2011) on different grounds.



Another consequence of this head movement derives from phase theory (Chomsky 2001, 2007, 2008; den Dikken 2006, 2007a, b; Marantz, 2007, 2008; Bobaljik & Wurmbrand 2013). Assuming that Appl defines a phase, moving it to V extends that phase. When the vP phase is complete, the heads and complements of all phase heads within vP will be sent to spellout. If Appl does not move to V, Appl and its complement, the theme, will be sent to spellout when vP is complete. If Appl does move to V (with both subsequently moving to v), then neither Appl nor its complement will be sent to spellout when vP is complete. Rather, Appl and its complement will be sent to spellout at the same time as v and its complement.

In the general case, assuming pronominal arguments, either the dative or the nominative will raise to/through Spec,VP for licensing (see (28)).¹⁵ Further, since vP is a phase, the architecture of the system would require the argument moving to subject position to move through its edge, assuming that probe–goal relations are established at the phase level only after spellout of lower phases. However, these architectural assumptions are not specifically necessary for the present analysis. What is important is that for all (or for any) A-movements, only the dative is available because it is closer to any c-commanding goal than the nominative theme.

¹⁵ Assuming a raising-to-object analysis along the lines of Chomsky 2007:20ff., 2008:148ff. It is not necessary, however, that such raising be driven by an [EPP] feature; see Sigurðsson 2010 for more refined notion of the EPP. In Icelandic, “EPP-like” movement is not required of all DPs, but is generally required of pronouns. Note that Chomsky’s main claim was that the C and v(*) phase heads behave in a parallel manner.

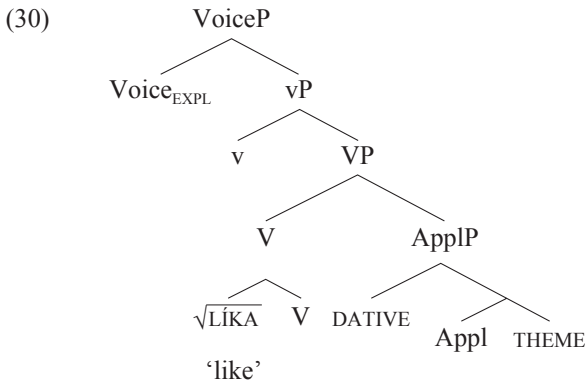
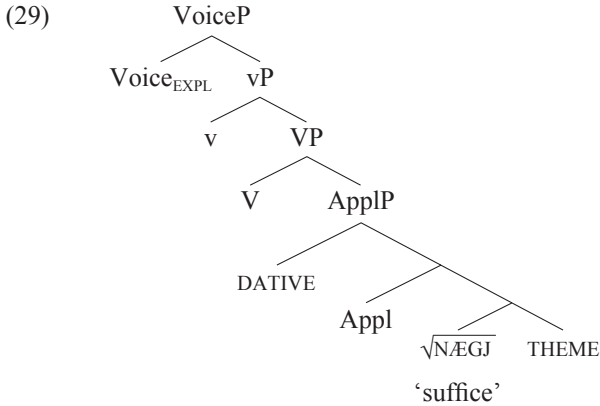


As an interim summary, domain-extending head movement has two effects: (i) it makes the specifier and the complement of the moving head equidistant to c-commanding heads, and (ii) it extends the phase of the moving head, if the moving head defines a phase. Taking Appl to be the relevant head, the first effect is responsible for either the dative or the nominative being able to move to the subject position. The second effect is not straightforwardly detectable in monoclausal DAT-NOM constructions, but we will show in the next section how the case-marking facts described above follow from it.

One issue this analysis raises is where/how to state the lexical difference between symmetric and asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs. That is, are the classes of verbs random, or is it nonaccidental that a verb like *lika* ‘like’ is asymmetric while a verb like *nægja* ‘suffice’ is symmetric? One way to state the difference would be to say that symmetric *nægja*-type verbs have a feature attracting Appl, and asymmetric *lika*-type verbs lack this feature. This is stipulative, but it is an empirical fact that there are two classes of verbs, and this has to be stated somehow. For the moment, providing symmetric DAT-NOM verbs with a feature attracting Appl will suffice, and the syntax will take care of the rest of the facts, as described below.

However, there are indications that other aspects of the behavior of the two classes of verbs might be related to the symmetry distinction, and we might be able to do better than to just state the difference in the lexical entries of the verbs. There seems to be a distinction with respect to which aspect of the event structure the lexical root modifies. For symmetric DAT-NOM verbs, the lexical root describes a property of the theme, whereas for asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs, the lexical root describes a property of the state, experience, or activity. Now assume that lexical roots are acategorical, and become verbs by merging with V either externally or internally (the latter being “movement”). We can capture the difference by attaching the root directly to the theme in case the root modifies/describes some property of the theme, but to V in case the root modifies/describes some property of the state/experience/activity. This is analogous to the analysis of Marantz (2009a, b, 2013), where the root for the English

verb *open* attaches directly to the DP object, and the root for the English verb *paint* attaches directly to the light verb *v* (=V here).



Then, in order to be “categorized,” the root in (29) will have to move to Appl, and then to V, and a consequence of this is that both arguments will be equidistant as described above. This movement is not necessary in (30), since the root is already attached to V from the start.

There are several considerations which support this analysis. First, as mentioned above, there is the semantic difference. Symmetric verbs like *nægja* ‘suffice’ describe a property of the object (that it is sufficient), while asymmetric verbs like *líka* ‘like’ describe a property of the experience with respect to the object. Second, there are syntactic differences having to do with the obligatoriness of arguments. For symmetric verbs like *nægja* ‘suffice’, the dative is often omittable.

- (31) a. Bíllinn hentar við íslenskar aðstæður.
 car.the.NOM suits with Icelandic conditions
 ‘The car is suited for the conditions in Iceland.’

- b. Málningin nægir.
 paint.the.NOM suffices
 'The (amount of) paint will suffice.'

In contrast, it is impossible to leave out the nominative and have only a dative.

- (32) a. *Mér hefur ekki hentað.
 me.DAT has not suited
 b. *Mér hefur ekki nægt.
 me.DAT has not sufficed

This follows if the root of symmetric DAT-NOM verbs modifies (properties of) the theme directly. The theme cannot be left out, but the dative can be left out if no Appl is merged.

With asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs, there is a strong tendency in the opposite direction, for the dative to be obligatory. The following examples show this for *sárna* 'hurt', *blöskra* 'outrage', *gremjast* 'anger', and *leiðast* 'bore'. The (a,b) sentences show that these verbs are asymmetric with only the dative raising to subject, and the (c) sentences show that the dative is obligatory.

- (33) a. Mér hefur alltaf sárnað svona framkoma.
 me.DAT has always hurt such conduct.NOM
 'Such conduct has always hurt me.'
 b. *Svona framkoma hefur alltaf sárnað mér.
 such conduct.NOM has always hurt me.DAT
 c. *Svona framkoma hefur alltaf sárnað.
 such conduct.NOM has always hurt
- (34) a. Mér hefur alltaf blöskrað svona hegðun.
 me.DAT has always outraged such behavior.NOM
 'Such behavior has always outraged me.'
 b. *Svona hegðun hefur alltaf blöskrað mér.
 such behavior.NOM has always outraged me.DAT
 c. *Svona hegðun hefur alltaf blöskrað.
 such behavior has always outraged
- (35) a. Mér hefur alltaf gramist svona hegðun.
 me.DAT has always angered such behavior
 'Such behavior has always angered me.'
 b. *Svona hegðun hefur alltaf gramist mér.
 such behavior has always angered me.DAT
 c. *Svona hegðun hefur alltaf gramist.
 such behavior has always angered

- (36) a. Mér hefur alltaf leiðst þessi bók.
 me.DAT has always bored this book.NOM
 ‘This book has always bored me.’
 b. *Þessi bók hefur alltaf leiðst mér.
 this book.NOM has always bored me.DAT
 c. *Þessi bók hefur alltaf leiðst.
 this book.NOM has always bored

This also follows if the root modifies a V which selects an ApplP rather than the theme. The distinction between symmetric and asymmetric DAT-NOM constructions, then, is not arbitrary, but rather follows from how the position of roots in the tree reflects event structure. A root identifying a property of an object attaches low, modifying that object, and thus must move through Appl in order to get to V and become verbalized. This movement makes both arguments equidistant and derives a symmetric DAT-NOM construction. A root identifying a property of the experiencer’s psychological state attaches to the (stative) V and modifies that state. This is higher than Appl, and there is thus no independent reason for Appl to raise, and therefore the dative remains the closer to c-commanding heads than the nominative and an asymmetric DAT-NOM construction is derived.

We should note that there are some exceptions to the tendencies described above.¹⁶ For example, *líka* ‘like’ is an asymmetric DAT-NOM verb, and in many cases behaves as expected, requiring a dative (as shown in 37c).

- (37) 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
 c. *{Þetta / svona dónaskapur} hefur aldrei líkað.
 this.NOM such rudeness.NOM has never liked

However, it can appear without a dative if an adverbial such as *vel* ‘well’ is added along with a PP like *á Íslandi* ‘in Iceland’.

- (38) {Þetta / svona dónaskapur} hefur aldrei líkað vel á Íslandi.
 this.NOM such rudeness.NOM has never liked well on Iceland.DAT
 ‘This/such rudeness has never been liked in Iceland.’

This is probably not problematic. The dative here is “understood,” and $\sqrt{\text{LÍKA}}$ is still naming a property of the psychological state, not of the theme. This is importantly different from the symmetric verbs, where much less additional machinery is needed to make the examples without the dative fully natural.

¹⁶ This is not unexpected, since lexical roots vary in how freely they can attach in various constructions.

A second exception involves verbs describing diseases, such as *skána* and *batna* ‘improve/recover’. Such verbs are asymmetric, in that when both the dative and the nominative are present, only the dative is available for A-movement. However, the dative can also be left out.

- (39) a. Mér hefur loksins batnað veikin.
 me.DAT has finally improved disease.the.NOM
 ‘I have finally recovered from the disease.’
 b. *Veikin hefur loksins batnað mér.
 disease.the.NOM has finally improved me.DAT
 c. {Veikin / ástandið} hefur loksins batnað.
 disease.the.NOM situation.the.NOM has finally improved
 ‘The disease/situation has finally improved.’

Unlike the case with *líka* ‘like’ in (37c) above, here there is nothing odd about the version without the dative, and there is not necessarily an understood experiencer, especially when a DP like *ástandið* ‘the situation’ is chosen. These cases can be accounted for if the root modifies V, but the latter may occur with an ApplP or a DP complement. When Appl is not present, there is no dative and no implication of an experiencer.¹⁷ When Appl is present, there is a dative and only it will be able to move to the subject position.

Another kind of exception to the tendency described above comes from verbs like *hugnastr* ‘like’ and *ofbjóða* ‘shock’. At first blush, we would expect such examples to involve a root modifying the state, such that there would be no independent motivation for Appl to move to V. It is surprising, from this perspective, that movement of the nominative argument to the subject position, while dispreferred, is not ruled out.

- (40) a. Mér hefur aldrei hugnastr svona hegðun.
 me.DAT has never liked such behavior.NOM
 ‘I have never liked such behavior.’
 b. (?) Svona hegðun hefur aldrei hugnastr mér.
 such behavior.NOM has never liked me.DAT
 c. *Svona hegðun hefur aldrei hugnastr.
 such behavior.NOM has never liked
- (41) a. Mér hefur alltaf ofboðið svona græðgi.
 me.DAT has always shocked such greed.NOM
 ‘Such greed has always shocked me.’
 b. (?) Svona græðgi hefur alltaf ofboðið mér.
 such greed.NOM has always shocked me.DAT

¹⁷ This is compatible with the intuition that when the dative is not present, it feels like a “different verb,” in some sense.

- c. *Svona græðgi hefur alltaf ofboðið.
such greed.NOM has always shocked

The analysis pursued in this paper forces us to say that Appl does move to V in such cases. For the hypothesis under consideration to be on the right track, either the root does originate within ApplP, or some other element does (or Appl moves to V anyway, for reasons that are not clear). For *ofbjóða* ‘shock’, for example, we might suppose that *of-* ‘too (much)’ originates lower and moves through Appl (cf. the analysis of English *out-* prefixation in Marantz, 2009a, b), observing that a number of different prefixes form verbs with *bjóða*, which independently means ‘offer’: *fal-bjóða* ‘offer for sale’, *for-bjóða* ‘forbid’, *fyrir-bjóða* ‘forbid’, *lög-bjóða* ‘order by law’, *mis-bjóða* ‘insult’, *undir-bjóða* ‘undercut’, *vald-bjóða* ‘order’, *yfir-bjóða* ‘outbid’.¹⁸ There are also a number of verbs with the *of-* prefix, such as *of-borga* ‘overpay’, *of-dekra* ‘spoil’, *of-gera* ‘overdo’, *of-hlaða* ‘overburden’, and *of-nota* ‘overuse’. For *hugnast* ‘like’, we might take note of the number of other (verbal and nonverbal) uses the root $\sqrt{\text{HUG}}$ has, such as the verbs *huga að* ‘take a look’, *hugsa* ‘think’, *athuga* ‘check, consider’ as well as the noun *hugur* ‘mind/thought’, which is involved in a large number of semi-idiomatic DAT-NOM constructions (see Friðjónsson 2006:392–395). In general, the more contexts a root appears in, the more of a chance there is that it will show exceptional behavior in DAT-NOM constructions. Evaluating this in detail would require a thorough examination of the roots involved in the putative counterexamples, which goes beyond the scope of the present article.

For the majority of cases, however, it seems that the pattern is as expected: symmetric verbs allow the dative to be left out and the root names something about the theme rather than the state, while asymmetric verbs require the dative and the root names something about the state. The present hypothesis has the advantage that the starting position of the root can be connected to (a) its event-structural properties (i.e., what aspect of the event the root names), (b) the “transitivity” properties of the verbs in question (i.e., that in intransitive uses, the nominative is primary with symmetric verbs while the dative is primary with asymmetric verbs), and (c) the symmetric–asymmetric distinction, in that the symmetric cases force movement of Appl by virtue of the root being merged lower than it. Thus, not only does the domain-extending head movement analysis of the symmetric–asymmetric distinction derive the availability of A-movement as well as the case-marking differences discussed above and analyzed in the next section, but it does so in a way that sheds light on (or at least provides coherent hypotheses for) why a given verb might end up in one class or another.

For what follows, however, it will not matter what semantic/event-structural factors underlie or constrain the formal distinction between symmetric and asymmetric verbs. While it would be fruitful to investigate the extent to which other properties of symmetric/asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs follow from the present analysis, the primary

¹⁸ The hyphens here are not written in standard Icelandic, and are used only for expository clarity.

purpose here is to illustrate how it derives the case-marking differences with *láta* ‘let’ causatives. We turn to this in the next two sections.

5. *Let Causatives with Subjectless Transitives*

McFadden (2004) recognized the importance of *láta* ‘let’ causatives in working out the domains governing the choice between nominative and accusative in Icelandic. His discussion centered primarily around subjectless embedded clauses such as the following.

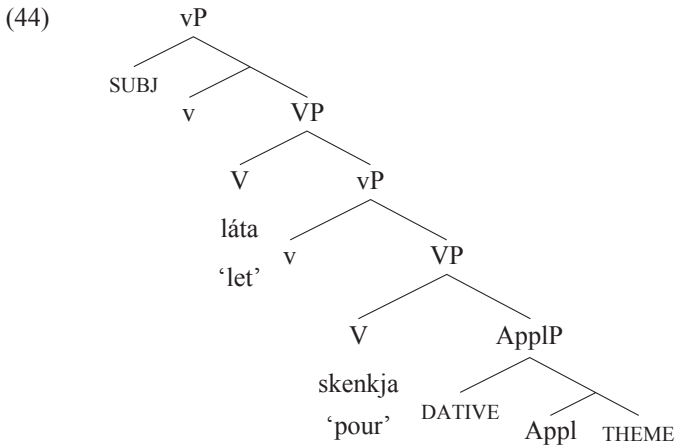
- (42) Gestgjafinn lét skenkja honum nýjan drykk.
 host.the.NOM let pour him.DAT new drink.ACC
 ‘The host had a new drink poured for him.’

For him, such sentences showed that dependent accusative case could be conditioned by a nonoblique argument in a higher vP. He considers and rejects the idea that we simply say that the domain for determining dependent accusative is fixed by the presence or absence of an external argument. This would account for examples like (42), where *skenkja* ‘pour’ does not itself take an external argument, but would run into problems for sentences like (5), as well as the passivized ditransitives such as the following:

- (43) Ég tel honum hafa verið sýndir drengirnir.
 I.NOM believe him.DAT have been shown.NOM.PL.M boys.the.NOM
 ‘I believe him to have been shown the boys.’

In neither (43) nor (5) is there an external argument, so the case domain would include the matrix subject and we would expect accusative case on the embedded (nondative) object, contrary to fact. On the independently-motivated assumption that *believe*-type ECM verbs embed a TP whereas *láta* ‘let’ causatives embed a vP, McFadden (2004) suggests one of two solutions. Either TP is a phase (at least in ECM constructions), or else stacked vPs count as one phase. Adopting the latter assumption, given the following structure of (42), the embedded theme gets accusative because it is in the same phase as the nominative in Spec,vP.¹⁹

¹⁹ In McFadden 2004, Appl is introduced above VP. For the point being made here, this is not relevant, so we adapt his analysis to the structural assumptions adopted here for expository clarity.



This analysis depends on the infinitive complement of *láta* ‘let’ causatives in general being smaller than other ECM complements. However, we have already seen that this cannot generalize to all cases. While McFadden’s analysis would extend nicely to embedded symmetric DAT-NOM verbs such as *nægja* ‘suffice’, it would be ill-equipped to handle cases where *láta* ‘let’ itself embeds a configuration with a nominative object, such as with embedded asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs such as *líka* ‘like’. To handle the latter case, we would be forced to stipulate that when *láta* ‘let’ embeds an asymmetric DAT-NOM verb, it selects a larger structure, such as a TP. In the absence of independent evidence in favor of this (or a theoretically driven reason to expect it), we conclude that the case-assignment properties of *láta* ‘let’ causatives cannot be accounted for solely by assuming that they embed a smaller structure than *believe*-type ECM verbs. They do embed a smaller structure, and this is probably related to their case assignment properties, but neither assuming that TP is a phase, nor assuming that stacked vPs count as one phase, will suffice.

If we assume that Appl defines a phase, we will have a way of distinguishing the two DAT-NOM classes on the basis of whether or not this phase is extended.²⁰ Before turning to the analysis of those cases, however, we consider here how the theme gets accusative case in sentences like (42), despite being in a different phase. To do so, it is worth explicitly acknowledging an important difference between sentences like (42) and sentences with embedded DAT-NOM verbs. The difference is observable through word order, where the verb in (42) must precede both arguments, but the verb cannot precede both arguments with an embedded DAT-NOM verb, even if the case frame is the same.

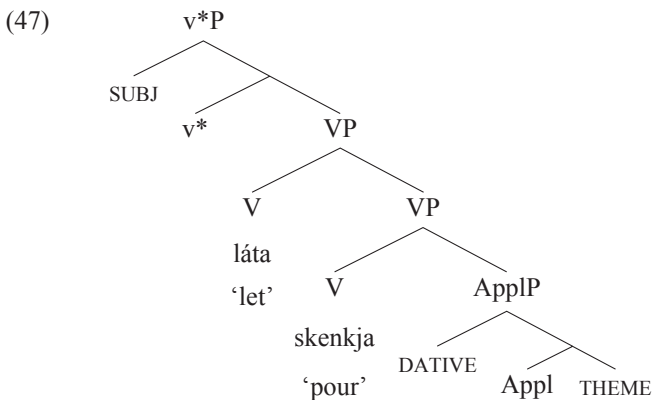
²⁰ This analysis is in principle available to McFadden (2004); however, then we would expect embedded subjectless ditransitives to have nominative case for some verbs, correlating with the symmetric–asymmetric distinction in passives. As far as we know, this never happens: subjectless ditransitives embedded under *láta* ‘let’ never have a nominative theme. This further supports the analysis in (47), where Appl is the only phase head between v* and the theme; phase extension is thus unnecessary.

- (45) a. Gestgjafinn lét {*honum} skenkja {honum} nýjan drykk.
 host.the.NOM let him.DAT pour him.DAT new drink.ACC
 'The host had a new drink poured for him.'
- b. Gestgjafinn lét {sér} nægja {*sér} nýjan drykk.
 host.the.NOM let REFL.DAT suffice REFL.DAT new drink.ACC
 'The host let himself make do with a new drink.'

The reason for this is that sentences like (42), with a subjectless embedded verb, are only acceptable with transitive verbs that normally take an external argument. Depending on one's assumptions, if we tried to put an unaccusative in such a construction, we would expect either no argument or a post-verbal one. However, only a preverbal argument is possible.

- (46) a. Ég lét hana deyja.
 I.NOM let her.ACC die
 'I let her die.'
- b. *Ég lét deyja hana.
 I.NOM let die her.ACC
- c. *Ég lét deyja.
 I.NOM let die

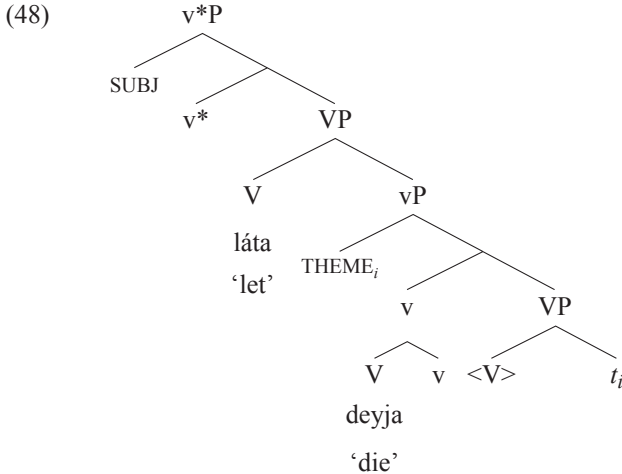
Suppose, then, that sentences such as (42) involve a structure such as the following, similar to the analysis of certain restructuring verbs in Wurmbrand 2004. The subject would thus be the subject of the complex 'let-pour' predicate.



Here, there is a requirement that the embedded VP match the matrix VP in transitivity (Taraldsen 1983, 1984; Christensen 1986). Presumably, it is only verbs that project an external argument in vP that can be directly embedded under *láta* 'let' without its own v layer, since *láta* 'let' itself needs to project an external argument in vP. The two V's thus match in features, and match the v* head, resulting in accusative case on the theme. What is crucial here is not that the theme is in the same phase as v*.

Rather, when the v^*P phase is complete, it will trigger the spellout of Appl and its complement, and the appropriate Agree relations can be computed at that time such that the theme can be sensitive to the presence of v^* , and assigned accusative case.

Turning to unaccusatives, we assume that an unaccusative VP cannot appear as the direct complement of *láta* ‘let’. Rather, it is embedded in its own v , which triggers movement of the internal argument to its specifier (presumably ϕ -driven, as argued in Sigurðsson 2012a), getting the work order facts observed in (46).²¹



When the v^*P phase is complete, it will trigger spellout of the lower v and its complement, and the theme would be assigned accusative case even if it had not moved to the edge of the lower vP phase. The same analysis can be extended to the DAT-NOM cases, as will be shown in the following section. The dative precedes the verb in (45b) because it is the element that moves to the specifier of the embedded vP , like the theme does in (48). As we will show, the analysis of the symmetric–asymmetric distinction presented in the previous section will allow us to connect the analysis of (42) shown in (47) to that of embedded symmetric DAT-NOM constructions despite significant structural differences between the two, the most important one being that sentences like (42) involve an embedded VP rather than vP , where as DAT-NOM constructions and sentences like (46a) involve an embedded vP .

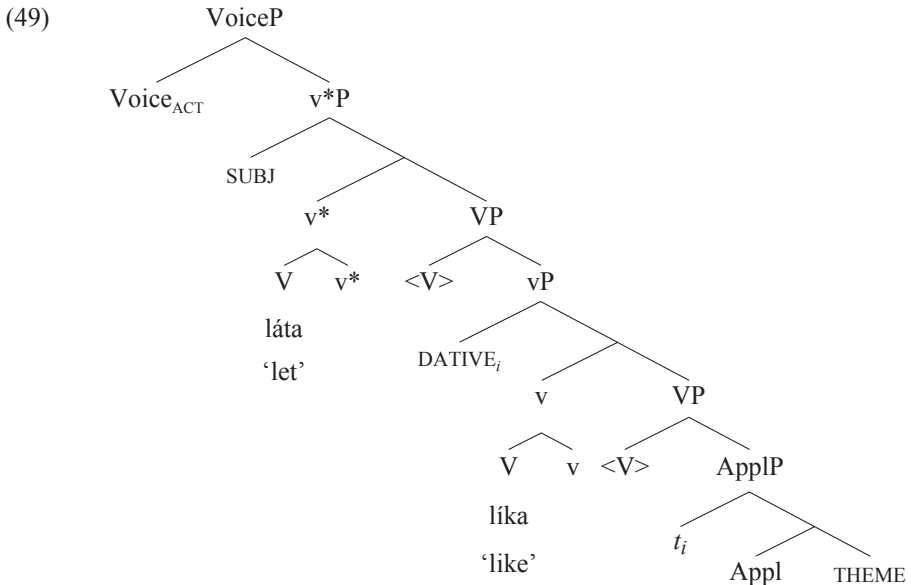
6. Let Causatives and DAT-NOM Verbs

As proposed above, DAT-NOM verbs embedded under *láta* ‘let’ are at least vPs . This accounts for the difference in word order between them and sentences like (42) (see (45)) under the assumption that v can force movement to its specifier, an analysis

²¹ We do not discuss the possibility of embedding passives under *láta* ‘let’ in this article, since the facts in this domain are not clear. See Wood 2011:25–26 for some discussion.

which also accounts for the word order properties of embedded unaccusatives illustrated in (46).

Consider first asymmetric DAT-NOM constructions, where the embedded object winds up nominative. These have the following structure:

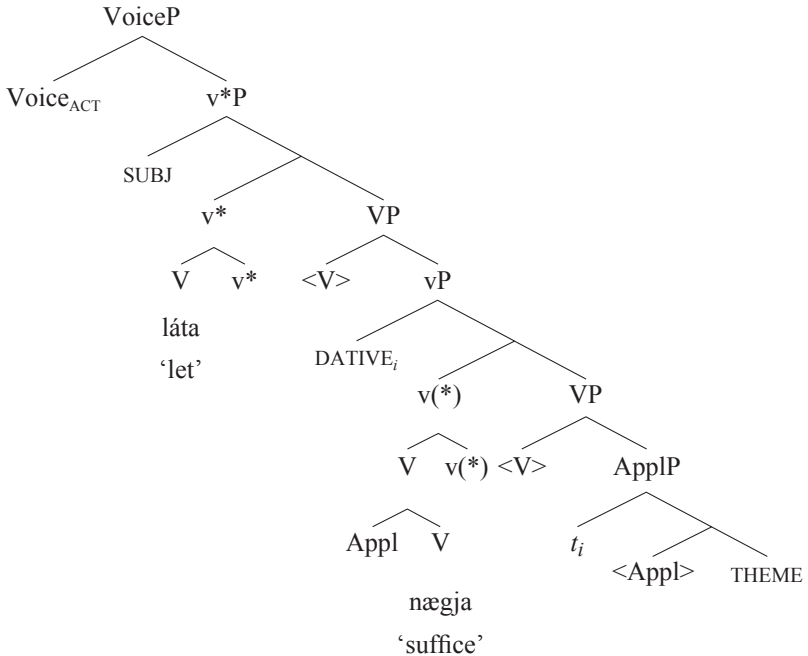


Being asymmetric, Appl does not raise to V and then v, so Appl and its complement DP will be spelled out as soon as the lower vP phase is complete. The theme will be nominative, because there is no v* to condition accusative case at this stage in the derivation. Then, *láta* ‘let’ merges with its functional structure and is embedded under an active Voice head, which selects for accusative-assigning v* rather than v. This v* probes and agrees with the lower v, turning it into v* as well. However, by this point, the theme has already been spelled out and assigned nominative case. The additional phase boundary provided by Appl “protects” the theme from accusative case assignment.

With symmetric applicatives, this phase boundary is not provided, since Appl moves to V and then to v, extending the phase. Thus, when the lower vP phase is complete, it does not send Appl and its complement to spellout; Appl and its complement are part of the same phase. When the higher phase containing ‘let’ is complete, v* agrees with the lower v, turning it into v*, and the latter sends its complement to spellout and assigns accusative case to the theme.²²

²² If the proposal in Section 4 is on the right track, then the structure of the lower head in (50) would probably be $[[[\sqrt{\text{NÆGJ}} \text{ Appl}] \text{ V}] \text{ v}^*]$.

(50)



Let causatives, then, involve a complex agreement chain consisting of Voice-*v**-V-*v**-V-DP. This captures the intuition that *let* causatives involve clause union (Taraldsen, 1983, 1984). The object is case-marked by the matrix and the embedded verb working together. All that is needed is a way to get that object into the domain of the higher verbal heads, which is accomplished here by moving Appl, extending its phase.

Consider now the crucial ways in which (47) is similar to (50). What is important here is that in both structures, the theme which gets accusative case marking is sent to spellout when the higher *v** phase introduced by *láta* ‘let’ is completed. Thus, in both cases, there is only one phase boundary between the accusative argument and the head it depends on. In (47), this is the Appl head, and in (50), this is the *v* head to which Appl raises.

The present analysis also correctly predicts that the symmetric DAT-NOM verbs are symmetric at a very low level. Thus, when Appl raises to *v* (through V), and *v* triggers movement to its specifier, either the dative or the theme is available to move, since they are equidistant. For asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs, only the dative can move.

- (51) a. Við verðum að láta tvo miða nægja hverjum þátttakanda.
 we have to let two tickets.ACC suffice every participant.DAT
 ‘We have to make two tickets be enough for every participant.’
 b. *Við verðum að láta eina bók líka hverjum lesanda.
 we have to let one book.ACC like every reader.DAT

- c. *Við verðum að láta ein bók líka hverjum lesanda.
 we have to let one book.NOM like every reader.DAT

In sum, the analysis of the symmetric–asymmetric distinction presented above accounts for the case marking properties of these predicates when embedded under a *láta* ‘let’ causative. Symmetric predicates are derived by extending the phase headed by Appl, and this phase extension extends directly to a phase-based analysis of case determination.

7. Conclusion

We have examined the intersection of two phenomena—*láta* ‘let’ causatives and DAT-NOM constructions—which have independently played an important role for many theoretical questions. This examination leads to the conclusion that even for nonpassive DAT-NOM constructions, it is no longer possible to tie the nominative case of nominative objects to a lexical property of verbs or argument structure frames. Rather, this nominative arises on the basis of its structural environment, and can alternate with accusative given the right structural context. We have further argued that we can go even further, and tie the availability of nominative case on the theme of a DAT-NOM verb embedded under *láta* ‘let’ to independent properties of the verbs where this is possible (namely, those properties that lead to the symmetric–asymmetric distinction in DAT-NOM verbs). We do this by appealing to an independently available mechanism, phase extension (den Dikken 2006, 2007a, b). This has the further advantage that it is possible to relate the availability of phase extension to the event-structural properties of roots, where the latter may force Appl to move (and extend the phase) by merging in a low position, modifying the properties of the theme. If so, then the lexical distinction between the symmetric and asymmetric DAT-NOM verbs would not have to be specifically learned, but would follow from independent properties of the verbal roots.

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