

# Another new passive in Icelandic

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Non-Canonically Case-Marked Subjects

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# Goal of the talk

- To show that DAT-ACC-passive (1b) (passive of a ditransitive with DP movement and accusative object) is not the same construction as the so-called New Passive (1c) (New Construction, New Impersonal, New Impersonal Passive ...)
- To do this, we:
  - 1 Compare Icelandic to Faroese
  - 2 Compare judgments from a written survey of 772 speakers
  - 3 Look at different syntax/semantics of the constructions

- (1)
- a. Þá voru mér gefnir **bílar**. (Canonical Passive)  
 then were me.DAT given.M.PL **cars**.M.NOM  
 'Then I was given cars.'
  - b. Þá var mér gefið **bíla**. (DAT-ACC-passive)  
 then was me.DAT given.DFLT **cars**.ACC
  - c. Þá var gefið mér **bíla**. (New Passive)  
 then was given.DFLT me.DAT **cars**.ACC

# The New Passive

- No overt subject
- Accusative case preserved on objects
- Reflexivization possible (2a)

- (2) a. Það er drepíð **sjálfan sig.** (monotransitive)  
 EXPL is killed **self.ACC refl.ACC**  
 ‘People take their own life.’  
 (Árnadóttir, Eythórsson and E.F. Sigurðsson 2011:48)
- b. Það var sýnt þeim **bæklinga.** (ditransitive)  
 EXPL was shown them.DAT **brochures.ACC**  
 ‘They were shown brochures before they left.’  
 (Jónsson 2009b:303)

# The New Passive

- Active analysis (Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir 2002, 2012a,b,c): The New Passive isn't a passive construction but an active impersonal with a *pro* subject (hence the terms the New Impersonal and the New Construction)
- Passive analysis (Barðdal and Molnár 2003, Eythórsson 2008a, Jónsson 2009b, Árnadóttir, Eythórsson and E.F. Sigurðsson 2010): It is a passive construction
- Alternative accounts: H.Á. Sigurðsson (2011), Ingason, Legate and Yang (2012) and E.F. Sigurðsson (2012)

# Jónsson (2009b)

- The following examples show passive of a ditransitive with an accusative DP where the dative DP stays in situ in (3a) but moves to subject position in (3b)
- Since (3b) shows DP movement, Jónsson (2009b) argues that the New Passive cannot have a *pro* subject

- (3) a. Það var sýnt þeim **bæklinga** áður en þau fóru.  
 EXPL was shown them.DAT **brochures**.ACC before they left  
 ‘They were shown brochures before they left.’
- b. 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 first?’  
 (Jónsson 2009b:303)

# Jónsson (2009b)

- There are however indications that (3a) and (3b) are not part of one and the same construction
- We argue that (3b) is in fact not part of the New Passive
  - (3a) = New Passive of a ditransitive
  - (3b) = DAT-ACC-passive

# Why is this important?

- If DAT-ACC-passive and the New Passive are the same construction, then there is no *pro* subject (the Active analysis is wrong, as Jónsson 2009b argues)
- This would also be a problem for H.Á. Sigurðsson (2011) and Ingason, Legate and Yang (2012) — (4a) violates Shortest Move and Relativized Minimality

- (4) a. Þá var mér<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub>  $\varnothing$  gefið t<sub>i</sub> **bíl**].  
           then was me.DAT [<sub>VP</sub>  $\varnothing$  given t<sub>i</sub> **car**.ACC]  
           ‘Then I was given a car.’
- b. Þá var [<sub>VP</sub>  $\varnothing$  gefið mér **bíl**].  
           then was [<sub>VP</sub>  $\varnothing$  given me.DAT **car**.ACC]

# Faroese

- The New Passive is ungrammatical in Faroese

(5) \*Tað bleiv sligið **meg**.  
EXPL was hit **me.ACC**  
'I was hit'  
(Eythórsson 2008b:88)



# Faroese

- DAT-ACC-passive is, however, possible for some Faroese speakers

- (6) Og var honum óivað ætlað **somu** **viðferð** og  
 and was him.DAT doubtless intended **same.ACC** **treatment** as  
 Øgmundi.  
 Øgmundur.DAT  
 ‘He was without a doubt intended to get the same treatment as  
 Øgmundur’  
 (Dahl 1939:119; cited after Barnes 1986:35)
- (7) Honum varð ynskt **eina** **góða** **ferð**.  
him.DAT was wished **a.ACC** **good.ACC** **journey**  
 ‘He was wished a good journey’  
 (Barnes 1986:35)

# Faroese

## ■ However:

- (8) a. Tað varð lovað henni **eina** **teldu**.  
 EXPL became promised her.DAT **a.F.ACC** **computer.F.ACC**  
 ‘She was promised a computer.’
- b. \*Tað varð lovað henni **hana**.  
 EXPL became promised her.DAT **her.ACC**  
 (Eythórssen 2008a:207)

# Faroese vs. Icelandic

- (9) a. Tað varð lovað henni **ein** **telda.** (Faroese)  
 EXPL became promised her.DAT **a**.NOM **computer**.NOM  
 ‘She was promised a computer.’
- b. \*Tað varð lovað henni **henda** **teldan.**  
 EXPL became promised her.DAT **this**.NOM **computer.the**.NOM  
 (Eythórsson 2008a:207)
- (10) \*Það var lofað henni **tölva.** (Icelandic)  
 EXPL was promised her.DAT **computer**.NOM  
 ‘She was promised a computer.’

# Faroese

- Faroese also exhibits accusative case objects of (originally) DAT-NOM-verbs in the active voice (e.g. Barnes 1986, Höskuldur Práinsson et al. 2004, Jónsson 2009a, Árnadóttir 2012)

- (11)    a.    Mær      dámar væl hasa bókina.  
             me.DAT likes    well that book.the.ACC  
             ‘I like that book.’
- b.    Eg        dámi væl hasa bókina.  
             I.NOM like    well that book.the.ACC  
             (Eythórsson and Jónsson 2003:207)

# Summary

- Faroese does not have a construction identical to the New Passive in Icelandic
- Faroese does, however, have DAT-ACC-passive, like Icelandic (similar to DAT-ACC-pattern in the active)
- Given this, the examples in (8)–(9) are surprising and need further inspection

# Variation in Syntax survey

- Survey nr. 1, conducted in 2005
- Results from 772 speakers used (Höskuldur Thráinsson PI)
- Four age groups
- Three choices given:
  - 1 *yes* 'I could say this'
  - 2 *?* 'I could hardly say this'
  - 3 *no* 'I could not say this'
- 16 sentences with the New Passive of monotransitives (accusative object)
- 2 sentences with the New Passive of ditransitives
- 1 sentence with DAT-ACC-passive

# Correlation

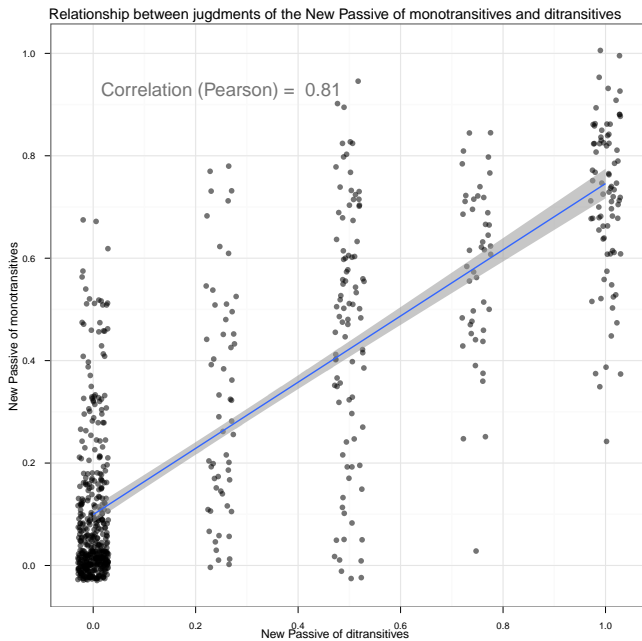
- Speakers who accepted the following sentences
- DAT-ACC-passive more accepted by the oldest age groups than the New Passive

(12)	Results from Variation in Syntax	15	20-25	40-45	65-70
a.	Pað var sýnt <u>þeim</u> EXPL was shown <u>them</u> .DAT	% = 43 N = 87	21 42	2 3	2 3
	<b>bæklinga</b> <b>brochures.ACC</b> 'They were shown brochures.'				
b.	Var <u>þeim</u> ekki sýnt was <u>them</u> .DAT not shown	% = 48 N = 100	21 42	8 15	11 20
	<b>íbúðina</b> fyrst? <b>apartment.the.ACC</b> first 'Were they not shown the apartment first?'				

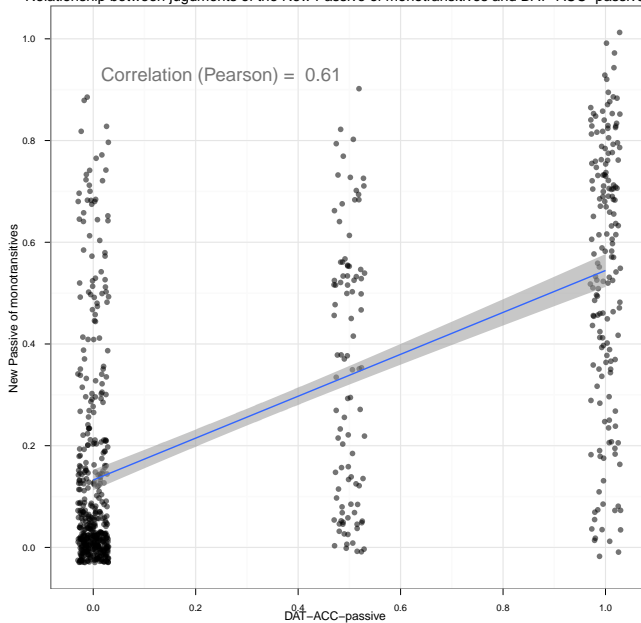
# Correlation

- Correlation between the New Passive of ditransitives and DAT-ACC-passive: 0.5
- Correlation between the New Passive of monotransitives and DAT-ACC-passive: 0.61
- Correlation between the New Passive of monotransitives and the New Passive of ditransitives: 0.81





Relationship between judgments of the New Passive of monotransitives and DAT-ACC-passive



# Summary

- DAT-ACC-passive is more accepted than the New Passive (especially among older speakers)
- The correlation between the New Passive of monotransitives and ditransitives is very high
- The relationship between DAT-ACC-passive and the New Passive is different

# Syntactic evidence

- If DAT-ACC-passive and the New Passive are one and the same construction, we must say that the dative DP is a subject when it moves but an object when it doesn't
- It cannot be a subject also when it doesn't move – as seen by accusative indirect objects:

- (13)
- a. Í gær        var leynt        mig        sannleikanum.  
           yesterday was concealed me.ACC **truth.the**.DAT  
           'Yesterday, the truth was concealed from me.'
  - b. \*Í gær        var mig        leynt        sannleikanum.  
           yesterday was me.ACC concealed **truth.the**.DAT
  - c. Í gær        var ég        leyndur    sannleikanum.  
           yesterday was I.NOM concealed **truth.the**.DAT

# Syntactic evidence

- DAT-ACC-passive vs. New Passive of a ditransitive
- When the dative DP moves to subject position, as in (14a), the implicit agent cannot bind the reflexive
- When there is no overt subject, as in (14b), it is possible for the reflexive to be bound by the implicit agent

(14) a. Í gær        var lækninum<sub>i</sub>        sýnt    **röntgenmyndina**<sub>j</sub>  
 yesterday was doctor.the.DAT<sub>i</sub> shown **x-ray.the**.ACC

**sína**<sub>i/\*j</sub>.

**own**.REFL.ACC<sub>i/\*j</sub>

‘Yesterday, the doctor was shown his x-ray.’

b. Í gær        var sýnt    lækninum<sub>i</sub>        **röntgenmyndina**<sub>j</sub>  
 yesterday was shown doctor.the.DAT<sub>i</sub> **x-ray.the**.ACC

**sína**<sub>i/j</sub>.

**own**.REFL.ACC<sub>i/j</sub>

‘Yesterday, the doctor was shown his x-ray.’

‘Yesterday, the doctor was shown an x-ray belonging to the person doing the showing.’

# Syntactic evidence

- Canonical passive vs. New Passive
- Different meaning, similar to DAT-ACC-passive (14a) vs. the New Passive of a ditransitive (14b)

- (15) a. **Maður<sub>i</sub>** er alltaf látinn bíða eftir (sjálfum) sér<sub>i/\*j</sub>.  
           **one**.NOM<sub>i</sub> is always let wait for (self.DAT) REFL.DAT<sub>i/\*j</sub>  
           ‘I always have to wait for myself.’ / ‘One always has to wait for oneself.’
- b. Það er alltaf látið **mann<sub>i</sub>** bíða eftir sér<sub>\*i/j</sub>  
           EXPL is always let **one**.ACC<sub>i</sub> wait for REFL.DAT<sub>\*i/j</sub>  
           ‘People are always making one/me wait for them.’  
           (Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson, Joan Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir, p.c.)

# Hlíf Árnadóttir's survey

- Created on Google Docs and published as a Facebook event
- Conducted from April 2nd to May 2nd 2012
- Results from 936 speakers used
- Main purpose to study case variation among DAT-NOM-verbs
- Three choices given: *yes*, *?*, *no*

# DAT-ACC in the active and the passive

- DAT-ACC seems to be on the rise with original DAT-NOM verbs in the active in Icelandic (Árnadóttir and Sigurðsson 2012)

Results from Hlíf Árnadóttir's study					yes	?	no
a.	<u>Magnúsi</u>	hlotnaðist	<b>þann</b>	<b>heiður</b>	% = 34	9	57
	<u>Magnús</u> .DAT	acquired	<b>that</b> .ACC	<b>honor</b> .ACC	N = 317	84	529
	að vera	valinn	efnilegasti	leikmaðurinn			
	to be	chosen	most.prominent	player.the			
	'Magnús acquired the honor to be chosen the most prominent player'						
b.	<u>Páli</u>	leiðist	<b>handbolta</b>	mjög mikið	% = 5	1	94
	<u>Páll</u> .DAT	is.bored.by	<b>handball</b> .ACC	very much	N = 46	13	865
	'Páll finds handball very boring.'						

- DAT-ACC-passive patterns with this, as in Faroese



# The New Passive and related constructions

- The New Passive (17) is different and is more like the passive construction in (18) (cf. Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir 2002)

(17) Það var gefið fólki **súpu**.  
 EXPL was given people.DAT **soup**.ACC  
 ‘People were given soup.’

(18) Nú er verið að gefa fólki **súpu** af stjórnámálamönnum.  
 now is been to give.INF people.DAT **soup**.ACC by politicians  
 ‘Now people are being given soup by politicians.’

- The dative DP in (18) cannot move to subject position — just like the New Passive but unlike DAT-ACC-passive

(19) \*Nú er fólki<sub>i</sub> verið að gefa t<sub>i</sub> **súpu**.  
 now is people.DAT<sub>i</sub> been to give.INF t<sub>i</sub> **soup**.ACC

# The NewPass and the Impersonal Modal Construction

- The New Passive is also similar to the Impersonal Modal Construction (H.Á. Sigurðsson and Egerland 2009) in (20) (E.F. Sigurðsson 2012)
  - No overt subject
  - Accusative case preserved on objects
  - *By*-phrases grammatical

(20)	Results from Hlíf Árnadóttir's study	yes	?	no
	Pað þyrfti að rannsaka <b>þetta</b> mun betur	% = 72	17	10
	EXPL needed to investigate <b>this</b> .ACC much better	N = 672	162	97
	af fræðimönnum			
	by scholars			
	'This needs to be investigated much further by scholars.'			

# Weak implicit argument

- Cf. H.Á. Sigurðsson (2011) and Ingason, Legate and Yang (2012) for the New Passive
- Weak implicit subject rather than PRO (secondary predicates don't seem to be grammatical)

- (21) a. Það var [ $\varphi$  gefið fólki **súpu** (??fullur)].  
 EXPL was [ $\varphi$  given people.DAT **soup**.ACC (??drunk.NOM)]  
 'People were given soup.'
- b. Nú er verið [ $\varphi$  að gefa fólki **súpu** (??fullur)].  
 now is been [ $\varphi$  to give.INF people.DAT **soup**.ACC (??drunk.NOM)]  
 'Now people are being given soup.'
- c. Það þyrfti [ $\varphi$  að rannsaka **þetta** mun betur (??fullur)]  
 EXPL needed [ $\varphi$  to investigate **this**.ACC much better (??drunk.NOM)]  
 'This needs to be investigated much better.'

# Conclusion

- We have argued that the DAT-ACC-passive and the New Passive are two different constructions, comparing Icelandic and Faroese and using quantitative (correlation in a judgment task) and qualitative (syntactic) evidence
- DAT-ACC-passive does not show that there isn't a *pro*/PRO/weak implicit subject in the New Passive
- DAT-ACC-passive: oblique (overt) subject; related to DAT-ACC active
- The New Passive: weak implicit subject (Sigurðsson 2011 and Ingason et al. 2012); related to the Impersonal Modal Construction and impersonal passives of aspectual verbs

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# Appendix

- Secondary predicates in the reflexive passive
- Speakers who accepted the following sentence

(22)	Maling and Sigurjonsdóttir's study	Adolescents	Adults
	<u>Svo var bara drifið <b>sig</b>      <i>einn</i> á ball</u>	<u>% = 48–60</u>	<u>23</u>
	so was just hurried <b>refl.ACC</b> <i>alone.NOM</i> to dance		
	'People just went to the dance alone.'		
	(Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir 2012a)		



# Appendix

## ■ Subject-oriented participial adjunct

- (23) a. Ég vakti börnin kl. 7, raulandi lítinn lagstúf. (Active)  
 I woke children.the at 7, humming little.ACC song.bit.ACC  
 ‘I woke the children at 7, humming a little piece of a song’
- b. \*Börnin voru vakin kl. 7, raulandi lítinn  
 children.the.NOM were awakened at 7, humming little.ACC  
 lagstúf. (Canonical Passive)  
 song.bit.ACC
- c. Það var vakið börnin kl. 7, raulandi lítinn  
 EXPL was awakened children.the.ACC at 7, humming little.ACC  
 lagstúf. (New Passive)  
 song.bit.ACC  
 ‘Someone woke the children at 7, humming a little piece of a song (the children were not humming)’  
 (Maling, Kroch and Sigurjónsdóttir 2011)

# Appendix

## ■ Subject-oriented participial adjunct

- (24) a. Í gær var lækninum<sub>i</sub> sýnt **röntgenmyndina**  
 yesterday was doctor.the.DAT<sub>i</sub> shown **x-ray.the**.ACC  
sína<sub>i/\*j</sub> (\*raulandi lítinn lagstúf).  
**own**.REFL.ACC<sub>i/\*j</sub> (\*humming little.ACC song.bit.ACC)  
 ‘Yesterday, the doctor was shown his x-ray.’
- b. Í gær var sýnt lækninum<sub>i</sub> **röntgenmyndina**  
 yesterday was shown doctor.the.DAT<sub>i</sub> **x-ray.the**.ACC  
sína<sub>i/j</sub> (raulandi lítinn lagstúf)  
**own**.REFL.ACC<sub>i/j</sub> (humming little.ACC song.bit.ACC)  
 ‘Yesterday, the doctor was shown an x-ray belonging to the person  
 doing the showing (while that same person was humming a little piece  
 of a song).’