

# VARIATION IN DATIVES

*A Microcomparative Perspective*

Edited by Beatriz Fernández

*and*

Ricardo Etxepare

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Inc., publishes works that further  
Oxford University's objective of excellence  
in research, scholarship, and education.

Oxford New York  
Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi  
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in  
Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece  
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore  
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other  
countries.

Published in the United States of America by  
Oxford University Press  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

© Oxford University Press 2013

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a  
retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior  
permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law,  
by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization.  
Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the  
Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form  
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Variation in datives : a micro-comparative perspective / edited by Beatriz Fernández and  
Ricardo Etxepare.

p. cm. — (Oxford studies in comparative syntax)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-19-993738-7 (pbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-19-993736-3 (alk. paper)

1. Grammar, Comparative and general—Syntax. 2. Grammar, Comparative and general—Case. 3.  
Grammar, Comparative and general—Agreement. I. Fernández, Beatriz. II. Etxepare, Ricardo.  
P201.V34 2013

415—dc23 2012011725

## CHAPTER 4

# Case in Disguise

HLÍF ÁRNADÓTTIR AND EINAR FREYR SIGURÐSSON

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As is well known, Icelandic has not only nominative case<sup>1</sup> subjects but also oblique subjects (see, e.g., Andrews 1976, Thráinsson 1979, and Zaenen, Maling, & Thráinsson 1985). In this article, we focus on the dative-nominative (DAT-NOM) construction, where the subject gets dative case and the object nominative case. In examples (1) and (2), the dative argument *mér* “me” is the subject and the nominative argument *bílarnir* “the cars” the object:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) *Mér líka bílarnir*  
 me.DAT like.3PL cars.the.PL.NOM  
 “I like the cars.”

In (1) the verb agrees in number (plural) with the nominative object. The verb agreement with the object in the example above is optional for many speakers, as shown by the nonagreement in (2), where the verb is in the default third-person singular (3SG):

- (2) *Mér líkar bílarnir*  
 me.DAT likes.3SG cars.the.PL.NOM  
 “I like the cars.”

1 As has become usual within generative linguistics, we use lowercase “case” when we talk about morphological case; when we use the capitalized form, “Case,” we are referring to abstract Case.

2 We use the following abbreviations where we gloss linguistic examples: NOM = nominative, ACC = accusative, DAT = dative, GEN = genitive, 1 = first-person, 2 = second-person, 3 = third-person, SG = singular, PL = plural, DEF = default third-person singular neuter form on the passive participle, M = masculine, F = feminine, EXPL = expletive, INF = infinitive, PRO = unexpressed argument in a control infinitive.

H. Á. Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008) discuss three varieties of Icelandic (A, B, and C) with respect to the DAT-NOM construction: Icelandic A speakers prefer agreement with nominative objects, while for Icelandic B speakers agreement is optional, but in the C variety only nonagreement is allowed (the finite verb then always turns up in the default 3SG).

However, as noted by Árnadóttir and E. F. Sigurðsson (2008), there are some indications of an interspeaker variation in the object case of DAT-NOM verbs—for some speakers the object is in the accusative case instead of the standard nominative case. We show examples of this in (3), taken from a blog and a newspaper, respectively:

- (3) a. *En hey, hljómsveitin er samt ekki slæm*  
 But hey band.the.F is still not bad  
*þó mér líkar hana ekki*  
 though me.DAT likes.3SG her.ACC not  
 “But hey, the band isn’t bad although I don’t like it.”  
[www.hugi.is/rokk/articles.php?page=view&contentId=4940211](http://www.hugi.is/rokk/articles.php?page=view&contentId=4940211),  
 posted May 28, 2007
- b. *og er hún fyrsta hljómsveitin sem*  
 and is she first band.the which  
*hlotnast þann heiður*  
 acquires.3SG that.ACC honor.ACC  
 “It is the first band that acquires this honor.”  
*Tíminn* [newspaper], August 5, 1989, p. 4

For most speakers, this use of an accusative object with the DAT-NOM verbs *líka* “like” (*mér líkar hana* in (3a)) and *hlotnast* “acquire” (*hlotnast þann heiður* in (3b)) is ungrammatical.<sup>3</sup>

The DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC change has received little attention in the literature. Therefore we conducted a small study in 2009 to test whether there really is a variation in the object case of DAT-NOM verbs. The results show that there

3 It should be noted that instead of the nominative object of *líka* “like,” a prepositional phrase, headed by *við* “to, with,” is frequently used (see (i-a) below). Thus, one might draw the conclusion from an example such as *Mér líkar hana* “me.DAT like her.ACC” that this was some kind of an error in writing where the preposition is not written. That is ruled out, however, in (3a) above, where an accusative argument of *líka* precedes the negation (Object Shift). As shown in (i-b) below, a PP argument of *líka* cannot precede the negation.

- (i) a. *Mér líkar ekki við hana*  
 me.DAT like.3SG not to her  
 “I don’t like her.”
- b. \**Mér líkar við hana ekki*  
 me.DAT like.3SG to her not

definitely is a variation in this respect among young speakers, and another survey from 2010 also conducted among young speakers shows the same (see section 2). We believe that this is an ongoing change at an early stage.

Dative subjects appear in the passive voice of many verbs, both monotransitives (4) and ditransitives (5). DAT-NOM constructions are thus also used in the passive: see (5b), where the dative argument raises to the subject position (Spec,T).<sup>4</sup>

- (4) a. Í gær bjargaði hún mér                      *active of a*  
 yesterday saved she.NOM me.DAT                      *monotransitive*  
 "Yesterday, she saved me."

- b. Í gær var mér bjargað                      *passive of a*  
 yesterday was.3SG me.DAT saved.DEF                      *monotransitive*  
 "Yesterday, I was saved."

- (5) a. Í gær gaf hún mér bílana                      *active of a*  
 yesterday gave she.NOM me.DAT cars.the.PL.ACC                      *ditransitive*  
 "Yesterday, she gave me the cars."

- b. Í gær voru mér gefnir                      *passive of a*  
 yesterday were.3PL me.DAT given.M.PL.NOM                      *ditransitive*  
 bílarnir  
 cars.the.M.PL.NOM  
 "Yesterday, I was given the cars."

Unlike the DAT-NOM construction in the active, agreement with a nominative object is obligatory with a passivized ditransitive. The passive participle agrees with the nominative object in number and gender, and the finite verb agrees with it in number. Therefore, in example (6) below, it is ungrammatical to use the finite verb in third-person singular and the passive participle in default third-person neuter (marked as DEF in glosses).

- (6) \*Í gær var mér gefið bílarnir  
 yesterday was.3SG me.DAT given.DEF cars.the.M.PL.NOM  
 "Yesterday, I was given the cars."

However, DAT-ACC has recently been discovered in the ditransitive passive (Jónsson 2009a). It is ungrammatical to most speakers; those who do find it grammatical are mainly younger speakers.

<sup>4</sup> Icelandic is a V2 language with T-to-C movement. If, for example, an adverbial phrase or a prepositional phrase, e.g., *í gær* "yesterday" is topicalized, as in (4)–(5), then the verb immediately precedes the subject, which is in Spec,T.

- (7) Í gær var mér gefið bílana  
 yesterday was.3SG me.DAT given.DEF cars.the.M.PL.ACC  
 "Yesterday, I was given the cars."

In all the DAT-NOM examples above involving a morphological change, the case of the object changes from nominative to accusative, while the dative case of the subject remains stable. However, there has been a lively discussion of morphological changes of oblique subjects in the active in Icelandic. It has mainly revolved around two phenomena: dative substitution (DS) and nominative substitution (NS) (see, e.g., Svavarsdóttir 1982, Eythórsson 2002, Jónsson 2003, Ingason 2010, and many others). In short, as Eythórsson (2002: 197) argues, "NS is motivated by syntax (structure) but DS is motivated by semantics (thematic roles)."<sup>5</sup> We will only discuss NS, since DS is beyond the scope of the article.

NS (mainly) affects oblique theme subjects (accusative and dative) of monadic verbs, rather than dyadic verbs.

- (8) a. Bátana rak > Bátarnir ráku  
 boats.the.PL.ACC drifted.3SG boats.the.PL.NOM drifted.3PL  
 "The boats drifted."  
 b. Bátunum hvolfdi > Bátarnir hvolfdu  
 boats.the.PL.DAT capsized.3SG boats.the.PL.NOM capsized.3PL  
 "The boats capsized."

The reason for NS not affecting subjects of DAT-NOM verbs seems to be that nominative is only assigned to one argument (e.g., Yip, Maling, & Jackendoff 1987), and in the case of DAT-NOM verbs, nominative has already been assigned to the object, therefore the oblique subject is not affected by NS. This is discussed further in section 4.

NS does not seem to affect oblique subjects of monotransitives in the passive voice.

- (9) a. Í gær var honum hjálpað  
 yesterday was.3SG him.DAT helped.DEF  
 "Yesterday, he was helped."  
 b. \*Í gær var hann hjálpaður  
 yesterday was.3SG he.M.SG.NOM helped.M.SG.NOM

<sup>5</sup> The term "DS" is used for a change in the case marking of experiencer subjects, mainly when an accusative subject is replaced by dative.

According to the examples sketched above, some speakers use nominative subjects with many monadic verbs in the active with which other speakers use an oblique subject: see (8). This is not the case with subjects of monotransitive verbs in the passive: see (9). In the active and passive DAT-NOM constructions, a change has been observed on the object but not the subject: see (3) and (7), respectively.

The goal of this article is twofold. First, we claim that there is an ongoing change of DAT-NOM verbs in Icelandic, not only in the passive, as has already been shown by Jónsson (2009a), but also in the active. We also claim that this change is expected, as can be seen when Icelandic is compared to other related languages. Second, we propose that this change must be explained in the syntax where Case is established, but then case is realized in a postsyntactic morphology (Legate 2008). Since we believe case realization derivationally follows Case establishment, covert NOM-ACC Case can be disguised as morphological DAT-NOM or DAT-ACC case.

The article is organized as follows: In section 2 we present the results of a written questionnaire we conducted, in which we focused on the DAT-NOM construction. Section 3 involves a comparison between Icelandic and some other Germanic languages. In section 4 we sketch an analysis of the change, and in section 5 we conclude the article.

To sum up we show in (10) and (11) the constructions discussed in this section (sometimes the examples are simplified).

(10) DAT-NOM and DAT-ACC constructions

Active			Passive		
a. DAT-agreement-NOM					
i. Mér	líka	bílarnir	ii. Mér	voru	gefnir
me.DAT	like.3PL	cars.the.PL.NOM	me.DAT	were.3PL	given.M.PL.NOM
"I like the cars."			bílarnir		
			cars.the.M.PL.NOM		
			"I was given the cars."		
b. DAT-nonagreement-NOM					
i. Mér	líkar	bílarnir	ii. *Mér	var	gefið
me.DAT	likes.3SG	cars.the.PL.NOM	me.DAT	was.3SG	given.DEF cars.the.M.PL.NOM
c. DAT-ACC					
i. Mér	líkar	bílana	ii. Mér	var	gefið
me.DAT	likes.3SG	cars.the.PL.ACC	me.DAT	was.3SG	given.DEF cars.the.M.PL.ACC

(11) Nominative substitution (NS)

Active		Passive		
a. DAT subject				
i. Bátunum	hvolfdi	ii. Honum	var	hjálpað
boats.the.PL.DAT	capsized.3SG	him.DAT	was.3SG	helped.DEF
"The boats capsized."		"He was helped."		
b. NOM subject (NS)				
i. Bátarnir	hvolfdi	ii. *Hann	var	hjálpaður
boats.the.PL.NOM	capsized.3PL	he.M.MSG.NOM	was.3sg	helped.M.SG.NOM

Now we turn to the results of our questionnaire.

## 2. A DAT-NOM QUESTIONNAIRE

### 2.1 The Questionnaire

In March 2009 we conducted a written questionnaire where we tested whether the DAT-ACC case pattern (instead of regular DAT-NOM) is accepted at all in Icelandic. We made the survey with Google docs (<https://docs.google.com>) and sent an invitation via Facebook (<http://facebook.com>). This way we got thirty-six participants: twenty-five male speakers and eleven female speakers. The youngest participant was seventeen years old (b. 1992) and the oldest one thirty (b. 1979), but most of them were around the age of twenty-five.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of the questionnaire revolved around a judgment task where the participants were asked to judge sentences. Three choices were given: yes "I could say this," "I could hardly say this," and no "I could not say this." Part of the survey had two, three, or four similar sentences where the participants were asked to mark the ones they could use. A few sentences had gaps where the speakers were asked to fill in the correct word form.

The main purpose of the survey was to test our suspicion that a change is taking place in DAT-NOM verbs, since we had already found several

6 Since we believe that the change from DAT-NOM case to DAT-ACC is at an early stage, as it only recently was noticed, we mostly focused on getting younger participants. Thus the group tested is homogenous with regard to the age of the speakers. For this reason we cannot say that the participants are representative of the Icelandic population. Neither can we state that they are representative of this particular age group. We do not think that this is a problem, since the main goal of the study was to test whether the DAT-ACC pattern is accepted in the active voice in Icelandic. A test group consisting of older speakers would, however, be ideal for comparison.

DAT-ACC examples in the active on the Internet. This had not been tested for Icelandic. The test sentences focused on DAT-NOM versus DAT-ACC pattern and agreement versus nonagreement, both in active and in passive of ditransitives. Interestingly, the speakers in the study accepted the DAT-ACC construction in the active a lot more than would be expected if the DAT-NOM pattern is as robust as has been described in the literature. However, some DAT-NOM verbs are much more accepted than others, as outlined below—some verbs, like *berast* “receive” and *leiðast* “be bored by,” were rejected with an accusative object by almost everyone, whereas nearly half of the participants produced an accusative case object with the verb *nægja* “suffice.” Although we believe that there is a change under way in case marking among DAT-NOM verbs, the results must be taken with care because only thirty-six speakers participated in the study.

We now present the results of our questionnaire.

## 2.2 DAT-ACC in the Active

In short, the results of the study indicate that there is an ongoing DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC change at an early stage in Icelandic.<sup>7</sup> Sentences with the DAT-ACC pattern were accepted by a considerable number of participants, and some speakers even produced an accusative object in a fill-in sentence with a dative subject (see (12) below). In that sentence, we tested the case of the object of the DAT-NOM verb *nægja* “suffice.” The speakers were asked to write with letters the correct word form instead of the number 2. In general, the participants either wrote the nominative form of two, *tveir*, or the accusative form, *tvö*. Interestingly, a large number of the participants, sixteen speakers, produced accusative with *nægja*.<sup>8</sup>

(12) Results for the object case of <i>nægja</i> “suffice”						NOM	ACC	other
Bjarni:	þarf	landslíðið	ekki	þrjá	sigra?			
Bjarni:	needs	national.team.the	not	three	wins			

<sup>7</sup> When we talk about the change from DAT-NOM case pattern to DAT-ACC pattern, we talk about the DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC change. We also talk about the DAT > NOM case change when we discuss the change from dative subjects to nominative subjects in general (both for monadic and dyadic verbs in the active, and monotransitives and ditransitives in the passive).

<sup>8</sup> In (12), Bjarni (a proper name of a man) asks Gunna (a proper name of a woman) whether it isn't right that the national team (in some sport, presumably) only needs three wins. Gunna answers with the DAT-NOM verb *nægja* “suffice” that the two wins will be enough (to qualify for the next round or to win a competition, presumably). Note that *nægi* in (12) is the present tense, subjunctive mood of the verb *nægja*. The morphology is the same for third-person singular and plural, which means that number agreement is not a factor.

“Does not the national team need three wins?”

Gunna: Nei, ég held að liðinu nægi 2 19 16 1

Gunna: no I think that team.the.DAT suffice.SG/PL 2

“No, I think two [wins] will be enough for the team.”

However, only one speaker accepted accusative object with *líka* “like” (*mér líkar hana*; answering options: *yes/?/no*):

(13) Results for an accusative object with <i>líka</i> “like”										yes	?	no
Hljómsveitin	er	fin	en	mér	líkar	hana	samt	ekki	1	1		34
band.the.F	is	fine	but	me.DAT	likes.3SG	her.ACC	still	not				

“The band is OK but I still don't like it.”

The difference between the results for the accusative object for *nægja* (12) and *líka* (13) is very clear (not taking into account the different methods to test these sentences). These verbs differ in at least two ways that might in part explain this difference. First, *nægja* is an alternating verb (or symmetric, e.g., Wood 2011), meaning that not only the dative argument, but also the nominative argument, can move to the subject position, as seen in (14). *Líka*, however, is not an alternating verb (it is asymmetric, e.g., Wood 2011, or “pure” DAT-NOM verb), hence the nominative is always the object, as seen in (15).<sup>9</sup>

(14) a. Liðinu mun ekki nægja þessi sigur  
team.the.DAT will.3SG not suffice.INF this.NOM win.NOM  
“This victory will not be enough for the team.”

b. Þessi sigur mun ekki nægja liðinu  
this.NOM win.NOM will.3SG not suffice.INF team.the.DAT

(15) a. Mér hefur aldrei líkað hljómsveitin  
me.DAT have.3SG never liked band.the.NOM  
“I have never liked the band.”

b. \*Hljómsveitin hefur aldrei líkað mér  
band.the.NOM have.3SG never liked me.DAT

This does not seem to explain why accusative case on objects is more acceptable with *nægja* than *líka*. In fact, some other alternating verbs, like *berast* “receive” and *henta* “suit,” seem to be more resistant to this change than pure (nonalternating) DAT-NOM verbs, as seen by the fact that only two

<sup>9</sup> The use of the auxiliaries *munu* “will” and *hafa* “have” in (14b) and (15b) excludes the possibility that the nominative argument is topicalized; it must be interpreted as the subject since the dative argument does not move out of the VP.

speakers accepted DAT-ACC in (16) with *berast* and three accepted DAT-ACC in (17c) with *henta*. In (17) and other similar examples, where the speakers could choose more than one sentence, the numbers at the end indicate how many marked that they could say that sentence.

(16) Results for an accusative object with <i>berast</i> "receive"						yes	?	no
Lögreglunni	barst	eina	ábendingu	um	ferðir	2	1	33
police.the.DAT	received.3SG	one.ACC	tip.ACC		about tours			
grunsamlegs	manns	við	skólalóðina					
suspicious	man	at	schoolyard.the					
"The police got one tip about a suspicious man at the schoolyard."								

(17) Results for <i>henta</i> "suit"						accepted by		
a. Péttri	hentar	ekki	sjálfskiptir	bílar		15		
Peter.DAT	suits.3SG	not	automatic.PL.NOM	cars.PL.NOM				
"Automatic cars do not suit Peter."								
b. Péttri	henta	ekki	sjálfskiptir	bílar		15		
Peter.DAT	suit.3PL	not	automatic.PL.NOM	cars.PL.NOM				
c. Péttri	hentar	ekki	sjálfskipta	bíla		3		
Peter.DAT	suits.3SG	not	automatic.PL.ACC	cars.PL.ACC				
d. Péttri	henta	ekki	sjálfskipta	bíla		1		
Peter.DAT	suit.3PL	not	automatic.PL.ACC	cars.PL.ACC				
answered by:						31		

The second difference between the verbs *nægja* "suffice" and *líka* "like" is that the subject of *líka* is an experiencer, but the dative argument of *nægja* is a beneficiary.<sup>10</sup> Let us, then, take a look at another DAT-NOM verb that takes an experiencer subject, *leiðast* "be bored by."

(18) Results for an accusative object with <i>leiðast</i> "be bored by"						yes	?	no
Páli	leiðist	handbolta	mjög	mikið		3	7	26
Paul.DAT	is.bored.by.3SG	handball.ACC	very	much				
"Paul does not like handball at all."								

<sup>10</sup> Note that the theta role of the dative argument of alternating verbs like *nægja* "suffice" has been analyzed as an experiencer (Jónsson 1997–1998: 20, Thráinsson 2005: 333). We believe, however, that it more accurately bears the role of beneficiary, as can be seen from the fact that it may be replaced with a PP with the preposition *fyrir* "for," which also bears the role of beneficiary:

- (i) Þetta nægði mér / fyrir mig  
 this.NOM sufficed.3SG me.DAT / for me.ACC

If the dative argument of *nægja* is a beneficiary, we expect *nægja* to have more in common with other beneficiary verbs or recipient verbs (e.g., *áskotnast* "acquire") than experiencer verbs like *líka* "like."

As in the case of *líka*, very few accept accusative object with *leiðast*. If the thematic role of the subject matters, then accusative object could be more acceptable with a pure DAT-NOM verb that takes a recipient subject than with *líka* and *leiðast*, since recipients and beneficiaries are closely related roles (a beneficiary is often described as an intended recipient). Such a verb is *áskotnast* "acquire."

(19) Results for an accusative object with <i>áskotnast</i> "acquire"						yes	?	no
Mariu	áskotnaðist	glænýjan	bíl	á	dögum	6	3	27
Mary.DAT	acquired.3SG	brand.new.ACC	car.ACC	on	days.the			
"María recently got a brand new car."								

When we compare (19) to the results in (13) and (18), we see that accusative case object with *áskotnast* is, in fact, more readily accepted than with *líka* and *leiðast*. However, we must be cautious in drawing conclusions.

We tested another DAT-ACC example of *áskotnast*. There the participants were given four similar sentences. They were asked to choose the ones they could say: that is, they could choose more than one (see (20)). In (20a) there is nonagreement with a nominative object; in (20b), the verb assigns accusative to the object; in (20c) there is agreement with a nominative object; and in (20d) there is agreement with an accusative object.

(20) Results for <i>áskotnast</i> "acquire"						accepted by		
a. Kristjáni	áskotnaðist	tveir	miðar	á	tónleika	6		
K.DAT	acquired.3SG	two.PL.NOM	tickets.PL.NOM	at	concert			
í	Laugardalshöll							
in	Laugardalshöll							
"Kristján got two tickets to a concert in Laugardalshöll."								
b. Kristjáni	áskotnaðist	tvo	miða	á	tónleika	9		
K.DAT	acquired.3SG	two.PL.ACC	tickets.PL.ACC	at	concert			
í	Laugardalshöll							
in	Laugardalshöll							
c. Kristjáni	áskotnuðust	tveir	miðar	á	tónleika	24		
K.DAT	acquired.3PL	two.PL.NOM	tickets.PL.NOM	at	concert			
í	Laugardalshöll							
in	Laugardalshöll							
d. Kristjáni	áskotnuðust	tvo	miða	á	tónleika	0		
K.DAT	acquired.3PL	two.PL.ACC	tickets.PL.ACC	at	concert			
í	Laugardalshöll							
in	Laugardalshöll							
answered by:						34		

More speakers accepted the DAT-ACC sentence in (20b) than in (19). These results indicate that *áskotnast* “acquire,” which takes a recipient subject, more readily takes an accusative object than *líka* “like” and *leiðast* “be bored by,” which take an experiencer subject.<sup>11</sup>

Since rather few speakers filled out our questionnaire, we present, in (21)–(22) below, results from a survey conducted in 2010 in the project “Linguistic change in real time in Icelandic phonology and syntax” (REAL; Höskuldur Thráinsson, PI). One goal of the survey was to test speakers who participated in Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir’s (2002) survey on the New Passive and compare the results in those two surveys. As of the writing of this article, forty-five speakers, all born in 1984, have filled out the REAL judgment task. Among the sentences that were tested (with the same response options as in our survey, i.e., *yes*,<sup>?</sup> and *no*) were two with DAT-NOM verbs showing the DAT-ACC case pattern, *hlotnast* “acquire,” see (3b) above, and *líka* “like.” Note that these two sentences were not among the sentences tested in Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir’s study.

(21) Results for an accusative object with <i>hlotnast</i> “acquire” in REAL							yes ?	no
Honum	hafði	ekki	hlotnast	þann	heiður	áður	18	10 16
him.DAT	had.3SG	not	acquired	that.ACC	honor.ACC	before		
“He had not acquired that honor before.”								

(22) Results for an accusative object with <i>líka</i> “like” in REAL						yes ?	no
Honum	líkar	nýju	tölvuna	ekki		9	3 33
him.DAT	likes.3SG	new.ACC	computer.the.ACC	not			
“He doesn’t like the new computer.”							

Just as in our study, the results from REAL indicate that there really is a change under way in the case marking of DAT-NOM verbs. If there were no signs of such a change, we would expect that almost all speakers would reject both the sentences. The majority did reject the sentence with *líka* in (22), similar to our survey (see (13)), although it was accepted a bit more in REAL than in our survey (nine speakers, or 20 percent, in REAL, but only one speaker accepted the sentence in our survey). Twice as many, eighteen speakers (41 percent), accepted an accusative object with *hlotnast* (see (21)). That is a much higher acceptance rate than would be expected if DAT-ACC in the active was ungrammatical to all, or almost all, speakers of Icelandic.

<sup>11</sup> As pointed out to us by Jim Wood, there is another difference between *líka* and *nægja* in that the dative argument is optional for *nægja* (*Þetta nægir* “This is enough”), whereas it is obligatory for *líka*. This aspect could be addressed more properly with a bigger survey.

In (23) we show a compilation of the sentence types we tested (and also the two sentences that were tested in REAL) and discussed in this subsection. Note that we have simplified the sentences for sake of clarity, always using the dative *mér* “me” as the subject and either *hún/hana* “she.NOM/her.ACC” or *bílar/bíla* “cars.PL.NOM/ACC” as the nominative/accusative object (this should make comparison between different verbs easier for the reader).

(23)	Verb	Construction	Example	See full example
a.	<i>nægja</i> “suffice”	DAT-NOM/ACC	Mér nægir me.DAT suffices.3SG	hún/hana 12 she.NOM/her.ACC
b.	<i>líka</i> “like”	DAT-ACC	Mér líkar me.DAT likes.3SG	hana 13/22 her.ACC
c.	<i>berast</i> “receive”	DAT-ACC	Mér barst me.DAT recieved.3SG	hana 16 her.ACC
d.	<i>henta</i> “suit”	DAT-NOM/ACC +/- agreement	Mér henta/r me.DAT suit.3PL/SG	hún/hana 17 she.NOM/her.ACC
e.	<i>leiðast</i> “be bored by”	DAT-ACC	Mér leiðist me.DAT is.bored.by.3SG	hana 18 her.ACC
f.	<i>áskotnast</i> “acquire”	DAT-NOM/ACC +/- agreement	Mér áskotnaðist/áskotnuðust me.DAT acquired.3SG/PL	bíla/r 19/20 cars.PL.NOM/ACC
g.	<i>hlotnast</i> “acquire”	DAT-ACC	Mér hlotnaðist me.DAT acquired.3SG	hana 21 her.ACC

We also showed an alternating verb (*nægja* “suffice”) that can have either argument as the subject, versus a nonalternating verb (*líka* “like”) that can only take a dative case subject (again, the examples are simplified, see full version in (14–15)):

(24)	Alternating				Nonalternating			
	DAT-NOM							
a. i.	Mér	mun	nægja	hún	ii. Mér	mun	líka	hún
	me.DAT	will.3SG	suffice.INF	she.NOM	me.DAT	will.3SG	like.INF	she.NOM
	NOM-DAT							
b. i.	Hún	mun	nægja	mér	ii. *Hún	mun	líka	mér
	she.NOM	will.3SG	suffice	me.DAT	she.NOM	will.3SG	like.INF	me.DAT

## 2.3 Nonagreement with Nominative Objects

Number agreement with a nominative object in the DAT-NOM construction is sometimes considered optional, and for many speakers it is. As mentioned



in the introduction above (section 1), H. Á. Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008) divide Icelandic into three varieties with respect to number agreement in the DAT-NOM construction. In Icelandic B number agreement with the nominative object is optional; it is preferred in Icelandic A but disallowed in Icelandic C.

There was an obvious preference for nonagreement with the verb *líka* “like” in our survey—(25a) shows nonagreement, which the majority accepted, and (25b) shows number agreement, which only three speakers accepted.

(25)	Results for agreement with <i>líka</i> “like”					yes	?	no
a.	Stefáni	líkar	ekki	súrsaðir	hrútsþungar	20	8	7
	Stefán.DAT	likes.3SG	not	pickled.PL.NOM	sheep.testicles.PL.NOM			
	“Stefán does not like pickled sheep testicles.”							
b.	Jóhönnu	líka	ekki	göddrykkir		3	8	25
	Jóhanna.DAT	like.3PL	not	soft.drinks.PL.NOM				
	“Jóhanna does not like soft drinks.”							

Fifteen of those who accepted the sentence in (25a) rejected (25b), three of them found (25b) questionable (they could hardly say it), but two speakers accepted them both. This clearly shows that number agreement with the nominative object is not optional for all speakers—at least not with the DAT-NOM verb *líka* “like” where the subject is an experiencer.

This suggests that most of the participants in our questionnaire were Icelandic C speakers. However, number agreement with some DAT-NOM verbs is more readily accepted if the dative subject is a recipient or a beneficiary. This applies to both the pure DAT-NOM verb *áskotnast* “acquire” (see results in (20c) above), and the alternating verb *henta* “suit” (see (17b)).<sup>12</sup> In addition to this, the vast majority accepted number agreement with the alternating verb *berast* “receive” (see (26b)), whereas a little less than half of the speakers accepted nonagreement (see (26a)). Note that the nominative forms in (26a) *tvö tilboð* “two offers” and (26b) *þrjár umsóknir* “three applications” are not morphologically distinct from the accusative form.

(26)	Results for <i>berast</i> “receive”					yes	?	no
a.	Önnu	barst	tvö	tilboð	í húsið	15	4	17
	Anna.DAT	received.3SG	two.PL.NOM	offers.PL.NOM	in house.the			
	“Anna received two offers for her house.”							

12 It might seem strange that DAT-ACC is more readily accepted with a verb like *áskotnast* “acquire” than *líka* “like” at the same time as number agreement with a nominative object of *áskotnast* is also more accepted. However, we need to look at intraspeaker judgments: Nine speakers accepted DAT-ACC case pattern with *áskotnast* in (20) above. Eight of them did not accept number agreement with a nominative plural object.

b.	Fyrirtækinu	bárust	þrjár	umsóknir	30	4	2
	company.the.DAT	received.3PL	three.PL.NOM	applications.PL.NOM			
	um	starfið					
	on	job.the					
	“The company received three applications for the job.”						

Based on these results, where thirty accepted number agreement in (26b) with *berast*, the vast majority (83 percent) are either Icelandic A or Icelandic B speakers with respect to this particular verb. Given the results above, it is interesting to compare (26) to DAT-ACC with *berast* (16), which only two speakers accepted—that is no coincidence: if number agreement is optional or preferred in a particular variety, then DAT-ACC is disallowed.

As is seen when (25) and (26) are compared, it certainly matters what verb, or what kind of a verb, we look at when we discuss the three varieties, Icelandic A, B, and C; if someone is an Icelandic C speaker with respect to a verb like *líka* “like” we cannot automatically draw the conclusion that she or he doesn’t like number agreement with any kind of a DAT-NOM verb.<sup>13</sup>

Before we look at results for the DAT-ACC construction in the passive, we want to mention that it is important to investigate the intraspeaker variation with respect to Icelandic C and the DAT-ACC variety. Although we argue that there is a relationship between Icelandic C and the DAT-ACC variety (and not between Icelandic A/B and DAT-ACC) our data is not rich enough to draw

13 In one of the surveys conducted in the project “Variation in syntax” more than seven hundred speakers in four age groups were asked to give judgments (answering options *yes/?/no*) on sentences with number agreement (Thráinsson, Angantýsson, & E. F. Sigurðsson 2011). The speakers were divided into four age groups: 15, 20–25, 40–45, and 65–70. Let’s take a look at the number agreement sentences in (i):

- (i) Number agreement in “Variation in syntax” (*N* = 702)
- a. Honum leiddust tónleikarnir mjög mikið  
him.DAT was.bored.by.3PL concert.PL.NOM very much  
“He found the concert really boring.”
- b. Henni hafa alltaf leiðst langar bíómyndir  
her.DAT have.3PL always been.bored.by long.PL.NOM movies.PL.NOM  
“She has always found long movies to be boring.”
- c. Það hafa mörgum blöskrað þessi ummæli  
EXPL have.3PL many.PL.DAT been.shocked.by these.PL.NOM statements.PL.NOM  
“Many people are shocked at these statements.”

Two of three sentences in (i) have the main verb *leiðast* “be bored by” and one *blöskra* “be shocked by.” Both these verbs take experiencer subjects and are nonalternating (the subject is never the nominative argument).

Only 9 out of 702 speakers rejected all three sentences. That indicates that rather few are Icelandic C speakers. However, 227 speakers found all the sentences in (i) to be grammatical. According to H. Á. Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008) sentences like (i-c) above with “dative intervention” are ungrammatical to other than Icelandic A speakers. Out of 712 speakers, 368 found (i-c) to be grammatical, but 187 rejected it. Based on this, most speakers are either Icelandic A or B speakers.

firm conclusions in these matters. To give an example of this, with *áskotnast* “acquire” in (20) we expected some speakers to accept both (20a) (nonagreement) and (20b) (DAT-ACC) but none of them did. However, four out of six speakers who accepted (20a) also accepted (20c) (number agreement). For those speakers number agreement with *áskotnast* is optional (Icelandic B).

## 2.4 DAT-ACC in the Passive

As has been pointed out recently by Jónsson (2009a), some speakers, mainly younger ones, use accusative objects instead of nominative in the passive of ditransitives (DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC passive). This change looks like the DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC change in the active. The DAT-ACC passive was, however, less accepted than some DAT-ACC active sentences in our survey.

(27) Results for accusative with <i>senda</i> “send”							yes	?	no
Mér	var	sent	þessa	mynd	í tölvupósti		4	3	28
me.DAT	was.3SG	sent.DEF	this.ACC	photo.ACC	in e-mail				
“This photo was sent to me by e-mail.”									

Árnadóttir and E. F. Sigurðsson (2008) argue that an intermediate stage in this change is when the verb and the passive participle do not agree with the nominative object—just like nonagreement with the nominative object of DAT-NOM verbs in the active seems to be an intermediate stage in the development of DAT-NOM to DAT-ACC. However, most speakers in the survey did not like the nonagreement in the ditransitive passive either (the canonical passive would have a passive participle agreeing with the nominative object, i.e., *sendur grunsamlegur pakki* “sent.M.NOM suspicious.M.NOM package.M.NOM”).

(28) Results for nonagreement with nominative for <i>senda</i> “send”						yes	?	no
Forsetanum	var	sent	grunsamlegur	pakki		3	4	28
president.the.DAT	was.3SG	sent.DEF	suspicious.M.NOM	package.M.NOM				
frá	útlöndum							
from	abroad							
“A suspicious package was sent to the president from abroad.”								

Thus, our results do not support Árnadóttir and E. F. Sigurðsson’s (2008) claim.

The results for *sýna* “show” in (29) are the same as for *senda* “send” in (27) and (28): DAT-ACC passive with *sýna* was less accepted than some of the DAT-ACC sentences in the active (see subsection 2.2 above). Also, the same was true for the DAT-NOM passive with nonagreeing passive participle, which none of the speakers accepted. This is shown in (29). (29a) is an instance of a nonagreeing

passive participle with a nominative object; (29b) shows agreement; (29c) shows DAT-ACC; and, finally, (29d) has agreement with an accusative object.

(29) Results for <i>sýna</i> “show”							accepted by
a. Mér	var	sýnt	tveir	jeppar	á bílasölunni		0
me.DAT	was.3SG	shown.DEF	two.M.PL.NOM	jeeps.M.PL.NOM	at car.dealer.the		
“I was shown two jeeps at the car dealer’s.”							
b. Mér	voru	sýndir	tveir	jeppar			33
me.DAT	were.3PL	shown.M.PL.NOM	two.M.PL.NOM	jeeps.M.PL.NOM			
á	bílasölunni						
at	car.dealer.the						
c. Mér	var	sýnt	tvo	jeppa	á bílasölunni		2
me.DAT	was.3SG	shown.DEF	two.PL.ACC	jeeps.PL.ACC	at car.dealer.the		
d. Mér	voru	sýndir	tvo	jeppa	á bílasölunni		2
me.DAT	were.3PL	shown.M.PL.NOM	two.PL.ACC	jeeps.PL.ACC	at car.dealer.the		
							answered by: 34

Out of the thirty-four participants who answered which sentences of those four they could say, only one did not choose agreement in (29b) (remember that the speakers were allowed to choose more than one sentence). Our results thus indicate that agreement in the passive is much more robust than in the active (for comparison, see section 2.3).

The fact that the DAT-ACC construction in the ditransitive passive was less accepted in our survey than DAT-ACC might be of some surprise. Jónsson (2009a: 303) reports a study from the “Variation in syntax” project (cf. Thráinsson, Angantýsson, & E. F. Sigurðsson 2011) where 59 percent of fourteen- to fifteen-year-olds (born 1991 and 1992) accepted the ditransitive DAT-ACC construction in the passive (the total number of fourteen- to fifteen-year-old speakers who filled out that survey was a little less than two hundred according to Jónsson 2009a).<sup>14</sup> Most speakers in our survey were a little older, which might explain this difference to a certain degree.

14 The example Jónsson gives is the following:

- (i) Var þeim ekki einu sinni sýnt íbúðina fyrst?  
 was them.DAT not even shown.DEF apartment.ACC first  
 “Were they not even shown the apartment first?”  
 (Jónsson 2009a: 303)

Examples like these have been discussed in relation to the so-called New Passive, or the New Impersonal, in Icelandic. Jónsson (2009a: 303) says that the example above provides a very strong argument against Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir’s (2002) analysis that the New Passive is, in fact, an impersonal active construction.

## 2.5 Summary

A change from DAT-NOM to DAT-ACC in the active seems to be under way. There is, however, variation between different verbs. The reason for this is not clear. This may have to do with the thematic role of the dative subject—verbs that take an experiencer subject (*líka* “like,” *leiðast* “be bored by”) are less likely to take an accusative object than verbs that take a recipient or a beneficiary subject (*nægja* “suffice,” *áskotnast* “acquire,” *hlotnast* “acquire”). This does not, however, apply to the verb *berast* “receive,” which also takes a recipient subject but was in general rejected with the DAT-ACC pattern in our questionnaire.

When we conducted our questionnaire, we expected pure DAT-NOM verbs to be accepted more readily with an accusative object than alternating verbs. This was not borne out, although *áskotnast* with DAT-ACC was accepted to some extent: accusative case object with *nægja* (alternating verb) was produced by almost half of the speakers, whereas accusative object with *líka* and *leiðast* (nonalternating verbs) was rejected by almost everyone. On the other hand, the alternating verbs *berast* and *henta* were rejected with an accusative object by most speakers, which means we cannot state that alternating DAT-NOM verbs are in general more acceptable with an accusative object than nonalternating verbs.

We believe that our small survey shows that there is a change under way in Icelandic, although we cannot draw conclusions about what the biggest factors are (e.g., regarding thematic roles, alternating verbs versus nonalternating verbs). The results from REAL support our claim. However, we want to emphasize that a bigger survey is needed.

In the next section we compare the development in Icelandic to a similar development in related languages.

## 3. COMPARISON WITH OTHER GERMANIC LANGUAGES

In this section we look at what seems to be oblique subjects in the history of English, Faroese, and Swedish—in each language we discuss the development of oblique subjects with monadic and dyadic verbs in the active and monotransitives and ditransitives in the passive. The changes in Icelandic, discussed in sections 1 and 2, are in many respects comparable to changes in case marking in English, Faroese, and Swedish.

The development of DAT-NOM constructions seems to be similar in all these languages; we follow Hrafnbjargarson (2004) in that DAT-NOM constructions were reanalyzed as NOM-ACC in English and Swedish (and other Mainland Scandinavian languages) in three steps:

- (30) DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC > NOM-ACC

This seems to apply to Faroese (Hrafnbjargarson 2004), as we discuss below, and also to Icelandic.

## 3.1 The Development in Faroese

Faroese, like Icelandic, has a rich case system, although verbs no longer assign genitive case to their arguments (Thráinsson et al. 2004). Furthermore, as first shown by Barnes (1986), Faroese exhibits oblique subjects, but the use is far more limited than in Icelandic. This indicates that the decline of oblique subjects, discussed in this section, is not driven by loss of morphology.

### 3.1.1 Loss of Oblique Subjects

In Faroese, oblique theme subjects of monadic verbs have been replaced by nominative (e.g., Eythórsson & Jónsson 2003: 209). In this respect, Icelandic and Faroese follow the same path (cf. (8) above):

- (31) Bátarnir róku á land *Faroese*  
boats.the.PL.NOM drifted.3PL to shore  
“The boats drifted to the shore.”  
(Thráinsson et al. 2004: 228)

In addition to this, dative experiencer subjects of most monadic verbs seem to have been substituted as well, with nominative (see (32)).<sup>15</sup> These verbs usually still take dative experiencer subjects in Icelandic (see (33)):

- (32) Eg kólnaði, sum eg stóð *Faroese*  
I.NOM got.cold as I stood  
“I got cold as I stood.”  
(*Føroysk orðabók* 1998: 626)
- (33) Mér kólnaði *Icelandic*  
me.DAT got.cold  
“I got cold.”

The same goes for oblique subjects of monotransitives in the passive in Faroese: they barely exist anymore. Whether this is changing in Modern Icelandic needs to be studied. In any case, the passive of monotransitives

<sup>15</sup> According to a few Faroese informants, verbs like *kólna* are preferred with a theme subject (e.g., *veðrið kólnaði* “weather.the.NOM got cold”). There, the subject is originally nominative, both in Faroese and Icelandic. However, if an experiencer subject is used, it must be in the nominative case in Faroese, not the dative case.

has changed a lot more in Faroese than Icelandic (e.g., Thráinsson et al. 2004). Compare (34) to (9) above.

- (34) a. Eg hjálpti honum Faroese  
I helped him.DAT  
"I helped him."  
b. \*Honum varð hjálpt  
him.DAT was helped.DEF  
"He was helped."  
c. Hann varð hjálptur  
he.M.NOM was helped.M.NOM

There are, though, a few verbs that, according to Thráinsson et al. (2004: 267), preserve the dative case marking in the passive of monotransitives in Faroese: *bíða* "wait," *dugna* "help," *takka* "thank," and *trúgva* "believe."

### 3.1.2 DAT-ACC in the Active, DAT-NOM in the Passive

Dative subjects of DAT-NOM verbs are rather well preserved, although they are clearly losing ground among monadic verbs. However, most DAT-NOM verbs assign accusative case to their object (e.g., Barnes 1986, Thráinsson et al. 2004)—in this respect the new variety in Icelandic, discussed in section 2, resembles Faroese.

- (35) Mær dāmar væl hasa bókina  
me.DAT likes.3SG well that.ACC book.the.ACC  
"I like that book."  
(Barnes 1986: 33)

There are, though, clear signs of dative subjects developing toward nominative (e.g., Barnes 1986; Eythórsson & Jónsson 2003; Thráinsson et al. 2004).

- (36) Eg dāmi væl hasa bókina  
I.NOM like.1SG well that.ACC book.the.ACC  
"I like that book."  
(Barnes 1986: 33)

Jónsson (2009b) argues that dative subjects in Faroese have covert nominative Case which is not morphologically realized. He refers to this as the Covert Nominative Hypothesis, where the dative subject is assigned

nominative Case by T in Spec,T. Empirical evidence he gives for this is number agreement with dative subjects:

- (37) Vit vóna at teimum dāma hugskotið  
we hope that them.DAT like.3PL idea.the.ACC  
"We hope that they like the idea."  
(Jónsson 2009b: 156)

In (37) the verb *dāma* "like" agrees with the dative subject *teimum* "them." There is, however, only agreement in number but not in person as seen by the fact that (38) is ungrammatical.

- (38) \*Mær dāmi hasa bókina  
me.DAT like.1SG that.ACC book.the.ACC  
"I like that book."  
(Jónsson 2009b: 159)

The next step in the development might however be person agreement but that might not sound plausible since many speakers already use morphological nominative case with *dāma*.<sup>16</sup>

Jónsson (2009b) gives an additional argument for dative subjects being established as nominative Case. That involves the use of the anaphoric element *sjálvur* "self," which is coindexed with the dative subject (*honum* "him" in (39)) and should receive the same case (see (39a)). For many speakers it does not: that is, in (39b) the anaphoric element is not in the dative case even though the subject is. Instead it bears nominative case, which is a manifestation of covert nominative Case of the subject.

- (39) a. Sjálvum dāmar honum ikki at lurta eftir tónleiki  
self.DAT likes.3SG him.DAT not to listen to music  
"He himself does not like to listen to music."  
b. Sjálvur dāmar honum ikki at lurta eftir tónleiki  
self.NOM likes.3SG him.DAT not to listen to music  
(Jónsson 2009b: 159)

Jónsson (2009b) claims that only in Faroese, and not in Icelandic, does the dative subject get covert nominative Case, since examples corresponding to (37) and (39b) are ungrammatical in Icelandic. While this is true for most speakers of Icelandic, we argue that some speakers (Icelandic C speakers, to be precise) have covert nominative on oblique subjects (see section 4).

<sup>16</sup> According to Jónsson (2009b: 158–159) the reason for the lack of person agreement may be that nominative Case is assigned in Spec,T rather than checked.

Dative subjects in the DAT-NOM ditransitive passive in Faroese, however, do not show signs of developing toward nominative case. In addition to this, the argument corresponding to a direct object in the active is usually in the nominative case and not accusative (e.g., Thráinsson et al. 2004). Thus, the DAT-NOM pattern is rather well preserved in the passive, unlike the active.

Number agreement with dative subjects is less accepted in the ditransitive passive (Jónsson 2009b). Since the DAT-NOM pattern is so well preserved in the passive, this might not be surprising. Note, however, that in the following example the second argument is not a DP in nominative case, but an infinitival clause.<sup>17</sup>

- (40) ?Teimum verða eggjað at koyra saman  
 them.DAT will.be.3PL encouraged.DEF to drive together  
 “They will be encouraged to drive together.”  
 (Jónsson 2009b: 151)

There is, though, an indication of a change in the DAT-NOM passive. Barnes (1986) discusses the DAT-ACC pattern in the passive voice in Faroese and shows the following DAT-ACC example (*var honum ætlað somu viðferð*) from a 1939 text:

- (41) Og var honum óivað ætlað somu  
 and was him.DAT doubtless intended.DEF same.ACC  
 viðferð og Øgmundi  
 treatment.ACC and Øgmundur.DAT  
 “And he was doubtless going to be given the same treatment  
 as Øgmundur.”  
 (Dahl 1939: 119; Barnes 1986: 35)

In addition to this, Eythórssen (2009) conducted a study in the Faroe Islands in 2008 where he asked if the following sentences were acceptable:<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Still, many speakers accept *eggja* “encourage” in the passive with a nominative subject (see Jónsson’s (2009b:149) example (9)). The reason that none of Jónsson’s (2009b) informants accepted the plural agreement with a dative subject of *eggja* might thus be that they preferred nominative case on the subject.

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that Thórhallur Eythórssen tested the DAT-ACC passive in (42b) with the passive participle *givin* “given,” which shows masculine/feminine morphology instead of the default third-person singular *givið*, which is the form to expect, since agreement with an accusative case object is unexpected. However, it is also possible to interpret *givin* as agreeing with the dative subject *gentuni*, since verbal agreement with dative subjects is possible in the active voice in Faroese (see (37); Jónsson 2009b). It should be noted that Eythórssen also tested a sentence equivalent to (42b) with the default third-person singular *givið* and the definite accusative object *telduna* “the computer.” That was, however, accepted by only four speakers. The same applies to a sentence equivalent to (42a) with the definite nominative case argument *teldan* “the computer,” which was accepted by one speaker.

(42) Results for <i>giva</i> “give” in ditransitive passive in Faroese						yes ? no		
a.	Gentuni	bleiv	givin	ein	telda	11	13	38
	girl.the.DAT	was	given.F.SG.NOM	a.F.SG.NOM	computer.F.SG.NOM			
	“The girl was given a computer.”							
b.	Gentuni	bleiv	givin	eina	teldu	16	13	31
	girl.the.DAT	was	given.F.SG.NOM	a.ACC	computer.ACC			

Few speakers accepted the DAT-NOM pattern in (42a), possibly because NOM-DAT is preferred (where the nominative subject corresponds to the direct object in the active). However, more speakers accepted the DAT-ACC pattern in (42b) than DAT-NOM. In this regard, Faroese might be different from Icelandic in that the change DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC is without a doubt more recent in the passive than in the active. In Icelandic, however, the changes might be from the same time period since they were discovered at a similar time.

### 3.2 The Development in Swedish

In Modern Swedish, as in other Mainland Scandinavian languages, morphological case marking is lost on full DPs.<sup>19</sup> Old Swedish, however, had case distinction and preposed oblique DPs. We follow Barðdal (2000) and Hrafnbjargarson (2004), who argue that Old Swedish, as well as other Old Scandinavian languages, exhibited oblique subjects. Falk (1995, 1997) gives the chronological order for the morphological changes of oblique case (dative) to nominative of preposed DPs in earlier Swedish. The parallels to the changes in Faroese and Icelandic are obvious.

The first step of these changes is within monadic verbs in the active and monotransitives in the passive. The examples in (43) show how a dative subject-like argument, (43a) *wardh honom forgifwit*, changes to a nominative subject, (43b) *han wart förgiffwen*, of a monotransitive verb in the passive. This happened before 1500 (Falk 1995: 208):

- (43) a. Llangt ther æpter wardh honom forgifwit  
 long there after was him.DAT poisoned  
 “A long time after that, he was poisoned.”  
 (ST: 102; Falk 1995: 208)
- b. han wart förgiffwen  
 he.NOM was poisoned  
 “He was poisoned.”  
 (PK: 234; Falk 1995: 208)

<sup>19</sup> This is in general true for Mainland Scandinavian dialects, although morphological distinction is found to a certain degree in some of the dialects.

The next step, according to Falk, is when case marking of dyadic verbs in the active changes (see the dative argument *henni* in (44a) versus the nominative *du* in (44b)). This happened mostly between 1500 and 1600.

- (44) a. Henni likar thätta  
her.DAT like this  
"She likes this."  
(Falk 1997: 10)

- b. Du likar mig  
you.NOM like me.ACC

The third and last step is a change in the case marking of oblique arguments of ditransitives in the passive (see the nominative subject *han* in (45)). Recipient subjects (corresponding to indirect object in the active), infrequently occurred in the nominative case before 1800 (Falk 1995: 210).

- (45) Han bleeff ... mycken ähre bewijst  
he.NOM was much honor shown  
"He was shown a great honor."  
(Tegel, G 1 2: 65, 1622; Falk 1995: 210)

Interestingly, these steps have parallels in Faroese with respect to diachrony. As we have already discussed, oblique subjects of intransitive verbs in the active and monotransitives in the passive are nearly nonexistent in Modern Faroese (the first step). Oblique subjects of dyadic verbs are still retained with most verbs—although there is a tendency to use a nominative subject with some of them (the second step). However, the use of oblique subjects in the passive of ditransitives is robust, although there are some hints of a change (nominative objects becoming accusative). There are no clear signs in the morphology, yet, of the dative subject changing to nominative in Faroese (the third step).

### 3.3 The Development in English

#### 3.3.1 Oblique Subjects of Monadic Verbs

At earlier stages of English, arguments were case marked. Oblique experiencers were sometimes preposed in Old English (OE) and thus look like oblique subjects, similar to oblique subjects in Icelandic. Allen (1995: 442–443) argues that these non-nominative NPs were, in fact, subjects in earlier

English (see also Barðdal 2000 and Hrafnbjargarson 2004).<sup>20</sup> In this subsection, we discuss how English follows the same path as Faroese, Swedish and—presumably—Icelandic, with regard to the DAT > NOM change.

Falk showed for Swedish that the DAT > NOM change affected monadic oblique verbs first. This seems to be the case for English as well: monadic oblique subject verbs already at the OE stage could be found with nominative subjects (Allen 1995: 72).

- (46) forþam þe ge hingriað  
for.that that you.NOM hunger.PL  
"Because you will hunger."  
(Lk [WSCp] 6.25; Allen 1995: 72)

Although Allen does not describe this in detail, it is obvious that this change happened long before the change in DAT-NOM verbs. As we will discuss below, the DAT > NOM change with dyadic verbs mainly occurred in the fifteenth century.

#### 3.3.2 DAT-NOM Verbs

Examples of DAT-NOM in the active are found in OE. Hrafnbjargarson (2004: 50) considers the following example to show a dative subject and a nominative object:

- (47) ðam wife þa word wel licodon  
the.DAT woman.DAT the.PL.NOM words.PL.NOM well liked.3PL  
"The woman liked the words well."  
(cobeowul 639.538; Hrafnbjargarson 2004: 50)

As seen from the data for Faroese, the case of the object of DAT-NOM verbs changes into accusative before the case of the subject can become nominative. In Early Middle English (EME), examples like (48) are found (Allen 1995: 236–238):

- (48) swetest him ðuncheð ham  
sweetest him thinks them  
"They seem the sweetest to him."  
or: "He thinks them the sweetest."  
(AW 101.7; Allen 1995: 237)

<sup>20</sup> However, Allen (1995) argues that preposed dative recipients in passive ditransitive constructions did not behave like subjects, unlike in Icelandic.

In examples like these, both the subject and the object appear to be in the dative case. However, at this stage there was no longer a distinction between accusative and dative in pronouns, so the object (and the subject for that matter) might really be accusative. In light of the development in other languages, we assume that the construction shown in (48) really is DAT-ACC. At least it is important to notice that the case of the object no longer is nominative. And the data is clear according to Allen: she finds no examples in which a postposed pronominal theme of DAT-NOM verbs is a nominative pronoun.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, if the theme is a preposed pronoun, it always appears in the nominative case.<sup>22</sup>

In a similar time period (EME), there are examples of a possible number agreement with the dative subject (see *ham likieð* in (49)) (Allen 1995: 235):

- (49) *swuðe wel ham likieð biuoren þe to beon*  
 very well them like.PL before thee to be  
 ("Cristes milde moder"; Allen 1995: 235)

Examples of this sort, however, are very rare in EME but become more common in later Middle English (ME) and in Early Modern English (Allen 1995: 235–236). Allen (1995: 241–243) also doubts that in EME there was any agreement with the postposed theme.

The DAT > NOM change for pronominal subjects of DAT-NOM verbs starts to occur in the fourteenth century (Allen 1995: 250). In the fourteenth century, the first examples of *like* appear with the experiencer subject in the nominative case (Allen 1995: 251). In the earliest examples, like (50a) which is from around 1330, *like* takes a sentential complement, but in later examples, like (50b) which is from late fourteenth century, *like* with a nominative subject can also take a DP complement (notice that the theme object is in the dative/accusative case and not the nominative).

- (50) a. And bot þou like we seruen þe we will þern fram þe te  
 "and unless you.NOM would like us to serve you, we will make  
 our way from you."  
 (A&M 5529; Allen 1995: 251)

<sup>21</sup> Studying the development of the experiencer verbs in EME, Allen (1995: 221–249) looked at texts written in the dialects in which the systematic distinction between accusative and dative pronouns had broken down. She only uses examples where the theme is pronominal, since nominative/dative distinction for nouns had also been lost in these dialects.

<sup>22</sup> One could argue that these verbs are alternating verbs, as found in Icelandic, since either the theme or the experiencer could be the subject.

- b. ...somehat she likede hym the bet  
 "She liked him better."  
 (Ch.LGW. 1076; Allen 1995: 251)

In the late fourteenth century, dative experiencers were still more common than nominative experiencers. At the same time, however, there is an increase in examples with number agreement with dative subjects (see *hem oughten* in (51)) (Allen 1995: 263):

- (51) how that hem oughten have greet repentaunce  
 how that them.DAT ought.PL have great repentance  
 "How they should have great repentance."  
 (Ch.B.Mel. 1731 (2920–2925); Allen 1995: 263)

In short, the use of dative subjects started to decrease in the fourteenth century, and, in the fifteenth century, dative subjects were still a structural possibility, but the dative was clearly losing ground. In the sixteenth century dative subjects became structurally impossible (limited to fixed expressions) (Allen 1995: 286–287). The end result is, of course, Modern English with NOM-ACC pattern:

- (52) He likes her/\*she

### 3.3.3 Passive of Monotransitives

In Old English, dative case in passives of monotransitives was retained in subject position (see (53a) *him bið gedemed*). However, this case marking was lost in Middle English, as seen in (53b), where the subject *he* is in nominative case:

- (53) a. hi ne demað nanum men, ac him bið gedemed  
 they not judge no men but them.DAT is judged  
 "They will not judge any men, but they will be judged."  
 (Ælc.P.XI.369; Allen 1995: 27)  
 b. for he nes þeo noht iquemed  
 for he.NOM not.was then not pleased  
 "For he was not then pleased."  
 (BrutC 1529; Allen 1995: 349)

Although the data is not very clear, Allen (1995: 366) assumes that the dative passive of monotransitive verbs "disappeared as a productive process

by the early thirteenth century.” This is a little later than the DAT > NOM change in monadic verbs in the active.

### 3.3.4 Passive of Ditransitives

Until around the middle of the fourteenth century, preposed dative passives of ditransitives were possible in English (54), but it was more common to have the theme preposed (55):

- (54) and him wearð geseald an snæd flæscas  
and him.DAT was sold a piece.NOM flesh.GEN  
“and he was given a piece of flesh”  
(ÆLS (Basil) 158; Allen 2001: 45)

- (55) þatt heffness zate uss oppnedd be  
that heaven’s gate us opened be  
“That heaven’s gate should be opened to us.”  
(Orm 13988; Allen 1995: 382)

Between the use of examples like (54), with a preposed dative recipient, and until the use of a nominative experiencer passive, there is a gap: the nominative recipient passive does not directly replace the dative experiencer passive (Allen 1995: 386). Nominative recipients with ditransitive verbs in the passive voice are not found until the late fourteenth century (see *she* in (56)).<sup>23</sup> In the fifteenth century they became more common.

- (56) Item as for the Parke, she is alowyd Every yere a dere and xx  
Coupull of Conyes and all fewell Wode to her necessarye...  
“Item: as for the park, she is allowed a deer every year and 20  
pairs of rabbits and all firewood necessary to her...”  
(Award Blount, p. 207; Allen 2001: 51)

Just like in the active, originally DAT-NOM pattern in the passive—later DAT-ACC—is now NOM-ACC (for a short discussion on the similarity between English examples like (57) below and the Faroese DAT-ACC passive, see Barnes 1986: 35):

- (57) I was given them/\*they for Christmas  
(Maling & Sprouse 1995: 177)

<sup>23</sup> However, earlier examples appear with verbs that have a PP or a clausal second in addition to the indirect object. We have left such verbs out of the discussion, since we have not fully studied such constructions, i.e., whether they should be considered monotransitives or ditransitives, or possibly neither.

### 3.4 A Note on German and Icelandic

The short overview given above is intended to show that some of the Germanic languages have undergone, or are undergoing, the same changes—in the same chronological order. It shows, then, that the change in the DAT-NOM construction to DAT-ACC is not unexpected at all. However, not all Germanic languages have gone through that change; some do not show any signs of it. German is one such language.

Whether German has oblique subjects is debated. The standard view has been that it does not exhibit oblique subjects, as seen by the fact that PRO subjects, corresponding to oblique arguments, have been considered ungrammatical:

- (58) a. Ihm wurde geholfen  
him.DAT was helped  
“He was helped.”  
(Zaenen, Maling, & Thráinsson 1985: 476)
- b. \*Er hofft \_\_\_\_\_ geholfen zu werden  
he hopes PRO.DAT helped to be.INF  
“He hopes to be helped.”  
(Zaenen, Maling, & Thráinsson 1985: 477)
- (59) a. Mir gefällt der Mann  
me.DAT likes.3SG the.NOM man  
“I like the man.”
- b. \*Ich hoffe \_\_\_\_\_ der Mann zu gefallen  
I hope PRO.DAT the.NOM man to like.INF  
“I hope to like the man.”
- c. Ich hoffe \_\_\_\_\_ dem Mann zu gefallen  
I hope PRO.NOM the.DAT man to like.INF  
“I hope to please the man.”

Although the dative arguments in (58a) and (59a) look like they might be subjects, they are not if PRO subjects in control infinitives cannot correspond to oblique case arguments (see (58b) and (59b)). Eythórsson & Barðdal (2005) argue against the standard view and give interesting evidence for their claim that German exhibits oblique subjects and, furthermore, that oblique subjects are a Germanic inheritance.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Examples equivalent to the German examples in (58b) and (59b), marked with “\*” are grammatical in Modern Icelandic. In these examples the subject is PRO, corresponding to a dative subject. However, a PRO subject corresponding to a nominative argument is ungrammatical (remember that *líka* is a pure DAT-NOM verb):



If German does not have oblique subjects, then it does not have nominative objects either. A change in the case of an argument from structural nominative to structural accusative is expected only if the argument is the object of the verb; thus, the change equivalent to the DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC in English, Faroese, Icelandic, and Swedish would be unexpected in German unless it exhibits nominative objects.

Why, then, is the change from DAT-NOM to DAT-ACC only at its beginning stages in Icelandic? Why has Icelandic not already undergone the same changes as, e.g., English and Swedish? Why does German not exhibit oblique subjects (according to the standard view)? We do not know the answer to these questions. For the last question, however, the obvious direction to look, as an anonymous reviewer points out, is that all the languages discussed here have changed word order from OV to VO, except German. Rögnvaldsson (1996), Barðdal & Eythórsson (2003) and Ingason, E. F. Sigurðsson, & Wallenberg (2011) give compelling evidence that oblique subjects existed in Old Icelandic (Old Norse).<sup>25</sup> This suggests that oblique subjects were not a consequence of the OV-to-VO change, since the change

- (i) a. Strákarnir                      vonast til að \_\_\_\_\_ verða hjálpað  
boys.the.M.PL.NOM              hope for to PRO.DAT be.INF helped.DEF  
"The boys hope to be helped."  
b. \*Strákarnir                      vonast til að \_\_\_\_\_ verða hjálpaðir  
boys.the.M.PL.NOM              hope for to PRO.NOM be.INF helped.M.PL.NOM  
(H. Á. Sigurðsson 1991: 336)
- (ii) a. Ég              vonast til að \_\_\_\_\_ líka              maðurinn  
I.NOM              hope for to PRO.DAT like.INF man.the.NOM  
"I hope to like the man."  
b. \*Ég              vonast til að \_\_\_\_\_ líka              manninum  
I.NOM              hope for to PRO.NOM like.INF man.the.DAT  
"I hope to please the man."

Interestingly, in Old Norse *líka* "like" was like *gefallen* "like" in the German example (59c), i.e., the subject of *líka* is found in the nominative case as shown in the following example from the Old Norwegian Book of Homilies; here the subject is PRO, corresponding to a nominative argument (and the object is then the dative argument):

- (iii) ef hann girníf at \_\_\_\_\_ líka guði þeim er...  
if he desires to PRO.NOM like.INF God.DAT that.DAT who  
"If he desires to be liked by God who..."  
or: 'If he desires to please God who...'  
(Indrebø 1931: 24.10–14, AM 619 4to)

In Old Norse *líka* was either a pure NOM-DAT verb or an alternating verb (like, e.g., Barðdal 2001 proposes). Given compelling evidence in favor of the hypothesis that Old Icelandic (Old Norse) exhibited oblique subjects, it is likely, at the very least possible, that *líka* was an alternating verb where either the dative or nominative argument could raise to the subject position.

<sup>25</sup> Whether Old Icelandic had oblique subjects has been debated. Faarlund (1999, 2004), for example, argues that oblique subjects are not found in Old Icelandic texts. For a recent discussion, see Viðarsson (2009).

was in progress during the time period of Old Icelandic (see Ingason, E. F. Sigurðsson, & Wallenberg 2011).

### 3.5 Summary

There are striking similarities in the development of the changes discussed above, in English, Faroese, Icelandic, and Swedish, although they happen at different time periods (the changes occurring first in Old English, and last in Modern Icelandic). The status of the case system is also different at the time of the changes: English was undergoing a drastic change in the case system, which partly seems to precede the DAT > NOM change, while Icelandic and Faroese still have a rich case system.

The steps of the development, outlined by Falk (1995, 1997) for Swedish, seem to apply for the other languages as well, namely that monadic (active) and monotransitive (passive) verbs undergo the DAT > NOM change before dyadic (active) and ditransitive (passive) verbs do. In each language the changes in the DAT-NOM constructions in the active and the passive appear to be intertwined and all of them also have intermediate stages, which are expected under our analysis (see section 4). These include nonagreement with nominative object, NOM > ACC change of the object of dyadic and ditransitive verbs, and plural agreement with dative subjects.

In (60) we show the development for the languages discussed in this section, English, Faroese, and Swedish. We use Icelandic examples, even though Icelandic has undergone only some of these changes. We expect Icelandic to follow the same path as the other languages.

(60) Step 1: DAT > NOM ((a) the active: monadic verbs, (b) the passive: monotransitives)

a. Mér	kólnar	>	Ég	kólna	see (8), (32), (33), (46)
me.DAT	gets.cold.3SG		I.NOM	get.cold.1SG	
"I get cold."					
b. Þeim	var		Þeir	voru	see (9), (34), (43)
them.DAT	was.3SG		they.M.PL.NOM	were.3PL	
				hjálpaðir	
				helped.M.PL.NOM	
"They were helped."					

Step 2: DAT-NOM > NOM-ACC ((a) the active: dyadic verbs, (b) the passive: ditransitives)

1: DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC<sup>26</sup>

a. Mér	líkar	hún	>	Mér	líkar	hana	see (3), (35), (48)
me.DAT	likes.3SG	she.NOM		me.DAT	likes.3SG	her.ACC	
"I like her."							

<sup>26</sup> We assume that before or at the beginning of this stage one can find occurrences of nonagreement with the nominative object. This can be seen in Modern Icelandic (see example (2)).

- b. Þeim var gefin > Þeim var see (7), (41), (42)  
 them.DAT was.3SG given.F.SG.NOM them.DAT was.3SG  
 hún gefið hana  
 she.F.SG.NOM given.DEF her.ACC  
 "They were given her."

2: DAT-ACC > NOM-ACC<sup>27</sup>

- a. Mér líkar hana > Ég líka hana see (36), (44), (50), (52)  
 me.DAT likes.3SG her.ACC I.NOM like.1SG her.ACC  
 b. Þeim var gefið hana > Þeir voru see (45), (57)  
 them.DAT was.3SG given.DEF her.ACC they.M.PL.NOM were.3PL (i) fr. 32  
 gefnir hana  
 given.M.PL.NOM her.ACC

#### 4. ANALYSIS

Legate (2008) proposes that Case is established in the syntax but that it is realized in the morphology. We agree with that view and argue that such an approach is needed to account for Nominative Substitution (NS) with monadic verbs and the change of DAT-NOM case > DAT-ACC. In this section we limit the discussion to the active voice and leave the passive mostly aside. We propose that (a) NS is expected if accusative and dative case arguments of monadic verbs are a morphological realization of nominative Case and (b) that for Icelandic C speakers DAT-NOM case is a morphological realization of abstract NOM-ACC Case.

Our view is that usually there is a one-to-one correspondence between abstract Case and morphological case, but a distinction is possible while a change is under way.<sup>28</sup> Under those circumstances a speaker may use the "pre-change" morphological case while showing syntactic signs of the "post-change" abstract Case. Only if these signs are found do we assume there may be a distinction between abstract Case and morphological

<sup>27</sup> Before or at the beginning of this stage we assume that there may be found instances of number agreement with the dative subject. This has been observed for Faroese (see (37) (Jónsson 2009b:151)) and English (see (49) (Allen 1995: 235)).

<sup>28</sup> This goes against Legate's (2008: 90) claim that "[o]nly when a morphological realization of a particular abstract Case is not available do we find a distinction between abstract Case and morphological case." We believe that we can find a distinction between abstract Case and morphological case, even though a morphological realization of the Case in question does exist, for example with DAT-NOM verbs (abstract NOM-ACC) in Icelandic C. We claim that nominative case is not available for the subject of DAT-NOM verbs, not in the sense that the morphology does not exist, but in the sense that it cannot apply because another nominative already exists in the sentence (on the object). This is further discussed in footnote 32.

case.<sup>29</sup> A sign of an abstract nominative Case subject on a verb with morphological dative case is, for example, number agreement with the dative case subject (see section 4.2).

#### 4.1 Nominative Substitution

For languages where morphological default case is absolutive, such as Warlpiri, Niuean, Enga, and Hindi, Legate (2008) proposes that even though the morphological case of subjects of intransitives and objects of transitives is realized as absolutive, they don't have the same abstract Case: the former has abstract nominative Case, and the latter abstract accusative Case. A similar claim can be made for NS in Icelandic (discussed in section 1). Most verbs described in the literature as showing NS are intransitives. Some of these verbs have transitive counterparts that take a nominative subject and an accusative or a dative object. In such cases the intransitive and the transitive often have a similar meaning, but not exactly the same, and the subject of the intransitive verb corresponds to the object of the transitive verb. In the following examples, we show the verbs *reka* and *hvolfa* used transitively and intransitively. In the intransitive use, see (61a), the meaning of *reka* is "drift," but the transitive can have several meanings. In the context given in (61b) it means "order (someone to go away)." *Hvolfa*, however, has the meaning "capsize" whether it is used intransitively or transitively, see (62).

- (61) a. Bátinn rak á land intransitive of *reka*  
 boat.the.ACC drifted to land  
 "The boat drifted to the shore."  
 (Jónsson 2003: 154)  
 b. Hann rak manninn burt transitive of *reka*  
 he.NOM drove man.the.ACC away  
 "He ordered the man to go away."  
 (62) a. Bátunum hvolfdi á miðju vatninu intransitive of *hvolfa*  
 boats.the.PL.DAT capsized.3SG in middle water.the  
 "The boats capsized in the middle of the water."  
 (Eythórrsson 2000: 188)

<sup>29</sup> To give a concrete example of this one might ask whether it is possible to claim that the nominative case subject of the unergative verb *dansa* "dance" in (i) has, say, dative Case. The answer is no because there are no signs of that. If the nominative case subject *við* "we" in (i) had abstract dative Case, we would expect examples where the subject does not agree in number and person with the finite verb:

- (i) Við dönsu/\*dansar í kvöld  
 we.NOM dance.1PL/3SG tonight  
 "We dance tonight."

Such examples are ungrammatical to all speakers as far as we know.

- b. Við hvolfdum bátunum transitive of *hvolfa*  
 we.PL.NOM capsized.1PL boats.the.PL.DAT  
 "We capsized the boats."

The case of the subjects in the intransitive clauses in (61a) and (62a) is originally accusative and dative, respectively, but for some speakers the abstract Case is sometimes realized as nominative (hence Nominative Substitution; see (63) below).

- (63) a. Báturinn rak á land NS with *reka*  
 boat.the.NOM drifted to land  
 "The boat drifted to the shore."  
 (Jónsson 2003: 154)

- b. Bátarnir hvolfdú á miðju vatninu NS with *hvolfa*  
 boats.the.PL.NOM capsized.3PL in middle water.the  
 "The boats capsized in the middle of the water."  
 (Eythórsson 2000: 188)

To our knowledge, the case of the object of transitive *reka* and *hvolfa* (or any other transitive counterpart of an intransitive NS verb for that matter), see (61b) and (62b), is always accusative and dative, respectively, and never realized otherwise.

We take these facts to show that although the morphological case of the subject of intransitive *reka* and *hvolfa* and the object of the corresponding transitive verbs is identical, the abstract Case is not one and the same—the subject of the intransitive bearing abstract nominative Case but the object of the transitive bearing abstract accusative Case. Therefore, only the oblique subject of the intransitive verb may change to nominative, and not the oblique object of the transitive counterpart. We argue that for those who show intraspeaker variation regarding the case of the subject of the monadic verbs in question, the abstract Case is nominative (this goes also for speakers who always use nominative subjects with these verbs). For others, who consistently use accusative or dative with the NS verbs, we do not propose that the abstract Case of the subject is nominative.

A part of our proposal is that Icelandic C speakers, who accept DAT-ACC with nonalternating DAT-NOM verbs or alternating verbs, also accept NS of monadic verbs. Also, we propose that Icelandic A and B speakers (who prefer or allow number agreement with nominative objects) are less likely to accept NS. However, we didn't include NS sentences in our study (reported in section 2 above). We leave the correlation between these two phenomena for future research, but now we turn to discussion on DAT-NOM verbs established in the syntax as NOM-ACC.

## 4.2 Nominative Case Realized as Dative Case

In Icelandic, some speakers seem to have number agreement with the dative subject of DAT-NOM verbs. In examples like (64) *þeim líkuðu*, where the verb agrees in number with a third-person subject, it is impossible to tell whether this is also person agreement. Note that the singular object in (64) is in the nominative case:

- (64) ...þar sem þeim líkuðu ekki þessi mikla aukning  
 since them.PL.DAT liked.3PL not this.SG.NOM much.SG.NOM increase.SG.NOM  
 á fylgi  
 on support  
 "Since they did not like this big increase in support..."  
<http://tiger.blog.is/blog/tiger/entry/110811/>, posted January 28, 2007

For these speakers, we argue that the subject is realized morphologically as dative case but established in the syntax as nominative Case.

However, not only have we discovered examples of number agreement, but also of person agreement with oblique subjects. These are not, though, examples of DAT-NOM verbs; *leiðast* in (65a) means "be bored" and is used as a monadic verb, and *dreyma* "dream" in (65b) is used with an oblique subject (accusative or dative) and a prepositional phrase:

- (65) a. Hitt skiptið var þegar mér og Helgunni minni  
 other time was when me.DAT and Helga.the.DAT mine.DAT  
 leiddumst geggjæð  
 were.bored.1PL crazy  
 "The other time was when I and Helga were very bored..."  
[http://hallla.blogspot.com/2007\\_07\\_01\\_archive.html](http://hallla.blogspot.com/2007_07_01_archive.html), posted July 19, 2007
- b. Þarna voru stelpurnar sem okkur drey mum um  
 there were girls.the.PL.NOM who us.PL.ACC/DAT dream.1PL of  
 að missa sveindóminn með  
 to lose.INF virginity with  
 "The girls, with whom we dream about losing our virginity, were there..."  
<http://hreinirsveinar.blogcentral.is/blog/2005/9/5/pjallantk-a-leid-til-glottunnar/>,  
 posted September 5, 2005

The subject in (65a) is *mér og Helgunni minni* "me and my Helga." This coordinated DP then agrees with the verb *leiðast* "be bored" in person and number (1PL). Similarly, the accusative or dative subject *okkur* "us" in (65b) agrees in person and number (1PL) with the verb *drey ma* "dream." The first-person plural forms of these verbs are *leiddumst* and *drey mum*,

respectively, but what would be expected are the third-person singular forms, *leiddist* and *dreymir*.

We have also found examples where the anaphoric element *sjálfur* “self” receives nominative case, even though it is coindexed with an oblique subject (similar to Jónsson’s (2009b: 159) Faroese example, shown in (39b) above). In (66) *sjálfur* bears nominative case even though the subject *mér* “me” is in the dative case.

- (66) a. *Sjálfur líkar mér ekkert vel við nasista*  
 self.NOM likes.3SG me.DAT not well to Nazis  
 “I do not like Nazis myself...”  
[www.hugi.is/ljod/providers.php?page=view&contentId=3180131](http://www.hugi.is/ljod/providers.php?page=view&contentId=3180131),  
 posted March 7, 2006
- b. *...sjálfur langar mér í hund*  
 self.NOM wants.3SG me.DAT in dog  
 “I want a dog myself...”  
[www.hugi.is/kettir/threads.php?page=view&contentId=6986464#item6986560](http://www.hugi.is/kettir/threads.php?page=view&contentId=6986464#item6986560), posted December 6, 2009

For the two speakers in (66) we might conjecture, as Jónsson (2009b) does for Faroese, that the nominative *sjálfur* shows that the dative case subject is really abstract nominative Case.

The following example is interesting, since it not only has number agreement with a dative subject, but also a nominative case floating quantifier modifying the dative subject. Note that the quantifier cannot modify the object; that is ruled out morphologically. (*Aðgerðarleysið* “the inaction” is a neuter singular noun, whereas *öll* “all” is the form of either feminine singular or neuter plural; here it is the latter form, modifying the neuter plural pronoun *þeim* “them.”)

- (67) *Þeim leiddust öll aðgerðarleysið*  
 them.PL.DAT were.bored.by.3PL all.PL.NOM inaction.the.NOM/ACC  
 “They were all bored of doing nothing.”  
<http://ernah-761436.blogcentral.is/?page=5>, posted December 13, 2006

These examples, taken from the Internet, must be regarded with care. They seem to be used mostly by younger speakers, which—presumably—have oblique subjects established in the syntax in nominative Case.

In our questionnaire we tested number agreement with a plural dative subject.

(68) Results for number agreement with dative subject of <i>líka</i> “like”					yes	?	no
Kennurunum	líkuðu	ekki	þessi	hegðun	8	5	23
teachers.the.DAT	liked.3PL	not	this.NOM	behavior.NOM			
nemendanna							
students.the.GEN							
“The teachers did not like the students’ behavior.”							

Note that the object is in the nominative case and that it is in the singular, as in (64) above. The plural form of the verb, which is in the past tense, thus agrees with the plural dative subject. Those speakers who rejected the sentence in (68) presumably did so because in order to be grammatical for them the verb would have to be in the third-person singular, *líkaði*, instead of plural *líkuðu*. More speakers accepted this sentence than the DAT-ACC version in (13) above, suggesting that those speakers have covert nominative Case on the subject, although the object is in the nominative case (we argue that the nominative object in (68) actually bears accusative Case; see next subsection). None of the speakers who accepted (68) accepted number agreement with a nominative object of *líka* in (25b): six of them rejected that sentence, and two found it questionable. These speakers are thus Icelandic C speakers, at least with respect to the verb *líka*.

We argue that for those who find (68) acceptable, the dative case argument really is an abstract nominative Case subject that triggers agreement. Legate (2008: 95) argues that agreement is “triggered by the highest DP bearing structural abstract Case.” For Icelandic A and B speakers, dative subjects with DAT-NOM verbs bear inherent abstract Case. For those speakers the nominative object is the highest (and the only) DP bearing structural abstract Case and thus it can trigger agreement. For Icelandic C speakers, however, both the dative case subject and the nominative object bear structural abstract Case, nominative and accusative, respectively. The dative case subject is then the highest DP bearing structural abstract Case and that DP can trigger agreement, not the lower one (the nominative case object).

In this article we focus on analyzing the Icelandic C variety, and in order to do so we adopt Jónsson’s (2009b) Covert Nominative Hypothesis for Faroese, where nominative Case on dative subjects is assigned in Spec,T, by T. Although Jónsson (2009b) doesn’t explicitly say it, dative case is possibly checked in Spec,Appl (within the *vP*) but then, as mentioned, assigned nominative Case in Spec,T. This approach might be too simplistic, though.

Cardinaletti (2004) argues that different types of subjects occupy different subject positions. It might be possible to account for the difference between Icelandic C (nonagreement) and Icelandic A (number agreement) in such a way. Then an IP might consist of NumberP, PersonP, and TP (see H. Á. Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008; see also H. Á. Sigurðsson 2000, 2006). For

Faroese (Jónsson 2009b) and Icelandic C the dative subject might move to Spec,Number, rendering number agreement with the dative case subject. In cases like (65) where the verb agrees with the dative subject not only in number but also in person, the subject presumably occupies a higher position, namely Spec,Person. For Icelandic A, on the other hand, the dative subject might occupy a lower subject position, for example Spec,T.

#### 4.3 Accusative Case Realized as Nominative Case

Nominative on subjects and objects is standardly said to be connected to T, and accusative is then connected to *v* (see, though, e.g., Alexiadou 2003, who argues against this). However, Eythórsson & Jónsson (2009), who build on H. Á. Sigurðsson (2000), claim that for speakers who do not allow number agreement with nominative objects in DAT-NOM constructions (Icelandic C speakers), *v* always assigns nominative case to the object. Under that approach no link can be established between T and the nominative object, rendering obligatory nonagreement. We agree with their suggestion. Thus, for these speakers, the nominative object in (69b) is assigned its case in the same way as the structural accusative object in (69a).

- (69) a. Konan drap manninn  
           woman.the.NOM killed man.the.ACC  
           ‘The woman killed the man.’  
       b. Mér líkar bílarnir  
           me.DAT likes.3SG cars.the.PL.NOM  
           ‘I like the cars.’

Our interpretation of this is that the nominative case in (69b) is really abstract accusative Case.

As discussed above, for many speakers, number agreement (as in (70b)) with the nominative object is either preferred (the Icelandic A variety in H. Á. Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008) or optional (Icelandic B) in the DAT-NOM construction in Icelandic, whereas for other speakers (Icelandic C) nonagreement (as in (70a)) is required.

- (70) a. Mér líkar bílarnir  
           me.DAT likes.3SG cars.the.PL.NOM  
       b. Mér líka bílarnir  
           me.DAT like.3PL cars.the.PL.NOM

However, this is restricted to number. Thus, person agreement is excluded (H. Á. Sigurðsson 1996, 2006) in all varieties—this includes number agreement with nominative objects that are first- and second-person pronouns (H. Á. Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008).

- (71) a. Henni \*leiddumst /?\*leiddust við  
           her.DAT were.bored.by.1PL / were.bored.by.3PL we.PL.NOM  
           ‘We bored her.’  
           (H. Á. Sigurðsson 1996: 28)  
       b. Mér \*líkið /?\*líka þið  
           me.DAT like.2PL / like.3PL you.PL.NOM  
           ‘I like you.’

The Person Restriction (H. Á. Sigurðsson 2006; H. Á. Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008) captures this: quirky dative blocks first- and second-person agreement in Icelandic A, B, and C. Only in Icelandic C, though, is a personal pronoun ‘not sharply unacceptable’ (H. Á. Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008: 256) as a nominative object. It follows, then, that the verb does not agree in number with the object (as in the following example; we don’t mark (72a–b) with ‘?’ even though ‘not sharply unacceptable’ probably entails that many Icelandic C speakers don’t find these examples particularly good):

- (72) a. Henni leiddist við Icelandic C  
           her.DAT was.bored.by.3SG we.NOM  
           ‘We bored her.’  
       b. Mér líkar þið  
           me.DAT likes.3SG you.PL.NOM  
           ‘I like you.’

This is not surprising if the nominative is assigned by *v* in Icelandic C, because then the object cannot agree with the verb (objects assigned by *v* in Icelandic don’t agree with finite verbs).<sup>30</sup>

30 A consequence of the change from DAT-NOM to DAT-ACC should be that there is no restriction on the accusative object, i.e., it can be a first- or second-person pronoun (thanks to Rajesh Bhatt for pointing this out to us originally). In our survey for Icelandic, four speakers accepted accusative object, which was a second-person pronoun, with the verb *leiðast* ‘be bored by’ (compare this to the results for *leiðast* in (18) above, where three accepted an accusative object):

- (i) Results for a second-person plural object with *hundleiðast* yes ? no  
       ‘be very bored by’  
       Mér hundleiðist ykkur! 4 7 25  
       me.DAT is.very.bored.by.3SG you.PL.ACC  
       ‘You bore me to death.’

Now take a look at the following ECM constructions:

- (73) a. Ég lét hana verða \*reið/reiða  
I let her.F.ACC become.INF angry.F.NOM/ACC  
"I made her become angry."  
b. Ég lét hana slá manninn  
I let her.ACC hit.INF man.the.ACC  
"I made her hit the man."  
c. Ég lét hana ýta \*manninn/manninum  
I let her.ACC push.INF man.the.ACC/DAT  
"I made her push the man."

The ECM verb *láta* "let" takes a bare infinitive complement. *Láta* licenses the accusative case on the subject and the adjectival predicate in the embedded clause in (73a). However, only the accusative on the subject is licensed by *láta* in (73b), since the main verb in the embedded clause assigns the object its case. This is further confirmed in (73c), where the object in the embedded clause gets not accusative case from *láta* but lexical dative from *ýta* "push."

But what about nominative objects in DAT-NOM constructions with the ECM verb *láta* "let"? According to Wood (2011), nominative is ungrammatical with the DAT-NOM verb *nægja* "suffice" under the ECM verb *láta*.

- (74) a. \*Ég lét mér nægja tveir miðar  
I let me.DAT suffice.INF two.PL.NOM tickets.PL.NOM  
b. Ég lét mér nægja tvo miða  
I let me.DAT suffice.INF two.PL.ACC tickets.PL.ACC  
"I let myself make do with two tickets."  
(Wood 2011: 2)

If this is true for all speakers, including those Icelandic C speakers who do not accept accusative case object but still always prefer nonagreement with the verb, then nominative case is probably not assigned by *v*. This, however, remains to be studied. For now, we can only predict that for those speakers who do not have number agreement with nominative case object (Icelandic C), only (74a) is grammatical, since *v* assigns the object its case (like it does in (73b–c))—then the paradigm in (74) is borne out for Icelandic A and B speakers and also for those Icelandic C speakers who accept accusative objects with DAT-NOM verbs; for Icelandic A and B speakers the accusative on "two tickets" in (74b) is assigned by *láta* "let" but for Icelandic C speakers it is assigned by *v*.<sup>31</sup>

31 The pattern of DAT-NOM verbs in ECM constructions is more complicated than shown in (74). Not all DAT-NOM verbs take an accusative object in an ECM

Finally, agreement with dative subjects of DAT-NOM verbs in Icelandic may uncover the Case of the object. In Faroese, the object of DAT-NOM verbs is usually in the accusative case, including when there is number agreement with the dative subject (see (37) above). In Icelandic, however, we have seen examples of number agreement with dative subjects where the object is, surprisingly, assigned not accusative case (see (64) and (68)) but nominative. These examples suggest that, for some speakers, covert nominative Case on the morphologically dative subject is possible even if the object is morphologically nominative. Now, two possibilities arise concerning the syntactic Case of the two arguments: either the subject and the object both have nominative Case, or only the dative case subject gets covert nominative Case and the nominative case object gets accusative Case. We find it highly unlikely that two arguments can be assigned nominative Case.<sup>32</sup> Thus, we propose that the object gets covert accusative Case, assigned by *v*.

construction with *láta* (those Icelandic C speakers who accept DAT-ACC would be an exception from this). For example, nominative object with *líka* "like" in such a construction is usually preferred to accusative.

- (i) Ég læt mér ekki líka svona dónaskapur /??dónaskap  
I let me.DAT not like.INF such rudeness.NOM /??ACC  
"I don't let myself like such rudeness."  
(Wood 2011: 2)

Also, which ECM verb is used matters. Accusative case objects (with DAT-NOM verbs) under *telja* "believe" are less acceptable than under *láta* (Wood 2011; see, however, Jónsson's (1996: 170) examples with *telja*).

32 This is expected, since only one nominative c/Case is assigned (Yip et al. 1987, H. Á. Sigurðsson 2003) in other than predicate constructions, contra Barðdal's (2009) analysis of the change, which states that the reason for the dative subjects of DAT-NOM verbs resisting morphological change longer than the objects is that dative subjects are higher in type frequency than nominative objects. According to such an analysis, two nominative arguments of the same verb could be grammatical.

Eythórsson's (2009) results on the DAT-NOM ditransitive passive in Faroese confirm that two nominative cases at once are ruled out. In his acceptability judgment task none of the sixty-two informants found the NOM-NOM case pattern in (i-a) grammatical. However, nine speakers found the NOM-ACC pattern in (i-b) grammatical, showing that the DAT-NOM passive is more likely to develop into NOM-ACC than NOM-NOM.

(i)	Results for <i>giva</i> "give" in ditransitive passive in Faroese				yes	?	no
a.	Gentan	bleiv	givin	teldan	0	0	62
	girl.the.F.SG.NOM	was	given.F.SG.NOM	computer.the.F.SG.NOM			
	"The girl was given the computer."						
b.	Gentan	bleiv	givin	telduna	9	5	47
	girl.the.F.SG.NOM	was	given.F.SG.NOM	computer.the.F.SG.ACC			

It should be noted that two nominatives show up in predicate constructions in many languages, such as Icelandic, Faroese, German, and Swedish—the predicate is then arguably not assigned the nominative case but agrees in case with the subject (e.g., Maling & Sprouse 1995). In Icelandic the copula verbs *vera* "be" and *verða* "become" take a

For the DAT-NOM pattern examples in (64) and (68), the dative subject is assigned covert nominative Case. However, nominative case is unavailable to it, since the object receives nominative case, and two nominatives are ruled out. Accusative case, on the other hand, is available to the object, and this results in morphological realization of the accusative Case. Only then is the nominative case available to the subject.

#### 4.4 Explaining the Diachrony

For the languages discussed above, we have seen that oblique subjects are replaced by the nominative. In general, oblique subjects of monadic verbs

nominative predicate (and a nominative subject), and so do a few others, such as *heita* “be called.” In addition to these verbs some verbs take two accusative case arguments that form a small clause (where the relationship between the two arguments is predicational, *x* (“the dog”) is *y* (“Guðmundur”)):

- (ii) *Ég kalla hundinn Guðmund*  
 I call dog.the.ACC Guðmundur.ACC  
 “I call the dog Guðmundur.”

When those verbs are passivized or take the affix *-st*, they take two arguments, a subject and a predicate. When some of these verbs don’t end with the affix *-st*, like *kalla* “call” and *gera* “do, make,” and are passivized, they also take two nominative arguments, a subject and a predicate (see a discussion in Yip, Maling, & Jackendoff 1987):

- (iii) a. *Hundurinn er kallaður Guðmundur*  
 dog.the.NOM is called Guðmundur.NOM  
 “The dog is called Guðmundur.”  
 b. *Hundurinn kalla-st Guðmundur*  
 dog.the.NOM calls-st Guðmundur.NOM  
 “The dog is called Guðmundur.”

Some other verbs take either an infinitival clause with a copula or a small clause. An example of this is the ECM verb *telja* “believe,” which governs the accusative case on both the subject and the predicate. When passivized, both the subject and the predicate become nominative:

- (iv) a. *Ég tel Mariu (vera) snilling*  
 I believe Mary.ACC (be.INF) genius.ACC  
 “I believe Mary to be a genius.”  
 b. *María er talin (vera) snillingur*  
 Mary.NOM is believed (be.INF) genius.NOM  
 “Mary is believed to be a genius.”  
 (Thráinsson 2007: 158)

For a deeper discussion on predicates in Icelandic we refer the reader to Thráinsson (2007).

Although we predict that two nominatives in Germanic languages at different diachronic stages are ruled out in other than predicate constructions, we don’t make the claim that this is universally true in all languages that show case morphology because, as an anonymous reviewer points out, two nominatives are possible in, e.g., Korean (see Maling 2000).

in the active and monotransitives in the passive change before subjects of dyadic verbs and ditransitives.

The change of oblique subjects of monadic verbs and monotransitives needs only one step, that is, the substitution by the nominative case. In the case of oblique subjects of dyadic verbs and ditransitives, however, the oblique subject cannot be substituted with the nominative since that would result in the sentence having two nominatives, which is ruled out (in the examples in this subsection we use Icelandic, even though Icelandic has not undergone the changes discussed here):

- (75) *Mér > \*Ég líkaði bílarnir*  
 me.DAT I.NOM liked.1SG cars.the.PL.NOM  
 “I liked the cars.”

Even though the same change is going on for monadic and monotransitive verbs, on the one hand, and dyadic and ditransitive verbs, on the other hand, that is, oblique subjects having abstract nominative Case, the nominative object blocks the oblique subject from receiving morphological nominative case.

Before the dative subject of dyadic and ditransitive verbs can change to nominative, there must be some changes to the nominative object. We assume that first the object gets abstract accusative Case, even though it may be realized morphologically as nominative. An indication of this is the Icelandic C variety, where nonagreement is obligatory (see results in our questionnaire for *líka* “like” in (25) above). We assume this happens after (or possibly at the same time as) the subject gets nominative Case. If the subject was still in dative Case, the sentence would have no nominative. That would go against, for example, H. Á. Sigurðsson’s (2003) Sibling Correlation, which states that structural accusative Case is not assigned in the absence of nominative Case (for similar accounts see, among others, Yip, Maling, & Jackendoff 1987, Marantz 1991/2000, Woolford 2003).

The next step, then, is for the object to get morphological accusative case:

- (76) *Mér líkaði bílana*  
 me.DAT liked.3SG cars.the.PL.ACC

As our examples in section 2.2 show, some Icelandic speakers seem to be at this stage.

It is predicted that next the subject receives nominative case, since nothing is holding back the change of the subject. These changes in the dyadic DAT-NOM construction in the active correspond to the steps outlined in Hrafnbjargarson (2004) for English and Mainland Scandinavian.

(77) Ég líkaði bílana  
I.NOM liked.1SG cars.the.PL.ACC

Icelandic has not reached this stage, but Faroese seems to be in the middle of these stages, while English and the Scandinavian languages have completed the change. As we can see, this explains the chronological order of the change of oblique subjects as outlined by Falk (1995, 1997), for the first two steps.

As mentioned above, in Swedish the passive of ditransitives resists the change the longest (Falk 1995, 1997), and this also seems to be the case for Faroese and English. In Icelandic, this is less clear: it seems that either the change from DAT-NOM to DAT-ACC in the passive happens at the same time as in the active, or even earlier. The reason this is the last step in some languages but not in others remains unclear. We want to point out that a possible factor might be which DP is usually moved in the ditransitive passive: the DP corresponding to the indirect object in the active, or the one corresponding to the direct object. In at least earlier English and Modern Faroese, the DP corresponding to the direct object in the active is preferred as the subject in the ditransitive passive. In Icelandic, however, the DP corresponding to the indirect object is usually moved to subject position in the ditransitive passive.

This means that the third step, which Falk (1995, 1997) gives, does not have to be the third step in all languages. It seems to be true for English, Faroese, and Swedish, but probably not for Icelandic. The conclusion is that monadic verbs in the active voice change before the dyadic verbs do, and monotransitives in the passive voice change before the ditransitives do.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In this article, we have argued that a change from DAT-NOM to DAT-ACC is under way in Icelandic. To show this, we reported results from a small survey we conducted. However, we believe this change is currently only at its beginning stage. We would like to emphasize the necessity to investigate this further. The thematic role of the dative subject appears to be an important factor. Also, what types of verbs are involved, that is, whether they are pure DAT-NOM verbs or alternating verbs, might be relevant. By comparing Icelandic to related languages—English, Faroese, and Swedish—we have shown that this change is, in fact, expected.

Furthermore, we agree with Legate (2008) in that Case is established in the syntax but then case is realized in a postsyntactic morphology. We have argued along the lines that NOM-ACC Case is disguised in the Icelandic C variety, first as DAT-NOM case, and then as DAT-ACC, before becoming NOM-ACC case, eventually.

We have shown that the chronological development of the change of dative subjects is very similar between the languages listed above: dative case subjects of monadic verbs in the active change before dative subjects of dyadic verbs do, and, similarly, dative subjects of monotransitives in the passive change before dative subjects of ditransitives do. Our account of Case in disguise explains this development: the abstract Case of dative case subjects becomes nominative, but the nominative object of DAT-NOM verbs prevents the subject from becoming morphologically nominative until the morphological case of the object has changed from nominative to accusative. Nothing, however, prevents nominative Case subjects of monadic and monotransitive verbs from being realized in the morphology as nominative case. Therefore, they are the first to show up with nominative subjects.

## TEXTS CITED

Here we list the texts we cite in the examples above. We do not, however, list blogs and newspaper texts for Modern Icelandic. Linguistic texts from which examples are taken are, of course, found in the References.

## ENGLISH

Examples from earlier English are taken from Allen (1995, 2001) and Hrafnbjargarson (2004). We cite them like they do. The comments on the texts are taken from Allen (1995). However, Allen's examples from *ÆLS* (Basil) and *Lk* (WSCp) are taken from *COE* (Antoinette Healey and Richard Venezky, *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English* [Toronto: Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 1980]), and the example from "Cristes milde moder" is taken from *MED* (*Middle English Dictionary*, edited by Hans Kurath and Sherman Kuhn [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956]). We cite those examples like *COE* and *MED* do.

## Old English

*Ælc.P.* = *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*. Edited by John Pope, EETS 259 and 260, 1967. Cited by homily and line number.  
*ÆLS* (Basil) = Saint Basil: Skeat, 1881–1900 I, 50–90; W. W. Skeat, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, 4 vols., EETS 76, 82, 94, 114 (London; rpt. in 2 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966). Citation is by line no. assigned by DOE, following the lineation of the edition.  
*cobeowul* = *Beowulf*. From the York Poetry Corpus. Source: *Beowulf and Judith: The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, vol. 4, 3.1–98.3182. Edited by E. V. K. Dobbie. New York: Columbia University Press, 1953.



Lk (WSCp) = Luke (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 140): Skeat, 1871–1887, 14–238; W. W. Skeat, *The Four Gospels in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian, and Old Mercian Versions* (Cambridge; rpt., Darmstadt, 1970). Cited by chapter and verse numbers following edition.

### The Thirteenth Century

AW = *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwe: Ancrene Wisse*. Edited by J. R. R. Tolkien. EETS 249, 1962. MS Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 402. Date: c. 1230, composition somewhat earlier. Cited by page and line number.

BrutC = *Lazamon: Brut*. Edited by G. L. Brook and R. F. Leslie, EETS 250 and 277, 1963 and 1978. MS Cotton Caligula A. ix. Date: MS date is probably thirteenth century, but composition is considerably earlier, although post-1189.

“Cristes milde moder.” In *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*, ed. C. Brown (1932). 3–8. Date: c. 1250. (Nero A.14)

Orm = *The Ormulum: With the Notes and Glossary of Dr. R. M. White*. 2 vols. Edited by Robert Holt. Rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1974. MS Oxford University, Junius I, Bodleian Library 5113. Date: usually dated c. 1200. Cited by line number.

### The Fourteenth Century

A&M = *Of Arthour and of Merlin*. Edited by O. D. Macrae-Gibson, EETS 268, 1973. The longest of the poems found in the Auchinleck Manuscript (= *The Auchinleck Manuscript. National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS 19.2.1*. With an introduction by Derek Pearsall and I. C. Cunningham. [London: Scholar Press, 1977]).

Award Blount = *Award of Dower by Sir Thomas Blount*. In “The Early History of Mapledurham,” by A. H. Cooke, *Oxfordshire Record Society* 7 (1925), 204–206. This document is dated 1375.

Ch. = *The Riverside Chaucer*. 3rd ed. Larry D. Benson, general editor. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987. The abbreviations are those used in TK [= Tatlock and Kennedy's concordance to Chaucer's work and the *Romant of the Rose*] preceded by “Ch.”; however, when the TK system of numbering differs from the Riverside system, the Riverside line reference is given first, and the TK reference is given in parentheses.

### FAROESE

Dahl, Sverri. 1939. “Jón Arason biskupur.” *Varðin* 19: 113–126.

### OLD NORSE

Indrebø = *Gamal norsk homiliebok*. 1931. Cod. AM. 619 4°. Utgjevi for Kjeldeskriftfondet ved Gustav Indrebø. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

### SWEDISH

The examples from earlier Swedish are taken from Falk (1995). We cite them like she does.

PK = *Sveriges krönika. Små stycken på forn svenska*, 219–248. Edited by G. E. Klemming. Stockholm, 1868–1881. Written c. 1452–1456.

ST = *Sialinna Thröst*. SFSS 59. Edited by S. Henning. Uppsala, 1954. Translated c. 1420.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank the editors and two anonymous reviewers, whose comments greatly improved the paper. Thanks to Anton Karl Ingason and Katrina Nicholas for reading an earlier draft of the paper. We also want to thank Joan Maling, Heimir Freyr Viðarsson, Joel C. Wallenberg and Matthew Whelpton for discussions and helpful comments. Special thanks go to Thórhallur Eythórsson, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson, Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, Höskuldur Thráinsson and Jim Wood.

### REFERENCES

- Alexiadou, Artemis. 2003. “On nominative case features and split agreement.” In Ellen Brandner and Heike Zinsmeister (eds.), *New perspectives on case theory*, 23–52. Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Allen, Cynthia. 1995. *Case marking and reanalysis: Grammatical relations from Old to Early Modern English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Allen, Cynthia. 2001. “The development of a new passive in English.” In Miriam Butt and Tracy Holloway King (eds.), *Time over matter: Diachronic perspectives on morphosyntax*, 43–72. Stanford, CA: Stanford, Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Andrews, Avery. 1976. “The VP-complement analysis in Modern Icelandic.” *North Eastern Linguistic Society* 6: 1–21.
- Árnadóttir, Hlíf, and Einar Freyr Sigurðsson. 2008. “The glory of non-agreement: The rise of a new passive.” Unpublished ms.
- Barðdal, Jóhanna. 2000. “Oblique subjects in Old Scandinavian.” *North-Western European Language Evolution* 37: 25–51.
- Barðdal, Jóhanna. 2001. “The perplexity of Dat-Nom verbs in Icelandic.” *Nordic Journal of Linguistics* 24: 47–70.

- Barðdal, Jóhanna. 2009. "The development of case in Germanic." In Jóhanna Barðdal and Shobhana Chelliah (eds.), *The role of semantic, pragmatic and discourse factors in the development of case*, 123–159. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Barðdal, Jóhanna, and Thórhallur Eythórsson. 2003. "The change that never happened: The story of oblique subjects." *Journal of Linguistics* 39(3): 439–472.
- Barnes, Michael P. 1986. "Subject, nominative and oblique case in Faroese." *Scripta Islandica* 37: 13–46.
- Cardinaletti, Anna. 2004. "Towards a cartography of subject positions." In Luigi Rizzi (ed.), *The structure of IP and CP: The cartography of syntactic structures*, vol. 2, 115–165. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Eythórsson, Thórhallur. 2000. "Fall á fallanda fæti? Um breytingar á frumlagsfalli í íslensku [Case in danger? On changes in subject case in Icelandic]." *Íslenskt mál* 22: 185–204.
- Eythórsson, Thórhallur. 2002. "Changes in subject case-marking in Icelandic." In David W. Lightfoot (ed.), *Syntactic effects of morphological change*, 196–212. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eythórsson, Thórhallur. 2009. "Passive and case in Faroese." Unpublished ms.
- Eythórsson, Thórhallur, and Jóhanna Barðdal. 2005. "Oblique subjects: A common Germanic inheritance." *Language* 81: 824–881.
- Eythórsson, Thórhallur, and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson. 2003. "The case of subject in Faroese." *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax* 72: 207–231.
- Eythórsson, Thórhallur, and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson. 2009. "Variation in Icelandic morphosyntax." In Andreas Dufter, Jürg Fleischer, and Guido Seiler (eds.), *Describing and modelling variation in grammar*, 83–96. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Faarlund, Jan Terje. 1999. "The notion of oblique subjects and its status in the history of Icelandic." *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax* 63: 1–44.
- Faarlund, Jan Terje. 2004. *The syntax of Old Norse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Falk, Cecilia. 1995. "Lexikalt kasus i svenska [Lexical case in Swedish]." *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 110: 199–226.
- Falk, Cecilia. 1997. *Fornsvenska upplevarverb [Experiencer verbs in Old Swedish]*. Lund: Lund University Press.
- Føroyks orðabók. 1998. [Faroese dictionary]. Edited by Jóhan Hendrik W. Poulsen et al. Tórshavn: Føroya Fróðskaparfelag.
- Hrafnbjargarson, Gunnar Hrafn. 2004. "Oblique subjects and stylistic fronting in the history of Scandinavian and English: The role of IP-Spec." PhD diss., University of Aarhus.
- Ingason, Anton Karl. 2010. "Productivity of non-default case." *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax* 85: 65–117.
- Ingason, Anton Karl, Einar Freyr Sigurðsson, and Joel Wallenberg. 2011. "Distinguishing change and stability: A quantitative study of Icelandic oblique subjects." A talk given at DiGS 13, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, June 2–5.
- Jónsson, Jóhannes Gísli. 1996. "Clausal architecture and case in Icelandic." PhD diss., University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Jónsson, Jóhannes Gísli. 1997–1998. "Sagnir með aukafallsfrumlagi [Verbs with oblique subjects]." *Íslenskt mál* 19–20: 11–43.
- Jónsson, Jóhannes Gísli. 2003. "Not so quirky: On subject case in Icelandic." In Ellen Brandner and Heike Zinsmeister (eds.), *New perspectives on case theory*, 127–163. Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Jónsson, Jóhannes Gísli. 2009a. "The new impersonal as a true passive." In Artemis Alexiadou, Jorge Hankamer, Thomas McFadden, Justin Nueger, and Florian Schäfer (eds.), *Advances in comparative Germanic syntax*, 281–306. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Jónsson, Jóhannes Gísli. 2009b. "Covert nominative and dative subjects in Faroese." *Nordlyd* 36(2): 142–164.
- Legate, Julie Anne. 2008. "Morphological and abstract case." *Linguistic Inquiry* 39: 55–101.
- Maling, Joan. 2000. "Whether to agree or not: The syntax of inalienable possession." In Akio Kamio, Ken-ichi Takami, and John Whitman (eds.), *Syntactic and functional explanations: A festschrift for Susumu Kuno*, 345–370. Tokyo: Kuroshio Press.
- Maling, Joan, and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir. 2002. "The 'new impersonal' construction in Icelandic." *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 5: 97–142.
- Maling, Joan, and Rex A. Sprouse. 1995. "Structural case, specifier-head relations, and the case of predicate NPs." In Hubert Haider, Susan Olsen, and Sten Vikner (eds.), *Studies in comparative Germanic syntax*, 167–186. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Marantz, Alec. 1991/2000. "Case and licensing." In Eric Reuland (ed.), *Arguments and case: Explaining Burzio's Generalization*, 11–30. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Rögnvaldsson, Eiríkur. 1996. "Frumlag og fall að fornu [Subject and case in Old Icelandic]." *Íslenskt mál* 18: 37–69.
- Sigurðsson, Halldór Ármann. 1991. "Icelandic case-marked PRO and the licensing of lexical arguments." *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 9: 327–363.
- Sigurðsson, Halldór Ármann. 1996. "Icelandic finite verb agreement." *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax* 57: 1–46.
- Sigurðsson, Halldór Ármann. 2000. "The locus of case and agreement." *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax* 65: 65–108.
- Sigurðsson, Halldór Ármann. 2003. "Case: Abstract vs. morphological." In Ellen Brandner and Heike Zinsmeister (eds.), *New perspectives on case theory*, 223–267. Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Sigurðsson, Halldór Ármann. 2006. "Agree in syntax, agreement in signs." In Cedric Boeckx (ed.), *Agreement systems*, 201–237. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Sigurðsson, Halldór Ármann, and Anders Holmberg. 2008. "Icelandic dative intervention." In Roberta D'Alessandro, Susann Fischer, and Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson (eds.), *Agreement restrictions*, 251–279. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Swavarsdóttir, Ásta. 1982. "Þágufallssýki [Dative sickness]." *Íslenskt mál* 4: 19–62.
- Thráinsson, Höskuldur. 1979. *On complementation in Icelandic*. New York: Garland.
- Thráinsson, Höskuldur. 2005. *Setningar: Handbók um setningafræði [Sentences: Handbook of syntax]*. Íslensk tunga 3. Reykjavík: Almenna bókafélagið.
- Thráinsson, Höskuldur. 2007. *The syntax of Icelandic*. Cambridge Syntax Guides. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thráinsson, Höskuldur, Ásgrímur Angantýsson, and Einar Freyr Sigurðsson, eds. 2011. "Tilbrigði í íslenskri setningagerð [Variation in Icelandic syntax]." Unpublished ms., University of Iceland.
- Thráinsson, Höskuldur, Hjalmar P. Petersen, Jógvan í Lon Jacobsen, and Zakaris S. Hansen. 2004. *Faroese: An overview and reference grammar*. Tórshavn: Føroya Fróðskaparfelag.
- Viðarsson, Heimir Freyr. 2009. "Tilbrigði í fallmörkun aukafallsfrumlaga: Þágufallshneigið í fornislensku? [Variation in case marking of oblique subjects: Dative substitution in Old Norse?]." *Íslenskt mál* 31: 15–66.
- Wood, Jim. 2011. "Icelandic let-causatives and case." *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax* 87: 1–52.
- Woolford, Ellen. 2003. "Burzio's Generalization, markedness, and locality constraints on nominative objects." In Ellen Brandner and Heike Zinsmeister (eds.), *New perspectives on case theory*, 301–329. Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Yip, Moira, Joan Maling, and Ray Jackendoff. 1987. "Case in tiers." *Language* 63(2): 217–250.
- Zaenen, Annie, Joan Maling, and Höskuldur Thráinsson. 1985. "Case and grammatical functions: The Icelandic passive." *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 3(4): 441–483.