Joan Malin

Paðrignir þagufallí á Íslaði
Verbs with Dative Objects in Icelandí

1. Introduction

One of the striking features of Icelandí syntax is the frequency with which verbs seem to govern the dative case.¹ This is all the more striking when compared to German, a closely related Germanic language which also retains four morphological cases: nominative, accusative, dative, genitive. The University Dictionary Project in Reykjavík (Gæsabok Háskólaunnar, henceforth UD) includes some 16,000 verbs, many of them intransitive, as entries. Malin (1999) contains a list of more than 750 verbs which in at least one sense occur with a dative object; this number would increase by at least 70 verbs if the borrowings and other slang verbs listed by Johanna Barðdal (2001b:121) were included. The corresponding number of verbs for German is approximately 145² and for Russian fewer than 60 (Pulkina &

¹ This paper has been a long time in the making. Hóskuldur Pétursson and two anonymous reviewers provided extensive comments on the organization and presentation as well as the content of this paper. I am grateful to them, and to members of the audience of the Linguistic Dimension Group at the University of Iceland where this material was presented on September 4, 2000. Special thanks to Kristín Bjarnadóttir for her help in accessing the collections of the Óðhokabók Háskólaunnar, and to Helgi Skúli Jónsson, Johannes Guði Jónsson, Ólafur Arni Harðarson, Kimar Sturluson, Hóskuldur Pétursson, Johanna Barðdal, Kereta Kiuru, Kristín Bjarnadóttir and Þórhallur Eygisson for providing numerous examples and hours of fascinating discussion. Hóskuldur provided many example sentences for the verbs in the 1998 compiled list, checked the English translations, and provided me with a copy of Heriður Hildursdóttir’s lecture notes. The usual disclaimers apply. Preparation of this article and the compilation of Icelandic verbs governing dative was supported in part by a grant from the National Science Foundation to Brandeis University, Grant No. DBS-9223735.

² See the appendix for a list of intransitive German verbs which govern dative on their objects. Many of these verbs have propositional prefixes which transparently contribute a goal-reading to the verbal object: ze (21 verbs), nach (11), con (4) and uner (3), plus another 12 verbs containing the prefixes en- with the additive sense of "then".
Zakhava-Nezkeasova (1980), Not included in the Icelandic list are dative subject verbs, of which there are at least 300 (see Johannes Gíslí Jóhannesson 1997, Jóhanna Búðaðal 2001:136 — approximately 175 more take accusative subjects). If adjectives which take dative subjects are included, e.g. mér et kali 'I feel cold', then the number of dative subject predicates is increased by perhaps another two hundred. One 40,000 word corpus of both spoken and written Icelandic contained 1268 accusative direct objects as compared to 479 dative direct objects; thus the ratio of accusative to dative objects was less than 3:1 and dative represented about 25% of all object tokens in both the spoken and written corpus (Jóhanna Búðaðal 2001b:89). I don’t know of any comparable counts for German or Slavic languages, but would expect to find a significantly lower percentage of direct objects marked dative. In the Nega II-corpus (2001) of German, which contains 20,602 sentences, there were 12,747 accusative NPs as compared to only 1966 datives. While it is difficult to compare these numbers directly to Jóhanna Búðaðal’s count of object case-marking, since passivized accusative objects do not appear in the count of accusatives, and the datives include free or adverbial datives, which are arguably not objects (cf. section 2.2), the difference in relative frequency seems clear.

It is difficult if not impossible to find a semantic characterization of dative objects which will include all dative verbs while at the same time excluding apparently synonymous verbs which do not govern dative. As has often been pointed out (cf. Asta Svavaradóttir & Margrétt Jónsdóttir 1988:19, Malting 1990, María Anna Gudjonsdóttir 1990, Eiríkur Røgnvaldsson 1994), the case on a verbal object cannot reliably be predicted from the verb’s meaning, since verbs with similar meanings may take different case frames. Consider, for example,

1 I am grateful to Heike Wiese for retrieving this information from Stefanie Diper of the University of Stavanger. Diper estimates that the relative frequency of accusative to dative objects for German lies somewhere between 5:1 and 9:1 (e-mail to Heike Wiese, date: August 9, 2002).

2 Icelandic has four morphological cases: nominative (N), accusative (A), dative (D), genitive (G). The case frames associated with a verb’s arguments are listed in the
the triplet nassu barnið NA vs sinna barnið ND vs gæta barnið NG

'watch/attend/hook after the child'. Some other near-minimal pairs are
given in the tables in (1) for simple transitive verbs, and in (2) for
ditransitive verbs governing different cases on the second object.

(1) Minimal pairs — monotransitive verbs governing dative vs.

accusative:

a. aka ND vs. keyra NA 'drive'
b. hjálpa ND vs. getvöða NA 'help, assist'  
c. fljaka ND vs. hlídra NA 'finish'
d. mæru ND vs. hitta NA 'meet'
e. hlif ND vs. vernda NA 'protect'
f. sunta ND vs. elsa NA 'love'

(2) Minimal pairs — ditransitive verbs governing dative vs.

accusative on the second object:

a. stúlka e-m e-u NDD vs. stúmmu e-m e-a NDA

'distribute, hand out'      'hand out, ration'

b. skóla e-m e-a NDD vs. afhenda e-m e-a NDA

'return, give back'         'hand over, give back'

For this reason, case-marking in

Icelandic is generally analyzed as the

result of lexical idiosyncrasies, so much so that it is frequently referred
to as "quirky case".  

But while case-marking on verbal complements is to some extent

arbitrary, it is far from random. As Stephen Jay Gould (1985:15) wrote

unmarked order with subject first, then indirect object if any, and direct object last.

Then ND indicates a verb that takes a nominative subject and a dative object, NDA is

a verb that takes a nominative subject, dative indirect object and accusative direct

object. Other abbreviations commonly used in dictionaries to represent verbal

arugments: e-a = neuter accusative (lcs. ennuhraid 'somebody/NA'), e-m = masculine

accusative (lcs. ennuhað 'someone/NA'), e-a = neuter dative (lcs. ennuháða

'somebody/ND'), e-m = masculine dative (lcs. ennuháða 'someone/ND'). e-a =

genitive (lcs. ennuháða 'someone/NEUTER/N'; e-m =

'someone/GENITIVE/N').

To the best of my knowledge, the term quirky case was first used in print in

in the Prologue to *The Flamingo's Smile*, one of his many books on
the laws of natural history, "quickness and meaning are my two not-
so-contradictory themes". It is impossible not to notice and comment
on certain semantic generalizations (for a discussion of verbs govern-
ing oblique subjects, especially experiencers, see Jóhannes Gísli
Jónsson 1997-98). Even for a novel or an unfamiliar verb, native
speakers are often very certain about what case it would govern; that
certainty surely reflects semantic generalizations governing the distri-
bution of morphological case in the language. Many linguistic quarks
turn out to be quite sensible in retrospect, that is "sensible oddities",
the ien's teeth of the linguistic world. This is certainly true of case-
marking in Icelandic and it is one of the reasons why it has fascinated
me for a long time. While some of my work on this topic is intended
mainly for the theoretically interested linguist (Maling 1990, 1991,
2001; Vip. Maling & Jákonsdóttir (henceforth YMD) 1987; Zannen,
Maling & Thráinsson (henceforth ZMT) 1985). I have also attempted
to do more practical or applied work on Icelandic case marking. Thus
the compilation in Maling (1996) is on the one hand intended as a
research tool for understanding the relation between semantics and
morphological case-marking, as well as for studying diachronic
changes in case frames, and on the other as a practical aid for foreign
students of Icelandic. The generalizations extracted in the present
paper should also prove helpful to the second language learner, who
discovers early on the limitations and inadequacies of even the best
dictionaries, morphological as well as etymological, but they are also of
more general theoretical interest as they show possible relations
between morphological case marking and the syntactic and semantic
properties of arguments.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 compares the status
and relative frequency of accusative and dative case in Old and
Modern Icelandic and shows that dative is by no means retreating in
Icelandic. Rather it seems to spreading with some semantic classes of
verbs, both as a subject case and object case. Sections 3 and 4 state
some generalizations about the distribution of the dative as an object
case in Modern Icelandic, with section 3 being devoted to diminutive
verbs and section 4 to monotransitive verbs. Section 3 also discusses passivization possibilities of ditransitive verbs (especially section 3.4), gives a general overview of the case marking patterns found with ditransitive verbs in Icelandic and shows that most dative (indirect) objects with ditransitive verbs are either recipients or benefactives (or, more generally, goals). As section 4 indicates, it is more difficult to come up with a semantic characterization of dative objects of monotransitive verbs, although it is possible to find some obvious tendencies. Finally, section 5 is a conclusion, followed by an appendix on monotransitive verbs governing dative objects in German.

2. The relative status of accusative and dative case

2.1 Accusative at default case

Accusative is clearly the unmarked or "default" case on verbal objects, just as nominative is the unmarked case on subjects. Accusative is by far the most common case on verbal objects, and most new verbs govern accusative. This type of case marking is often referred to as grammatical or syntactic case, or in the generative literature, as structural Case. Certain semantic classes of verbs probably never govern anything other than default case on their objects. For example, verbs of creation (bregja ‘build’, samða ‘erode, build’) with effect (as opposed to affected) objects always govern accusative (Jónas Gíslason, class handout dated 7 April, 1997). There are also morphological generalizations at work; as illustrated in (3), clausal verbs usually govern accusative on an object denoting the locatum (Jónas Gíslason, class handout, based on a collection of verbs of aiming (sóti: ævarningssagningu) compiled by Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir (1990:41)).

9 “sagnir sem stjóna þóðafall eru langtengjast í málinu, og þýja sagnir (sem kunnið í málum) verðast þanst stjóna þóðafall” (Eiríkur Rúgvaldsson 1983a:153). However, according to Jóhanna Bjartal (2001b:158), nearly 25% of novel verbs in the language assign dative to their objects, so both accusative and dative can be said to be productive cases on objects.
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(3) Noun: Denominational verb:
   a. díkka ‘tablecloth’ díkka brúð ‘cover the table with a tablecloth’
   b. kalk ‘chalk’ kalka veggin ‘white-wash the wall’
   c. maltík ‘asphalt’ maltíka gynna ‘put asphalt on the street’
   d. salt ‘salt’ saltas fiskur ‘salt the fish’
   e. skráa ‘décoration’ skráa kókka ‘decorate the cake’
   f. smjør ‘butter’ smjór brúað ‘butter the bread’

Psych-verbs (predicates denoting a psychological state of mind) typically take default case on their objects: accusative if the subject is nominative (e.g. elka ‘love’, hata ‘hate’), of nominative if the subject is dative (e.g. líka ‘like’, leða ‘be bored with’). Only a very few psych-verbs like varða ‘be angry’, þyngjaþafl ‘be worried’ have dative objects, and at least one psych-verb takes a genitive object (sána ‘miss’). On the other hand, some other types of non-agentive dyadic (transitive) verbs regularly govern dative, e.g. verbs of comparison, such as húastr ‘resemble’ and samþykið ‘correspond to’ (see section 4.8.2).

2.2 Sources of dative objects

If accusative is so firmly established as the unmarked case on verbal objects, why, then, do so many Icelandic verbs govern dative? Nyegaard (1906, §99) observes that the dative in Old Icelandic is a “samþykið kasus” — a uniting pot of all instrumental, ablative and locative cases together with the true ("eigenlig") dative of recipients and experiencers. Halldór Halldorsson (n.d.) goes so far as to suggest that all dative objects in modern Icelandic are derived historically from nonobjects. For example, it is clear that many dative objects originated from old instrumental adverbials. As Halldór Halldorsson notes (n.d., p. 54), it is often hard to tell whether a postverbal dative NP is governed by the verb or whether it is an (ungoverned) adverbial. Consider the examples in (4):

2 "Samþykið kasusum, verða nú mikilof. Sæfræt eru enda, og þar spegul ännu, af þer er akki í lystu undirlegi" (p.53). (All definite phrases which according to Icelandic literature objects have in common that they are not in origin objects. — 36)
(4.a. Rósa ok. *vagnínun.
Rósa drove car-the(D) (/carriage-the(D))
b. Jón talði *hárrí roðdu.
Jón spoke loud voice(D)
'Jón spoke in a loud voice'

In (4a), the bold-faced dative NP *vagnínun is clearly felt to be direct object of the verb ok 'drive', whereas in (4b), *hárrí roðdu is felt to be an adverbial (of manner) modifying talð 'speak'. This intuition is reflected both in the corresponding question word (hefur 'what' vs. hvor 'how'), and by the contrast in the possibility of placing the dative NP in subject position is the passive voice, as illustrated in (5):

(5.a. Var *vagnínun ekkó alla leiðina til Akureyri?
'Was the car (D) driven all the way to Akureyri?'
b. Var *hárrí roðdu ekkó?
'Was loud voice(D) spoken?'
(intended reading: 'Was there spoken in a loud voice?')

Other examples where the dative object may have originated as an adverbial are given in (6):

(6.a. *sóma *augumun yfri e-z 'run one's eyes over something'
b. *ræða um eitthvað *nókkruð orðun 'say a few words about something'
c. *skýða spjóti (að e-m) 'shoot a spear (at someone)'
d. *kasta *boltanum 'throw the ball'

Note, however, that sometimes the same verb can either take a dative that seems to have an adverbial source or a dative with a considerably different meaning, as illustrated by the pair in (7):

(7.a. *svara *enningills einau 'answer with nothing/about only'
b. *svara *spurninguini 'answer the question' (= 'answer with the question')

8 The feminine noun núta does not normally take an ending in the dative except in such fixed expressions.
2.5 The spread of dative case

Although default nominative and accusative are statistically the most frequent cases on subjects and objects, respectively, it is noteworthy that the use of the dative case actually seems to be spreading. The best known example of the extension of dative in Icelandic is the phenomenon known as þákgafa-sískjót 'dative-sickness' (cf. Æsta Svatvars-dóttir 1982, Hálfdór Hálfdánsson 1982, Æsta Svatvars-dóttir et al. 1984, inter alia), which affects the case-marking of non-agentic experiencer subjects. Lexically-governed idiosyncratic accusative on experiencer subjects of so-called impersonal verbs, e.g. kanga 'waste', vanta 'need, lack', has been giving way to either dative or nominative since at least the 19th century (Hálfdór Hálfdánsson 1962). þákgafa-sískjót clearly reflects the psychological reality of the correlation between dative case and the thematic role experiencer among native speakers, despite the fact that most experiencer arguments bear default case (cf. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1983b). Even more striking evidence comes from the instances of dative case replacing default nominative on the subject of verbs like hlaða 'look forward to' and æhrða þærir 'be apprehensive about'.

Just as thematically predictable dative on experiencer subjects is gaining at the expense of accusative (and occasionally even default nominative), so too is dative gaining at the expense of default accusative on verbal objects. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1994) and Þórunna Ólafsdóttir (2001b:180) have both noted an increase in the frequency of dative case throughout the recorded period. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1994) observed that the relative frequency of the four morphological cases has changed from Old to Modern Icelandic.\(^5\)

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\(^6\) The statistics for modern Icelandic are from the Heimskringla fræðið (Jörgen Pildedal et al. 1991). For Old Icelandic they are based on the corpus of nouns in the Icelandic sagas done by Guðrún Ingibjörg Ólafsdóttir and Béring Kristjánsson. The results have since been published at Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000).
Table 1. Relative frequency of the four morphological cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Old Icelandic</th>
<th>Modern Icelandic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>27.54%</td>
<td>27.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>41.13%</td>
<td>30.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>21.71%</td>
<td>30.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>9.62%</td>
<td>11.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the relative frequencies of nominative and genitive have remained approximately the same, dative case has gained nearly 10% at the expense of accusative. While further research would be necessary to pinpoint the causes of this statistical change, two possible factors are (i) an increase in the use of prepositional phrases, since dative is the most common case on prepositional objects (see Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b. Part II, for discussion), and (ii) the fact that some verbs, or perhaps entire semantic classes of verbs, which exclusively govern dative case in the modern language, used to govern only accusative, or took either dative or accusative with no apparent difference in meaning. It is this second possibility which is relevant here. Jóhanna Barðdal (2001b:180) does distinguish between the case-marking on verbal objects as opposed to prepositional objects; her results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Relative frequency of the four morphological cases on verbal objects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Old Icelandic</th>
<th>Modern Icelandic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>21.15%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Jóhanna Barðdal's results indicate that at least part of the reason for the increase in the use of dative case reflects an increase in the number of verbs governing dative on their objects. (These figures are for token frequency, so the increase in dative objects might be due in part to eðrin dative verbs having become higher in token frequency in Modern Icelandic.)
The verb *seinka* ‘delay’ occurs with either dative or accusative in Old Icelandic (henceforth OL), but only dative in modern Icelandic. The verb *laka* ‘finish, cease’ governs only dative in modern Icelandic, whereas OL *laka* ‘close’ occurred with either accusative or dative according to Cleasby-Vigfusson. Indeed, it occurs with an accusative object in *laka upp mina kistu* ‘open up my chest’ but a dative object on the very same page of Pólitardrá saga, according to Cleasby-Vigfusson: *laka þu upp kornun* ‘open(s) up the chest’. Verbs occurring only with accusative objects in OL but only with dative in the modern language include *della* ‘divide, share’; *frikka* (frikka/fremna) ‘decrease’; *laka* ‘lock, shut’ and OL *ripu* (ripa) ‘annul, revoke, break (an agreement)’. In (8) are given some OL examples from Cleasby-Vigfusson which illustrate the use of accusative on the verbal object:

(8)a. *della sér illan blut* of ‘deal oneself a bad share(A) from’

b. *et fama sköldi húskasta* that should reduce in number the cautious(B)

c. Hann gekk inn í háti ok lokahi ínna húrðlaa-
   he went into house-the and looked door-the(A) from the inside

d. Engi maðr á ripu glöf sina.
   ‘No man should revoke his gift(A).’

These objects, which are presumably themes, would be marked dative in the modern language.

It is worth emphasizing, therefore, that it is an overstatement to claim, as Halldór Halldórsen (n.d.) seems to, that all dative objects in modern Icelandic have developed from case syncretism (e.g. the merger of instrumental and dative) or from other grammatical functions. In Cleasby-Vigfusson explicitly state that the verb *della* in the sense of ‘deal, divide’ never governs dative in Old Norse. As discussed by Pétursson (1994:34), this change in case-assignment bears on the interpretation of the Runic inscription on the Ture stone, which contains the forms *DALISUN ARDIESA.

11. Juhans Raudvald (p.c.) points to Runehistoria’s 1973 study of dative in Swedish and Norwegian dialects, which indicates that the frequency of dative in Icelandic is at least a common North Germanic phenomenon. Klänner-Olsson (p.c.) points to relevant 19th century studies by Ditzreid (1851) and Koonst-Gishon which I have not been yet been able to obtain.
would be interesting, to think about the historical changes in case assignment by particular verbs in light of recent work by Sveronius (2001, 2002) arguing that the assignment of dative case marks aspect and event structure (see also Halldór Arnarson Sigurðsson 2002).

The increase in verbs governing dative continues in the modern period. Many new verbs govern dative case on their objects. Jóhanna Barðdald (2001b:121) lists 88 novel verbs, many of them borrowings from Danish or English, which govern dative in Icelandic, and argues that the assignment of dative to verbal objects is "highly regular and structured" (p. 125) in that new verbs tend to be "attracted by a cluster of verbs with the same or similar meaning and the same argument structure construction" (p. 130). Examples include three new verbs, brista, fingra, pína, meaning "steal," which govern dative like the already existing stella, hrapa and ranna. There are at least two semantically predictable classes for which dative is on the increase: (i) experiencers (see Jóhanna Barðdald 1993, 2000, Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1997–98, and section 4.3 below for discussion), and (ii) objects which undergo movement (Jóhanna Barðdald 1993, 2001b:139, and section 4.5 below):

(9) keen tá mír heim vs. keen tá farangurinn heim

'drive me(D) home' 'drive the luggage(A) home'

(10) spóla myndinni nið baks 'rewind the movie (the video-tape)(D)' negla bolíanum 'kick the ball(D) hard'

forvanda meillín 'forward the e-mail(D)'

rasta húðlókn 'demolish the apartment(D)'

(and other objects of verbs of qlimenting, shattering)

Note that objects which undergo movement are by definition zeroes since they undergo a change of location.

Some new verbs assign dative case in accordance with the semantic generalizations mentioned here (see Jóhanna Barðdald 2000, 2001b:155). Jóhanna Barðdald (p.c.) reports encountering dative objects with the borrowed verbs topikaífarna 'topicalize', skrambla 'scramble' and strandi 'strand' in discussions with linguists. Jóhannes
Gislí Jónsson (p.c.) also reports that a student at Hf used dative with kjönnaférra ‘topicalization, from’, as illustrated in (11a), although the verb férra ‘move’ is traditionally a verb taking an accusative object. Other examples of a similar kind are given in (11b-d):

(11) a. kjönnaférra líðnum ‘topicalize the phrase(D)’  
    b. férg peista honum bara á aftur.
    ‘I just paste it(D) back on again.’
    c. áilla fekkum ‘delete the file(D)’
    d. Hana faxaði samningnum til þjón.
    ‘He faxed contract-the(D) to you.’

The verb unferma ‘reload’, which is ‘half-artificial’ but used at least in EEA translations,5 assigns dative case to the object moved (the goods trucked or shipped). In all these examples, the object is by definition a theme; the verbal argument which undergoes a change of state or location. The existence of dative themes is a feature of the case-system which makes Icelandic cross-linguistically unusual (cf. Maling 2001 for relevant discussion).

In the remaining sections of this paper, I discuss various semantic subclasses of verbs governing dative case in modern Icelandic, beginning with ditransitive verbs (three-place predicates), where the semantic classification is clearest.

3. Dative objects with ditransitive verbs

3.1 Introduction

Ditransitive verbs in Icelandic occur in the following case frames (cf. e.g. YMJ 1987 and references cited there — the numbers in parentheses are based on the rough frequency estimates given by YMJ):

(12) NDA 
    gefa e-m e-ð ‘give somebody(D) something(A)’ (75+)
    NAD 
    sókka e-n e-a ‘deprive somebody(A) of something(D)’

5 This observation is due to Kenova Kaut (p.c.).
NAD  sprýja e-n e-s 'ask somebody(A) something(G)' (10)
NDD  kifa e-m e-u 'promise somebody(D) something(D)' (10)
NUG  sújja e-m e-a 'lend somebody(D) something(G)' (15)
NAA  kost e-n e-b e-s 'cost somebody(A) something(A)' (2)

As the reader will note, the first argument (the subject) is always nominative and hence it is omitted in the examples in (12). The NDA case frame is by far the most common one for ditransitive verbs but the NAD frame is also fairly common. In Icelandic, as in the other Germanic languages, the indirect object is the linearly first object, the intended recipient, hence typically human, "the person for whom something is done or to whom something happens" (Stefín Erlingsson 1945:107). Dative is generally said to be the case of the indirect object of a ditransitive (double object) verb, e.g. geða 'give': húna geð mér bokina 'he gave me(D) the book(A). The accusative direct object is then theme.

The dative is thus used for the recipient of verbs like geða 'give' but it is also used for beneficiaries (or maleficiaries) of verbs like auðvelda 'make easier'. Recipients and beneficiaries may be considered subtypes of the thematic role goal and some examples are given in (13):

(13a) Recipient dative:
geða 'give', hjóta 'offer', lóma 'loan', brjóta 'rent', segja 'say', selja 'sell', venda 'sell', sýna 'show', veita 'award, offer'

b. Benefactive dative:
auðvelda, leiða 'make easier'; torvelds 'make harder'; selja e-m tindamóti 'set someone(D) a deadline(A)'; haða e-m sorg 'cause somebody(D) grief(A)'; haða e-m vandfráði 'make trouble for somebody' (lit. 'make somebody(D) trouble(A)'); baða sér e-b (til) 'make oneself(D) something(A)'; fjáð sér e-b 'get oneself(D) something(A)'; heija sér orðafórða 'acquire a vocabulary' (lit. 'acquire oneself(D) vocabulary(A)'); nöfta sér e-b 'make use of something' (lit. 'make use of oneself(D) something(A)')

As we will see below, these two semantic roles are the most common ones that can be associated with the dative.
In the following subsections I will give an overview of the case frames of ditransitive verbs in Icelandic, concentrating on the semantic role of the dative arguments. For the sake of completeness, and for comparative purposes, it will be necessary to also include case frames where no argument is marked with the dative case, i.e. the NAG and NAA case frames.

3.2 An overview of the case frames

3.2.1 The NDA case frame

Although the NDA case frame is by far the most common one for ditransitive verbs (cf. (12)), it is not clear to what extent this case frame is productive. The borrowed verb *e-mail* can be used ditransitively by some speakers, as illustrated in (14):

(14) *Hún hefur meiðað mér myndina.*

*She has e-mailed me the picture.*

On the other hand, the verb *fax* 'fax', which might be expected to take two objects both on semantic grounds and on the usage in the source language, instead takes a single NP object plus a prepositional phrase; for some speakers (15b) is not possible. It is interesting that there is idiosyncratic variation in the case-marking on the object, with some speakers using accusative on the theme, as in (15a), while others use dative, as illustrated in (16a) (% indicates idiosyncratic variation with respect to acceptability):

(15a). *Geturðu faxað samninginn til mín?*

'Can you fax the contract(A) to me?'

b. %*Geturðu faxað ráð samninginn?*

'Can you fax me(D) the contract(A)?'

(16a). *Geturðu faxað samningnum til mín?*

'Can you fax the contract(D) to me?'

b. %*Geturðu faxað mér samningnum?*

'Can you fax me(D) the contract(D)?
Johanna Bæðað (2001b:155) accounts for the observed variation in case-marking in terms of two possible analyses: verbs of transfer typically assign accusative to the direct object, whereas the cause-motion construction, which focuses on the change of location undergone by the object, is associated with dative case.

It is worth mentioning here that the PP with til 'to' indicating the goal with verbs of this kind is not as productive as the to-phrase in English, as shown by the fact that it cannot be used with gefa 'give' although it can be used with senda 'send'.

(17)a. Hún hefur meilað myndina til mín.
     she has e-mailed picture-the(A) to me.

b. Hún hefur gefið myndina til mín.
     she has given picture-the(A) to me.

c. Hún hefur sent myndina til mín.
     she has sent picture-the(A) to me.

As discussed in greater detail below, there are cross-linguistic differences as to which verbs can occur with the NDA case frame, taking two NP objects. Whatever the productivity of the NDA case pattern in Icelandic, dative case is by no means restricted to the indirect (first) object of a ditransitive verb, nor is the indirect object always marked dative, as we have seen.

3.2.2 The NAD case frame

For some verbs, it is the second object which is marked dative, and the first object which is marked accusative. It is useful to distinguish two subclasses based on the semantics of the two arguments. The first subtype consists of ditransitive verbs where (accusative) indirect object is more a source than a recipient. This difference in thematic role is reflected in the English translation. The accusative first object is semantically a source rather than a goal (recipient — see YMI 1987 and references cited there for discussion). Here and elsewhere *indicates obsolete usage, but such examples can typically be found in Cleasby-Vigfusson, for instance.
(18) rana e-n e-u  "rob somebody(A) of something(D)"
    (cf. rana e-fred e-m "rob sth(D) from sb")
spita e-n e-u  "deprive somebody(A) of something(D)"
fitra e-n e-u  "save somebody(A) from something(D)"
nya e-n e-u  "conceal something(D) from somebody(A)"
    (lit. "conceal somebody(A) something(D)")
verja e-n e-u  "protect somebody(A) against something(D)"
    (now only vernda e-n styrt e-u)
þæla e-n e-u  "steal something(D) from somebody(A)"
    (cf. Hverir eru þessir þjófrar, er ... stæla mik
     eign miða? (IF V, 239) 'Who are these thieves,
     who rob me[A] [of] my property(D)?'

Stefán Einarsson (1945:108, section I.3.1(f)) describes the use of
ative on the second object as ablative in sense, as does Hálfdán
Hálfdársson (n.d., p. 56). The corresponding German verbs, e.g.,
stehlen 'steal', rauben 'rob', typically occur with the basic NTA case
frame if dittisitive, i.e., with a dative first object (the source, or
affected human participant) and an accusative second object.14

In the second type of NAD verbs, the accusative argument is the
affected object, presumably a patient. Unlike the typical indirect
object, it may be inanimate. The dative NP seems to be an adverbial
"instrumental" dative or a goal (the thing assimilated to), rather than
a true direct object. While it may be inaccurate to characterize these
verbs as having two objects, I include them here because they take two
"bare NP" complements, unmediated by a preposition.

(19) a. fleita e-n kláðum  "strip somebody of their clothes (by force)"
    b. samhafja e-ð e-u  "adapt/adjust/coordinate something to
        something else"
    c. sambatta e-ð e-u  "integrate something into something else"

14 The verb bróðan 'rob' occurs with a NAG case frame because of the prefix
br-.
3.2.3 The NAG case frame

As noted in the preceding section, it is the indirect object which bears accusative case for some verbs; in addition to NAD verbs like rena, sirpa, friru mentioned in the previous section, we can mention the following verbs with NAG case frame:

(202a. bi[x]a e:n e:n 'ask somebody for something'
b. s[e]yja e:n e:n 'ask somebody something'
c. k[e]jja e:n e:n 'demand something of somebody'
d. v[y]ja e:n e:n 'conceal something from somebody'

The class of verbs occurring in this case-frame is quite small (cf. (12))

3.2.4 The NDD case frame

For some verbs, both objects are marked dative; the linearly first dative is a recipient, the second the theme argument:

(212a. le[f]a e:m e:m 'promise somebody something'
b. skila e:m e:m 'return something to somebody'
(c. stih[la] t:m e:m 'distribute/hand out something to somebody' (lit. "hand out(s) th[is/that]")
d. valda e:m e:m 'cause something (e.g. vandradum 'problems'; fjot 'damage') for somebody'
e. huita e:m e:m 'promise' (literary)
f. forta e:m e:m 'sacrifice'
g. t[b]e[f]a e:m e:m 'sacrifice'
For at least some of these verbs, the second dative is derived from
an IE instrumental (Halkdór Halldórsson n.d., p. 51):

(22)a. sværst e-m e-u ‘answer somebody with something’ (lit. “answer
shd(D) shd(D)’’)

b. lifa e-m e-u ‘threaten somebody with something’ (lit. “threaten
shd(D) shd(D)’’)

c. heita e-m e-u ‘promise somebody something’

The second dative, originally an adverbial in many cases at least, may
become a true object with a different semantic relationship to the verb,
as in (23) (cf. (7) above):

(23) Hún svaraði (mét) öllum spurningum.
the answered (mét(D)) all questions-the(D)

The class of verbs occurring in the NDD case frame is also small (cf.
(12)).

3.2.5 The NDG case frame
The fifth case frame for ditransitive verbs is NDG. The first object, the
one marked dative, is typically the beneficiary. Note the difference in
meaning between the NAG and NDG case frames for the verbs heita
and berða ‘ask’. The accusative indirect object (IO) is the goal of the
speech act, the person one asks, whereas the dative IO is the benefi-
ciary, the person on whose behalf one asks.

(24)a. þheita e-m e-s ‘request something for someone’

b. berða e-m e-s ‘ask for something on someone’s behalf’
   (e.g. berða e-m lifi’s ‘ask for clemency for someone’, berða e-m
   bíðhanna ‘curse someone’, berða sér kenju ‘propose to a woman’
   (lit. “ask oneself(D) a woman(G)”)

c. eðka e-m e-s ‘wish someone something’ (e.g. eðka e-m
   allra heilla ‘wish sb all the best’)

d. ryðja sér trúna ‘clear an area/space for oneself’ (mostly fig-
   uratively)
c. unna e-m e-s “grant someone something”
    (e.g. unna e-m santomellis “grant do sb justice (or fair discussion)"

f. varna e-m e-s “deny someone something, prevent someone from doing something”

g. afla e-m e-s “get something for someone”

This is presumably not a productive class of verbs, although it may be slightly larger than the NAG and NDD classes (cf. (12))

3.2.6 The NAA case frame

For the sake of completeness, I include the two triadic verbs which may occur in the NAA case frame, kosta ‘cost’ and taka ‘take’ (cf. ZMT 1985, YMJ 1987)

(25) beta kosta tvig two dollars / beta tik tvig two tins
    this cost metA two dollars(A) / this took metA three hours(A)

It isn’t clear whether these two verbs should be considered ditransitive. Neither object passivizes, presumably since the subjects are agents; moreover, the second postverbal NP is a measure phrase, hence passivizable an adverbial complement rather than a true object.

3.3 Restrictions on benefactive datives

In addition to dative indirect objects which are semantically recipients, Germanic languages have indirect objects which are semantically beneficiaries, i.e. the person for whose benefit the verbal action occurs. (For a few verbs, e.g. Icelandic torvelda e-m e-s ‘make something more difficult for somebody’, this argument would more accurately be termed a benefactive dative.) The difference in thematic role is reflected in the fact that in English, benefactive datives usually alternate with PPs headed by for rather than to. Compare the following, for instance (see Levin 1993 for a list of English verbs taking for-datives):

(26a) a. Throw me a towel = Throw a towel to me.
    b. Fix me a drink = Fix a drink for me.
Although the possibility of substituting a for-PP for a daative can frequently serve as a diagnostic for a benefactive daative, the existence of this particular PP-alternation should not be considered a necessary condition for analyzing a daative object as a benefactive, any more than a to-PP is for daative recipients. In Icelandic, unlike English, the benefactive daative often does not freely alternate with a PP:

(27)a. baka e-m sorg "cause someone grief" vs. *baka sorg fyrir e-n "cause someone trouble, create trouble for"
   b. baka e-m vandradst "cause someone trouble, create trouble for" vs. *baka vandradst fyrir e-n
   c. vinna e-m gagni vs. *vinna gagni fyrir e-n "do somebody a service"
   d. divrega e-m v. vs. *dvegja e-m fyrir e-n "get somebody something"

It seems that the more idiomatic the collocation, the less acceptable the PP-variant is, as illustrated by the contrast in (28). Sýnir e-m veinar in (28a) is a fixed expression, whereas in (28b) stýrir "shorten" has a literal interpretation:

(28)a. Sjónarvísir stýrir gamla fólkina standiðar. television the shortens old people-the(D) hours-the(A) "T.V. shortens the passage of time for the elderly."
   b. *Sjónarvísir stýrir standiðar fyrir gamla fólk. television-the shortens hours-the for the elderly
   c. Nýi vegarréttir akamennið leibina um mægri kilómetra. new road-the shortens way-the(D) way-the(A) by many kilometers "The new road shortens the way for the driver by many kilometers.
   d. *Nýi vegarréttir leibina fyrir akamennið um mægri kilómetra. new road-the shortens way-the for driver-the by many kilometers "The new road shortens the way for the driver by many kilometers."

The fact that the PP-variant is compatible only with a fairly literal reading is reminiscent of the well-known constraints on the daative-alternation in English. Idiomatic expressions like give someone the finger can only be used in the double-object construction; using the
PP-variant (prie for finger to someone) imposes an implausible, and hence comical, literal reading involving the transfer of a dismembered body part.

In Icelandic the benefactive dative occurs in either the NDA or NDG case frame. The dative is most commonly a reflexive, and for many verbs only a reflexive dative is possible. The verbs in (29) take a reflexive dative; the direct object is marked accusative unless otherwise noted:

(29a) a. hlaða sér eða pl ‘make oneself(D) something, prepare’
    b. fá sér eða ‘get oneself something’
       (ct. Eg auti og fá mér fis: ‘I’m going to have fish’)
    c. hefja sér orðaforda ‘build up a vocabulary’
    d. hlaða sér hakki ‘make oneself(D) coffee’
    e. leita sér eða ‘look for something (NDG)
    f. nefjara sér eða ‘make use of’
    g. rýða sér ōma ‘clear oneself(D) space’ (figuratively) (NDG)
    h. veiða sér bök á þókafund ‘get oneself(D) a book from the library’
    i. ræða sér eða ‘adopt for oneself’
    j. áður sér eða ‘prepare/make oneself(D) something’
    k. velja sér eða ‘choose something for oneself’

However, the verbs in (30) naturally occur with a nonreflexive dative (see Jón Jónsson 2000 for additional examples):

(30a) a. aðveida e-m eða ‘make something easier for somebody, facilitate’
    b. hlaða e-m lif ‘ask for mercy for someone’ (NDG)
    c. blanda e-m eða (b.d. dryki) ‘mix somebody(D) something, e.g. a drink’
    d. finna e-m starf við hafi ‘find somebody(D) a job suited to his/her ability’
    e. lýsa e-m eða ‘lighten something for somebody’
    f. setja e-m tímanþrið ‘set somebody(D) a deadline’
    g. skaffa e-m hátt ‘get housing for somebody’
h. skönnja e-m drýkk 'pour somebody(D) a drink'
i. stytta e-m e-d 'shorten something for somebody'
j. sækja e-m e-d 'seek/look for something for somebody'
k. torvelda e-m e-d 'make something more difficult for somebody'
l. tryggja e-m e-d 'guarantee something for somebody'
m. skræma e-m e-d 'obtain something for somebody'
n. vinnu e-m gagn 'do someone(D) a service'

It is worth emphasizing here that the classes of verbs which can take such benefactive datives are not the same in Icelandic and English. For example, the Icelandic verb auðveldla e-m e-d 'make something easier for someone' has no ditransitive counterpart in English ('to facilitate somebody something'), whereas the everyday English Bake me a cake! cannot be rendered naturally in Icelandic with a benefactive dative ('Bakaðu mér köku!'), despite the existence of the above-quoted fixed idiomatic expressions with baka 'bake'.

It has frequently been noted that benefactive objects are less productive in Modern Icelandic than in English or the mainland Scandinavian languages (Holmberg & Platzack 1995:201–204, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1995, Johanna Barðdal 2001b:189–190). However, it is an overstatement to claim (as Holmberg & Platzack do15) that modern Icelandic lacks nonreflexive benefactive indirect objects altogether. There are a number of ditransitive verbs with NDA case frame whose first object is a benefactive, as illustrated above. In addition, some of the verbs that occur in the NDG frame appear to allow benefactive reading of the datives:

15 Holmberg & Platzack derive this as a consequence of their hypothesis that dative is a lexical case in Icelandic but a structural case in English, Faroese and the mainland Scandinavian languages. If lexical case can only be associated with verbal arguments, then it should not be associated with adjectives, including benefactives or byfactives. While verbs like auðveldla 'make easier, facilitate', leita 'search' and torvelda 'make more difficult' arguably assign the benefactive thematic role directly to the dative NE and thus would not necessarily undermine their hypothesis, many of the verbs cited here are clearly counterexamples to any claim that nonreflexive benefactive objects are completely lacking in modern Icelandic.
It is true, however, that benefactive datives are certainly most common as reflexives and many speakers find such sentences odd when the dative NP is nonreflexive (e.g. hið mér kaffi vs. hún kaffi / hún má kaffi?). But for all speakers, there are many verbs which can take a nonreflexive benefactive dative. In addition to aðvelda ‘make easier’, léta ‘facilitate’ and torvelda ‘make (more) difficult’, where the benefactive dative is plausibly a verbal argument licensed by the verb’s meaning, we find among the verbs in (30) examples of benefactives which are probably adjuncts rather than arguments: hunda e·m drykk ‘mix someone a drink’, settja e·m ínámörk ‘set someone a deadline’, sýta e·m léttna ‘shorten the way for somebody’.

Note that in English, some of these benefactive datives must be expressed as a PP (*choose oneself something, *lighten oneself the load), so that the class of verbs that can occur with a benefactive dative in Icelandic is not simply a subset of the verbs that can take a benefactive dative in English (cf. Leivin 1993) or Swedish. For some verbs, e.g. baka ‘bake’, the benefactive dative is possible only in certain idiomatic expressions:

(32a) baka e·m sorg ‘cause somebody grief’
    b. baka e·m vántrarið ‘make trouble for somebody’
    c. *baka e·m smálokar ‘bake somebody cookies’
    (baki baka kikur lands e·m ‘bake cookies for somebody’)
    d. *Han bakiði mér afmæliðskýr.
    ‘She baked me a birthday cake.’

The potential productivity of the construction is nicely illustrated by a clearly novel use of a benefactive/malbenefactive dative in the late 19th century example in (3). from the OH collection:
Joan Maling

(33) ... ás skíta ... honum [kaupmannnum] stylitki. (1883)
to shut him(D) [the merchant] a turd

Interestingly, the intuition among those familiar with OE is that benefactive datives were in fact more common than in the modern language. The OE examples in (34) are no longer possible:

(34)a. þéa sér hilt `go fishing to get oneself(D) a share of the catch'
b. þakera e-m skýrstu `cut (i.e. make) somebody(D) a shirt'
c. þkúupa e-m ífey `buy someone a ship'
    (cf. the stanza in Egil's saga:
     þat mætti mín niðrið ouð styldu kúupa/fíey
     `My mother said that (for) me(D) should be bought a ship ...'
     [I II, 100])

The example in (34a), þéa sér hilt `go fishing to get oneself a share of the catch', occurs six times in the OH collection of written Icelandic from 1540 on, but is impossible in Modern Icelandic. If there was more rather than less lexical case-marking in earlier periods than in the modern language, then the decline of benefactive datives is the opposite of what would be expected under Holmberg & Flotaek's analysis, under which the productive use of the benefactive dative is attributed to structural assignment of dative case.

3.4 Passivization of ditransitive verbs

3.4.1 Passivization of different arguments

For many ditransitive verbs, either the first or second object may passivize. This is true for the recipient subclass of NDA ditransitives as illustrated in (35):

(35)a. Mör voru gefnar þessar bákur (jélágafí)
    me(D) were given(pl.) these books(pl.N) as Christmas present
    `I was given these books for Christmas.'

b. þessar bákur voru gefnar mör (jélágafí)
    these books(pl.N) were given(pl.) me(D) as Christmas present

As already pointed out by Stefan Dimarsson (1943), the dative case on the indirect object is preserved in the passive. Note that the retained object heitar is marked nominative rather than accusative in the passive voice in (35a); as a consequence, the finite verb and the passive participle agree with heitar rather than with the dative grammatical subject (cf. YMJ 1985, YMJ 1987, inter alia, for theoretical accounts of the case switch on the retained object). This is not so surprising when one takes into account the fact that nominative objects also occur in modern Icelandic sentences in the active voice. In fact, as Johanna Bárðdís (2001b:87) observes, nominative is actually more frequent than genitive on verbal objects, in her modern Icelandic corpus of 40,000 words, there were 110 nominative objects as compared to only 38 gerative objects. Nominative objects were more common in the spoken corpus (15,000 words) than in the written corpus (25,000 words), since "the main difference between the two corpora is that oblique subjects, especially dative subjects, are more common in the spoken language than in the written genres" (Johanna Bárðdís 2001b:88).

The passivization possibilities for the benefactive subclass of NDA verbs have not been studied systematically, but certainly deserve closer attention. For some verbs of this class, either object may passivize, at least marginally, as illustrated in (36):

students-the(D) were set(pl,N) these deadlines(pl,N) right in the first class.

b. (3) Jessi fimmru voru set nemendunum strax í fyrstu frá og.
these deadlines(N) were set students-the(D) right in the first class.

"The students were set this deadline right in the first class."

"This deadline was set for the students right in the first class."

But the examples in (37)-(38) suggest that the benefactive subclass needs to be distinguished from the prototypical NDA verbs whose indirect object is a recipient.
37a. priest-th(e)N asked sinner-th(e)D God’s blessing(G) God’s blessing.
   a. Syndaranum var bebind blessun: gud:.
   b. "Syndaranum var bebind blessun: gud:.

38a. Bilun: vinun:.
   b. Henni var torveldu: vinun: (af bilunini).

For many speakers, the dative object of the benefactive subclass does not passivize easily when the underlying subject is nonagentive, as in (38). However, if the subject is agentive, then passivization of the dative is possible. In either case, the theme argument undergoes passive across a benefactive indirect object only reluctantly. This contrasts with the synactic behavior of verbs taking recipient indirect objects (cf. the full acceptability of (35b) above):

39a. stepmother-th(e)D made-difficult work-th(e)A work-th(e)D.
   b. Henni var torveldu: vinun: (af stömpoðurinni).

If one considers other types of ditransitive verbs, the generalization seems to be that the second object may not passivize across the first one. This is illustrated in (40) for NAD verbs:

16 Note also passivization is generally unacceptable when the subject of the active voice is nonagentive, as we have seen. This holds, for instance, for NAD-verbs like skiptu er na: "matter to someone."

40a. Puh skipti milg enga noll.
   b. Eg var skip: enga noll.

40b. I didn’t matter to me."
The case holds for NAG-verbs. The accusative object may always passivize (given that the active subject is genitive), but the genitive second object may not passivize across the accusative first object:

(41a). Narmarinn bað kennanam aldrari hjálpar, studen-the asked teacher-the(A) never help(G)
    'The student never asked the teacher for help.'

b. Kennarinn var aldrari beðið hjálpar, teacher-the(N) was never asked help(G)
    'The teacher was never asked for help.'
c. *Hjálpar var aldrari beðið kennarinn, help(G) was never asked teacher-the(N)

Similarly, for NDD-verbs the first dative object (the “indirect object”) passivizes freely but the dative second object may passivize only if the goal argument is realized as a PP, i.e. it may not passivize across the dative indirect object, as illustrated here with the examples from ZMT (42) and (43) (see ZMT 1985, YMJ 1987 for further discussion and examples):

(42a). Eg skilaði henni peningum. (=ZMT ex. (42a-c))
    I returned her(D) money-the(D)
    'I gave her back the money.'

b. Henri var skilað peningum, she(D) was returned money-the(D)
    'She was given back the money.'
c. *Peningum var skilaði henni, money-the(D) was returned her(D)

(43a). Þeg skilaði peningum til honar. (= ZMT ex. (43a,b))
    I returned money-the(D) to her
b. Peningantun var skilað til hennar.

money-the(D) was returned to her

This apparent “cross-over restriction” on passivization of many ditransitive verbs calls for an explanation and one suggestion is described in the next section.

3.4.2 Correlation between passive and inversion

It has been argued that the existence of two different passives for the NDA class of ditransitives is correlated with the existence of two different word orders (Collins & Thráinsson 1996) is the active. Only the NDA class allows the inverted word order in which the theme object precedes the goal object. This is illustrated by the contrasts between the NDA verb gifa ‘give’ in (44a-d), and the NAD verb svipa ‘deprive’ in (45a-4). Note that in these examples, the semantics and form of the two objects have been carefully controlled: both are [+human, +animate, +definite, -pronominal].

(44a). Þær gafu konunginum ambíttina.

they gave king-the(D) slave-girl-the(A)

“They gave the king the slave-girl.”

b. Þær gafu konunginum ambíttina

they gave slave-girl-the(A) [to] king-the(D)

“They gave the slave-girl [to] the king.”

c. Konunginum var gefin

king-the(D) was given

“The king was given the slave-girl.”

d. Ambíttina var gefin konunginum.

slave-girl-the(N) was given

“The slave-girl was given [to] the king.”

(45a). Sjörinn svipti konuna einismanninum.

sea-the(N) deprived woman-the(A) husband-the(D)

“The sea deprived the women of her husband.”

b. *Sjörinn svipti einismanninum konuna.

sea-the(N) deprived [of] husband-the(D) woman-the(A)
c. Konan var svipt eiginnaminum.
woman-the(N) was deprived [of] husband-the(D)
"The woman was deprived of her husband."

d. *Eiginnaminum var svipt konan.
husband-the(D) was deprived woman-the(N)

There is also an interaction between inversion and reflexivization, at least for those speakers who allow nonsubject antecedents (for discussion see Eiríkur Rúgavallason 1982:133–135, ZMT 1985, section 4.2).

As noted earlier, the syntactic behavior of verbs taking benefactive datives has not been systematically investigated. As illustrated by the ungrammaticality of the inverted word order in (46b), these NDA verbs do not behave like the prototypical NDA verbs with a recipient dative.

(46)a. Stjórnóður tveitaði príssessunní viðnuma
stepmother-the made difficult princess-the(A)
"The stepmother made the work difficult for the princess."
b. *Stjórnóðinu tveitaði viðnuma príssessunní.
c. *?Vinnan var tveitaður príssessunní.
work-the was made-difficult princess-the(D)
"The work was made difficult for the princess."

As noted earlier (cf. the discussion around (39)), the theme argument undergoes passive only reluctantly, as illustrated by (46c). It is worth pointing out, however, that the passive is typically better than the presumed source with inverted word order, even for the recipient dative (Jóhannes Gisli Jónason, p.c.).

4. Dative objects with monotransitive verbs

4.1 Introduction

Many monotransitive verbs which take only a single object govern dative case and the prototypical transitive verb governing dative is probably hjálpa 'help.' Verbs with similar meanings also tend to ge-
Verbs of helping

In (47) I have listed several verbs of helping that take dative objects:


Here I have included verbs of rescue (bjarga, forða) in the semantic class of helping. But although this is arguably the prototypical class of verbs taking dative objects, there are some very common exceptions to this generalization, i.e. verbs with similar meanings which nonetheless take accusative objects. Consider the following (cf. also the discussion in section 1):

(48) taking a dative object: taking an accusative object:
   líttna ‘assist’ vs. ananna ‘assist’
   hjárka ‘nurse’ vs. lekka ‘heal’
   hjálpa ‘help’ vs. umkja ‘support’

If the semantic class of helping is extended to include objects which are in some sense beneficiaries, then we might add verbs like these, which all take dative objects:

(49) eira ‘show mercy’, hifla ‘protect’, mistnna ‘take pity on’, vargja ‘spare’, fyrna ‘spare’
   bkr ‘lull (a baby)’, hósa ‘lull (a baby)’, vaggja ‘lull (a baby)’

But here, too, it is possible to find exceptions and come up with near-minimal pairs like these:

17 The various verbs of lulling babies into sleep could also be related to the verbs whose objects undergo movement (cf. section 4.5).
(50) taking a dative object: taking an accusative object: 
*hefða* 'protect' vs. *vernda* 'protect'

The dative nominal in the two curious examples in (51) are semantically benedictive:

(51a) Hverjum klukkan glymur. 

'For whom the bell tolls.' [the title of the famous novel] 

b. Búrfjöllum var vendiðegar snýs.

'The children(0) were carefully [helped to] blow their coxes.' (OH)

Note that the dative in (51b) must be analyzed as a verbal argument, since it has become the grammatical subject of the passive voice.

Plausibly belonging to the same semantic class are the objects of verbs trusting *treysa* 'trust', *tréða* 'believe'), which take dative objects. Halldór Halldórsson (n.d., pp. 3–4) also includes *heita* 'greet', *una* 'love', *höfða* 'praise', as well as verbs indicating usefulness, convenience, appropriateness, etc., such as *henta* 'wait' and *þyrra* 'be appropriate'.

(52a) Þessi konungrin hoppar áður höfða þenda mér vel.

'This textbook has never suited me(D) well.'

b. Ílla samtri þér að herpyk (mót) mér.

'It suits you badly to fight against me.' (HH, from Flateyjarbók)

As is the case of diritransitives, we do not only have dative objects that have the semantic role of a beneficiary but also dative objects that have the role of a recipient rather than a beneficiary, although the difference is not always clear cut. Some examples are given in (53):

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18 Some of the verbs discussed above, such as *grápa* 'be of value', and *henta* 'suit', are 'alternating verbs' in the sense that the dative argument can be either grammatical subject or object, as can be instantiated both from the behavior of the argument in the subject-verb inversion or direct question like these (see also Johansen Kransál 2001c):

(53a) Hefur þér áður höfða þena?

has you(D) never suited this

b. Hefur þena áður höfða þér?

has this(N) never suited you

Has this never suited you?
(53) gefa (harunnunum) 'feed (the chickens(D))', kenna (hórnunum) 'teach (the children(D))', segja (enunum) 'tell (nobody(D))' vatrna (hestum) 'water (horses(D))', brynna (skeppum) 'water (animals(D))'

For verbs like gefa, kenna and segja one could argue that here the direct accusative object has been left out, although it is often claimed that the direct object (the theme argument) of a ditransitive is always obligatory, whereas the indirect object (the goal argument) tends to be optional (cf. Hudson 1992). While this generalization is certainly by-and-large true, the verb gefa in the sense of ‘feed’ works the other way, as does the verb feed in English (I fed the children) I fed oatmeal. For verbs like kenna ‘teach’ and segja ‘tell’ both objects are optional in Icelandic as well as in English (Don’t tell the children! Always tell the truth). Note that in Icelandic, the same lexical item, the verb gefa ‘give’, is used to mean both ‘give’ and ‘feed’.

The fact that the normally ditransitive verb gefa ‘give’ can be used as a monotransitive verb meaning ‘feed’ brings to mind a class of analyses for verbs governing dative. Kress (1982:215) suggests that many transitive verbs which govern dative are really covert ditransitives with an implicit accusative cognate object.19 Wegener (1991) offers a similar analysis for German in support of her claim that in German dative is a structural case predictably assigned to second (indirect) objects. Heidolph et al. (1984:346) suggest that for the German verb glauben ‘believe’, the accusative object has been eliminated, leaving the dative behind: Ich glaube dir (das), was du sagst ‘I believe you(D) (it(A1)), what you say’. It should be clear that this kind of analysis cannot account for the much wider thematic range of dative objects that exist in Icelandic.

4.3. Experiencers and verbs taking experiencer objects

Most experiencer subjects are actually nominative (cf. Johannes Gisl Jónsson 1997, Jóhannes Barðdal 2001a:100, 187), but it is dative experiencer subjects which have received the most attention in the linguistic literature cross-linguistically. In Icelandic at least, dative experiencers are typically grammatical subjects: *mér leitði ati bórð* 'I was bored', *mér leið vel mi vél wél 'I was well', *mér er kólt 'I feel cold'. Such subjects have therefore not been included in the list of dative objects. As has often been noted (Halliday Armanné Sigurðsson 1989, Jóhannes Barðdal 1992, inter alia), many predicates taking dative experiencers exhibit case alternations: the subject is marked dative if it is a human (or at least animate) experiencer, but nominative otherwise (i.e. if the experiencer is not an experiencer, but a theme, the thing that undergoes the change of state or location denoted by the predicate).

(54). Dative experiencer subject. Nominative theme subject:

   "She(D) recovered immediately." 'The weather(N) improved immediately.'

b. *Henni bætti í kímmi.* Stramnir bætti í sölinni.
   'Her(D) gets-hat in cheek.' 'Snowy hat on hat.'

c. *Her cheeks are getting warm.* *Heiður bætti í sölína*
   'She gets-hat on cheek.' 'The snow(N) is hot up in the sunshine.'

d. *Heiður fættu.* Hin er kólt.
   'She(D) feels cold.' 'It is cold.'

With nominative case on the subject, the adjectival *kald*('hot')/kólt('cold') normally has a figurative meaning when predicated of an animate being, but it can also mean literally cold, for example, to describe an avalanche survivor whose body temperature is cold as a result of having been buried in the snow for hours.

Experiencer objects also tend to be marked dative:

(55) *greitha barni* 'comb the child's hair' (lit. "comb the child(D)"). *kritthlí* *ev* ‘warm somebody(D)’. *orm* *sér* ‘warm oneself(D)’. *stríða kettinni* 'put the cat(D)'. *po* *barmi* 'wash the child(D)'.

Interesting case alternations can also be found here with an experiencer object bearing dative case whereas a theme gets marked accusative (cf. Jóhanna Barðdal 1992 for further examples and discussion):

(56) Dative experiencer object:

- *goða barnina* 'comb the child's hair'
- *hína henni á fórum* 'warm her feet'
- *híja séi 'warm oneself'
- *húna heittina* 'comb the bone'
- *klíra séi 'scratch an itch'
- *stína hurninna* 'wipe the child'
- *stjóra kettinum* 'put the cat'
- *fúnika barnina* 'dry the child'
- *fro hurninna* 'wash the child'

Accusative theme object:

- *goða hörin 'comb one's hair'
- *hína kaffi 'heat the coffee'
- *híja cónina 'warm the comfortable'
- *húna allina 'comb the wood'
- *klíra en 'scratch leaving marks'
- *stíina rassína á hurninna 'wipe the child's bones'
- *stjóra hóuleggum á séi 'put one's arm'
- *fúnikia fúminna 'dry the laundry'
- *fro persóna 'wash the sweater'

Note the difference in meaning between *klíra séi 'scratch an itch'* and *klíra rassína á hurninna 'wipe the child's bones'*.

(57a) Ég klóraði kettinum.

- 'I scratched the cat.'

b. Kotturinn klóraði mig.

- 'The cat scratched me.'

c. Hún klóraði séi í höfinu.

- 'She scratched her head.' (lit. 'scratched herself(D) in the head')

d. Hún klóraði sig til að þykjaðaða meiða sig.

- 'She(N) scratched herself(A) in order to appear to have hurt herself.'

With at least some of these verbs, an animate object could conceivably be marked accusative (húna hurninna), but an inanimate object could never be marked dative: *húna rassína á hurninna.*

20 There may also be a change in progress, generalizing the dative as the case for object experiencers. Thus neither the Icelandic dictionary edited by Ásriður H. Jónsdóttir (1999) nor the Icelandic-English dictionary edited by Sigfús Ólafsson (1930–24) gave a form with dative in the relevant reading. There is possibly also some dialectal or
Sigmundsson (2002) cites the following minimal pair with the verb *bæ*o ‘wash’:

(58)a. *bæ*o barnið ‘wash the child(D)’

b. *bæ*o fæðun ‘wash the prisoners(A)’

Here the use of accusative on the animate object serves to indicate that the ‘prisoners’ are dehumanized or objectified.

On the other hand, as noted by Jóhanna Búddal (1992, 1993), many similar verbs take only accusative, regardless of whether or not the object is a human experiencer:

(59)a. bæða barnið ‘bathe the child’

b. bursa sig ‘brush (one’s teeth)’

c. lagi sig ‘fix up’

d. punta sig ‘get dressed up’

e. raka sig ‘shave’

f. ræskja sig ‘clear one’s throat’

g. snýra sig ‘fix oneself up’

b. sóla sig ‘sandbathe’

etc.

Note also that the verb *trafla* ‘disturb, bother’ governs accusative, even when the object is human (cf. (60a)). However, I heard the example in (60b), with dative instead of the standard accusative, presumably reflecting the tendency for human objects to be marked dative:

(60)a. Hæv traflaði mig/fundinn.

b. Ekkv traflaði mið! (Hilda R. S., age 2,11)

‘He disturbed me(A)/the meeting(A).’

‘Don’t bother me(D).’

As discussed below in section 4.5, verbs of movement tend to assign only dative to the moved object: *bylu* ‘overturn’, *rólu* ‘swing’.

Idiomatic variation here. According to “Bókkríður Búddal” (p.c.), the verb *skóma* always governs accusative in the north of Iceland.
rugga 'rock, swing'; šia 'push'. It makes no difference whether or not the object is a human experience/undergoer:

(a) rugga termen 'rock the child(D)'; rugga bītām 'rock the boat(D)'
(b) šia manētām 'push the man(D)'; šia bītām 'push the car(D)'

For these verbs, the case on the verbal object has clearly been grammaticalized, and is insensitive to the semantics of the sentence. The same might be said about trugla 'bother someone', whose object is usually an animate experiencer (or by extension trugla fjordan 'disturb the meeting'), but here the accusative has been generalized.

4.4 Verbs of bodily and heavenly emissions

One of the more curious classes of verbs governing dative is the semantic class which might be characterized as "verbs of bodily and heavenly emissions". Without exception (as far as I know), verbs meaning 'vomit' and verbs referring to other bodily excretions govern dative when used transitively. One example is the colloquial expression Hedurū a dī skētā peningum? 'Do you think I shit money(D)?' which is the functional equivalent of the English Do you think money grows on trees? These verbs include:

(62) šabha, spia, aša 'vomit'; pissa, miga, spurā 'urinate'; drul-
la, hergba sēr, kōka, skāj; feces'; skypa, spīja, spīya 'spit';
sēga 'drool'; hēsta sālimbādhi 'cough up mucus/blood'; sīfē 
(sēr); 'blow one's nose'; rota 'belch, burp'; press; spūmpa 
'fart'; brunda 'ejaculate'; bēndhi 'bleed'; 'ganga bōdhi 'hem-
orrhage'.

Examples can be found throughout the recorded period, as illustrated by the following examples; (63a), taken from the OHT, is from the mid 19th century (collection of folk tales), whereas (63b) is from a late 20th century novel.

(63a) Nautiś meig jā ētu vártiša, sem bōdhi dākkī īr māmānī. 
bull the urinated then all water-die(D) that it drank from river-the
Then the bull urinated all the water that it drank from the river.
8. Ég þóstí að Randr hafði slefnir morgum hirnum af munavatni á grúftryps. ‘I suspected that Randr had dooled many liters of saliva on the rug.’

This semantic generalization seems to be acquired early. A four-year-old boy who had been vomiting all day was heard to say playfully the following:23

(64) Ég prampaði gabbirun. (Kári, age 4)
I farted vomit-the(D)

This generalization holds only of verbs which are normally intransitive. Verbs which are usually transitive, e.g. þéysa ‘cause to gush forth’, may govern accusative. The following example from Egill’s saga is cited by Valfells & Catley (1981:141):

(65) Siðan þéysti Egill upp át sét spjú runki.
then gushed Egill up from self vomit pret(A)

Then Egill gushed forth much vomit.’

Although this sentence would be impossible in modern Icelandic, the use of accusative is reminiscent of the case-marking on cognate objects (see below, section 4.7), which are marked dative if the verb is normally intransitive, but otherwise get the same case as any other object.

The verbs in (66) take an accusative object in the sense of dirtying something or someone when combined with the particle át ‘out’, as does the inchoative verb óhrinka ‘soil, dirty’, that is, when the object denotes the locatum,24 giving rise to dative/accusative alternations:

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23 I am indebted to Helgi Skóli Jónsson (p.c.) for this example.
22 In the OFI collection is a colorful example from the late 10th century of þéysa with an accusative object emoting a body part rather than the substance emoted:
23 snar kama þéysa fio mástarnar hana þánger fóti Blóð vi
‘whenever blows his nostrils hard from blood-vat’

This is impossible in Modern Icelandic with either dative or accusative on the body part.
[66a. *slefa musavatni* ‘dried saliva(D)’
  vs. *slefu sig it* ‘dirty oneself(A) drooling’
  b. *skita peningum* ‘shit money(D)’
  vs. *skita e-di it* ‘make something(A) dirty, *skita e-n uit* ‘put somebody(A) down’

This appears to constitute a semantic subregularity; the subclass of verbs meaning ‘make dirty’ all seem to govern accusative. Other examples include *blia e-di it* ‘soil something’, *dralla e-di it* ‘soil something’, *söda e-di it* ‘dirty something, make a mess somewhere’. Verbs referring to the bearing of young or the laying of eggs generally govern dative:

[67] *verpa eggium* ‘lay eggs’; *unga uie kleka eggium* ‘batch’; *bera lombum* ‘lamb/ calf’; *göda hvolumpum* ‘kitten’
  *pups/kittens*; *göda hrognum* ‘spawn roe’; *karla folau* ‘foal’

Note that the verb *bera* ‘bear’, said of cows and sheep, governs dative in this sense even though it governs accusative in the sense of ‘carry’.

[68a. *ærin bar* tveimur lombum/ two lônhe.
  ewe-the bore two lambs(D)(A)
  b. *kýrin bar* svörtum kálf/ svartan kálf.
  cow-the bore [a] black calf(D)(A)
  c. *pjórinn bar* *mánum/mástin* á borb.
  waiter-the(N) bore food-the(D)(A) to [the] table.

Note that *kasta* and *verpa* (cf. the lst in [67]) have ‘throw’ as their basic meaning, in which sense they also govern dative, as does *göda* in the expression *göda magna um ili es* ‘look sideways at someone’ (lit. ‘bear eyes(D) towards’). Governor dative. Overall, nonhuman objects of these verbs of bearing are almost always dative. However, the verbs used for humans, *slefa* ‘give birth’, *egna horn* ‘have a child’ and *ada* (a general) ‘bear (offspring)’; govern accusative. Perhaps this

[23] Although no motion seems to be involved, the verb *slefa* ‘dirty, make a mess’ governs dative in the sense *slefa e-di it* ‘make sloppy work of something’.
is because these verbs are not restricted to this sense, but whatever the reason, they do not behave like *bera*, which governs accusative in the sense of 'carry' but dative in the sense of giving birth. The verb *ala* is not restricted to humans, and it can take a benefactive dative with an NDA case frame: *ala mannin staum barn* 'bear one’s husband(D) a child(A).

Also included in the semantic class of physical emissions are verbs of "heavenly emissions" such as *regn* 'rain' and *sniða* 'snow', which are, of course, generally intransitive, but which govern dative when used with a complement:

(69.a) Pað rigndi eldI og brunnstein.
   'It rained fire(D) and brimstone(D).'

b. *Spjarnstingurn* rigndi yfir meistaran.
   'The winners/masters were showered with questions.' (lit. "It rained questions(D) over ...")

c. Pað rigndi blónum yfir liðkóna Díon trínessu.
   'It rained flowers(D) over Princess Diana’s caftan.'

d. Pað snjóðði englim.
   'It snowed angels(D).' (poetic)

The dative argument might, of course, be analyzed as the grammatical subject, even when postverbal, since it is usually indefinite and thus allows for an expletive; however, the dative case is determined by the semantics of the verb. Furthermore, the same dative case marking is found with transitive uses of similar verbs such as *spíla* 'spew':

(70) Eldfjall spíla eldI og eimyr yfir landI.
   'The volcanoes spew fire(D) and brimstone(D) over land-the
   'The volcanoes spew fire and brimstone over the land.'

4.5 Verbs whose objects undergo movement
4.5.1 The basic generalizations
As noted by Stefán Einarsson (1945:108) and Johannn Barðdal (1992, 1993), a verb whose object undergoes movement typically governs
dative. This is true, for instance, of verbs meaning 'throw', 'kick', 'roll' or the like:

(71) freyja, henda, hreyta, kasta, varpa 'throw'; skula 'throw, harpoon'; ínna 'throw, snare, lasso'; spæka, spyrna, bruma, brusa 'kick'; veilha, rálía 'roll'; mjaka, 'move slowly, inch, eke', aka e-w til 'inch something about'; slefa 'drag'; ysa 'push'

On the other hand, several basic verbs meaning 'move' govern accusative:

(72) feru 'move', fútra 'move, transport', freyja 'move', ferja 'tarry', reka (t½) 'drive (sheep) (vs. smala fénu 'gather the sheep')

These basic verbs have many figurative uses, so they are perhaps felt to belong less clearly to this class. Stefin Einarsdòttir (1945:108) suggests that the semantic class is perhaps restricted to 'verbs denoting (quick) movement'. While it is true that drogja 'drag, tow' governs accusative, many verbs denoting slow movement govern dative, as can be seen from the list in (71) (cf. ysa 'push'; veilha, rálía 'roll'; mjaka, aka til 'move slowly, inch about'; slefa 'drag, pull' (from Danish slede), so speed seems not to be a relevant factor. Thus there is no obvious difference of speed in the examples in (73):

(73a) Hann dóti bátan að landi,
  'He dragged/towed the boat(A) to shore,'

b. Hann slefaði bátum að landi,
   'He dragged/towed the boat(D) to shore,'

c. ... áttu að fæ mig til að slefa bátum hans (OH)
   '... was supposed to get me to drag his boat(D)'

31. This case alternation may strike the second language learner as the opposite of the common case alternation forms with certain prepositions in Icelandic (as in German), where Accusative marks movement towards (drogging) and Dative marks static location (drogging). The distinction is that dative on verbal objects marks the thing that moves, a notion which does not come into play with the relevant prepositional objects.
For the ditransitive verb *afhenda* N(DA) 'hand over', the theme is marked accusative, unlike for the root verb *henda* N(D) 'throw', possibly because physical movement is not necessarily involved, as illustrated in the following mid-16th century (1545) example from OH:

(74) vandízt sira Stephan ab sira Oddur hefti af[h]ent sier viljanlíga stáðinn

'Rev. Stephan expected that Rev. Oddur would turn the place(A) over to him willingly.'

Here the semantics, rather than the case-assigning properties of the stem seem to determine the case frame. See section 4.8.1 for discussion of prefixed verbs.

This semantic classification often gives rise to case alternations; an object which undergoes movement (change of location) is marked dative; otherwise the object is accusative:

(75) Dative object undergoing movement: 
- *frakka sunna* 'stone the snow'
- *reka hrey saman* 'raise the hay up'
- *skjóta káli* 'shoot the bull'
- *slyttu skulinnam* 'throw the hoop'
- *slyttu fríram* 'gore the sheep'

Accusative object: 
- *frakka e-ba* or 'roll something'
- *maka trýggunam* 'shovel the steps'
- *reka gestringi* 'raise the yard/field'
- *skjóta feitt* 'shoot the bird'
- *slyttu fjóran* 'throw the hoop'
- *slyttu fríram* 'gore the sheep'

Many verbs work similarly (see Þórunn Barðdá 1992 for further discussion): *masta* 'tadle, scold, pout'; *bramta* (samman) 'stir (together)'; *rykkja* 'pull, pleat'; *sýpa* 'sweat'; *þykkja* 'shave, spread'. Þórunn Barðdá notes that the dative case frame seems to require a locative (directional) adverbial.

As noted earlier, Johannes Gislí Jonsson observes that denominative verbs often govern accusative on an object which denotes the location (lecture notes, 7 April, 1999, based on Kristin M. Þórhardsdóttir 1996:111).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Denominational verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bækt ‘bit’</td>
<td>bæktla bæktins ‘put a bit in a horse’s mouth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bær ‘woodstain’</td>
<td>bærna bærtm ‘stain the wood (against rot)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>díður ‘tablecloth’</td>
<td>díður bæðst ‘cover the table with a tablecloth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faldur ‘hem’</td>
<td>faldur fólmur ‘hem the dress’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gull ‘gold’</td>
<td>gullta bæktins ‘plate with gold, put gilt lettering on the book’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>há ‘skin’</td>
<td>hála línur ‘put a skin/glaze on a clay pot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ít ‘ice’</td>
<td>íta fiskinn ‘ice the fish’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalk ‘chalk’</td>
<td>kalka vegginn ‘white-wash the wall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>krín ‘charm’</td>
<td>krína húfómm ‘put charm on the hubcaps’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lákk ‘polish’</td>
<td>lákkar naglarur ‘polish one’s nails’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lítt ‘color’</td>
<td>lítt myndinn ‘color (on) the picture’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malbú ‘asphalt’</td>
<td>malbúla fóllum ‘put asphalt on the street’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sál ‘soil’</td>
<td>sálta fóllum ‘soil the fish’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skór ‘shoe’</td>
<td>skóra bærinn ‘get shoes for the kids’ (archaic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skParents ‘decoration’</td>
<td>skyrtra fóllumr ‘decorate the Christmas tree’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smyj ‘butter’</td>
<td>smyjra bentrur ‘butter the bread’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snæ ‘snare, assass’</td>
<td>snæra bættum ‘snare, lasso the horse’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svæt ‘sugar’</td>
<td>svætur fóllum ‘sprinkle sugar on the cakes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>týgur ‘tar’</td>
<td>týgur bækt ‘tar the roof, cover with tar’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veggflýtur ‘wallpaper’</td>
<td>veggflýtur húfómmur ‘wallpaper the room’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vóta ‘liquid’</td>
<td>vóta blofin ‘water the flowers’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the generalization is semantic (locatum vs. theme or beneficiary) rather than strictly morphological. Consider the case frames associated with the various uses of the noun ‘ladle, scoop, pour’, which is derived from the feminine noun asa ‘ladle’:

(77a) a. asa sítunn ‘ladle the soup’
   b. asa bátum ‘bail the boat’
   c. asa vatni úr brunni ‘draw water from a well’
   d. asa e-n vatni ‘sprinkle someone(A) with water(D), baptize someone’
   e. asa skómmum yfir e-n ‘pour abuse(D) on someone’

Here one could also mention the dative objects of the denominal verbs
vatra ‘water’ and sjosta ‘give snow to’ which are clearly intended recipients in examples like the ones in (78). The verb frastra ‘slave’ is derived from the noun frastr ‘slave’; it can be used intransitively to mean ‘toil, slave away at’; but when used transitively, the object is presumably a maleficiary rather than a true locutum, which would account for the dative case:

(78a) vatra hestum ‘water horses’; sjosta kindum ‘give snow to sheep’

b. frastra nemendunum at ‘pile work on the students’

The examples in (77)–(78) suggest that the generalization at work here is semantic (theme vs. locutum) rather than morphological. Note that this generalization can override the experiencer vs. theme generalization discussed in 4.3. As illustrated by the examples in (79a,b), the substance smeared is marked dative, and the locutum or location which gets smeared is marked accusative, even if that locutum happens to be a human being, showing that the verbal situation is not interpreted as sensory experience:

(79a) maka sólólonni framan i sig ‘smear suntan-lotion-the(D) on one’s face’

b. maka e-n i sólólon ‘smear somebody(A) with suntan lotion’

There appears to be some speaker variation with verbs of this class: some speakers use only dative if the object of a verb like maka ‘shovel’ is moveable; other speakers use dative if a directional adverb or PF is present, but accusative otherwise:

(80a) Hanu makaði sandi but: he shoveled sand(3D) away

b. Hanu maka e-sand allis dagaði. he shoveled sand(3A) all day

c. bað var réysar til makaði vynigði. (Hallfín Ármanz Sigurðsson 1995:60) he was tried to shovel snow-the(A)

‘People tried to shovel the snow.’
Sentence (80c) with accusative on the theme is acceptable even for speakers who generally prefer dative. Johannes Gíslí Jónsson (p.c.) suggests that the case marking probably reflects the interpretation rather than a true idiolectal difference. Put differently, if you are removing some substance from one location to another, then the object must be marked dative. This contrast shows up nicely with the object skaffi 'snow drift'; in (81b) where the snow drift stays put, the object is marked accusative:

(81a) Peir mokudu skaffinum burt.
    they shoveled snow-drift-the(D) away

(81b) Peir mokudu skaffini.
    they shoveled/dug through snow-drift-the(A)

4.5.2 Subclasses of objects undergoing movement
It may be useful to distinguish several subclasses of objects undergoing movement (see Levin 1993 on English *spray-load* alternations). One class is verbs of scattering, spreading and the like:

(82) Verbs meaning scatter, spread, smear, spray, shatter:
    sprænna ‘spray’, strá ‘strew, scatter’, sundra ‘scatter’, 
    tvítra ‘scatter’

These verbs can show dative/accusative alternations of the kind illustrated above:

(83) Datne object undergoing movement: Accusative object:
    smýrja angjótta a brandið    smýrja brandið
    ‘spread the butter on the bread’ ‘spread the bread [with butter]’
    sprænna rauða lákki i bíðinn    sprænna bíðinn með rauða lákki
    ‘spray red paint on the car’    ‘spray the car with red paint’

Another definable class of verbs has to do with loading and unloading:

(84) Verbs of loading and unloading:
Although this is not a large class, it is possible to find systematic case alternations here too, where the verbal object bears dative or accusative depending on whether or not the object is what gets moved:

(85) Dative object undergoing movement: Accusative object:

\[\text{hlöða hæstum á vaginum} \quad \text{hlöða vaginum mæð hæsi}\\
\text{‘lead the horse on the wagon’} \quad \text{‘lead the wagon with horse’}\\
\text{umhladda vérnum} \quad \text{umhladda vörublævi}\\
\text{‘restack the goods’} \quad \text{‘repack the truck’}\]

Verbs referring to means of transportation generally govern dative. This use of dative is derived from an Old IE instrumental. The means of transport as well as the passenger undergoes the change of location and for the following verbs, for instance, it is marked with the dative case:

(86) \text{aka hítum} ‘drive the car’, \text{fljúga flugvéljum} ‘fly the plane’, \text{lenda flugvéljum} ‘land the plane’, \text{rída hesti} ‘ride a horse’, \text{róa bátum} ‘row the boat’, \text{sjón skapi} ‘sail a ship’

The exceptions are the very common, however, and includes the everyday verb \text{keyru} ‘drive’, which governs accusative: \text{keyru bátum} ‘drive the boat(A)’, \text{keyru hana heim} ‘drive her(A) home’; and the verb \text{forja} ‘ferry’: \text{forja hana yfir ánu} ‘ferry her(A) across the river’.\textsuperscript{25} But as noted by Jóhanna Bergdáls (1992), many younger speakers tend to use dative for an animate passenger: \text{keyru henni heim} ‘drive her(D) home’.

Note that \text{keyru} has other uses not referring to means of transportation which also govern accusative: \text{keyru nefdum} ‘drive the nails’, \text{keyru dóina híaðh heimum} ‘drive the ax into his head’, \text{keyru e-n niður} ‘knock someone down’. The OH collection contains no examples of \text{keyru} governing a dative object in the relevant sense,\textsuperscript{26} and the

\textsuperscript{25} As Kyrtan Ottason points out (p.c.), the verb \text{forja} does not take an object denoting the means of transportation, only the personal/vehicular transport: \text{forja fjöllum} ‘ferry the people Allíte cart(A)’.

\textsuperscript{26} OH has two examples of \text{keyru} with a dative object in the sense of being \textit{pá} \text{því} \text{hár} \text{hárhalgræ} ‘with hand or roughly’, which is presumably an instrumental/dative:

(1) \text{Síthu keyru hígi hafnum á stýrnu, svi hálftum sétt ok af.} ‘Then they man simultaneously hit forty at the handle, so that the whole blade stuck in.’
colloquial use of dative with human objects noted earlier (cf. keyr
hann heim ‘drive him(D) home’ in (9) in section 2.3) is apparently
a relatively recent extension.

Note that the verb aða ‘drive’ continues to govern dative even in
other senses: aða e-n til ‘inch something(D) about’, aða e-n til stað
‘inch something(D) away’, whereas réða ‘row’ exhibits alternations:
réða sér í sæti stína ‘rock back and forth in one’s seat’ (AB/JHU) vs. réða
e-n upp ‘catch up with someone’ (AB), where the requirements for
dative-marking are not met because the object does not undergo
movement. At least two dictionaries of modern Icelandic (AB/JHU)
cite without comment examples of réða with accusative objects in
the sense of transport: réða hann i landi/ífir fjörðum ‘row him(A) to
shore/across the bay’ (JHU), réða mannan yfir dina ‘row the man(A)
across the river’, réða hóttum yfir dina ‘row the boat(A) across the river’
(AB), which is reminiscent of use of accusative with čear ‘ferry’.

These examples of réða are apparently taken from Sigfús-Björnsson
(ed.) (1920–24) and are from the 19th century. The use of accusative on
the object is not familiar to speakers today, who would either use dative,
as Jóhanna Barðdal notes (1992): réða mariunum yfir dina ‘row the
man(A) across the river’), or preferably a PP (réða með mariunum yfir
dina ‘row with the man across the river’), if the object refers to the pas-
sengers or things transported. This diachronic change from accusative
to dative is hardly surprising, since most verbs meaning ‘transport
someone’ govern dative:

[87] aða hann heim, skýta hann heim ‘drive her(D) home’; skyla
hann í heim ‘give her(D) a lift to town’

An adverbial accusative does occur with these verbs in the sense of
path (cf. ZMT 1985:474):

(88)a. aða þessa leð ‘drive this way(A)’
b. réða sjóðin/nýþa ‘row (across) the sea/jord’
c. réða án/þandinn (or réða yfir án/þandinn) ‘ride (across) the
river/band’
A single page of text discussing the use of dative objects in Icelandic, particularly in instrumental cases. The text includes examples such as "taka e-n hindum 'arrest sb.'" and "taka e-n tvílm hindum 'greet with open arms'". It notes that dative objects can be derived from adverbial instrumental cases and mentions examples like "biðla súlur sýnu 'let him see his own sea'". The text also discusses the use of dative objects in passive constructions and the use of instrumental datives in various contexts. The text is a part of a larger discussion on the grammatical structure of Icelandic.
As noted by Halldór Halldórsson (n.d., p. 62), the instrumental dative may contain a semantically related nominal (see also the discussion of cognate datives in the next section):

(90)a. geðu grimmum/fjórum tírum "cry bitter/sweet tears(D)"
   b. kelli-beri ríðdu "call [in] a loud voice(D)"
   c. ráða ráðum sínun "consult, make plans"
   d. reða um eitthvæð nokkrum orðum "speak a few words about something"

(lit. "discuss something few words(D)"

The instrumental dative is usually slightly formal but similar in meaning to a prepositional phrase medi-NP(D) with NP, although they are not always interchangeable:

(91)a. Pér tóku benni (**med) opinum órnum
   "They greeted her (with) open arms."
   b. Pér tóku benni (**med) téveim hínundum
   "They greeted her (with) open arms. (lit. "two hands")"
   c. ganga (**med) þarrum flúnum "have dry feet (crossing a stream)"
The PP may be odd in (91a) only because opnum írnum is an idiom, a fixed expression, and the same could be said about the other examples.

4.7 Cognate datives

Verbs which are strictly intransitive may take "cognate objects" which are almost always modified by an adjective; the entire cognate object functions much like a manner adverbial. These were not generally included in the verb list in Malin (1990), but are included in this discussion because of their case-marking. Cognate objects are often called "cognate accusatives", but in Icelandic, such cognate objects tend to be marked dative (similar case marking is found in Slavic):

(92)a. hún grét sárum gráði.
    she cried bitter weep(D)
    "She cried bitter tears." (cf. hún grét sárun "She wept bitterly.")
b. Hann staf djúpm veðri.
    He slept a deep sleep(D).
c. Hún læk alfús svo innlegum blástu.
    "She always laughs such a heartily laugh(D)."
d. Hann dó bræðilegum snøðiaga.
    "He died a terrible death(D)."
e. Hún lifi gödu lítið stór líf.
    "She lives a good life(D) her own life(D)."
f. Hún brosti til hans findanþið brost.
    she looked to him sparkling smile(D)
    "She smiled her sparkling smile at him."
g. Hann byr göðu bol.
    "She farms a good farm(D)."

The following examples are exceptions to this generalization, in that they take accusative cognate objects:

24 The (transitive) verb báði takes accusative in the sense of "prepare", a sense which is not semantically associated with intransitive not in the sense of "live".
I have found some idiosyncratic variation among speakers, with younger speakers especially preferring dative (idiomatic translations are hard to come by here!):

(94a) a. Hann veinaði skelflaug veini.
   "He screamed a [a] bloodcurdling scream(D)."

   b. Hann hróðaði hrópinu úti yfir fjallahringinn.
      be yelled the yell(D) out over the mountain-ravine(D)

   c. Hann óskrði óskrinu áfram alla.
      he screamed scream-the(D) over everybody

If the verb normally governs dative, it is, of course, impossible to tell what the source of the dative case-marking is when the object is a "cognate object":

(95) Noncognate dative object: Cognate dative object:
   a. skóta órinni  skóta göðu skóti
      shoot the arrow(D) shoot a good shot(D) ('make a
good shot')

   b. dela matnum       dela litéllum við vør
      divide up the food(D)  quarrel among quarrels(D) with sb
      'have a hostile quarrel with somebody.'

   c. Hann raðst því her
      he determines all(D) here
   'He makes all the
   decisions here.'

   Stjórnendur ráða óðann sinam.
   the directors plan their plans(D)
   'The directors are making their
   plans.'

29 In one of the sagas one can find the following
(i) Að hiti eftir hverr tókkst op.  (from the Flateyjarbók manuscript)
   "Scream after him some scream(A)."
However, a transitive verb generally continues to govern its normal case even if the object happens to be "cognate" (these accusative examples are due to Jón G. Ófærnsson, p.c., note however the change in höggva sværina til og frá ‘swing the sword back and forth’). Note that for the most part, the objects of these transitive verbs are very different in nature from the cognate object of semantically intransitive verbs in that there is no adverbial or manner reading; as a result there is no need for an adjectival modifier. These verbs should therefore be considered transitive verbs taking ordinary objects which may happen to share the same root as the verb. The same holds for verbs which take accusative objects:

(96) Noncognate accusative object:

| a. | Hann ol bómin up á landin. He raised the children(A) in landin. |
| b. | Hann drýmði máningin. She dreamt mis-theth(A). |
| c. | Hvítar skráðið krófl. ‘The writing is Now(A).’ |
| d. | Døma málins ‘Judge the case(A).’ |
| e. | Gata skórum. ‘Scream (it).’ |
| f. | Höggva róðs. ‘Cut how, cut the tree’ |
| g. | Krafa rímans. ‘Chant the ballad(A).’ |
| h. | Bitra kastigorms. ‘Play soccer(A).’ |
| i. | Leva bóknar. ‘Read the book(A).’ |
| j. | Norjaða þurfa. ‘Tell a joke(A).’ |
| k. | Stora brændu. ‘Cut the brisk(A).’ |
| l. | Spóna trévinl. ‘Spin the yarn(A).’ |
| m. | Höggva lóðr. ‘Sing the song(A).’ |
| n. | Fyrir dískab. ‘Wave the dískar(A).’ |
| o. | Höfði kviða. ‘Recite the poem(A).’ |

Cognate accusative object:

| a. | Hann ol slán álfr zinn á fæðal. He lived his whole life(A) in fæðal. |
| b. | Hann drýmði út sinum. She dreamt bad dreams(A). |
| c. | Hvítar skráðið lóðr. She had a bad dream. |
| d. | Tók það báðum. ‘Took that judgment(A).’ |
| e. | Höggva fanga. ‘Drown a mag(A).’ |
| f. | “And a heavy blow” |
| g. | Höggva lóðr. ‘Chant, recite the poem(A).’ |
| h. | Leva bóknar. ‘Make a good move(A), play a good game(A), [as in soccer]’ |
| i. | Norjaða þurfa. ‘Tell the story(A).’ |
| j. | Stora brændu. ‘Cut the brisk(A).’ |
| k. | Spóna trévinl. ‘Spin the spinning(A).’ |
| l. | Höggva lóðr. ‘Sing the song(A).’ |
| m. | Fyrir dískab. ‘Wash the dískar(A).’ |
| n. | Fyrir dískab. ‘Wash (do) the wash’ |
| o. | Höfði kviða. ‘Recite the long poem(A).’ |
In a few instances, either dative or accusative is possible with no apparent difference in meaning. Sometimes the accusative is the familiar idiom from the sagas, whereas the use of dative reflects the generalization for cognate objects:

(97) Cognate accusative: Cognate dative:
   a. leika göðan leik  leika göðum leik
      'make a good move'
      'make a good move(D)'
   b. play a good game(A)'  play a good game(A)'  [cannot mean 'play a good game']
   c. sofa satan svefn  sofa ðipum svefn
      'have a nice sleep(A)'
      'sleep a deep sleep(D)'

With the exception of kotlins 'sommersault', the complements in the following examples are plausibly measure phrases, and as such would be expected to be marked accusative: 50

(98) Non-cognate object: Accidental cognate object:
   a. hlaupa tuo spretti  hlaupa hlaupið
      'run two spurs(A)'
      'run the race(A)'
   b. rūa eina fird  rūa (langtri) rðbar
      'row one lap(A)'
      'go for a long row(A)'
   c. stōkka kotlins  stōkka langtri stōkk
      'turn a sommersault(A)'
      'make a long jump(A)'
   d. synda eina fird  synda langtri sund
      'swim one lap(A)'
      'go for a long swim(A)'
   e. synda lauginga ði enda
      'swim the pool(A) to the end'

As noted earlier, the verb rūa 'row' usually governs dative when the object refers to "the thing moved", i.e. the boat (cf. rūa hútmum 'row the boat(D)' ), but the distance covered and other measure-like phrases will be in the accusative as with other verbs of movement:

50 Adnominal measure phrases are genitive (þétt er margir víkingar ferð). As an measure phrases modifying an adjective, even if that adjective head is noun. Hátt er þrjúggar úr (gammur). He is three years (old).
(99.a) Peir rena mikinn endaspret.
   *They rowed a tremendous final spurt.*

b. Raðan hnaðgræn hliypur grindina.
   *The red linears [Guðrún Arnardóttir] run the hurdles.*

c. Hesturrinn hefr stokkði gíndunga.
   *The horse has jumped the fence.*

Sometimes the choice between accusative and dative seems to be meaningful. With the verb *fara* 'go', it is (or was) possible to have a modified dative cognate NP interpreted as a manner adverbial (*fara (verrum) fórum*, lit. "make worse trips(D)"); whereas an accusative is interpreted as a measure phrase, presumably bearing what traditional grammars call the accusative of palæstasis:

(100.a) *fara feðma fórma ‘make the journey(A)’*

b. Peir fóra margra leðingra upp í jökullinn.
   *They made many expeditions(G) up on the glacier.*

c. Peir fóra þessa leið.
   *The went this way(A).*

d. Peir fóra (i) þessa leið.
   *They made this journey(A).*

e. Honur... hvít því verrum fórum... fóra skyldou... (lit. þær varari leiði).
   *Hunur said they the worse trips(D) go should... they were more*  
   *Hunur said it would go the worse for them the more numerous they were.*
   *(F, V, G)*

But it is not always the case that a modified NP which is semantically related to the verb shows up in the dative, as illustrated by (101a) where the object lacks the manner reading of a typical modified cognate object:

(101.a) *sófa sortn dáð ‘take a nice nap(A)’* (lit. *sleep a sweet nap*)

b. Hann svaf enil dáð.
   *He took a little nap(A).*

c. Ég sváf svona dáð og dáð.
   *I slept in this/needlessly.* (lit: *I slept kind-of nap and nap*)

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31 Guðrún Arnardóttir is a famous Icelandic horse and a two-time Olympian.
As illustrated in (102), a verb may sometimes take a cognate object in addition to an ordinary direct object; the usual case on the cognate object seems to be dative (with an adverbial or instrumental reading), but in a few fixed (archaic?) expressions, we find accusative (cf. ZMT 1985 for discussion):

(102) Native cognate object:  Accusative cognate object:
  a. *íóða e-ð bængri șiðu  *íóða e-ð *líðir niðq nemeningqáss
     'bad something a long bolt(D)'  'she gives me a big kiss(A)'  
  b. *sæt e-n stórú sárri  *sæt e-n *líðir níkhért
     'injure someone seriously'  'gave sb a blow on the cheek'
     (lit. "wound sb a big wound(D)"")  (lit. "hit sb a cheek-hit(D)"")
  c. *sæt e-n búnautári  *sæt e-n *líðir níkhért
     'give someone a deathwound(D)'  'deal someone a deathblow(A)'

Some native speakers report that banahígg ‘deathblow’ feels like something other than an instrumental, more object-like, perhaps because of the accusative case-marking, and some speakers also accept dative: höggva e-n banahígg, in keeping with the general pattern. Note that stíð e-n kínnahtí is not literally a cognate object, but has the same double accusative case frame and a similar meaning.

4.8 Word-formational regularities

4.8.1 Prefixed verbs

A prefixed or compound verb (e.g. stiffi esti ságm) almost always governs the same morphological case as the root verb. For example, the verb múshymna ‘torture’ governs dative, since hymna ‘spare someone’s life’ does, whereas the verb missnota ‘abuse’ governs accusative just like nota ‘use’; the fact that the assigned case is inherited from the root verb and not the prepositional prefix is seen most clearly from the many un-verbs which assign dative despite the fact that the preposition un ‘about, around’ always governs accusative, and the ni-verbs, which do not govern genitive even though the preposition ni ‘to’ always assigns genitive. Note also that the verb adhígg e-ð ad e-ð u

*adapt something to something* governs an accusative object although the preposition all assigns dative to its object.
(103) Þetta forrit helur verði atlagar að þessari tölvu.

This program has been adapted to this computer(D).

Not surprisingly, the same generalization holds of the case assigned to the grammatical subject when it is assigned lexically (as accusative or dative — I do not know of any prefixed verbs which govern genitive on the subject); the prefixed verb governs the same morphological case as the root verb. Thus, the verb miðna (seem to) remember’ and misminna ‘remember incorrectly’ both take accusative subjects, whereas both members of the following verb pairs take dative subjects: litva ‘like’ and mistila ‘dislike’, takazt ‘succeed’ and misukast ‘fail’, heppnast ‘succeed’ and mishekpeast ‘fail’, htekast ‘succeed’ and mishtakast ‘fail’, kethast ‘be bored’ and hundleðast ‘be bored to death’. There is at least one ditransitive prefixed verb pair: haga ‘expect’ and fyrirhaga ‘plan’, both occurring with a NDA case frame:

(104a) Heimur var ekki haga til.
he(D) was not expected life(A)

‘He wasn’t expected to live.’

b. fram við að hafa verði fyrrin og verðið bíðvek illinum.
he believes that sub(D) has been planned special mission(A) in life

‘He thinks that he has been given a special mission in life.’ (HB)

There are a few exceptions to this generalization, however:

(105) Root verb: Prefix/compound verb:

a. henda viðunum vs. afhenda viðurnar
throw the goods(D) (away) deliver the goods(A)

b. forsa líðan vs. kjrárfara líðanum
move the phrase(A) topicalize the phrase(D)

Despite exceptions like these, the generalization is that by-and-large the prefixed or compound verb simply inherits the case of the verbal root. Given this, we can in principle keep adding to the list of dative verbs by this means, as illustrated at (106):
Root verb | Prefix/compound verbs governing
governing dative: | dative:
lenka ‘land’ | nauvelenda ‘make an emergency landing’
smaa ‘turn’ | trungsmia ‘turn around in circles’
varpa ‘throw’ | koldvarpa ‘overthrow’, sjomvarpa ‘broadcast (TV)’, átvorpa ‘broadcast (radio)’

4.8.2. Sam- verbs and verbs of comparison

Verbs of comparison tend to govern dative, where the dative NP is the basis of comparison:

(107). Some verbs of comparison:

lhjast ‘resemble’; nema ‘amount to’; samlagast (samлага sig) c.w. ‘assimilate to’, samrýja, samtréma ‘reconcile with’; sam-
rýmisst, samtrémasst ‘conform to’; samtvara ‘correspond to’;
cf. also liðja e.u. við e.ð ‘ liken something to something’

Some of these verbs are perhaps not strictly “verbs of comparison” but the meaning is at least related. A few examples are given in (108) to illustrate the one marking:

(108a). Efumýndin líkist frummyndinni.

b. The copy resembles the original(D).

'Ve has difficulties in assimilating [to] the group(D).'

d. Táð er ríki hægt að samtrýyja þetta neíma óska.

‘It is not possible to reconcile this [with] anything else(D).’

e. Verðið samtvorar einum múnahárínsum.

‘The price corresponds [to] one month’s salary(D).’

f. Heir liðku hónum við apa.

‘They likened him(D) to an ape.’

Adjectives of comparison also take dative complements: Hann er mjög (ó)fiðkur fóður sínum ‘He is very (un)like his father(D).’
As can be seen in the examples above, verbs with the prefix sam- are common in this semantic class (cf. Kress 1982 on sam- + V). Most verbs with the prefix sam- govern dative, even when they do not seem to belong to strictly to the semantic class of comparison:

(109) sambyggja "agree with", samflaga "congratulate", sambyggja "express sympathy for", samtina "agree with", etc.

The case marking is illustrated in (110):

(110)a. Hjálpsetti lýsingarður sambyggist nafnorðinu.
   "An attributive adjective agrees [with] the noun(D)."
   a. Við samflagnu þeim á nafnorðslaginum.
      "We congratulate them(D) on their birthday."

But sam- verbs whose meanings emphasize unity rather than comparison govern accusative:

(111)a. Sjálfaðurhástarin sanninadö þjóðina.
      "The fight for independence united the people(A)."
   b. Tilgangarinn með æfinguinni er að saðlaða algengar hjálpar-
      sveitarræna.
      "The purpose of the exercise is to coordinate the operations(A) of the rescue teams."
   c. Affir eiga að sambyggja tillögu.
      "Everyone must modify the proposal(A)."

Johannes Giði Jónsson (p.c.) suggests a possible morphological generalization: a sam-verb governs dative only if (a) it has the suffix -st or (b) the root governs dative on its own (cf. faggzi "welcome sb.", samflaga "congratulate"). Kjarlay Ottsisson (p.c.) points out that sam-

\[ \text{rýma e-d e-u} \] "reconcile something with something" is an exception to this generalization, since rýma "vacate" governs accusatives: the semantic correlation between samrýma "reconcile" and rýma "vacate" is not very transparent. However, as expected, the basis of comparison is marked dative.
4.8.3 Verbs of mixing together and the adverb saman

Many verbs which normally govern accusative on their object govern dative in the sense of "mixing together" when occurring with the adverb saman 'together' (and for some other adverbs of PP with a similar meaning). Some examples are given in (112):

(112) Accusative object: Dative object with saman;
  a. blandu drykk 'fix a drink' blandu e-u saman 'mix sth together'
  b. hnoða deigid 'knead the dough'
     hnoða e-u saman 'knead sth together'
  c. hrera deigid 'mix the dry ingredients together'
     hrera hrærfrunnan saman 'mix the dry ingredients together'
  d. píasd pásulsplid 'work on a jigsaw puzzle'
     písar e-u saman 'work on a jigsaw puzzle'

If the adverb saman is obligatory whenever the object is marked dative, this was noted in Maling (1996) by including saman as part of the lexical entry as illustrated in (113):

(113) blandu e-u saman 'mix sth together', hrera e-u saman 'stir sth together', písar e-u saman 'put sth together', rak e-u saman 'rake sth together', vefja e-u saman 'wet sth together', vóða e-u saman 'crumple sth together', hrera e-u saman 'crumple sth together'

Other verbs, however, continue to govern accusative even when they occur with saman;

(114) setja e-ð saman 'put sth together', samna e-ð saman 'sew sth together', líma e-ð saman 'glue sth together', nefla e-ð saman 'nail sth together', benda e-ð saman 'tie sth together', breða e-ð saman 'braid sth together', slóða e-ð saman 'braid sth together', friða e-ð saman 'clip sth together', hrupa sig saman 'crowd together', hrýupa sig saman 'curl up into a ball', etc.

The second language learner is likely to be perplexed by the apparently conflicting information in dictionary entries for these verbs. For example, JÜJ gives only hrera e-ð saman (i.e. with accusative)
whereas Jóhanna Barðsdóttir (1992) indicates that dative is the natural case with *hrætra saman* 'stir together', citing *hrætra þærfinnum saman* as an illustrative example. The difference between accusative and dative seems to reflect the degree of mixing; the more the items retain their individual integrity, the more likely they are to be marked accusative rather than dative (diss items sewn, glued or nailed together can still be individually identified). Helgi Skúli Jóhannesson (p.c.) offers the following comment (translations of example sentences added—JM):

Dative is a more natural choice if different things are mixed; *hræra saman skyrtinu og þærfinum ‘mix the sky and the cream together’, whereas accusative is natural for further mixing what is already a mixture, thus:

> *Hræraðu hetau saman þresa bínhæi ‘Stir this mixture together better’*  
> *Hræraðu þærfinum hetau saman ‘Stir the dry ingredients together better’*

where *hetau* suggests that they have already been combined. Also:

> *Pé ett ekki bæst var hræra hetau níga vel saman! ‘You haven’t stirred this well enough together.’*

This is certainly a grey area, where there is considerable idiolectal variation, and grammaticality judgments are far from absolute.

**4.9 Miscellaneous semantic classes**

Some miscellaneous semantic classes are listed in the following subsections.

**4.5.1 Verbs of marrying**

Verbs of marrying typically take a dative object, including the ditransitive *gifta* ‘marry off’:

(115) *Hanna gifti döttur sina rikum mannsi.*  
*‘He married his daughter(A) to a rich man(D).’*

Verbs in this semantic class include *giflast e-m* ‘marry, get married to’, *kvennast ‘marry (a woman),*32 *þröstast e-m* ‘get engaged to’.

The verb *kvennast* is etymologically related to the noun *kvenn* ‘woman’ and thus means ‘marry to a woman’. The verb *gifast* is etymologically related to the verb *gifast*. 

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32 The verb *þröstast* is etymologically related to the verb *gifast*. 
4.9.2 Verbs expressing dominance
Verbs meaning 'govern, manage, obey, serve', etc. are referred to as
"verbs which express dominance" by Heidolff et al. (1984). These
typically govern dative in Icelandic:

(116) ge$na, hîta, hîvða e u 'obey, listen to'; stjórna e u 'govern,
run'; stýra e u 'steer, direct'; (i)orka e u, válkja e u 'manage';
hjóna 'serve'.

Note that the corresponding Russian verbs govern instrumental case.

4.9.3 Verbs of organizing
Verbs meaning 'organize, arrange' tend to take dative objects (cf. HH,
p. 53):

(117) a. fylka ðlît liðnun 'organize, muster the whole force(D)'
b. hagja þ sett hannig 'arrange this(D) that way'
c. stilla e u hof 'keep sth.(D) within limits'
d. þeir stillu í ð drykkvumni.
    "They didn't temper their drinking(D)."

Note that in the sense 'adjust', stillu governs accusative: Hann stillt
ljósin 'He adjusted the lights.'

4.9.4 Verbs of postponing and finishing
Verbs meaning 'postpone, refuse, stop, finish' usually take dative
objects:

(118) fresta e u 'postpone', hafna e u 'refuse', hatta e u 'stop', létta
 e u 'stop', lýka e u 'finish', þykrra randræðum 'prevent
trouble(D)'

Note, however, that létta in the sense of 'lighten' governs accusative:

"gave" and in OF it was only used about women being married (i.e. "given away") to
men. In modern Icelandic it is the default verb for 'marry', whereas ávennari is some-
times used in more formal speech in its original meaning.
(119).a. Þeir léttu ekki ferðinat fyrir en þeir konu á Pingvellir.
   "They did not stop (the journey(D)) until they came to Thingvellir."

b. Þeir þarfu að léttu tóskuna.
   "They needed to lighten the suitcase(A)."

It should also be noted that the generalization about case marking of
verbs of finishing and stopping is not without exceptions. Thus the
following verbs, for instance, govern accusative:

(120) klára málini 'finish the meal(A)', stoppaþátthra verkið/bíllan
     'stop the job(A) of the car(A) stemma e-niðr ‘stop somebody/
     something’ (ÁB)

4.9.5 Verbs of cursing, reproaching and threatening
When verbs of cursing are used transitively, they typically take dative
objects, as do verbs of reproaching and threatening:

(121) ámela e-m ‘reproach’ (HH); bóltar, bóltar, formala e-niðr-u
     ‘damn, curse sb/it/th’; húllmata e-n ‘criticize, denigrate
     sb’d’; ágaz, ágaz e-m ‘threaten sb’d’, reðst e-m ‘get angry at
     sb’d’

4.9.6 Verbs of spending and wasting
Verbs meaning ‘spend, waste’ take dative objects:

(122) eyða háupina sín ‘spend one’s salary(D)’, sója peningum
     ‘waste money(D)’, súðalda arsfærum ‘waste the inheritance(D)’

4.9.7 Verbs of collecting and stealing
Verbs meaning ‘collect, gather’ take dative objects, frequently with a
(directional) adverb or PP like saman ‘together’ or að stérthi sin ‘to
oneself’:

(123) næsla saman peningum ‘board money(D)’, safna bókum ‘col-
     lect books(D)’, sæks að sér uppsýningum ‘gather information(D)
     ’, veða að sér vístim ‘gather provisions(D)’
Verbs of stealing and pilfering could perhaps be seen as semantically related and these too tend to take dative objects. The thing stolen is then marked dative but the person stolen from is usually realized as a PP (e.g. with fra e-m 'from sb' or af e-m 'from sbd'):

(124) stela e-u 'steal', loupla e-u 'flech', nappa e-u 'pilfer', rana e-u 'rob'

The verb nappa is presumably a loan word and according to Jóhanna Barðdal (1999; 2001b, ch. 5), the case marking generalization also holds for more recent borrowings with this meaning. Note the two ways of using the verb rana 'rob' in (125a-c):

(125)a. Peit stala bōkunum fra Jóni.
   'They stole the books(D) from Jón(D).'
b. Peit rendu bōkunum fra Jóni.
   'They robbed the books(D) from Jón(D).'
c. Peit rendu Jón bōkunum.
   'They robbed Jón(A) the books(D).'

The ditransitive version is more formal, although it is not obsolete like the corresponding version for stela 'steal' (cf. the discussion around (18) above).

4.9.8 Verbs of damage or destruction

Many verbs meaning 'damage, destroy' take dative objects:

(126) eyfa e-u 'destroy, delute'; granía, spilla, torrða, 'destroy, make unusable'; kaffa e-u 'risk'; refus e-m 'punish'; rískera e-u 'risk'

It is perhaps questionable whether refus 'punish' belongs in this category, but the classes are not always clear cut, as can be seen from the fact that HH (p. 52) includes geyrma 'forget' in this category. Yet it is clear that there is a living generalization here. Thus the Danish loan rískera 'risk' takes a dative like the native hænna 'risk'. Similarly, recent borrowings like allfma (or allfma) 'delete' also tend to govern
dative like the native eyfa ‘destroy, delete’. But some verbs in this semantic class take accusative objects:

(127) skemma, órna, eyðingja e-d ‘destroy something, lay waste’ (cf. that legging ‘lay’ which governs accusative; fella, rifja e-d ‘pull something down (e.g. a building)’, jifma e-d við þarfa ‘level’)

4.9.5 Verbs of killing and of bodily harm

Many verbs of killing take dative objects:

(126) bana, granda, kala, stæfa ‘kill’, jæra, ðega, stiðra ‘slaughter’;

fyrifjara e-m ísleð ‘kill stóðnesself’; fyrirkoma e-m ‘kill sod’

Many verbs of killing take accusative objects, however:

(129) aflifa, dreya, drepra ‘kill’; halthöggja, húggra ‘behead’; hengja ‘hang’; myðra ‘murder’; skera ‘slaughter’ (lit. “cut”); skýra ‘shoot’; stinge ‘stab’

Verbs of bodily harm can be said to be semantically related and these too frequently take dative objects:

(130) niðhöða e-m ‘offend, injure’; niðyrma e-m ‘torture, inflict bodily harm’; nauðga e-m ‘rape’

But here too there are exceptions as several verbs in this semantic class take accusative objects:

(131) meða e-á ‘hurt’, niðsory e-ó ‘abuse’, þíma e-m ‘torture’, þyfia e-n ‘torture (mainly as punishment or to extract information)’

We can say, then, that most verbs meaning ‘kill’ govern dative, although the basic verb drepra ‘kill’, governs accusative. 24 Note that all the verbs which govern dative generally take sentients animate beings

23 M.H. suggests that the case governed “by at least some” of these verbs is determined by the perfRB, -e- which it’s a proposition which becomes a prefix; however, as a proposition, fyrir can govern either accusative or dative. Besides, we have seen that the perf of verbs generally influence their case marking properties (cf. section 4.9.1).

24 The verb drepra governs dative in other verbs, including the fixed expressions drepra e-a ‘dread’; avoid the issue’s sense (as removed from ‘kill’; drepra flókast ‘wean “dry a finger in water” and drepra smjöfra ‘break’ ‘stitch a butch’. 25 the breast’.
as object, but so do many verbs in this semantic class which govern accusative: *myða* 'murder', *hengja* 'hang', *skera* 'cut, slice', *afiða* 'take somebody's life', *kælkhjörg* 'behead', *skjót* 'shoot', *stunga* 'sting'. But the verb *drep* can also take inanimate and abstract objects: *drep* *tímam* 'kill time'. The objects of the verbs governing dative are generally animate. The following examples are perhaps personification: *naðga* *málin* *tövenkin* 'rape the language/the piece of music'.

4.9.10 The verb *brenna* 'burn'

In this final section, I mention some of the complexities concerning the choice between dative and accusative on the object of one verb, *brenna* 'burn'. The taxonomy is due largely to Helgi Skúli Kjartansson (p.c.), who distinguishes six senses.

The basic rule is that when the object refers to fuel used for combustion, it governs dative: *brenna* *rúslín* *kolum* 'burn the garbage/the coals(D)'. Jón G. Friðþjóðsson (class notes) has suggested that in this sense, *brenna* belongs to the semantic class of verbs whose objects undergo movement. Otherwise the object is accusative, for example, if you burn down something large (and hence stationary): *brenna* *hús* *land* *að* 'burn the house/the land(A)'. The burning of letters or other documents is a tricky area, as noted below. Overall, the difference in case-marking seems to be marking an aspectual dimension, with accusative emphasizing the (potential) result of the burning. Further details are provided below.

(132) *brenna* + dative on fuel used for combustion:

*brenna* *rúslín* *kolum* *oll* *ollanni* 'burn the trash/coals/oil'

Exceptions to this include combinations like *brenna* *upp* 'burn up' and *brenna* *till* *ósk* 'burn to ash', as these take accusative even if the substance is a fuel:

(133a) a. Hann *brenndi* allan *eldvið* *brenna* upp.
   'He burned all the firewood(A) up.'

b. Hún *brenndi* kolinn til *ósk*.
   'She burned the coal to ashes.' (cf. *JH*)
(134) *brenna* = accusative if you hurt someone or damage something (on the surface) by heat
   a. Gástu ekkir strúggur skynnon án þess að brenna kragan?
      ‘Couldn’t you iron the shirt(A) without burning the collar?’
   b. Eg skaf brenna jág upp hertan minn af þi holdur áfram að strúggar niðr.
      ‘I will burn your(A) with my candle if you keep teasing me.’
   c. Brenndu jág ekkir á kafluð!
      ‘Don’t burn yourself(A) with the coffee!’

(135) *brenna* = accusative in the intentional use of heat for a specific purpose (subcase of the above, but with a desirable effect rather than damage). e.g. in the sense of bake, roast or cauterize: *brenna kofn* ‘roast coffee (beans)(A)’, *brenna síðr* ‘cauterize a wound(A)’, *brenna tigillteina* ‘bake lós(A)’, *brenna kol* ‘char wood(A)’ (Zoëga), *brenna lið* ‘cremate’ (lit. ‘burn corpse(A)’)

Note how the expression *brenna kol* ‘char wood (A, making charcoal)’ contrasts with *brenna kolum* ‘burn coal(D)’ as a fuel.

(136) *brenna* = accusative, if you burn down something large, e.g. a building (or part thereof), hence stationary: Cortesz leyð brenna skip síðr en hann lagði til lógu við Astéka.
      ‘Cortez burned his ships(A) before he went to battle with the Aztecs.’
      (or ‘had his ships burned ...’)

Presumably *brenna upp* ‘burn up’ and *brenna líðsk* ‘burn to ash’ fall into this category.

(137) *brenna* = accusative/collective in the sense of ‘disposal by free of letters, documents, etc.’ Here either dative or accusative is possible, with a ‘false difference in meaning that native speakers find almost impossible to explain:

Hún brenndi allin ástarfréttumum og allan fréttum.
      ‘She burned all the love letters(A).’
One generalization seems to be that the use of dative on the object implies intentionality; the burning cannot be accidental, whereas if the object is marked accusative, then the burning could be either incidental or intentional:

(138a) Haan brendi håndritli handsritnu (misgripur.
   ‘He burned the manuscript(A/D) by mistake.’

b. Haan brendi håndritli handsritnu viljandi.
   ‘He burned the manuscript(A/D) on purpose.’

(139) brenda 4 accusative vs dative in the sense of disposal by fire of refuse:

brenda rulinu  vs. brenda rulid
burn the trash(D)  burn the trash(A)

For some speakers, if the object is dative, then it is understood as being the fuel, if marked accusative, then it is the thing being disposed of. Kjartan Ottosson (p.c.) suggests that use of the dative puts focus on the end result, as illustrated by the following contrast:

(140) Ég brendi rulid? rulinu, er það brann bara ekki að.
   ‘I burned trash(D), but it burned just not completely’
   ‘I burned the trash, but it didn’t burn completely up.’

Adding ‘but it just didn’t burn completely’ feels more like a contradiction if the object was marked dative than if it was marked accusative.

4. Conclusion

Dative objects are thematically unrestricted in that they can be givers, recipients, experiencers, beneficiaries and even themes. Although the correlation between thematic role and morphological case is not one-to-one, there is clear evidence of semantic generalizations at work in the language. The frequency of dative case on verbal objects has been increasing throughout the recorded period, most notably for two semantically predictable classes; (i) experiencers, and (ii) objects
which undergo movement. Particularly interesting is the correlation between dative case on the object and the occurrence of a directive PP or adverb, which can be seen as a direct consequence of the semantic generalization involving movement. Derive case is also used on the complements of two classes of normally intransitive verbs when used transitively: (i) verbs denoting heavenly and bodily emissions, and (ii) verbs taking cognate objects. Some uses of dative in Icelandic, including the case on cognate objects, correspond to instrumental case in Slavic.

Thus to a limited degree, the case-marking on verbal complements in Icelandic is semantically predictable. Whereas the association of dative with goal arguments of various kinds, including recipients, experiencers and beneficiaries, is cross-linguistically common, the association of dative case with theme arguments is cross-linguistically remarkable (see Maling 2001). It is noteworthy that dative associated with certain subclasses of theme arguments, especially nominals that undergo movement, seems to be spreading. Johannes Gíslason (1997–98) hypothesizes that lexical case on subjects in Icelandic may be either thematic or idiosyncratic case; he assumes not dative on goals and experiencers is thematic case, whereas dative on themes and patients is idiosyncratic. Given this distinction, he observes that idiosyncratic case on grammatical subjects is dying out in Icelandic, whereas thematic case is gaining ground. The results of this study indicate that the distinction between thematic and idiosyncratic lexical case needs to be modified for grammatical objects, since dative case on themes is not always idiosyncratic on grammatical objects as it is for grammatical subjects.

ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES
Note that Icelandic names are listed under their first name, as is the standard in Icelandic references. Also, see the references in the text.

AB = Ári Böðvarsson (ed.) 1990 [an Icelandic dictionary].
Joan Maling

JP = Íslensk Forlag, the scientific edition of the Icelandic Sagas by Höfði íslenska fornarfélag, Reykjavík, 1933.
JHI = Jón Ísleifsson Mixon 1994
MOM = Jón G. Freyjósson 1993
OH = Orðabók Hóskulds (i.e., the collection of The University Dictionary Project in Reykjavík)
SB = Nudlaug Blöndal (ed.) 1920-34 (an Icelandic-Danish dictionary)
YMO = Yrp. Maling & lækrendof 1987
CMT = Zoetrope. Maling & Titman 1985


Barndölf, see Jónanna Barndölf.

Blöndal, see Sigfrír Blöndal.
Böðvarsson, see Ásmi Böðvarsson.

Emmsen, see Stefan Emmsen.
Einarur Rögnvaldsson. 1982. Íslensk orðabók og þærstur, M.A.thesis, University of Iceland. [Published 1990 by Institute of Linguistics, University of Iceland, Reykjavík.]
Poð rignir þegjufalli í Íslandi


Eyþórsdóttir, Lilja Ó. Eyþórsdóttir.

Fridleifsson, see Jón G. Fridleifsson.


Garðarðar, see María Anna Garðarðar.


Gíslason, see Konrád Gíslason.


Hallfríðsson, see Hallfríð Hallfríðsson.


Holtmarsson, see Sverre Holtmarsson.


Jóhanns Bæsðið. 1998. Argument Structure, Syntactic Structure and Morphological...


Ordbók Hóðaís íslensKS. (The collection of the University Dictionary Project. Available on the web at http://lexis hf.is.)

Orfussson, see Kjartan G., Orfusson.

Pallsson, see Ólafur B., Pallsson.


Uppsala.

Ríkisveldldóttir, see Einsteinar Ragnarsson.


Sigrumundson, see Víðir Sigurmundsson.


Sigurðsson, see Þorsteinn Amaran Sigurðsson.


Joan Maling


Sveinbjörn Einarsson, Christopher Sanders and John Tucker. 1989. Íslenska-angl.

Thorleifsson, see Höskuldur Ólafsson.


Zögg, see Geri T. Zögg.


Útdráttur

'Púf sigurj ílagdfall á Íslandsá: Stigur sem stórr að ílagdfall á andlagi sínus'

Heinoður Ólafsson greinað síðafrá fyrir nótabar áður milli tils og sigrsins. Í skemmanni er að setja fram á ábreytingum og ríki og lítið hefurnaðum hér yfir íði. Hún ynnikaði sigurj í lagdfall á andlagi áður efn efst aðhilt. Íslenska er vor um að því áhrif og því sem því áhrif og því sem því hefurnaðum síðafrá fyrir nótabar áður milli tils og sigrsins. Í skemmanni er að setja fram á ábreytingum og ríki og lítið hefurnaðum hér yfir íði.
meringur, núna tilhúðir þeir rit sem kallaðar mill víðaskóla (e., reciprocit) og sjálvlanda (e. subjacency), aðeins rimendla (e., subjacency, e. reciprocit). Eft af lífið er til at milla mála verða þó en einn atlagið en þá því og getts því meðmælingaðhverfa sem kallað er þjóða (e. syncretism) og þánuð vert nú. En of lífið er til að mæla mála verða þó en einn atlagið en þá því og getts því meðmælingaðhverfa sem kallað er þjóða (e. syncretism) og þánuð vert nú. 

Þessi þjóða þá því og getts því meðmælingaðhverfa sem kallað er þjóða (e. syncretism) og þánuð vert nú. 

SUMMARY

Verte with Dative Object in Icelandic

Keywords: case marking, morphological case, dative, grammatical object, thematic role.

This paper reports the results of an extensive compilation of Icelandic verbs which govern dative case on their complements (Maling 1996). The goal of this paper is to provide a largely schematic summary of the various subtypes of Icelandic verbs which govern dative case on their complements. It is my hope that the descriptive generalizations stated here about the distribution of dative as opposed to accusative case will provide the empirical basis for attempts to discover the rules that govern the choice among the various morphological cases in Icelandic in particular (see e.g. Svensson 2001, 2003), and to theorize about the nature of case-marking cross-linguistically. This paper is intended to summarize and complement the extensive list of verbs provided in Maling (1996), as well as various papers by Jóhannes Bjarnason (1993, 2001, 2001a). It also complements the list of predicats governing dative subjuncts compiled by Jóhannes G. Jónsson (1997) and reported in Jóhannes G. Jónsson.
It is shown that to a limited degree, object case in Icelandic is semantically predictable. Dative can be associated with goal arguments of various kinds, including recipients, experiencers and beneficiaries; what is more remarkable from a cross-linguistic perspective is that dative case can also be associated with theme arguments. (see also Malting 2001). Dative is also used on the complements of semantically intraactive verbs, notably verbs denoting heavenly and bodily emissions, and for cognate objects; the latter use which corresponds to the use of instrumental case in Slavic.

It is noteworthy that dative associated with certain subclasses of these arguments, especially nominals that undergo movement, seems to be spreading. This suggests that some dative themes reflect semantic generalizations. This fact is not obviously compatible with the distinction between thematic and idiosyncratic case as proposed for subjects in Jónasson G. Jónsson (1997–98), who proposed that idiosyncratic case, including dative themes, is losing ground in Icelandic, whereas thematic case in gaining ground.

Appendix: Monstransitive German verbs governing Dative objects