1. Introduction

One of the striking features of Icelandic syntax is the frequency with which verbs seem to govern the dative case. This is all the more striking when compared to German, a closely related Germanic language which also retains four morphological cases: nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive. The University Dictionary Project in Reykjavik (Orðabók Háskólaum, henceforth OE) includes some 16,000 verbs, many of them intransitive, as entries. Maling (1996) 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 Jóhanna Barðdal (2001b:121) were included. The corresponding number of verbs for German is approximately 140, and for Russian fewer than 60 (Pulkina & 1

This paper has been a long time in the making. Hóskuldur Práðins 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 Linguistics Discussion 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 Orðabók Háskólaum, and to Helgi Skúli Kjartansson, Jónas Gíslason, Jón Axel Harðarson, Ólafur Jónsson, Hóskuldur Práðins, Jóhanna Barðdal, Keneva Kunz, Kristín Bjarnadóttir and Dóhílur Eyjólfsson for providing numerous examples and hours of fascinating discussion. Hóskuldur provided many example sentences for the verbs in the 1996 compiled list, checked the English translations, and provided me with a copy of Háldei Halldórsson’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-9223725.

2 See the appendix for a list of monosyllabic German verbs which govern dative on their objects. Many of these verbs have prepositional prefixes which transparently contribute a goal-reading to the verbal object: zu- (21 verbs), nach- (11), vor- (4) and unter- (3), plus another 12 verbs containing the prefix ent- with the ablative sense of ‘from’.


Zakhava-Nekrasova (1980). Not included in the Icelandic list are dative subject verbs, of which there are at least 300 (see Jóhannes Gíslason Jónsson, Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b:136 — approximately 175 more take accusative subjects). If adjectives which take dative subjects are included, e.g. mér er kalt ‘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 Barðdal 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 Negra II-corpus (2001) of German, which contains 20,000 sentences, there were 12,747 accusative NPs as compared to only 1966 dative NPs. While it is difficult to compare these numbers directly to Jóhanna Barðdal’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. Ásta Svatavardóttir & Margrét Jónsdóttir 1988:19, Maling 1990, María Anna Gardársdóttir 1990, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1994), the case on a verbal object cannot reliably be predicted from the verbal’s meaning, since verbs with similar meanings may take different case frames. Consider, for example.

3 I am grateful to Heike Wieze for obtaining this information from Stefanie Dipper, of the University of Stuttgart. Dipper estimates that the relative frequency of accusative to dative objects for German lies somewhere between 5:1 and 9:1 (e-mail to Heike Wieze dated August 9, 2002).

4 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 *passa barnið* NA vs. *sína barninu* ND vs. *geya barnsins* NG ‘watch/attend/look 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 — montransitive verbs governing dative vs. accusative:
   a. *aka* ND vs. *keyra* NA ‘drive’
   b. *hjálpa* ND vs. *aðstóða* NA ‘help, assist’
   c. *ljúka* ND vs. *klára* NA ‘finish’
   d. *mæta* ND vs. *hitta* NA ‘meet’
   e. *hlífa* ND vs. *vernda* NA ‘protect’
   f. *unna* ND vs. *elska* NA ‘love’

(2) Minimal pairs — ditransitive verbs governing dative vs. accusative on the second object:
   a. *úthluta* e-m e-u NDD vs. *skammta* e-m e-d NDA ‘distribute, hand out’
   b. *skilta* e-m e-u NDD vs. *affenda* e-m e-d NDA ‘return, give back’
‘hand out, ration’
‘hand over, give back’

For this reason, case-marking in Icelandic is generally analyzed as the result of lexical idiosyncrasy, 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. Thus ND indicates a verb that takes a nominative subject and a dative object, NDA is verb that takes a nominative subject, dative indirect object and accusative direct object. Other abbreviations commonly used in dictionaries to represent verbal arguments: e-d = neut. accusative (Icel. *eðhverja* ‘something(n.D)’), e-n = masculine accusative (Icel. *eðhverja* ‘someone(m.A)’), e-s = neuter dative (Icel. *eðhverja* ‘something(n.Ø)’), e-m = masculine dative (Icel. *eðhverja* ‘someone(m.D)’), e-s = genitive (Icel. *eðhverja* ‘someone/something(n.n.G)’).

5 To the best of my knowledge, the term ‘quirky case’ was first used in print in Levin & Simpson (1981).

in the Prologue to *The Flamingo’s Smile*, one of his many books on the laws of natural history, ‘quirkiness and meaning are two not-so-contradictory themes’. It is impossible not to notice and comment on certain semantic generalizations (for a discussion of verbs governing oblique subjects, especially experiencers, see Johannes Gisli 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 distribution of morphological case in the language. Many linguistic quirks turn out to be quite sensible in retrospect, that is “sensible oddities”, the hen’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; Yip, Maling & Jackendoff (henceforth YMJ) 1987; Zaanen, Maling & Thórarísson (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, monolingual as well as interlingual, 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 ditransitive
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 daive (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 daive 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 daive objects in German.

2. The relative status of accusative and daive case

2.1 Accusative as 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 (byggja ‘build’, smiða ‘make, build’) with effects (as opposed to affected) objects always govern accusative (Jóhannes Gislí Jónsson, class handout dated 7 April, 1997). There are also morphological generalizations at work; as illustrated in (3), denominal verbs usually govern accusative on an object denoting the locatum (Jóhannes Gislí Jónsson, class handout, based on a collection of verbs of snearing [Icel. smurningssagnir] compiled by Kristín M. Jónsinsdóttir (1996:111)):

6 “sagnir sem stjóna þólfalli eru lanalgengasæt [I målt inn], og nýjar sagnir: [sem konu í mål] viðsta/Aest stjóna þólfalli” (Stórbirk Ragnvaldsson 1983a:193). However, according to Jóhanna Barðdal (2001b:118), nearly 25% of novel verbs in the language assign daive to their objects, so both accusative and daive can be said to be productive cases on objects.

(3) Noun:
  a. dákur ‘tablecloth’
  b. kalk ‘chalk’
  c. maltik ‘asphalt’
  d. salt ‘salt’
  e. skraut ‘decoration’
  f. smjör ‘butter’

Denominal verb:
  a. dákabordið ‘cover the table with a tablecloth’
  b. kalkavegginn ‘white-wash the wall’
  c. maltikgöta ‘put asphalt on the street’
  d. saltifik ‘salt the fish’
  e. skreyta kökuna ‘decorate the cake’
  f. smurja brautbiðið ‘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. elskja ‘love’, háta ‘hate’), or nominative if the subject is daive (e.g. líka ‘like’, leða ‘be bored with’). Only a very few psych-verbs like (væntyrjaa ‘mistrust’ have daive objects, and at least one psych-verb takes a genitive object (saka ‘miss’). On the other hand, some other types of non-agentive dyadic (transitive) verbs regularly govern daive, e.g. verbs of comparison, such as líkast ‘resemble’ and samefara ‘correspond to’ (see section 4.8.2).

2.2 Sources of daive objects

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

7 “Öllum þágufallsaldaum, sem frá maltíf. ílæknir eru andl., er þáð samstigleik, að þeir eru ekk í fyrstu andl.” (p.53). [All daive phrases which according to Icelandic situation are objects have in common that they are not in origin objects. — JM]
2.3 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 þággufallssýki 'dative-sickness' (cf. Ásta Svaarsdóttir 1982, Halldór Hallgrímsson 1982, Ásta Svaarsdóttir et al. 1984, inter alia), which affects the case-marking of non-agentive experiencer subjects. Lexically-governed idiosyncratic accusative on experiencer subjects of so-called impersonal verbs, e.g. langa 'want', vanta 'need, lack', has been giving way to either dative or nominative since at least the 19th century (Hallgrímsson 1982). þággufallssýki 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 hlakka 'look forward to' and kvöða fyrir '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 Jóhanna Barðdal (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.\(^9\)


\(^{10}\) The statistics for modern Icelandic are from the Icelandic corpus (Jörven Pálmason et al. 1994) for Old Icelandic they are based on the count of nouns in the Icelandic sagas done by Guðrún Ingólfsdóttir and Bergþóra Kristjánsdóttir. The results have since been published as Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000).
Table 1. Relative frequency of the four morphological cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></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><strong>21.71%</strong></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></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>67.2%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td><strong>21.8%</strong></td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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 numbers 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 certain dative verbs having become higher in token frequency in Modern Icelandic.)

The verb *setka* ‘delay’ occurs with either dative or accusative in Old Icelandic (henceforth Ol), but only dative in modern Icelandic. The verb *ljóka* ‘finish, close’ governs only dative in modern Icelandic, whereas Ol *ljóka* ‘close’ occurred with either accusative or dative according to Cleasby-Vigfússon. Indeed, it occurs with an accusative object in *ljóka upp mina kislu* ‘open up my chest’ but a dative object on the very same page of Fóstbræðra saga, according to Cleasby-Vigfússon: *lúkru þó upp kisluni* ‘opens (3sg) up the chest’. Verbs occurring only with accusative objects in Ol but only with dative in the modern language include *deila* ‘divide, share’, *fækk* (fækkafættu) ‘decrease’, *lóka* ‘lock, shut’ and Ol *ripta* (ripta) ‘annul, revoke, break (an agreement)’. In (8) are given some Ol examples from Cleasby-Vigfússon which illustrate the use of accusative on the verbal object:

(8) a. *deila sér ilan hlut af* ‘deal oneself a bad share(A) from’
    b. *at fættu skyldi húskarla* ‘that should reduce in number the menservants(A)’
    c. Hann gekk inn í hús dí ok lókaði innan hurðina.
       He went into house-the and locked door-the(A) from the inside
    d. Engi maður á ripta gjóf 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 Haldór Halldórsson (n.d.) seems to, that all dative objects in modern Icelandic have developed from case syncretism (e.g. the merge of instrumental and dative) or from other grammatical functions.\(^{12}\) It

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\(^{11}\) Cleasby-Vigfússon explicitly state that the verb *deila* in the sense of ‘deal, divide’ never governs dative in Old Norse. As discussed by Pårhallur Eybörsson (2001:33), this change in case-assignment bears on the interpretation of the Runic inscription on the Tune stone, which contains the forms DALÍÐUN ARÐÍJUN.

\(^{12}\) Jóhanna Barðdal (p.c.) points to Reishamarar’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 inheritance, Kjartan Ottosson (p.c.) points to relevant 19th century studies by Dietrich (1851) and Konráð Gíslason 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 Stenonius (2001, 2002) arguing that the assignment of dative case marks aspect and event structure (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2002).

The increase in verbs governing dative continues in the modern period. Many new verbs govern dative case on their objects. Jóhanna Barðdála (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, bísa, fingra, putta, meaning ‘steal,’ which govern dative like the already existing stíla, hnuplá and rana. There are at least two semantically predictable classes for which dative is on the increase: (i) experiencers (see Jóhanna Barðdála 1993, 2000, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–98, and section 4.3 below for discussion), and (ii) objects which undergo movement (Jóhanna Barðdála 1993, 2001b:139, and section 4.5 below):

(9) keyra nér heim ‘drive me(D) home’
   vs. keyra farangurinn heim ‘drive the luggage(A/D) home’

(10) spóla myndinni til baka ‘rewind the movie (the video-tape)(D)’
    negla bolanum ‘kick the ball(D) hard’
    forvarda meiltun ‘forward the e-mail(D)’
    rústa íbúðinni ‘demolish the apartment(D)’
    (and other objects of verbs of splintering, shattering)

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

Some new verbs assign dative case in accordance with the semantic generalizations mentioned here (see Jóhanna Barðdála 2000, 2001b:155). Jóhanna Barðdála (p.c.) reports encountering dative objects with the borrowed verbs topikalísara ‘topicalize’, skrambla ‘scramble’ and stranda ‘stand’ in discussions with linguists. Jóhannes

Gísli Jónsson (p.c.) also reports that a student in Há used dative with kjarnafera ‘topicalize, front’, as illustrated in (11a), although the verb fera ‘move’, is traditionally a verb taking an accusative object. Other examples of a similar kind are given in (11b–d):

(11)a. kjarnafera liðnum ‘topicalize the phrase(D)’
    b. Ég peista honum bara á afurs.
       ‘I just paste it(D) back on again.’
    c. dulka fjárnun ‘delete the file(D)’
    d. Hann faxaði samningunum til þinn.
       ‘He faxed contract-the(D) to you.’

The verb umferma ‘release’, which is “half-artificial” but used at least in EEA translations, 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-o ‘give somebody(D) something(A)’ (75+)
NAD sveita e-n e-o ‘deprive somebody(A) [of] something(D)’

13 This observation is due to Kerenza Kurz (p.c.).
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-)meila 'e-mail' can be used ditransitively by some speakers, as illustrated in (14):

(14) Hun nefur meilað mér myndina.
She(N) has e-mailed me(D) picture-the(A)
'She has e-mailed me the picture.'

On the other hand, the verb faxa '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 idiolectal 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 idiolectal variation with respect to acceptability):

(15a) Geturðu faxað samninginn til mín?
‘Can you fax the contract(A) to me?’
b. %Geturðu faxað mér 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)’

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” (Stefán Einarsdóttir 1945:107). Dative is generally said to be the case of the indirect object of a ditransitive (double object) verb, e.g. gefa ‘give’: hann gaf mér bókina ‘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 gefa ‘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:

b. Benefactive dative:
auðvelda, léta ‘make easier’, torvelda ‘make harder’, setja e-m þinamörk ‘set someone(D) a deadline(A), baka e-m sorg ‘cause somebody(D) grief(A), baka e-m vandregi ‘make trouble for somebody’ (lit. ‘make somebody(D) trouble(A)’), búa sér e–b (tli) ‘make oneself(D) something(A), já sér e–ð ‘get oneself (D) something(A), heyma sér orðaförða ‘acquire a vocabulary’ (lit. ‘acquire oneself(D) vocabulary(A)’), noftra sér e–ð ‘make use of something’ (lit. ‘make-useful 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.
Jóhanna Barðdal (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 causative-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 meldað 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 sendið 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 whose (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 YMJ 1987 and references cited there for discussion). Here and elsewhere ÷ indicates obsolete usage, but such examples can typically be found in Cleasby-Vigfússon, for instance:

(18) a. reina e-n e-u ÷rob somebody(A) of something(D)’
    (cf. reina e-u frá e-m ‘rob sth(D) from sbd’)
    svipta e-n e-u ÷deprive somebody(A) of something(D)’
    firra e-n e-u ÷save somebody(A) from something(D)’
    leyra 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)’
    ÷vernda e-n e-u ÷protect somebody(A) against something(D)’
    (now only vernda e-n fyrr e-u)
    ÷stela e-n e-u ÷steal something(D) from someone(A)’
    (cf. Hverjr eru þessir þjófnir, er ... stela mik eign minni? (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 dative on the second object as ablative in sense, as does Halldór Halldórsson (n.d., p. 56). The corresponding German verbs, e.g. stehlen ‘steal’, rauben ‘rob’, typically occur with the basic NDA case frame if ditransitive, 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 klaðum ‘strip somebody of their clothes (by force)’
    b. samhæfa e-ð e-u ‘adapt/adjust/coordinate something to something else’
    c. samþætt e-ð e-u ‘integrate something into something else’

14 The verb berað ‘rob’ occurs with a NAG case frame because of the prefix be-.
For at least some of these verbs, the second dative is derived from an IE instrumental (Halldór Halldórsson n.d., p. 51):

(22.a) **svara e-m e-u** ‘answer somebody with something’ (lit. “answer sbd(D) sth(D)”)  
(22.b) **hita e-m e-u** ‘threaten somebody with something’ (lit. “threaten sbd(D) sth(D)”)  
(22.c) **heit 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** (mér) öllum spurningunum.  
**she answered** (me(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 a beneficiary. Note the difference in meaning between the NAG and NDG case frames for the verbs **beita** and **biðja** ‘ask’. The accusative indirect object (IO) is the goal of the speech act, the person one asks, whereas the dative IO is the beneficiary, the person on whose behalf one asks.

(24.a) **beita e-m e-u** ‘request something for someone’  
(24.b) **biðja e-m e-s** ‘ask for something on someone’s behalf’ (e.g. **biðja e-m lifs** ‘ask for clemency for someone’, **biðja e-m hölbaena** ‘curse someone’, **biðja sér konu** ‘propose to a woman’ (lit. “ask oneself(D) a woman(G)”))

(24.c) **óska e-m e-s** ‘wish someone something’ (e.g. **óska e-m altra keila** ‘wish sbd all the best’)  
(24.d) **ryðja sér ráms** ‘clear an area/spaces for oneself’ (mostly figuratively)
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) Petti kosti mig tvó dollar / þetta tók mig þrýja tíma
this cost me(A) two dollars(A) / this took me(A) three hours(A)

It isn’t clear whether these two verbs should be considered ditransitive. Neither object passivizes, presumably since the subjects are nonagents; moreover, the second postverbal NP is a measure phrase, hence plausibly 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-d* ‘make something more difficult for somebody’, this argument would more accurately be termed a malefactive 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):

(26)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 dative can frequently serve as a diagnostic for a benefactive dative, the existence of this particular PP-alternation should not be considered a necessary condition for analyzing a dative object as a benefactive, any more than a *to*-PP is for dative recipients. In Icelandic, unlike English, the benefactive dative often does not freely alternate with a PP:

(27)a. *baka e-m sorg vs. *baka sorg fyrir e-n
   ‘cause someone grief’
   b. *baka e-m vandraði vs. *baka vandraði fyrir e-n
   ‘cause someone trouble, create trouble for’
   c. *vinna e-m gagn vs. *vinna gagn fyrir e-n
   ‘do somebody a service’
   d. *ávega e-m e-d vs. *ávega e-d 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). *Styttir e-m styttir* in (28a) is a fixed expression, whereas in (28b) *stýtt* ‘shorten’ has a literal interpretation:

(28)a. *Sjónvarpið styttir gamla fólkið* styttir
   television-the shortens old people-the(D)
   ‘TV. shortens the passage of time for the elderly.’
   b. *Sjónvarpið styttir styttir* gamla fólkið
   television-the shortens hours-the
   ‘The new road shortens the way for the driver by many kilometers.’
   c. *Nýi vegurinn styttir okumanninum leiðina um margra kilómetra.
   new road-the shortens driver-the(D) way-the(A) by many kilometers
   ‘The new road shortens the way for the driver by many kilometers.’
   d. *Nýi vegurinn styttir leiðina fyrir okumanninum um margra kilómetra.
   new road-the shortens the 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 dative-alternation in English. Idiomatic expressions like *give someone the finger* can only be used in the double-object construction; using the
PP-variant (give the 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 dative reflexive: the direct object is marked accusative unless otherwise noted:

(29)a. búa sér e-ð til ‘make oneself(D) something, prepare’
b. fá sér e-ð ‘get oneself something’
   (cf. Ég aðla að fá mér fisk ‘I’m going to have fish’)
c. heijja sér orðafornið ‘build up a vocabulary’
d. hita sér kaffi ‘make oneself(D) coffee’
e. leita sér e-s ‘look for something’ (NDG)
f. nostrera sér e-ð ‘make use of’
g. ryðja sér rúms ‘clear oneself(D) space’ (figuratively) (NDG)
h. skýja sér bök á bókasafnið ‘get oneself(D) a book from the library’
i. temja sér e-ð ‘adopt for oneself’
j. úthúa sér e-ð ‘prepare/make oneself(D) something’
k. velja sér e-ð ‘choose something for oneself’

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

(30)a. auðvelda e-m e-ð ‘make something easier for somebody, facilitate’
b. bída e-m lifs ‘ask for mercy for some (NDG)
c. blanda e-m e-ð (c.d. drykk) ‘mix somebody(D) something, e.g. a drink’
d. finna e-m stofr við hafi ‘find somebody(D) a job suited to his/her ability’
e. léta e-m e-ð ‘lighten something for somebody’
f. setja e-m timamörk ‘set somebody(D) a deadline’
g. skaffa e-m hlánaði ‘get housing for somebody’
h. skenka e-m drykk ‘pour somebody(D) a drink’
i. styta e-m e-ð ‘shorten something for somebody’
j. seinja e-m e-ð ‘seek/fetch something for somebody’
k. torvelda e-m e-ð ‘make something more difficult for somebody’
l. tryggja e-m e-ð ‘guarantee something for somebody’
m. útvega e-m e-ð ‘obtain something for somebody’
n. vinna 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 auðvelda e-m e-ð ‘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 kóku*), despite the existence of the above-cited 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 Gíslason 1996, Jóhanna Barðdóttir 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 factives. While verbs like auðvelda ‘make easier, facilitate’, léta ‘lighten’ and torvelda ‘make more difficult’ arguably assign the benefactive thematic role directly to the dative NP 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. hitaði mér kaffi vs. %Viltu hita mér kaffi?). But for all speakers, there are many verbs which can take a nonreflexive benefactive dative. In addition to auðvelda ‘make easier’, lêta ‘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: blanda e-m drykk ‘mix someone a drink’, setja e-m timamörk ‘set someone a deadline’, stytta e-m leiðina ‘shorten the way for somebody’.

Note that in English, some of these benefactive datives must be expressed as a PP (choose oneself something, strengthen oneself the lead), 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. Levin 1993) or Swedish. For some verbs, e.g. baka ‘bake’, the benefactive dative is possible only in certain idiomactic expressions:

(32a). baka e-m sorg ‘cause somebody grief’
   b. baka e-m vandaði ‘make trouble for somebody’
   c. *baka e-m smáður ‘bake somebody cookies’
      (but: baka kúkur handa e-m ‘bake cookies for somebody’)
   d. *Hún bakaði mér afmælistöku.
      ‘She baked me a birthday cake.’

The potential productivity of the construction is nicely illustrated by a clearly novel use of a benefactive/malefactive dative in the late 19th century example in (33), from the OH collection:

(33) … að skita … honum [kaupmanninn] stykki. (1883)
      to shit him(D) [the merchant] a turd

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

(34a). *röa sér hlut ‘go fishing to get oneself(d) a share of the catch’
   b. *skera e-m skyrta ‘cut (i.e. make) somebody(d) a shirt’
   c. *kaupa e-m fley ‘buy someone a ship’
      (cf. the stanza in Egil’s saga:
         Pat multi min móðir at mér skyldi kaupafley …
         ‘My mother said that (for) me(D) should be bought a ship …’ If II, 100)

The example in (34a), röa sér hlut ‘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 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 & Platzack’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):

(35a). Mér voru gefnar þessar bækur fí jólágjöf.
      me(D) were given(f.pl.) these books(f.pl.N) as Christmas present
      ‘I was given these books for Christmas.’
   b. Þessar bækur voru gefnar mér fí jólagnjöf.
      these books(f.pl.N) were given(f.pl.) me(D) as Christmas present
As already pointed out by Stefán Einarsson (1945), the dative case on the indirect object is preserved in the passive. Note that the retained object bekkur is marked nominative rather than accusative in the passive voice in (35a); as a consequence, the finite verb and the passive participle agree with bekkur 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 Jóhanna Barðdal (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 genitive 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” (Jóhanna Barðdal 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):

(36)a. Nemendumun voru sett bessi tímakôk strax í fyrsta tíma.

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

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

b. (?b) Bessi tímakôk voru sett nemendumun strax í fyrsta tíma.

  these deadlines(N) were set students-the(D) 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.

(37)a. Fresturinn bað syndaranum bessunar guðs, priest-the(N) asked sinner-the(D) blessing(G) God’s

  ‘The priest asked for God’s blessing for the sinner.’

b. (?b) Syndaranum var bessð bessunar guðs.

  ‘Blessing(G) God’s var beðið.

(38)a. Bilunin torveldaði henni vinnuna.

  ‘The malfunction made the work(A) difficult [for] her(D)’

b. ?Henni var torveldað viðmann (af biluninum).

  her(D) was made-difficult the work(N) (by the malfunction)

For many speakers, the dative object of the benefactive subclass does not passivise 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 syntactic behavior of verbs taking recipient indirect objects (cf. the full acceptability of (35b) above):

(39)a. Stjúpmôðurinn torveldaði henni vinnuna.

  stepmother-the(N) made-difficult her(D) work-the(A)

  ‘The stepmother made the work difficult for her.’

b. Henni var torveldað viðmann (af stjúpmôðurinni).

  she(D) was made-difficult work-the(N) (by stepmother-the)

  ‘The work was made difficult for her (by the stepmother).’

c. ??Vinnan var torveldað henni.

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

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 skipa e-n máli ‘matter to someone’:

(40)a. Bað skipi mig enga máli.

  it mattered me(A) no matter(D)

  ‘It didn’t matter to me.’

b. Æg var skipi enga máli.
b. **Penningunum** 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) in 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 *gefa* ‘give’ in (44a–d), and the NAD verb *svipta* ‘deprive’ in (45a–d). Note that in these examples, the semantics and form of the two objects have been carefully controlled: both are [+human, +animate, +definite, –pronominal].

(44)a. Þeir gáfu **konungunum** ambáttina.
   they gave king-the(D) slave-girl-the(A)
   ‘They gave the king the slave-girl.’

b. Þeir gáfu ambáttina **konungunum**.
   they gave slave-girl-the(A) [to] king-the(D)
   ‘They gave the slave-girl [to] the king.’

c. **Konungunum** var gefin ambáttin.
   king-the(D) was given slave-girl-the(N)
   ‘The king was given the slave-girl.’

d. Ambáttin var gefin **konungunum**.
   slave-girl-the(N) was given [to] king-the(D)
   ‘The slave-girl was given [to] the king.’

(45)a. Sjórinn svipi konuna **eiginmanninum**.
   sea-the(N) deprived woman-the(A) [of] husband-the(D)
   ‘The sea deprived the women of her husband.’

b. **Sjórinn svipi eiginmanninum** konuna.
   sea-the(N) deprived [of] husband-the(D) woman-the(A)
c. Konan var svipt eigninnunum.
woman-the(N) was deprived [of] husband-the(D)
‘The woman was deprived of her husband.’

d. *Eigninnunum 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 Rögnvaldsson 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.

(46a. Stjúpmöðrin torveldaði prinsessum vinnuna
stepmother-the made-difficult princess-the(D) work-the(A)
‘The stepmother made the work difficult for the princess.’

b. *Stjúpmöðrin torveldaði vinnuna prinsessum.

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 datives (Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson, 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 govern dative (cf. Stefán Einarsson 1945:107 (section 1.3.1.2(a)), Kress 1982, §525). Hence it is tempting to try to find semantic generalizations that could account for the selection of dative over accusative objects. That is the purpose of this section and we will begin with the prototypical class.

4.2 Verbs of helping

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


Here I have included verbs of rescue (hjarga, 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:
lúðsinna ‘assist’ vs. áðstóða ‘assist’
hjúkra ‘pursue’ vs. lúkna ‘heal’
hjálpa ‘help’ vs. styrkja ‘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’, hílfa ‘protect’, miskunna ‘take pity on’ vargja ‘spare’, þyrna ‘spare’
bía ‘lull (a baby)’, hossu ‘lull (a baby)’, vága ‘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 4.3).
(50) taking a dative object: taking an accusative object:

hifsa ‘protect’ vs. vernda ‘protect’

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

(51) a. Hverjur klukkan glýmur.
   ‘For whom the bell tolls.’ [the title of the famous novel]

b. Börnumum var vendilega snýt.
   ‘The children(D) were carefully [helped to] blow their noses.’ (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 (treysta ‘trust’, trúa ‘believe’), which take dative objects. Halldór Halldórsson (n.d., pp. 3–4) also includes heilsa ‘greet’, unna ‘love’, ketta ‘praise’, as well as verbs indicating usefulness, convenience, appropriateness, etc., such as henta ‘suit’ and þætt ‘be appropriate’.

(52) a. Þessi kennslubók hefur aldrei hentað mér vel.
   ‘This textbook has never suited me(D) well.’

b. Illa samir þer dø berjaski fómi mér.
   ‘It suits you badly to fight against me.’ (HH, from Flateyjarbók)

As in the case of ditransitives, 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 cut clear. Some examples are given in (53):

(53) gefa (hærunum) ‘feed (the chickens(D))’, kenna (börnumum) ‘teach (the children(D))’, segja (engrum) ‘tell (nobody(D))’
    vatna (lestum) ‘water (horses(D))’, brynna (skeppnum) ‘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. 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(A)), 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.

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18 Some of the verbs discussed here, such as gagna ‘be of use to’, and henta “suit”, are “alternating verbs” in the sense that the dative argument can be either grammatical subject or object. As can for instance be seen from the behavior of the arguments in the subject-verb inversion in direct questions like those (see also Johanna Barðdal 2001a):

(i) Hefur þer áldeis hentað þetta?
    has you(D) never suited this

   a. Hefur þer áldeis hentað þetta?
      has you(D) never suited this
   b. Hefur þetta áldeis hentað þer?
      has this(A) never suited you

   ‘Has this never suited you?’

4.3 Experiencers and verbs taking experiencer objects

Most experiencer subjects are actually nominative (cf. Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997, Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b:100, 187), but it is dative experiencers which have received the most attention in the linguistic literature cross-linguistically. In Icelandic at least, dative experiencers are typically grammatical subjects: mér leðist ‘I was bored’, mér leð vel ‘I was well’, mér er kall ‘I feel cold’. Such predicates have therefore not been included in the list of dative objects. As has often been noted (Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989, Jóhanna 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 argument 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’

   ‘Her(N) gets hot in cheeks’ stones:the get-hot in sun:the

c. Henni er kall. Hún er kóld.
   ‘She feels cold’ ‘She is cool/cold (figuratively)’

With nominative case on the subject, the adjective kóldur(n) kóld (f)/kall(n) 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) greiða barninu ‘comb the child’s hair’ (lit. “comb the child(D)”), hiða þóga e-m ‘warm somebody(D)’, orna sér ‘warm oneself(D)’, strjúka kettinum ‘pat the cat(D)’, þvo barninu ‘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) Accusative theme object:
   greiða þógu ‘comb one’s hair’
   hiða henni fóra ’warm her feet’
   hiða kaffí ‘heat the coffee’
   þóga sér ‘warm oneself’
   kettinum ‘comb the horse’
   klóra sér ‘scratch an itch’
   þva barninu ‘wash the child’
   þva barninu ‘wash the child’
   þva barninu ‘wash the child’
   þva barninu ‘wash the child’

Note the difference in meaning between klóra séreiðurvingum ‘scratch oneself/somebody(D) (e.g., an itch)’ and klóra sér/einvern ‘scratch oneself/somebody(A) leaving scratch marks’:

(57a). Óg klóraði kettinum.
   ‘I scratched the cat(D).’

b. Kótturrinn klóraði mig.
   ‘The cat scratched me(A).’

c. Hún klóraði sér í höfinu.
   ‘She scratched her head.’ (lit. “scratched herself(D) in the head”)’

d. Hún klóraði sig til að þykja hafa meint 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 (%skéina barnið), but an inanimate object could never be marked dative: *skéina rassinum á barninu.20 Halldór

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 Árnis Bróðarsson (1990) nor the Icelandic-Danish dictionary edited by Sigrún Blondal (1920–24) give skéina with dative in the relevant reading. There is possibly also some dialectal or
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rugga 'rock, swing', ýía 'push'. It makes no difference whether or not the object is a human experiencer/undergoer:

(61)a. rugga barninu 'rock the child(D)' rugga bátinn 'rock the boat(D)'
   b. ýía mannin 'push the man(D)' ýía bátinn '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 trufa e-n 'bother someone', whose object is usually an animate experiencer (or by extension trufa fundinn '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 emissions govern dative when used transitively. One example is the colloquial expression Heldurðu að e skíti peningum? 'Do you think I sh*t money(D)?' which is the functional equivalent of the English Do you think money grows on trees? These verbs include:

(62) gább, spía, ela 'vomit'; píssa, miða, spræna 'urinate'; drolla, hájga sér, kíka, skíta 'defecate'; skypa, spýja, spíta 'spit'; sletta 'drol'; hóstá slimiðið 'cough up mucus/blood'; snýta (sér) 'blow one's nose'; ropa 'belch, burp'; freta, prumpa 'fart'; brunda 'ejaculate'; bélda 'bleed'; týganga blöði 'hemorrhage'

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

(63)a. Nautið meig þá óllu vatinnu, sem þau drakk úr móðunni.
   'Then the bull urinated all the water that it drank from the river.'
(66)a. stefa munuvatni ‘drool saliva(D)’
   vs. stefa sig út ‘dirty oneself(A) drooling’

   b. skita peningum ‘shit money(D)’
   vs. skita e-D út ‘make something(A) dirty’, skita e-nt út ‘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 b já e-D út ‘soil something’, drulla e-D út ‘soil
something’, séd a e-D út ‘dirty something, make a mess somewhere’.23

Verbs referring to the hearing of young or the laying of eggs gen-
ernally govern dative:

(67) verpa eggum ‘lay eggs’; unga út klexja eggum, ‘hatch’; hera
lömbum/kalfi ‘bear lambs/a calf’; göta hvølpum/kettingum ‘bear
pups/kittens’; göta hrognun ‘spawn roe’; kasta folaldi ‘foal’

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

(68)a. Ærin bar
   ewe-the bore
   treimur lömbun*/tvø lönb.
   two lambs(D/*A)

   b. Ærin bar
   cow-the bore [a]
   svörtum kalf/*svarta kalf.
   black calf(D/*A)

   c. Ærin bar
   waiter-the(N) bore
   *matnum/matinn á borð.
   food-the(D/A) to [the] table

Note that kasta and verpa (cf. the list in (67)) have ‘throw’ as their
basic meaning, in which sense they also govern dative, as does göta
in the expression göta augunum til e-s ‘look sideways at someone’
(lit. ‘bear eyes(D) towards’) governs dative. Overall, nonhuman
objects of these verbs of bearing are almost always dative. However,
the verbs used for humans, fáða ‘give birth’, eiga barn ‘have a child’
and ála (afkvæmi) ‘bear (offsprings)’, govern accusative. Perhaps this

21 I am indebted to Helgi Skúli Kjartansson (p.c.) for this example.
22 In the OF collection is a colorful example from the late 16th century of saun
with an accusative object denoting a body part rather than the substance emitted:
Q. niur hans smynt fier ensfornu hann þungur bar liðr öf
   whoever blows his nostrils hard forces blood out
   ‘This is impossible in Modern Icelandic: with either dative or accusative on
   the body part.

23 Although no motion seems to be involved, the verb sóða ‘dirty, make a mess’
governs dative in the sense sóða e-u at ‘make sloppy work of something’.
is because these verbs are not restricted to this sense, but whenever 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 aða is not restricted to humans, and it can take a benefactive dative with an NDA case frame: aða manni sínum barn ‘bear one’s husband’s a child(A).’

Also included in the semantic class of physical emissions are verbs of ‘heavenly emissions’ such as ragna ‘rain’ and snjóda ‘snow’, which are, of course, generally intransitive, but which govern dative when used with a complement:

(69)a. Pað rigandi eldi og brennistein.
   ‘It rained fire(D) and brimstone(D).’

b. Spurningum rigandi yfir meistarana.
   ‘The winners/masters were showered with questions.’ (lit. ‘It rained questions(D) over ...’)

c. Pað rigandi blönum yfir ljókum Díonu prinsessu.
   ‘It rained flowers(D) over Princess Diana’s casket.’

d. Pað snjódaði englum.
   ‘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 spúa ‘spew’:

(70) Eldjóllin spúa eldi og emyrju yfir landið.
   ‘The volcanoes spewed fire(D) and brimstone(D) over land-the’

   ‘The volcanoes spewed fire and brimstone over the land.’

4.5 Verbs whose objects undergo movement

4.5.1 The basic generalizations

As noted by Stefán Einarssson (1945:108) and Jónhanna 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) fleýgja, hendla, hreyta, kasia, varpa ‘throw’; skafta ‘throw, harpoon’; snara ‘throw, snare, lasso’; spaska, spyrna, prúma, frusa ‘kick’; velta; rílla ‘roll’; mjaka, ‘move slowly, inch, eke; aða e-u til ‘inch something about’; sleta ‘drag’; yta ‘push’

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

(72) fera ‘move’, flytja ‘move, transport’, hreyfa ‘move’, ferja ‘ferry’, reka (fæ) ‘drive (sheep)’ (vs. snaða fænu ‘gather the sheep(D)’)

These basic verbs have many figurative uses, so they are perhaps felt to belong less clearly to this class. Stefán Einarsson (1945:108) suggests that the semantic class is perhaps restricted to “verbs denoting (quick) movement’. While it is true that drega ‘drag, tow’ governs accusative, many verbs denoting slow movement govern dative, as can be seen from the list in (71) (cf. yta ‘push’; velta; rílla ‘roll’; mjaka, aða til ‘move slowly, inch, inch about’; sleta ‘drag, pull’ (from Danish slæbe)), so speed seems not to be a relevant factor. Thus there is no obvious difference of speed in the examples in (73):

(73)a. Hann dróð bátínum að landi.
   ‘He dragged/towed the boat(A) to shore,’

b. Hann sletaði bátínum að landi.
   ‘He dragged/towed the boat(D) to shore,’

c. ... aðt í fæ mig til að sleta bátínum hans (OH)
   ... was supposed to get me to drag his boat(D)’

24 This case alternation may strike the second language learner as the opposite of the common case alternation found with certain prepositions in Icelandic (as in German), where Accusative marks movement towards (þvefing) and Dative marks static location (staðarmæli). 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 *aftenda* N(D)A ‘hand over,’ the theme is marked accusative, unlike for the root verb *henda* ND ‘throw,’ possibly because physical movement is not necessarily involved, as illustrated in the following mid-16th century (1545) example from OH:

(74) vændizit sira Stephan að sira Oddur hefði af[h]ent sier vilianlioga stádum
  ‘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 seems 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:  
   *druall* mælingvunn ‘dip paint’  
   *moku* snjómum ‘shovel the snow’  
   *raka* heyi saman ‘rake the hay up’  
   *skjóð* kálumi ‘shoot the bullet’  
   *skalla* skulánum ‘throw the harpoon’  
   *smulda* féim ‘gather the sheep’  
   *þeyta* lúáfnum ‘bunt the leaf; away’  
   *þeyta* rúdanna ‘whip the cream’

Accusative object:
   *druall* eði it ‘soil something’  
   *moku* trópgunnar ‘shovel the steps’  
   *raka* gárðir/þaldir ‘rake the yard/field’  
   *skjóð* fuglanna ‘shoot the bird’  
   *skalla* húllann ‘harpoon the whale’  
   *smulda* hefðina ‘rid the heath of sheep’  
   *þeyta* húfnum burt ‘thug the leave; away’  
   *þeyta* rúdanna ‘whip the cream’

Many verbs work similarly (see Jóhanna Barðdála 1992 for further discussion): *ausa* ‘ladle, scoop, pour’, *hræra* (samán) ‘stir (together)’, *rykka* ‘pull, pull out’, *sópa* ‘sweep’, *smyja* ‘smear, spread’. Jóhanna Barðdála notes that the dative case frame seems to require a locative (directional) adverbial.

As noted earlier, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson observes that denominal verbs usually govern accusative on an object which denotes the location (lecture notes, 7 April 1999, based on Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir 1996:111):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>72</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(76) Noun:</td>
<td>Denominal verb:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beisi ‘bit’</td>
<td>beista hestim ‘put a bit in a horse’s mouth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bera ‘woodstain’</td>
<td>bæsa völum ‘stain the wood (against rot)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dýkur ‘tablecloth’</td>
<td>dýka bordið ‘cover the table with a tablecloth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faldur ‘hem’</td>
<td>faldla kjöfum ‘hem the dress’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gall ‘gold’</td>
<td>gylla bókina ‘plate with gold, put gilt lettering on the book’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>húð ‘skin’</td>
<td>húða leikur ‘put a skin/gleaze on a clay pot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ís ‘ice’</td>
<td>ísa fiskinn ‘ice the fish’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalk ‘chalk’</td>
<td>kalka veggin ‘white-wash the wall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>krón ‘chrome’</td>
<td>krána ljúlkoppa ‘put chrome on the hubcaps’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lakk ‘polish’</td>
<td>lakkka nýlumar ‘polish one’s nails’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>litur ‘color’</td>
<td>líta myndina ‘color (in) the picture’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malbik ‘asphalt’</td>
<td>malbika gösina ‘put asphalt on the street’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salt ‘salt’</td>
<td>sílta fiskinn ‘salt the fish’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skín ‘shoe’</td>
<td>skói bórini ‘get shoes for the kids (among)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skránt ‘decoration’</td>
<td>skráta jólarið ‘decorate the Christmas tree’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smjór ‘butter’</td>
<td>smynja braðð ‘butter the bread’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snara ‘snare, lasso’</td>
<td>snara hestim ‘snare, lasso the horse’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sykur ‘sugar’</td>
<td>sykra kókurnar ‘sprinkle sugar on the cakes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>íjarga ‘tar’</td>
<td>íjarga pask ‘tar the roof, cover with tar’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veggföður ‘wallpaper’</td>
<td>veggföðra herbergið ‘wallpaper the room’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>völvi ‘liquid’</td>
<td>vökvæ blómin ‘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 *ausa* ‘ladle, scoop, pour’, which is derived from the feminine noun *ausa* ‘ladle’:

(77) a. *ausa* súpunni ‘ladle the soup(D)’
   b. *ausa* hattinn ‘bail the boat(A)’
   c. *ausa* vatnir úr brumni ‘draw water(D) from a well’
   d. *ausa* e-n vatni ‘sprinkle someone(A) [with] water(D), baptize someone’
   e. *ausa* skómmum yfir e-n ‘pour abuse(D) on someone’

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

(78)a vatna heltum ‘water horses’, snjóa kindum ‘give snow to sheep’
   b. praðla nemendunum út ‘pile work on the students’

The examples in (77)-(78) suggest that the generalization at work here is semantic (theme vs. locatum) 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 locatum or location which gets smeared is marked accusative, even if that locatum happens to be a human being, showing that the verbal situation is not interpreted as sensory experience:

(79)a. maka sólóll dismissed from one’s face
   b. maka e-n i sólóll ‘smeared 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 moka ‘shovel’ is moveable; other speakers use dative if a directional adverb or PP is present, but accusative otherwise:

(80)a. Hann mokadi sandi burst.
       he shaved sandi(D) away
   b. Hann mokar sand allan daginn.
       he shovels sand(A) all day
   c. Preði var reynið að muka sjógin.
       (Hallór Ármann, Sigurðsson 1989.60)
       it 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 Gísli Jónsson (p.c.) suggests that the case marking probably reflects the interpretation rather than a true idiolectal difference. Put differently, if you are (re)moving some substance from one location to another, then the object must be marked dative. This contrast shows up nicely with the object skafli ‘snow drift’; in (81b) where the snow drift stays put, the object is marked accusative:

(81)a. Preði nokuðu skaflið burst.
       they shoveled snow-drift-the(D) away
   b. Preði nokuðu skaflið.
       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:

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

(83) Dative object undergoing movement:  Accusative object:
    smyrja smjóraða á brautinni
    ‘spread the butter on the bread’  smyrja brautinni
    splundra rauðu lakið á bilinn
    ‘spray red paint on the car’  splundra bilinn með rauðu lakið
    sprauta rauðu lakið á bilinn
    ‘spread the bread [with butter]’  sprauta bilinn með rauðu lakið

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

(84) Verbs of loading and unloading:
    ferma ‘load’, afferma ‘unload’, hlaða ‘load’, umhlaða ‘restack, repack’
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:**

- hlada keyinu ú vaginum
  - load the hay on the wagon
- umhlaða vörúnun
  - restack the goods

**Accusative object:**

- hlada vagninn med keyi
  - load the wagon with hay
- umhlaða vörubliten
  - 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) a) akja bilinn ‘drive the car’, fjölda flugvélinni ‘fly the plane’, lenda flugvélinni ‘land the plane’, ríða hestí ‘ride a horse’, ríða bánum ‘row the boat’, sigla skípi ‘sail a ship’

The exceptions are the very common, however, and include the everyday verb keyra ‘drive’, which governs accusative: keyra bilinn ‘drive the car(A)’, keyra hana heim ‘drive her(A) home’, and the verb ferja ‘ferry’: ferja hana yfir ána ‘ferry her(A) across the river’.25 But as noted by Jóhanna Barðdís (1992), many younger speakers tend to use dative for an animate passenger: keyra henni heim ‘drive her(D) home’.

Note that keyra has other uses not referring to means of transportation which also govern accusative: keyra nágámann ‘drive the nail’, keyra öxina i hofnun honum ‘drive the ax into his head’, keyra en níður ‘knock someone down’. The OH collection contains no examples of keyra governing a dative object in the relevant sense,26 and the

25 As Kristjan Ottosson points out (p.c.), the verb ferja does not take an object denoting the means of transportation, only the person/thing transported: ferja folkblitiðinn ‘ferry the people(A) in the boat(A).

26 OH has two examples of keyra with a dative object in the sense of being on foot: ríða harkalega ‘a little hard or roughly’, which is presumably an instrumental dative:

(i) Síðan keyraði þessi maður he sauðum á skapuk, svo hafðið það allur.
  ‘Then this man aimed/drove his fist(D) at the handle, so that the whole knife sunk in.’

The colloquial use of dative with human objects noted earlier (cf. keyra honum heim ‘drive him(D) home’ in (9) in section 2.3) is apparently a relatively recent extension.

Note that the verb akja ‘drive’ continues to govern dative even in other senses: akja e-n til ‘inch something(D) about’, akja e-n í stæð ‘inch something(D) away’, whereas ríða ‘row’ exhibits alternations: ríða sér í sæti sínu ‘rock back and forth in one’s seat’ (ÁB/JHU) vs. ríða e-n uppi ‘catch up with someone’ (ÁB), where the requirements for dative-marking are not met because the object does not undergo movement. At least two dictionaries of modern Icelandic (ÁB/JHU) cite without comment examples of ríða with accusative objects in the sense of transport: ríða hann í landi yfir fjöðrinn “row him(A) to shore/across the bay” (JHU), ríða manninn yfir ána “row the man(A) across the river”, ríða búinn yfir ána “row the boat(A) across the river” (ÁB), which is reminiscent of use of accusative with ferja ‘ferry’. These examples of ríða are apparently taken from Sigfús Bjöndal (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 Barðdís notes (1992: ríða manninn yfir ána ‘row the man(D) across the river’), or preferably a PP (ríða með manninn yfir ána ‘row with the man across the river’), if the object refers to the passengers or things transported. This diachronic change from accusative to dative is hardly surprising, since most verbs meaning ‘transport someone’ govern dative:

(87) a) akja henni heim, skjóta henni heim ‘drive her(D) home’; skjóta henni í beinum ‘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) akja þessa leit ‘drive this way(A)’
  b) ríða sjönum/yfir fjöðrinn ‘row (across the sea/fjord)’
  c) ríða ána/sandinn (or ríða yfir ána/sandinn) ‘ride (across) the river/sand’
4.6 Instrumental datives

As noted earlier, many postverbal dative NPs that native speakers now feel to be objects are derived from adverbial instrumentals. It is sometimes difficult to decide on the grammatical status of the dative NP. Passive is one possible test (ZMT 1985, Halldór Halldórsson n.d.). In their discussion of the German counterparts, Heidolph et al. (1984:340) describe dative objects of monotransitive verbs as obligatory arguments (valenznotwendig); adverbial datives on the other hand should always be optional. Verbs taking adverbial or “instrumental” datives were generally not included in the compilation (Maling 1996) unless they take a dative object in addition (cf. Stefán Einarsson 1945:108, section 1.3.1(e));

(89)a. taka e-n hónum 'arrest sbd' (lit. “take somebody(A) hand(D)’’)
   b. taka e-n tvéim hónum ‘greet with open arms’
      (lit. “greet somebody(D) two hands(D)”)
   c. fara kalda höfði ‘go incognito’ (lit. “go covered head(D)”)
   d. ganga berum fótum ‘walk bare-footed’ (lit. “walk bare feet(D)”)
   e. ganga þurrum fótum ‘have dry feet (crossing a stream)’ (lit. “walk dry feet(D)”)
   f. Strúkurinn staur á mig stórum augum.
      ‘The boy is looking at me [with] big eyes(D).’
   g. þetta e-n fullum bóttum ‘make full amends’ (lit. “compensate sbd. full amends(D)”)
   h. þigaðla fullum gjöldum ‘pay in full’ (lit. “pay full amount(D)”)
   i. aða ‘scoop; anoint’

27 On the other hand, no direct translation of the advertising slogan “Fly the friendly skies of United [Airlines]” seems to be possible.
The PP may be odd in (91a) only because opnum örnun 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 Malting (1996), 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):

(92a) Hún grét sárnum gráti.
    she cried bitter weeping(D)
    ‘She cried bitter tears.’ (cf. Hún grét sárri ‘She wept bitterly.’)

b. Hann svaf djúpum svefn.
    ‘He slept a deep sleep(D).’

c. Hún hler allt í svo innilegum hlátri.
    ‘She always laughs such a hearty laugh(D).’

d. Hann dó hreilegum dautaga.
    ‘He died a terrible death(D).’

e. Hún lifir göðu liti/ sinu liti.
    ‘She lives a good life(D)/her own life(D).’

f. Hún brosti til hans tindrandi brosi.
    she smiled to him sparkling smile(D).
    ‘She smiled her sparkling smile at him.’

g. Hann býr göðu búi.
    ‘He farms a good farm(D).’

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

The transitive verb búa takes accusative in the sense of ‘prepare’, a sense which is not semantically associated with intransitive búa in the sense of ‘live’.

(93)a. eapa milið óp ‘scream a great scream(A)’

b. dreyma ilfan draum ‘have a bad dream’ (lit. “dream a bad dream(A)’)

c. ?veinga skelfilegt vein ‘scream a bloodcurdling scream(A)’

I have found some idiolectal variation among speakers, with younger speakers especially preferring dative (idiomatic translations are hard to come by here!):

(94)a. Hann veinaði skelfilegu veini.
    ‘He screamed [a] bloodcurdling scream(D).’

b. Hann hrópaði hröpinu út yfir fjallahringin.
    he yelled the yell(D) out over the mountain-range(D)

c. Hann öskraði öskrinu yfir 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. skjóta örinni
    shoot the arrow(D)
    skjóta göðu skoti
    shoot a good shot(D) (‘make a good shot’)  

b. deila matnum
    divide-up the food(D)
    deila ildileium við e-n
    quarrel bitter quarrels(D) with sbd
    ‘have a hostile quarrel with somebody.’

c. Hann ræður òllu hér.
    he determines all(D) here
    Stjórnendurinn ráðaðin sínum.
    ‘He makes all the decisions here.’
    the directors plan their plans(D)
    ‘The directors are making their plans.’

In one of the sagas one can find the following:

(1) Slæp þá eftir honum nokkurt óp. (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 Jon G. Friðjónsson, p.c.; note however the dative in höggva svæðina 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) Non-cognate accusative object:
   a. Hann ðið børni up á Ísafirði.  
   He raised the children(A) in Ísafirði.
   Cognate accusative object:
   hann allan aldur sinn á Ísafirði.  
   He lived his whole life(A) in Ísafirði.
   b. Hann dreymði mananna.  
   He dreamt man-acc(A)  
   ‘She dreamt about the man.’
   Cognate accusative object:
   hann dreymði illan draum.  
   She dreamt bad dream(A)  
   ‘She had a bad dream.’
   c. binda svæðið staðfangið  
   ‘tie the string(A)/bow(A)’
   binda bandið  
   ‘tie the band(A)”
   d. danna þáttur ‘judge the case(A)’
   danna þáttur þáttur ‘render that judgment(A)”
   e. guda ‘crow, scream’ (intr.)  
   ‘guda gáður ‘crow a magic(A)”
   höggva þangi þangi  
   ‘deal a heavy blow’
   f. kveða rimuna ‘chant the ballad(A)”
   kveða kveðið ‘chant, recite the poem(A)”
   g. leika knattspurr ‘play soccer(A)”
   leika gðan leik ‘make a good move(A); play a good game(A) [as in soccer]”
   h. leika höggva ‘read the book(A)”
   leika lesturinn ‘read the reading(A)”
   j. segja þráður ‘tell a joke(A)”
   segja þóguur ‘tell the story(A)”
   k. skera þráður ‘cut the thread(A)”
   skera þráður þráður ‘cut the first cut(A)”
   l. spinnu bandið ‘spin the yarn(A)”
   spinnu spinnu ‘spin the spinning(A)”
   m. skyra laugur ‘sing the song(A)”
   skyra sängur ‘sing the song(A)”
   n. þvo diskana ‘wash the dishes(A)”
   þvo þvotum ‘wash (do) the wash”
   o. þviða kveðið ‘recite the poem(A)”
   þvið þviða ‘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:
   a. leika gðan leik  
   ‘make a good move’
   play a good game(A)”
   [cannot mean ‘play a good game’]
   b. sofa setan svefn  
   ‘have a nice sleep(A)”
   ‘sleep a deep sleep(D)”

With the exception of köllum ‘somersault’, the complements in the following examples are plausibly measure phrases, and as such would be expected to be marked accusative:

98) Non-cognate object:
   a. hlaupa tvo spretri  
   ‘run two spurt(A)”
   hlaupa hlaupið  
   ‘run the race(A)”
   b. róa eina ferð  
   ‘row one lap(A)”
   róa (lango) róður  
   ‘go for a long row(A)”
   c. stökkva köllum  
   ‘turn a somersault(A)”
   stökkva langi stökk  
   ‘make a long jump(A)”
   d. synða eina ferð  
   ‘swim one lap(A)”
   synða langi sund  
   ‘go for a long swim(A)”
   e. synða lauginga á enda  
   ‘swim the pool(A) to the end’

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

30 Adnominal measure phrases are genitive (þræta er margir viðna ferð ‘This is [a] many weeks(G) trip”), as are measure phrases modifying an adjective, even if that adjective head is null: Hann er þræggja ara (gamalli) ‘He is three-years(G) old.”
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) Dative cognate object:                    Accusative cognate object:
  a. sjóða eðr langri súðu  hún kyssir mig kembugskoss
t      ‘boil something a long time(D)’          ‘she gives me a big kiss(A)’
b. sára e-n stóru sári    slá e-n kinnhest
      ‘injure someone seriously’             ‘give sb a blow on the cheek’
    (lit. ‘wound sb a big wound(D)’)        (lit. ‘hit sb a cheek-hit(D)’)
c. sára e-n banasírri    hóggva e-n banahöggi
      ‘injure someone a death-wound(D)’      ‘deaf someone a deathblow(A)’

Some native speakers report that banahöggi ‘deathblow’ feels like something other than an instrumental, more object-like, perhaps because of the accusative case-marking, and some speakers also accept dative: hóggva e-n banahöggi, in keeping with the general pattern. Note that slá e-n kinnhest 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 (Icel. forseyyt sogn) almost always governs the same morphological case as the root verb. For example, the verb mísfrýrma ‘torture’ governs dative, since frýrma ‘spare someone’s life’ does, whereas the verb mismota ‘abuse’ governs accusative just like nota ‘use’. That the assigned case is inherited from the root verb and not the prepositional prefix is seen most clearly from the many um-verbs which assign dative despite the fact that the preposition um ‘about, around’ always governs accusative, and the til- verbs, which do not govern genitive even though the preposition til ‘to’ always assigns genitive. Note also that the verb aðlaug a-ð að e-u ‘adapt something to something’ governs an accusative object although the preposition að assigns dative to its object:
Pað rignir þágufalli á Íslandi 85

(103) Peta forrit hefur verðið aðlagðað á þessari tölvu. 'This program has been adapted to this computer(D).'

No: 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 verbs minna ‘(seen to) remember’ and misminna ‘remember incorrectly’ both take accusative subjects, whereas both members of the following verb pairs take dative subjects: líka ‘like’ and mislíka ‘dislike’, takasti ‘succeed’ and mistakasti ‘fail’, heppnast ‘succeed’ and misheppnast ‘fail’, lakast ‘succeed’ and mislakast ‘fail’, leiðast ‘be bored’ and hund leiðast ‘be bored to death’. There is at least one ditransitive prefixed verb pair: huga ‘expect’ and fyrirhuga ‘plan’, both occurring with a NDA case frame:

(104)a. Honum var ekki hugað líkið.

he(D) was not expected life(A)

'He wasn’t expected to live.'

b. Hann teður í sóu verði fyrirhugaðar sójąkki liðverk tilfimu.

he believes that self(D) has been planned special mission(A) in life

'He thinks that he has been given a special mission in life.' (JHU)

There are a few exceptions to this generalization, however:

(105) Root verb: Prefixed/compound verb:

a. henda vörunum vs. afhenda vörurnar

throw the goods(D) (away) deliver the goods(A)

b. fira liðinn vs. kjarnafira liðnum

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 in (106):

(106) Root verb

governing dative:

tenda ‘land’

naðblenda ‘make an emergency landing’
snúð ‘turn’

hringssnað ‘turn around in circles’

varpa ‘throw’

kollvarpa ‘overthrow’, sjónvarpa ‘broadcast (TV)’, lýðvarpa ‘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:

líkast ‘resemble’; nema ‘amount to’; samlagast (samlaga sig) e-u ‘assimilate to’, sámryma, sámrema ‘reconcile with’, sámrynast, sámremanast ‘conform to’, samsvara ‘correspond to’, cf. also líkja e-u við eð ‘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 case marking:

(108)a. Efirmyndin líkist frummyndinni.

'The copy resembles the original(D).'

b. Kostnaðurinn nemur tvöhúsund dollurum.

'The cost amounts [to] two thousand dollars(D).'

c. Hann á erflit med að samlagast bóhnum.

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

d. Pað er ekki heigt að sámryma þetta neðum öðru.

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

e. Verðið samsvarar einnum mánaðarlönum.

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

f. Pétur líkta honum við apa.

'They likened him(D) to an ape.'

Adjectives of comparison also take dative complements: Hann er mjög íður fódur sínum 'He is very (un)like his father(D).'
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/or some other adverb or PP with a similar meaning). Some examples are given in (112):

(112) **Accusative object:**

Dative object with *saman*:

a. *blanda drykk* 'fix a drink'
   *blanda e-* **u** *saman* 'mix sth together'

b. *hnoða deigð* 'knead the'
   *hnoða e-* **u** *saman* 'knead sth together'

c. *hræra* **deigð**
   *hræra pururjununum* **saman**
   'stir the dough/batter'
   'mix the dry ingredients together'

   d. *puðla puðluspilitð*
   *puðla e-* **u** *saman*
   'work on a jigsaw puzzle'
   'put sth (e.g. schedule) together'

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) *blanda e-* **u** *saman* 'mix sth together', *hræra e-* **u** *saman* 'stir sth together', *puðla e-* **u** *saman* 'put sth together', *raka e-* **u** *saman* 'rake sth together', *vefja e-* **u** *samanum e-* **i** *föld sth together*, *völsa e-* **u** *saman* 'crumple sth together', *hverla 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', *sauma e-* **ð** *saman* 'sew sth together', *líma e-* **ð** *saman* 'glue together', *negla e-* **ð** *saman* 'nail together', *binda e-* **ð** *saman* 'tie together', *hnoða e-* **ð** *saman* 'melt together', *sjóða e-* **ð** *saman* 'boil together', *klemma e-* **ð** *saman* 'clip together', *hópa sig e-* **sam** *saman* 'crowd together', *huppa sig e-* **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, JHJ gives only *hræra e-* **ð** *saman* (i.e. with accusative)
whereas Jóhanna Baðdal (1992) indicates that dative is the natural case with hræða saman 'stir together', citing hræða þurrfrínum 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 (thus items sewn, glued or nailed together can still be individually identified). Helgi Skúli Kjartánsson (p.c.) offers the following comment (translations of example sentences added — JM):

Dative is a more natural choice if different things are mixed: hræða saman skyrinu og rjómum 'mix the skyr and the cream together', whereas accusative is natural for further mixing what is already a mixture, thus:

Hræðða þurr frínum þessa hlíðu 'Stir this mixture together better'
Hræðða þurrfrínum þurr frínum 'Stir the dry ingredients together better'
where þurr suggests that they have already been combined. Also:

Pú er ekkið báinn að hræðða þetta nógu 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.

4.9.1 Verbs of marrying

Verbs of marrying typically take a dative object, including the ditransitive gifsta 'marry off':

(115) Hann gifsta dóttur sinna ríkum manni.
"He married his daughter(A) [off to a] rich man(D)."

Verbs in this semantic class include gifsta e-m 'marry, get married to', kvænast 'marry (a woman)', trúfosta e-m 'get engaged to'.

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

4.9.2 Verbs expressing dominance

Verbs meaning 'govern, manage, obey, serve', etc. are referred to as "verbs which express dominance" by Heidolph et al. (1984). These typically govern dative in Icelandic:

(116) geigna, hlita, hlýða e-m 'obey, listen to'; stjórna e-u 'govern, run'; stíra e-u 'steer, direct'; þorka e-u, valda 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. fylkja ölli líðinu 'organize, muster the whole force(D)'
    b. haga þessu þannig 'arrange this(D) that way'
    c. stilla e-u í höf 'keep sth(D) within limits'
    d. þeir stillu lítt drykkjuminni.
    "They didn't temper their drinking(D)."

Note that in the sense 'adjust', stilla governs accusative: Hann stilli líjosin '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', hætta e-u 'stop', létt e-u 'stop', lífka e-u 'finish', þræðum 'prevent trouble(D)'

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

32 The verb kvænast is etymologically related to the noun lona 'woman' and thus means 'marry to a woman'. The verb gifsta is etymologically related to the verb gifsta
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 sbd’ or af e-m ‘from sbd’):


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 ræna ‘rob’ in (125a-c):

(125) a. Peir stállo bökunum frá Jóni.
   ‘They stole the books(D) from Jon(D).’

   b. Peir rendu bökunum frá Jóni.
   ‘They robbed the books(D) from Jon(D).’

   c. Peir rendu Jon bökunum.
   ‘They robbed Jon(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) eyðu e-u ‘destroy, delete’; granda, spilla, sortirna, ‘destroy, make unusable’; hatta e-u ‘risk’; refsa e-m ‘punish’; rískaða e-u ‘risk’

It is perhaps questionable whether refsa ‘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 gleyma ‘forget’ in this category. Yet it is clear that there is a living generalization here. Thus the Danish loan rískaða ‘risk’ takes a dative like the native hatta ‘risk’. Similarly, recent borrowings like dítta (or díttera) ‘delete’ also tend to govern
dative like the native eðu ‘destroy, delete’. But some verbs in this semantic class take accusative objects:

\[(127) \text{skemna}, \text{bræta}, \text{evildugna} e-ð ‘destroy, something, lay waste’ (cf. that ‘eggja ‘lay’ which governs accusative); fella, rifa e-ð ‘pull something down (e.g. a building); jafna e-ð við jordu ‘level’}\]

4.9.9 Verbs of killing and of bodily harm
Many verbs of killing take dative objects:

\[(128) \text{bana, granda, kala, salg ‘kill’; farga, lóga, slátra ‘slaughter’; fyrirfara e-m lór ‘kill sbd/oneself’; fyrirkoma e-m ‘kill sbd’}\]

Many verbs of killing take accusative objects, however:

\[(129) \text{affóta, deyða, drepa ‘kill’; hálshögga, höggva ‘behead’; hengja ‘hang’; myrda ‘murder’; skera ‘slaughter’ (lit. ‘cut’); skjóta ‘shoot’, stinga ‘stab’}\]

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

\[(130) \text{misþýma e-m ‘offend, injure’; misþyrmma e-m ‘torture, inflict bodily harm’; nauðga e-m ‘rape’}\]

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

\[(131) \text{meítæ e-n ‘hurt’, misnóta e-n ‘abuse’, pínna e-n ‘torture’, pynta e-n ‘torture (mainly as punishment or to extract information’)}\]

We can say, then, that most verbs meaning ‘kill’ govern dative, although the basic verb, drepa ‘kill’, governs accusative.\(^{34}\) Note that all the verbs which govern dative generally take sentient animate beings

\(^{33}\) HH suggests that the case governed “by at least sense” of these verbs is determined by the prefix fyrir, which is “a preposition which becomes a prefix”; however, as a preposition, fyrir can govern either accusative or dative. Besides, we have seen that the prefix of verbs rarely influences their case marking properties (cf. section 4.8.1).

\(^{34}\) The verb drepa governs dative in other uses, including the fixed expression drepa e-ð drepd ‘avoid the issue’; a sense far removed from ‘kill’; drepa fingri i veir ‘dip a finger in water’ and drepa suðjúltum a brætid ‘slather burner(D) on the bread’.

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as object, but so do many verbs in this semantic class which govern accusative: myrða ‘murder’, hengja ‘hang’, skera ‘cut, slice’, aflifa ‘take somebody’s life’, hálshögga ‘behead’, skjóta ‘shoot’, stinga ‘stab’. But the verb drepa can also take inanimate and abstract objects; drepa timann ‘kill time’. The objects of the verbs governing dative are generally animate. The following examples are perhaps personification: nauðga málinu tónverkinu ‘rape the language/the piece of music’.

4.9.10 The verb breynna ‘burn’
In this final section, I mention some of the complexities concerning the choice between dative and accusative on the object of one verb, breynna ‘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: breynna ruslina/kolum ‘burn the garbage/the coals(D)’. Jón G. Friðþjófsen (class notes) has suggested that in this sense, breynna 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): breynna husidlandið ‘burn the house/the land(A)’. The burning of letters or other documents is a sticky 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.

\[(132) \text{breynna + dative on fuel used for combustion:}\]

\[\text{breynna ruslina/kolum/olíunni ‘burn the trash/coal/oil’}\]

Exceptions to this include combinations like breynna upp ‘burn up’ and breynna til ósku ‘burn to ash’, as these take accusative even if the substance is a fuel:

\[(133)a. \text{Hann brendi allan eldviðinn upp.}\]

‘He burned all the firewood(A) up.’

\[b. \text{Hún brendi kolín til ósku.}\]

‘She burned the coal to ashes.’ (cf. JHI)
(134) *brenna* + accusative if you hurt someone or damage something (on the surface) by heat
a. Gástu ekki straunja skyrteua án þess að *brenna* kragann?
   ‘Couldnt you iron the shift(A) without burning the coatar?’
b. Egi skal *brenna* þig með kertina mínð af þú heldur aðr man að straunja mír.
   ‘I will burn you(A) with my candle if you keep teasing me!’
c. Brendu þig ekki á kaffinu!
   ‘Don’t burn yourself(A) on the coffee!’

(135) *brenna* + accusative in the intentional use of heat for a specific purpose (result of the above, but with a desireable effect rather than damage), e.g. in the sense of bake, roast or casserize: *brenna* kaffi ‘roast coffee (beans)(A)’, *brenna* sár ‘cauterize a wound(A)’, *brenna* ígulsteina ‘bake tiles(A)’, *brenna* kol ‘char wood(A)’ (Zoēga), *brenna* lik ‘cremate’ (lit. “burn corpse(A)’)

Note that 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: Cortes léi *brenna* skip sín áður en hann laði til áðagvi á Azteka.
   ‘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* til ösku ‘burn to ash’ fall into this category.

(137) *brenna* + accusative/dative in the sense of ‘disposal by fire of letters, documents, etc.’ Here either dative or accusative is possible, with a subtle difference in meaning that native speakers find almost impossible to explain:
Hún brenndi óllum ástarþrunum/öll ástarþréfa.
   ‘She burned all the love letters(D/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 accidental or intentional.

(138a) Hann brenndi *handritið*/*handritinu* í misgriðum.
   ‘He burned the manuscript(A/D) by mistake.’

(138b) Hann brenndi *handritið*/*handritinu* viljandi.
   ‘He burned the manuscript(A/D) on purpose.’

(139) *brenna* + accusative or dative in the sense of disposal by fire of refuse:
   *brenna* ruslið vs. *brenna* ruslín
   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) Egi *brenndi* ruslið?/*ruslín, en þá brenn bara ekki allt.
   ‘I burned trash-the(D/A)?, 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 goals, 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 directional PP or adverb, which can be seen as a direct consequence of the semantic generalization involving movement. Dative 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 non-nominals that undergo movement, seems to be spreading. Jóhannes Gíslason Jónsson (1997–98) hypothesizes that lexical case on subjects in Icelandic may be either thematic case or idiosyncratic case; he assumes that 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 losing ground 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 authors are listed under their first name, as is the standard in Icelandic references (cf. also the references in the text).

ÁB = Árni Böðvarsson (ed.) 1990 [An Icelandic dictionary]
Cleasby-Vigfússon = Richard Cleasby, Gudbrandur Vigfússon and William Craigie 1957

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ÍF = Íslensk forrit, the scientific edition of the Icelandic Sagas by Híð íslenska forritafélags, Reykjavík, 1933–
JIU = Jón Hilmar Jónsson 1994
MM = Jón G. Friðþósson 1993
OH = Orðabók Háskköns (i.e., the collection of The University Dictionary Project in Reykjavík)
SB = Sigurður Blöndal (ed.) 1920–24 [An Icelandic-Danish dictionary]
YMI = Yip, Maling & Jackson 1987
ZNT = Záven, Maling & Távrróssson 1985

Barðdal, see Jóhanna Barðdal.
Blöndal, see Sigurður Blöndal.
Böðvarsson, see Árni Böðvarsson.
Einarsson, see Steinn Einarsson.
Pað rignir þágufalli á Íslanní


Eyþórsson, see Þorhallur Eyþórsson.

Erik Jónsson, see Jón G. Eiríksson.


Gíslason, see Conrad Gíslason.


Hallfórr Helgadóttir. 1982. Úm metani: Drög að samfélagsh, og súgulegi aðhugun. Íslenskt móti 4:159-189.


Hallfríðarson, see Hallfríður Helgadóttir.


Humason, see Sverrir Humason.


Joel Jónsson, see Kristinn M. Joelsson.


Jónsson, Jóhannes Gríms, see Jóhannes Gríms Jónsson.

Jónsson, Jón Hilmun, see Jón Hilmur Jónsson.


Pað rigtnir þagufalli á Íslandi


Stefnun Sigurður Norðal, Reykjavík.


Örnsson, see Kjartan G. Örnsson.

Pind, see Jórunn Pind.


Rognvaldsson, see Birgirur Rognvaldsson.


Sigmundsson, see Sövar Sigmundsson.


Sigurðardóttir, see Hallildur Ármann Sigurðardóttir.


Joan Malling


Valfells, see Sigurbjörn Valfells.

Thródís, see Húskóla Íslands.


Zöege, see Geir T. Zöege.


ÚTRÁTTUR

Pað rigtnir þagufalli á Íslandi: Sagnir sem stjóra þagufalli á andlangi sína

pað rignir þágufalla á Íslandi

merkinga, nánar tilækki þar framt sem kartan má viðtakaða (e. recipient) og njoðanda (e. beneficiary), auk reyndaða (e. skynjanda, e. experiences). En ef þessi er til annarra mála verða það eftir að þeim verði það um það sem germa því þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það sem germa þeim verði það um það semi...
Puo rignía þágufalli a Íslandi

profit by; nützen 'be of use to'; parieren 'obey'; passen 'suit'; passieren 'happen to'; reichen 'suffice'; schaden 'harm'; schmecken 'taste'; schmeicheln 'flatter'; schwerfallen 'be a burden to'; sein 'feel'; sichnähern 'approach'; stehen 'stand'; telegrafen 'telegraph'; trauen 'trust'; trotzen 'defy'; unterlaufen 'occur'; unterliegen 'succumb'; untersteuern 'be subordinate to'; vertrauen 'trust in'; verzeihen 'forgive'; vorauseilen 'precise'; vorauseilen 'hurry on ahead of'; vorausgehen 'precede'; verstehen 'oversee'; weglauen 'run away from'; wehmen 'hurt'; weichen 'yield to'; weiterhelfen 'help s.o. on'; widerfahren 'befall'; widersprechen 'contradict so.'; widerstreben 'oppose'; widerstreben 'oppose'; willen 'comply with'; winken 'wave to'; zieren 'beefring'; zublenden 'wink at'; zulassen 'all to'; zulassen 'fly to'; zulassen 'listen to'; zungenschnip 'cheer'; zufriednen 'cheer'; zukommern 'reach, belong to'; zugaffen 'run to'; zu sei 'smile at'; zugreifen 'gras'; zutreten 'advise'; zutreffen 'come before, prevent'; zutrinken 'drink to, pledge'; zukommen 'come before, prevent'; zutrinken 'wave to, signal to'; zuzwinkern 'wink at

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