

Passive variation in Northwest English dialects

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1. INTRODUCTION

- Ditransitive verbs subcategorize for two object arguments
- These objects are marked in different ways in different languages

The 'dative alternation'

1) a) *Prepositional Dative* (PD)

John gave/sent/threw the book to Mary. Theme > PP Goal

b) *Double Object Construction* (DOC)

John gave/sent/threw Mary the book. Goal > Theme

- English DOCs are supposed to be 'asymmetric': only the Goal can undergo passivisation

2) a) Mary was given/ sent/ thrown the book. ✓Goal passivisation

b) *The book was given/ sent/ thrown Mary. *Theme passivisation

American English, 'Standard' British English

- Theme passivisation is found in many varieties of British English,

3) a) It was given him.

b) It was sent him.

- This pattern is particularly associated with the Northwest (Hughes and Trudgill 1979)
- Previous studies have described theme passivisation in various Northwest dialects (including Haddican 2010, Haddican and Holmberg 2012; but also Hughes et al. 1979, Siewierska and Hollmann 2007, Myler 2011)

TALK OUTLINE

- New data from Liverpool: allows theme passive of definite DPs
- This differs with data from recent studies of NW
 - Manchester (Haddican 2010, Haddican and Holmberg 2012)
 - Ormskirk (Myler 2013, Myler p.c.)
 - Also mentioned: South Lancashire dialects (Siewierska and Hollman 2007), Chester (Rebecca Woods p.c.), N. Wales (Ian Roberts p.c.) Southport (own data), Stockport (own data)
- Variation is dialectal, not ideolectal
 - Liverpool theme passives derive from prepositional datives with a null preposition (§2)
 - This contrasts with Manchester (and Ormskirk etc.) theme passives which derive from DOC (Haddican 2010; Haddican and Holmberg 2012) (§4)
- The Liverpool dialect is innovating a null prepositional case (§3) from its overt preposition
 - The key variable is the distribution of the Indirect Object's case on different functional heads (cf. Haddican and Holmberg 2012)
- The availability of symmetric passivisation is not a binary option, as entailed by locality-based approaches (Anagnostopoulou 2003) (cf. Citko 2009; Haddican and Holmberg 2012)

2. BACKGROUND

NW

- 4) (a) She was given it. *Goal passivisation*
 (b) It was given her. *Theme passivisation*

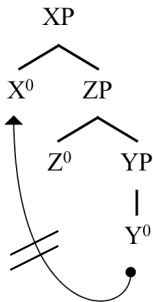
Liverpool

- 5) (a) The book was given the teacher. *DP Theme passivisation*
 (b) The package was sent her nan's. *DP Theme passivisation*

- The problem: In a DOC the Goal is the most local argument to spec-T

- 6) a) *Locality*
 Relativized Minimality: A local relation R cannot hold between X and Y when Z intervenes between X and Y, where Z is a potential candidate for R.

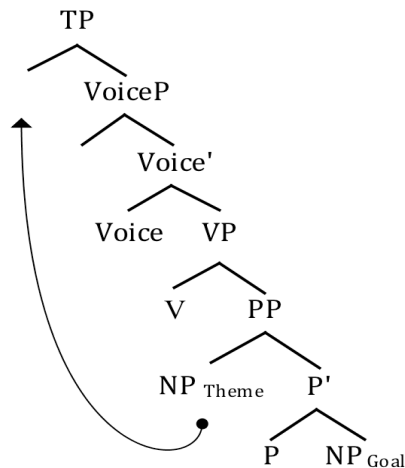
(b)



(Rizzi 1990 et seq.)

- Z is a 'potential candidate' if Z is of the same structural type as Y
- Z intervenes if X c-commands Z, and Z c-commands Y

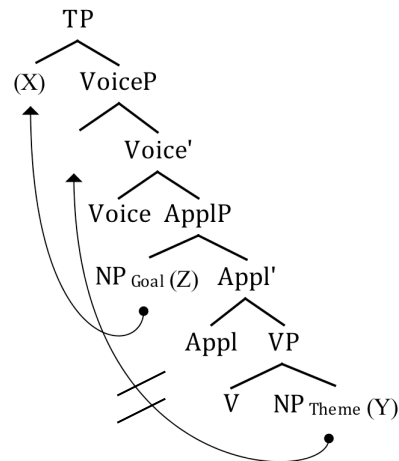
- 7) a) *Prepositional Dative*



(Based on Kayne 1984; Larson 1988; Harley 2002; Bruening 2010, etc.)

- b) The watch was given to the cook.
 c) *To the cook was given the watch.

8) a) *Double Object Construction*¹



(Marantz 1993; Pyllkkänen [2002] 2008; Bruening 2010:289)

- b) *The watch was given the cook.
- c) The cook was given the watch.

(Judgements for Standard British English and American English)

9) It was given her. *Theme passive*

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 10) a) John gave it (to) her | <i>Prepositional dative</i> | Theme > pp Goal |
| b) John gave her it | <i>Double object construction</i> | Goal > Theme |
| c) John gave it her | <i>Theme-Goal Ditransitive</i> | Theme > Goal |

• *Theme-Goal Ditransitives*²

- The Goal is unmarked (cf. Double Object Constructions)
- The Theme and Goal appear in the order Theme > Goal (cf. Prepositional Datives)

- 11) a) Mary gave it him. *Theme-Goal Ditransitive*
- b) It was given him (by Mary). *Theme passive*

12) The availability of Theme passivisation depends on the availability of Theme-Goal Ditransitives
 (Haddican 2010, Haddican and Holmberg 2012)

13) Short object movement feeds Theme passivisation
 (Haddican 2010, Haddican and Holmberg 2012; cf. McGinnis 1998, 2001; Anagnostopoulou 2003)

¹ The representation of the dative alternation has received a lot of attention in the generative literature. There is relatively little controversy regarding the structure of the prepositional dative, which will be the construction of interest in this paper. Rather, debate focuses on the representation of the DOC, and specifically the locus of the introduction of the Goal. In the spirit of Marantz (1993), a substantial body of work has argued that the Goal is introduced by an applicative projection above VP, as in (8) (Pyllkkänen [2002] 2008; McGinnis 2002; Doggett 2004; Jeong 2006; Bruening 2010). It has also been argued that a small clause (i.) (Kayne 1984) or cascade (ii.) analysis (Pesetsky 1995) of DOCs is more appropriate:

i. [VP ... [V' V [XP IO [X' X DO]]]]
 ii. [VP ... [V' V [PP IO [P' P DP]]]]

Under this class of analysis, DOCs involve extra structure within the VP. This approach is also pursued in Harley (2002), and in Pyllkkänen's ([2002] 2008) work on low applicatives. Whether or not the Goal is introduced within or outside of VP, the Goal is always taken to c-command the Theme in a position more local to T, which, under Relativized Minimality, precludes the possibility of Theme passivisation. The equivalence of the various analyses in this respect therefore means that nothing in this paper rests on the choice of representation in (8).

² TGDs are well attested in Northwestern and Western dialects of England, although they are also reportedly accepted by some speakers in Wales and from southern dialects such as London and Cornwall (Hughes & Trudgill 1979, Siewierska & Hollmann 2007, Haddican 2010: 2425, Kortmann & Lunkenheimer 2011); there are no reports of TGD in Northeastern English or Scottish dialects.

14) [TP THEME [TP T... [XP <THEME> [XP GOAL [YP <THEME>]]]]] (Haddican and Holmberg 2012:73)

15) *Correlation between TGD and theme passivisation*

Table 1: Availabilities of theme-goal orders in active and passive contexts in BrE dialects

Grammar	Theme-goal orders in active sentences	Theme passives
1	*	*
2	Ok	Ok
3	Ok	*
4 (unattested)	*	Ok

(Haddican and Holmberg 2012: 77)

2. A-MOVEMENT IN LIVERPOOL BRITISH ENGLISH³

Theme passivisation of pronominals

16) a) **It** was given him (by Mary).
b) It was sent her yesterday. NW dialects

- In Liverpool Theme passivisation of full DPs with full DP Goals is also accepted
- Liverpool appears to be the most 'symmetric' English dialect (so far) recorded

Theme passivisation of full DPs

17) a) **The book** was given the teacher.
b) **The package** was sent her nan's. Liverpool

Theme-goal ditransitives of definite DPs

18) a) Mary gave **the book** the teacher.
b) Mary sent **the package** her nan's. Theme > Goal Liverpool

- (18) predicted by (12)
- *What is the underlying structure of TGDs in Liverpool?*⁴

19) a) James taught French to the students, but they didn't learn anything. DOC
b) *James taught the students French, but they didn't learn anything. PD

- PD: transfer of location
- DOC: transfer of possession
- Green (1974), Oehrle (1976), Pinker (1989), Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2008); see also Bresnan and Nikitina (2009)...

³ The data is based on a survey of 5 male and 4 female linguistically naïve native speakers of Liverpool English aged between 20-30. 'Native' is defined as having lived in the city of Liverpool (specifically, the wards Toxteth, Allerton, Childwall, Wavertree, or Kensington) until at least the age of 18. Three of the informants have completed a Bachelor's degree in a University outside of Liverpool, three have obtained a Bachelor's degree from a university in Liverpool, and three left formal education at 16. Seven of the informants (from across the educational demographic) have lived outside Liverpool for at least three years. Education, sex, and place of residence since the age of 18 do not appear to be relevant factors. There remains scope for investigation of the sociolinguistics involved.

⁴ Bissell-Doggett (2004: 94) proposes TGD are a distinct construction. There does not appear to be any evidence for this from the Liverpool data.

<i>Latinate verbs</i> (cf. Oehrle 1976, Green 1974)		<i>canonically PD</i>	
20)	a) She donated/contributed it to me.	PD	BrE
	b) She donated/contributed me it.	DOC	*Liverpool/ *BrE ⁵
	c) She donated/contributed it me.	TGD	✓Liverpool/ *BrE
<i>“Manner of communication verbs”</i>		<i>canonically PD</i>	
21)	a) She whispered/shouted it to me.	PD	BrE
	b) She whispered/shouted me it.	DOC	*Liverpool/ *BrE
	c) She whispered/shouted it me.	TGD	✓Liverpool/ *BrE
<i>“Verbs of continuous imparting of force”</i>		<i>canonically PD</i>	
22)	a) She pushed/hailed/lifted it to me.	PD	BrE
	b) She pushed/hailed/lifted me it.	DOC	*Liverpool/ *BrE
	c) She pushed/hailed/lifted it me.	TGD	✓Liverpool/ *BrE
<i>Refuse, deny</i>		<i>canonically DOC</i>	
23)	a) She refused it to me.	PD	*Liverpool/ *BrE
	b) She refused me it.	DOC	Liverpool/ BrE
	c) She refused it me.	TGD	*Liverpool/ *BrE
24)	a) *The car cost five grand to Beth.	PD	*Liverpool/ *BrE
	b) The car cost Beth five grand.	DOC	Liverpool/ BrE
	c) *The car cost five grand Beth.	TGD	*Liverpool/ *BrE
<i>Pronominal Theme passivisation</i>			
25)	a) It was whispered her before she knew what was happening.		
	b) It was donated the hospital last week.		Liverpool
<i>Full DP Theme passivisation</i>			
26)	a) The winnings from last week’s draw were donated the hospital.		
	b) The code was whispered Mary before Sally knew what was happening.		Liverpool
27)	a) *Five grand was cost the car.		
	b) *The ice cream was denied the child.		Liverpool
<i>A-bar extraction</i>			
28)	a) Who did she give it to <who>?	PD	BrE
	b) <Who> did she give it?	DOC	*BrE// ✓Liverpool
	c) <Who> did she give it?	TGD	*BrE/✓Liverpool
Conclusion:			
29)	a) It was given her.	<i>Theme passive</i>	
	b) It was given to her.	<i>TGD/prepositional dative</i>	

⁵ Some Liverpool DOC judgements diverge from Standard British English, where Liverpool speakers can sometimes obtain a benefactive reading. This is not the reading associated with Theme-Goal Ditransitives. This appears to follow from an independent factor. Passivisation of specific benefactive classes is also possible in the dialect, for example: ‘The toy was bought the child’

3 LICENSING THEME PASSIVISATION

3.1 PREPOSITION-DROP IN THE LIVERPOOL VARIETY

- Preposition-drop is found across NW English (see Myler 2013 for full discussion of the nuances of preposition-drop in Ormskirk English)

- 30) a) I want to go the cinema.
b) I'm planning on going the shops.

NW English

- Liverpool preposition-drop is far more extensive than in neighbouring dialects

stative AT

- 31) a) She's staying John's tonight. (She's staying at John's tonight)
b) I'm working the library today. (I'm working at the library/office)

Liverpool

'complex' PPs

- 32) a) He's heading *(from) the station now.
b) He put the beers *(in) the fridge.

Liverpool

- In Ormskirk (Myler p.c.) and Southport (own fieldwork) AT-drop does not seem to be possible
- In Chester (Woods p.c.), Stockport, and Manchester, AT-drop is possible with proper Nouns (?)
- GENERALISATION: Preposition-drop occurs freely with allative *to* and stative *at* in Liverpool English
- "In general, across languages, only the unmarked stative and directional Ps 'at' and 'to', not the marked source directional preposition 'from', can fail to be pronounced"
(Caponigro and Pearl 2008: fn. 383, cited in Cinque 2010: fn.12)
- NP_{Goal} is not dependent on predicate for licensing

'straight'-modification

- 33) a) I'm going straight the pub after this. (I'm going straight to the pub after this)
b) He's heading straight the office. (He's heading straight to the office)

Non-adjacency, predicate and Goal separated by a PP

- 34) a) Come with me the pub. (Come with me to the pub)
b) He took both of them the zoo. (He took both of them to the zoo)

Nominalisations

- 35) a) An errand the shops is called for!
b) I'm on my way the library...
c) I want to go on a trip Spain.

(33-35 based on Myler 2013; judgements for Liverpool)

- (33-35) ungrammatical in rest of NW
- NW Generalisation: preposition-drop is restricted to verbs of motion (Myler 2013)
- Myler (2013) proposes p-drop in the [rest of the] NW is dependent on predicate for licensing

3.2 CONSEQUENCES FOR PREPOSITIONAL DATIVES IN THE LIVERPOOL VARIETY

PROPOSAL:

In Liverpool British English, a null element licenses Goals in Theme-Goal Ditransitives and (consequently) in Theme passives

PREDICTION:

Wherever preposition drop is free in the Liverpool dialect, we should see a correlate in ditransitive structures

- *from* (source), and ‘complex’ or ‘lexical’ prepositions (such as containment *in*) cannot be dropped
- Theme-Goal Ditransitives and Theme passivisation should be ruled out with *in*, *from*

- 36) a) John put the beers *(in) the cooler.
 b) The beers were put *(in) the cooler.

- Theme-Goal Ditransitives should be available in any allative context

Liverpool: Non-Recipient/ inanimate Goals with verbs of motion

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|------------|
| 37) a) He sent the letter to France. | PD | Liverpool |
| b) *He sent France the letter. | DOC | *Liverpool |
| c) He sent the letter France. | TGD | Liverpool |

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|------------|
| 38) a) Betty sent John to the pub. | PD | Liverpool |
| b) *Betty sent the pub John. | DOC | *Liverpool |
| c) Betty sent John the pub. | TGD | Liverpool |

Inanimate Goals with verbs of motion

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|------------------|
| 39) a) I sent the letter to France. | PD | BrE/Manchester |
| b) *I sent France the letter. | DOC | *BrE/*Manchester |
| c) *I sent the letter France. | TGD | *BrE/*Manchester |

Non-Recipient/ inanimate Goals⁶

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|------------|
| 40) a) I gave the money to the state. | PD | Liverpool |
| b) ??*I gave the state the money. | DOC | *Liverpool |
| c) I gave the money the state. | TGD | Liverpool |

- Only Theme-passivisation is possible with non-Recipient Goals

- 41) a) The letter was sent France.
 b) *France was sent the letter.

- 42) a) John was sent the pub.
 b) *The pub was sent John.

3.3 NULL PREPOSITIONS/ LICENSING THE GOAL

Past proposals

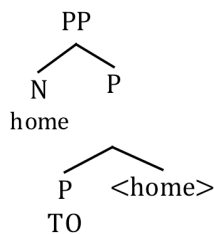
- Nouns marked by silent adpositions are licensed by incorporation into the verb (Den Dikken 1995)

⁶ The animacy requirement in DOC may hold with verbs of motion, but is less robust with other verb classes, such as, ‘The revolution gave Romania a new government’ (den Dikken 1995: 128). Here, Liverpool speakers accept the inanimate Recipient/Goal (as do all other speakers...).

- 43) a) I stayed (*AT) home.
 b) I went (*TO) home.
 c) I came *(FROM) home.

- Kayne (2010/[2004]), Collins (2007) propose that movement of overt light nouns to a specifier licenses non-pronunciation of a (functional) preposition
- In these variants the predicate again licenses the nominal (rather than the null P)
- Collins (2007) proposes null TO and null AT are light PPs
 - Light nouns lack lexical content ('I'll meet you someplace').
 - Parallel to light verbs, light nouns always move to a higher functional projection (Kishimoto 2000)
 - "Locative light nouns obligatorily move to the specifier of locative TO/AT in English"
 - A PP is null if a light noun moves to PP

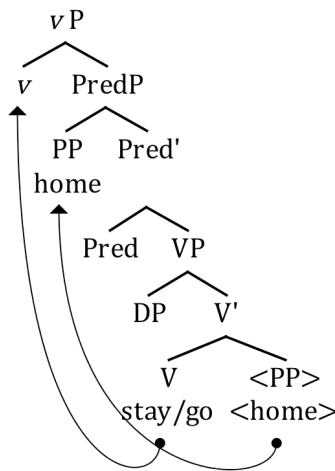
44) 'Home'



(Collins 2007: 12)

- A light PP is a PP where no Case checking takes place
- The nominal is licensed through incorporation of the light PP to the predicate

45) 'I go home'



(Collins 2007:20)

- In the Liverpool variety, the null element does license Case⁷

- 46) a) A trip the pub is called for!
 b) John came with me the pub.
 c) She said we'd go the pub, and the pub we went.
 d) It's the pub we want to go!

Nominalisation
Intervening PP
Topicalisation
Cleft

⁷ See also Aboh (2010) on null prepositions in Gungbe.

- 47) a) Suarez ran on the pitch.
 b) It was on the pitch that Suarez ran.

Directional/locational
Locational

(Stringer 2006: 64, cited in Cinque 2010: fn.12)

- Whilst noting a preference for a non-directional reading in the cleft, Liverpool speakers volunteer that ambiguity holds of both examples
- Configurational independence of the null element = non-structural case
- null material ≠ overt preposition (see i.a. Merchant 2001 *et seq.*, Sigurðsson 2004, and Kayne 2005)

Pseudo-passives require overt preposition

- 48) a) John was talked *(to).
 b) The music was listened *(to) carefully.
 c) After hours of discussion the contract was finally agreed *(to).

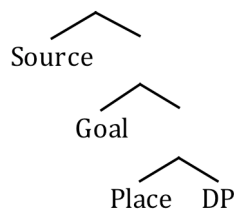
- 49) a) [Despite his gifts], the committee refused to admit Bob's son *(to) the school.
 b) Bob's son was refused admission *(to) the school.

Liverpool

(cf. A-bar extraction examples above)

- The Liverpool null element DK is always associated with non-structural case
 - *i*[Case] feature (cf. Citko 2009)
 - DK is a non-structural case

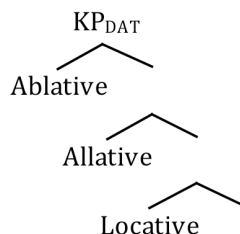
50) *Split-P projection*



(Cinque 2010, Pantcheva 2010)

- Split-P projections associated with dative case
- If the licensing capabilities of functional adpositions are equivalent to CasePs (or KPs) (Caha 2009:213; Cinque 2010)...

51) *Split-dative projection*



- 52) a) He's heading *(from) the station now.
 b) She's travelling *(from) home.

Liverpool

- The overt preposition corresponds to the root node of KP_{DAT}

CONSEQUENCES

- In Liverpool, null KP_{DAT} corresponds to a proper subset of the functions of the overt preposition
- The syntax of the overt preposition and the null KP_{DAT} overlap
- The overt preposition is sensitive to properties of external constituents
- The null KP_{DAT} is insensitive to properties of external constituents (Allative and Locative terminals too deeply embedded)

KEY POINTS

- The null element (KP_{DAT}) licenses the Goal
- The Liverpool variety has innovated a non-structural case

3.4 VARIATION AND CHANGE

- The judgements reported so far are taken from a survey of 9 linguistically naïve native speakers of Liverpool English aged between 20-30
- The survey was extended to 6 linguistically naïve native speakers of Liverpool English over the age of 60
 - These speakers restrict TGDs to **pronominal** themes (i.e. the general NW pattern)
 - They **ALSO** reject the generalised preposition-drop found in the younger generation
- preposition > case marker is an unexpected grammaticalisation pathway...
 - a. contrasts with the classically observed pattern that loss of case correlates with the introduction of adpositions and more rigid word order (Latin>Romance)
 - b. Contrasts with the generalisation that “the order of indirect and direct object has to remain constant unless there is a morphological case system” (Weerman 1997: 433)

4 THE MANCHESTER VARIETY

4.1 THEME PASSIVISATION IN MANCHESTER

53) a) It was given/sent/thrown him.

54) a) %The ball was given my sister.
b) %The ball was given TO my sister.⁸

(Haddican 2010: 2432)

55) a) ?The ball was carried the boy.
b) *The letter was sent France.

(Haddican 2010: 2432-2433)

12) The availability of Theme passivisation depends on the availability of Theme-Goal Ditransitives
(Haddican 2010)

56) a) She gave it him.	pro > pro	Manchester
b) She gave it the boy	pro > DP	Manchester
c) (?) She gave the ball him.	DP > pro	Manchester
d) (??/*) She gave the ball the boy.	DP > DP	Manchester

(Haddican 2010: 2426)

⁸ Haddican (2010) notes that his data shows there are two groups of speakers of the Manchester dialect. The majority (those that his article focuses on) exhibit the pattern reported in §4, who derive TGD from DOC. However, he reports that a small set of speakers appear to treat Theme-Goal orders as Prepositional Datives. These speakers also permit (to some extent) full DP Theme passivisation. This latter group may share the Liverpool Grammar discussed in §2, or may have a less selective version of the Lk head postulated in Haddican and Holmberg (2012).

4.2 THEME-GOAL DITRANSITIVES DERIVE FROM DOC IN MANCHESTER

- cf. Haddican (2010)
- The following judgements are shared with the Ormskirk variety

<i>Latinate verbs</i>	<i>canonically PD</i>	
57) a) She donated/contributed it to me.	PD	BrE
b) *She donated/contributed me it.	DOC	BrE
c) *She donated/contributed it me.	TGD	Manchester

<i>“Manner of communication verbs”</i>	<i>canonically PD</i>	
58) a) She whispered/shouted it to me.	PD	BrE
b) *She whispered/shouted me it.	DOC	BrE
c) *She whispered/shouted it me.	TGD	Manchester

<i>“Verbs of continuous imparting of force”</i>	<i>canonically PD</i>	
59) a) She pushed/hailed/lifted it to me.	PD	BrE
b) *She pushed/hailed/lifted me it.	DOC	BrE
c) *She pushed/hailed/lifted it me.	TGD	Manchester

<i>Refuse, deny</i>	<i>canonically DOC</i>	
60) a. *She refused it to me.	PD	BrE
b. She refused me it.	DOC	BrE
c. %She refused it me.	TGD	Manchester

(Judgements from Haddican & Holmberg 2012:193; own fieldwork)

<i>Inanimate Goals with verbs of motion</i>		
61) a) I sent the letter to France.	PD	BrE
b) *I sent France the letter.	DOC	BrE
c) *I sent the letter France.	TGD	Manchester

(Haddican 2010: 2430)

<i>Person Case Constraint (animate Theme preference)</i>		
62) a) Tania showed it / him / me to her.	PD	BrE
b) Tania showed her it / ?him / ??/*me.	DOC	BrE
c) Tania showed it / ?him / ??/*me her.	TGD	Manchester

(Haddican 2010: 2432)

63) a) Who did she give it to <who>?	PD	BrE
b) <Who> did she give it?	DOC	*BrE/*Manchester
c) <Who> did she give it?	TGD	*BrE/*Manchester ⁹

(Larson 1988; Haddican 2010: fn.10)

4.3 DERIVING THEME PASSIVISATION FROM DOC VIA TGD IN THE MANCHESTER VARIETY

- TGD are derived from DOC (Haddican 2010)
- Haddican and Holmberg (2012): Theme ‘movement’ is pronominal incorporation (in the sense of Roberts 2010)

⁹ The Ormskirk variety patterns with Liverpool with respect to A-bar extraction. I assume this follows from an independent pattern of p-drop in the dialect: prepositions of verbs of motion

TGD

- 71) a) She gave it him. pro > pro
 b) She gave it the boy pro > DP
 c) *She gave the ball **him**. DP > pro
 d) She gave the ball the boy. DP > DP
- 72) a) Mary gave the book the teacher.
 b) Mary sent the package John.
- 73) a) *I gave the book **her**.
 b) *I sent the letter **him**.

Liverpool

- Non-obligatory pronominal shift in Manchester TGD
- Obligatory pronominal shift in Liverpool TGD, i.e. *DP_{THEME} > PRO_{GOAL}

TWO problems...

PASSIVE DP > pro OK

- 74) a) The letter was sent him.
 b) The book was given her

Liverpool

But cf. other instances of obligatory pronominal shift

- across Germanic (Vikner 1995)
- in older varieties of English (Wallenberg 2008)

- 75) a) Beth looked it up.
 b) *Beth looked up it.

- 76) a) Forget me not.
 b) *Forget not me.

Early Modern English
 (Roberts 1995)

- 77) a) *I gave the book her.
 b) *She gave the ball him.

Liverpool

OVERT PP + DP > pro OK

- 78) a) *I gave the book her.
 b) *I sent the letter him.
 a)' I gave the book to her
 b)' I sent the letter to him.

Liverpool

5.2 INDEFINITES?

Theme-Goal Ditransitives in "Northern varieties"

- 79) a) She gave the book him. defDP > pro
 b) She gave a book the man. indefDP > DP

*BrE/ *Liverpool/ 'NW'
 *BrE/ *Liverpool/ 'NW'
 (Hughes & Trudgill 1979:21)

- 80) a) *I sent a **package** the school.

b) A package was sent the school.

- 81) a) *He donated a **fortune** the school.
b) *A fortune was donated the school.

Liverpool

Indefinite theme passivisation in British English (BUT rejected by some Southern BrE speakers)

- 82) a) A watch was given him.
b) A reward was offered the man.

(From Woolford 1993: 684; see also Jespersen 1927, Hughes & Trudgill 1979, McGinnis 1998, Anagnostopoulou 2003, Postal 2004: 241-243, etc.)

Indefinite theme passivisation in American English

- 83) a) Several books were given him by the teacher.

(Chomsky 1975:493)

Predicate class?

- 84) a) *A letter was sent the man/ him.
b) *A prize was awarded the best pie.
c) *An ice-cream was denied the child

American and 'Standard' British English

- 85) a) *The watch was given him.
b) *The reward was offered the man.

- Indefinite arguments theme passives are possible 'Grammar 4'

Table 1: Availabilities of theme-goal orders in active and passive contexts in BrE dialects

Grammar	Theme-goal orders in active sentences	Theme passives
1	*	*
2	Ok	Ok
3	Ok	*
4 (unattested)	*	Ok

(Haddican and Holmberg 2012: 77)

6. CONCLUSIONS

IN THE LIVERPOOL DIALECT...

- Theme passives are underlyingly prepositional datives
- The Goal of ditransitives can be licensed by a (recently innovated) null non-structural case
 - The innovation of the abstract Case in place of prepositions contrasts with the familiar grammaticalisation pathway Case > preposition

IN THE NORTHWEST...

- Theme passives are underlyingly DOCs
- The variation in the availability of A-movement is greater than previously thought, and varies (roughly) by dialect
- Variation makes reference to the functional lexicon of different dialects, specifically the distribution of Case and agreement features across different functional heads

THANKS

Many thanks to my informants, and to Theresa Biberauer, Bill Haddican, Anders Holmberg, Adam Ledgeway, Neil Myler, Ian Roberts, Michelle Sheehan, Rebecca Woods, the Cambridge ReCoS project, and the audiences of IGG 39 and LAGB 2013 for discussion, comments, and suggestions. The research reported here was funded by the European Research Council Advanced Grant No. 269752 “Rethinking Comparative Syntax”. Any errors are my own.

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