

# Reflexive Datives and Argument Structure\*

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## Abstract

Many languages have constructions where applied datives must be reflexive. This creates a puzzle. When arguments are forced to be reflexive, we tend to call them inherent reflexives and assume that they are essentially listed in the lexicon and connected in some way with the meaning of the verb. But applied datives are frequently optional, non-selected arguments, so listing them as inherent reflexives does not seem to be a likely solution. Some previous proposals have tried to derive the properties of reflexive datives, in some sense, from the semantic effects that they induce. But I argue that the range of semantic effects cross-linguistically is too diverse for that to be a general solution. In this paper, I focus on reflexive datives in Icelandic, and show that they contribute truth-conditional meaning, and can both be freely added as non-selected arguments and be selected for by particular verbs. I propose that the general picture forces a principled expansion of the range of selectional features that argument-introducing heads can possess: they can select for a DP specifier, a  $\phi$ P specifier, or no specifier; essentially, they can select for a DP or any subset of a DP. The structure that generates reflexive datives is based on general primitives, and is therefore widely available for languages to use, but the features involved do not predetermine the semantic interpretation, so languages can make use of the structure distinct but related ways.

## 1 Introduction

Many languages have constructions where an applied dative, when it is possible, must be reflexive. For example, when the title of Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I have a dream” speech is translated into Icelandic, the result is as in (1).

- (1) **Ég** á { **mér** / \***pér** / \***henni** } draum.  
I.NOM have { REFL.DAT / \*you.DAT / \*her.DAT } dream.ACC  
‘I have a dream.’

In (1), a reflexive dative is used; but that reflexive could not have been replaced with a non-reflexive dative. Constructions like this raise an interesting puzzle for theories of argument structure. On the one hand, applied datives generally have a less tight structural relationship with the verb (which is why they are generally “severed” from the verb’s argument structure in the first place). This makes it puzzling that they can be forced to be reflexive. On the other hand, I will show that although it

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must be possible to introduce them freely, it must also be possible to select for them in a rather idiosyncratic way.

The goal of this paper is to argue that Obligatorily Reflexive Datives (ORDs) force us to expand the formal typology of argument-introducing heads in a specific, precise way. In particular, I adopt the assumption that Appl heads have features that constrain what kind of specifier they may take. I then argue that the Appl heads that derive ORDs must be featurally distinct from the ones that do not. I furthermore claim that the restriction to reflexives cannot be derived semantically; rather, this construction type must fall out of the formal, syntactic typology of Appl heads. The kind of Appl must be general enough languages can easily make use of it, but underspecified, so that languages (and constructions within a language) may make use of it in different ways.

This state of affairs suggests that ORDs must involve a particular syntactic feature or collection of features that the semantics can be sensitive to, but that the semantics must not be encoded directly in the syntax. I will propose that ORDs are derived with a fully expected subcategory of Appl: while canonical Appl heads have D-features and select for DPs, ORD Appl heads have  $\phi$ -features only and select for  $\phi$ Ps.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I briefly discuss reflexive datives from a cross-linguistic standpoint, showing how they are common across languages but are used in different semantic ways in different languages. In section 3, I discuss reflexive datives in Icelandic, focusing first on benefactives, and then on experiencers and other more lexically restricted cases. In section 4, I present the syntactic analysis of reflexive dative constructions, and discuss the ways in which they are derived from the features of argument-introducing heads. Section 5 concludes.

## 2 Reflexive Datives Cross-Linguistically

In this paper, I understand the term *reflexive dative* construction to refer to a construction with an indirect object,<sup>1</sup> which must be understood as referring to the external argument subject. It is in this sense reflexive; it cannot be replaced by a pronoun or DP referring to anyone or anything else. This kind of indirect object is usually morphologically reflexive, cross-linguistically, but see below on an English construction which I take to be a reflexive dative construction despite the absence of reflexive morphology.

There are many languages that have been described as having constructions that fit this description, including (but not limited to) French, Italian, Modern Hebrew, Russian, Southeastern Serbo-Croatian, Spanish and Syrian Arabic (Berman 1982; Borer and Grodzinsky 1986; Borer 2005; Al-Zahre and Boneh 2010; Boneh and Nash 2011; Arsenijević 2012; MacDonald 2017). Analyses of reflexive dative constructions vary, across and within languages, with some analyses

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<sup>1</sup>I understand the term ‘indirect object’ as referring to the 1st object of a double object construction, which in Icelandic is usually but not always in the dative case.

introducing the dative high in the structure, others low. It is possible that both structures exist cross-linguistically. However, in Icelandic it seems to be low, and given the cross-linguistic robustness of the construction, I will suggest that the structure here is widely available across languages, even if it might be a bit of a stretch to suggest that this structure underlies all constructions that have the descriptive properties of reflexive datives.

Characterizations of the meaning contribution of the reflexive dative also vary, across languages and across different descriptions of the same language. It is sometimes claimed that the dative adds “non-truth-conditional” meaning, and it has been suggested that this is a crucial aspect of the reflexive dative construction, explaining why it exists and why it has the properties it has (Horn 2008, 2013; Boneh and Nash 2011; Arsenijević 2012). It will be of considerable interest, therefore, to show below that Icelandic reflexive datives do add truth-conditional meaning, which casts doubt on this suggestion as a general explanation. In what follows I will provide just a few examples of reflexive dative constructions across a few languages and discuss how they have been characterized.

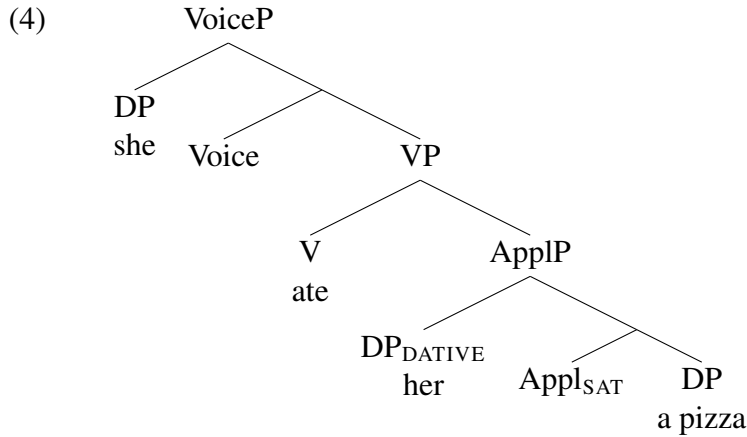
In Southern American English (SoAmE), we find “Personal Datives” (PDs) (Horn 2008) which look like ordinary pronouns, but which must be coreferential with the external argument.

(2) He<sub>i</sub> needs { him<sub>i/\*j</sub> / \*me } a new truck. (SoAmE; Horn 2013)

They in fact behave syntactically and semantically so similarly to reflexive dative constructions in other languages, that they are generally referred to as dative constructions (despite English having no dedicated dative case morphologically), and the dative has often been analyzed as a kind of reflexive clitic (Conroy 2007; Haddad 2011; Bosse 2014; Hutchinson and Armstrong 2014; Lee 2016; Wood and Zanuttini 2018) (but see also Horn 2008, 2013 for a different approach). Horn (2008, 2013) argues that the PD contributes only a conventional implicature, which is non-truth-conditional, “not-at-issue” meaning. It cannot be negated, with the rest of the sentence then being asserted, as shown in (3a), and it does not have an ordinary benefactive meaning, because a distinct benefactive *for*-phrase can be added, as shown in (3b).

- (3) a. # He didn't buy him a truck, he bought a truck.  
b. He bought him a truck for his son.

Hutchinson and Armstrong (2014) argue that the dative pronoun is introduced by a low Appl head, which relates a DP complement to its DP specifier. This is similar to the Appl head we find in double object constructions (Pylkkänen 2002), but with a special flavor: Appl<sub>SAT</sub> (for satisfactive) introduces a relation of “satisfaction” between the subject and the event denoted by the predicate. Note that the material after the “:” is argued to be on a non-truth-conditional tier, where it conveys a conventional implicature. Their analysis of *She ate her a pizza* is presented in (4) and (5).



(5)  $\llbracket \text{Appl}_{\text{SAT}} \rrbracket = \lambda x \lambda y \lambda P_{\langle e, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle} \lambda e. P(e, x) \ \& \ \text{THEME}(e, x) : \\ \text{MATTERS-TO}(x, y) \ \& \ \text{SATISFIED-THROUGH}(e, y)^2$

As pointed out by Bosse (2014), the material on the truth-conditional tier (before the colon) is essentially an identity function on the verb it combines with semantically. That means, informally, that it restates the semantic information contained in the verb, and provides no new truth-conditional semantics, so, just as Horn (2008, 2013) proposed, the personal dative structure does not add any truth conditional meaning.

In Romance languages like Italian, there is a similar construction which has a somewhat different distribution. A reflexive clitic may be added to so-called “ingestive” predicates like ‘eat’, ‘drink’ and ‘smoke’; non-reflexive clitics are not possible.

- (6) Lui { si / \*mi / \*ti } mangia una pizza.  
 he { REFL.DAT / \*me.DAT / \*you.DAT } eats a pizza  
 ‘He eats a pizza.’ (Campanini and Schäfer 2011)

This Italian reflexive dative has also been argued to contribute non-truth-conditional meaning. However, since it is apparently restricted to ingestives, it is arguably semantically distinct from the English PD construction discussed above. Campanini and Schäfer (2011) argue that the construction encodes structurally the consumption meaning that is otherwise already present in the lexical semantics of the verb.

In fact, the proposed semantics for reflexive dative constructions can differ greatly from language to language, as can the set of verbs entering into the construction. Here I provide just a few examples. Spanish reflexive datives have been argued to have an effect on aspect, forcing telicity on predicates that otherwise might be atelic (though see MacDonald 2017 for a more nuanced characterization of this effect). Modern Hebrew reflexive datives have been argued to be

<sup>2</sup>This formula is taken from Wood and Zanuttini (2018), which includes a technical correction to the one in Hutchinson and Armstrong (2014), but preserves the spirit of the analysis. Note that “e” is a variable ranging over eventualities, including dynamic events and non-dynamic states.

anti-telic, preventing telicity with verbs that would otherwise allow it (Borer 2005:234ff.). South-eastern Serbo-Croatian reflexive datives have been argued to express a subject’s positive evaluation of the eventuality denoted by the verb (Arsenijević 2012). French reflexive datives have been argued to add a semantic flavor of “affectedness” to the highest DP in the vP (Boneh and Nash 2011).

In this paper, I show that Icelandic ORDs do affect truth conditions in some, perhaps most cases. This fact suggests that the existence and properties of ORDs should not be made to follow from the absence of truth-conditional meaning. The cross-linguistic (and even language-internal) variation we find in the meanings of ORDs further suggests that the existence and properties of ORDs should not be made to follow from the semantics of those constructions. I will instead suggest that the ORD structure is generally available across languages, but different languages may put that structure to different semantic uses.<sup>3</sup> That is, the existence of reflexive dative structures should follow from the basic combinatorics of argument-introducing heads, but the interpretive uses to which those structures are put can vary across languages.

### 3 Reflexive Datives in Icelandic

#### 3.1 Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are probably the most discussed ORDs in the Icelandic literature (Holmberg and Platzack 1995:201–4; Jónsson 2000; Maling 2002; Tungseth 2007). In particular, beneficiaries cannot be freely added to creation verbs in Icelandic the way that they can in English, Faroese, and other Germanic languages. For creation verbs, however, simplex reflexive datives can be added quite freely, with an apparent benefactive interpretation.

- (7) a. \*Ég keypti syni mínum nýjan bíl.  
 I.NOM bought son my.DAT new car.ACC  
 INTENDED: ‘I bought my son a new car.’  
 b. Ég keypti mér nýjan bíl.  
 I.NOM bought REFL.DAT new car.ACC  
 ‘I bought myself a new car.’

There are many such examples in the literature, and the generalization is robust enough to be considered productive. The following is a list of verbs that behave in this way, at least for a great many speakers.

- (8) *byggja* ‘build’, *hita (kaffi)* ‘heat (coffee)’, *kaupa* ‘buy’, *laga* ‘fix or prepare’, *panta* ‘order’,

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<sup>3</sup>I wish to note that for the purposes of this paper, I am focusing on *applied* datives, generally the first object in a ditransitive. Icelandic also has direct object datives that are not introduced by anything like an Appl(icative) head, and such direct object datives can also be inherent reflexives. I will set aside direct object inherent reflexives in this paper. I will generally focus on verbs with two overt internal arguments to be sure that the datives in question are applied datives.

*prjóna* ‘knit’, *sauma* ‘sew’, etc.

We can see that these are beneficiaries by the fact that they affect truth conditions. Thus they can be targeted for negation, and (9) is not contradictory:<sup>4</sup>

- (9) Hann keypti sér ekki nýjan bíl—  
he.NOM bought REFL.DAT not new car.ACC  
hann keypti nýjan bíl handa mér.  
he.NOM bought new car.ACC for me  
‘He didn’t buy himself a new car—he bought a new car for me.’

The restriction that the indirect object must be reflexive, and cannot be a disjoint pronoun or DP, then, cannot be due to non-truth-conditional semantics, as has been proposed for some language, because the dative makes a truth-conditional interpretive contribution. Further evidence that the need for a reflexive is structural comes from the fact that only SE-reflexives are allowed. SELF-reflexives are not, as illustrated in (10).

- (10) \*Hann keypti sjálfum sér nýjan bíl.  
he.NOM bought self REFL.DAT new car.ACC

If the restriction were simply that the agent and beneficiary must be the same, then a SELF-reflexive would be able to meet this requirement; but it cannot. One might try to argue that (10) is ungrammatical because SELF-reflexives are contrastive, and since non-reflexives are not possible, there would be nothing to contrast the reflexive with. For this reason, it is important to note here that Icelandic SELF-reflexives need not be contrastive; in many cases they are perfectly ordinary ways of forming reflexive meanings. For example, the SELF-reflexives in (11) do not have to be contrastive or focused in any way; they are like their English counterparts in the translations.

- (11) a. Hann elskar sjálfan sig.  
he loves self.ACC REFL.ACC  
‘He loves himself.’  
b. Hann gaf sjálfum sér afmælisgjöf.  
he gave self.DAT REFL.DAT birthday.present  
‘He gave himself a birthday present.’

In requiring a SE-reflexive and disallowing a SELF-reflexive or non-coreferential DP, these constructions are reminiscent of inherent reflexive constructions. But this won’t help either: we do not want say that *kaupa* ‘buy’ is an inherently reflexive verb. This would be counter-intuitive, since there is nothing about the meaning of events of buying that make the buyer an inherent

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<sup>4</sup>Florian Schäfer (p.c.) asks whether the for-phrase is licensed by the same Appl head as in the reflexive dative, an interesting question that I will set aside for the time being.

beneficiary. Moreover, such a claim would also miss the generalization that ORDs can be freely added to creation verbs. We also don't want to say that the notion "benefactive" is itself inherently reflexive. This would also be unintuitive, would be highly unusual cross-linguistically, and would be readily falsified by verbs that do take non-reflexive beneficiary objects (Jónsson 2000; Maling 2002), as illustrated in (12).

- (12)      Þetta tæki auðveldar okkur störfín.  
           this tool facilitates us.DAT jobs.the.ACC  
           'This tool makes the jobs easier for us.' (Jónsson 2000:79)

Note that for a verb like this, the beneficiary can also be expressed with a 'for'-phrase, which further supports the claim that it is a beneficiary.<sup>5</sup>

- (13)      Þetta tæki auðveldar störfín            fyrir okkur.  
           this tool facilitates jobs.the.ACC for us.ACC/DAT  
           'This tool facilitates the jobs for us.'

In sum, while beneficiary dative indirect objects cannot be freely added to creation verbs in Icelandic the way that they can in many related languages, such datives can be added if they are simple reflexives. The restriction to reflexives in this case cannot be explained by the interpretative contribution of that dative or the construction. I will propose that what makes ORDs available with benefactives is that the ORD structure is generally available to languages as part of the argument-introduction system—the basic properties of argument-introducing heads—but different languages might put it to different (semantic) use. Before elaborating on that, however, I will discuss several other, perhaps less-frequently discussed ways in which ORDs are used in Icelandic.

### 3.2 Experiencers and Lexically Selected Datives

Jónsson (2000) notes that subjects of ORDs can also be experiencers.

- (14) a.      Hann ímyndar sér            alls konar vitleysu.  
           he.NOM imagines REFL.DAT all kinds nonsense.ACC  
           'He imagines/believes all kinds of nonsense.'  
       b.      Hann ímyndar mér            alls konar vitleysu.  
           he.NOM imagines me.DAT all kinds nonsense.ACC

However, this appears to be much more restricted than beneficiaries, and in fact appear to be lexically selected rather than freely added. In addition to disallowing a non-coreferential dative, *ímynda* 'imagine' requires the dative reflexive—cannot occur without it.

<sup>5</sup>Judgment due to Einar Freyr Sigurðsson. However, note that the preposition must be *fyrir* 'for' and not *handa* 'for', the latter more strongly implying possessive as well as beneficiary semantics. Einar Freyr also points out that speakers vary between accusative and dative on the object of *fyrir*, but this makes no difference in (13), since *okkur* is syncretic between accusative and dative. Despite the syncretism, the beneficiary in (12) must be dative, as revealed by examples with non-syncretic indirect objects.

- (15) \*Hann ímyndar alls konar vitleysu.  
 he.NOM imagines all kinds nonsense.ACC

This is unlike the case with beneficiaries, where the dative reflexive was entirely optional, but seems to common with experiencer ORDs. This property is, however, not restricted to experiencers. Verbs like *notfæra* ‘make use of’ and *ávinna* ‘earn’ also require a dative reflexive:

- (16) a. Ég notfæri mér þetta.  
 I.NOM make.use.of REFL.DAT this.ACC  
 ‘I make use of this.’  
 b. \*Ég notfæri þetta.  
 I.NOM make.use.of this.ACC
- (17) a. Ég ávann mér traust þitt.  
 I.NOM earned REFL.DAT trust your  
 ‘I earned your trust.’  
 b. \*Ég ávann traust þitt.  
 I.NOM earned trust your

Some verbs take a simplex reflexive dative but only with a particular, special meaning. For example, in (18a), *Jón* must have tasted the beer, or at least ordered it himself. In contrast, (18b) can mean that he got a beer unwittingly, such as if it just showed up at his table.

- (18) a. Jón fékk sér bjór.  
 John.NOM got REFL.DAT beer.ACC  
 ‘John got himself a beer.’  
 b. Jón fékk bjór.  
 John.NOM got beer.ACC  
 ‘John got a beer.’

This is a relatively subtle meaning difference, but it is a clear one. More dramatic meaning differences can be found, such as with the verb *ætla*, often translated as ‘intend’. With the dative reflexive, *ætla* means something like ‘plan’: it refers to a personal ambition or intention. Without the dative, the meaning is more general like ‘going to’ (or ‘gonna’).

- (19) a. Ég ætla að sigra.  
 I intend to win  
 ‘I’m gonna win.’  
 b. Ég ætla mér að sigra.  
 I intend me.REFL.DAT to win  
 ‘I plan on winning.’

Interestingly, this difference also comes with a strong syntactic difference: *ætla* without the dative reflexive is—or can be—a raising verb, whereas *ætla* with the dative cannot be. In (20a), we see



that the verb *heppnast* ‘succeed’ takes a dative subject. (20b) shows that this dative case can be preserved in the matrix clause with *ætla*, which is a standard test for raising (as opposed to control). (20c) shows that the dative reflexive is not possible in this context.

- (20) a. Honum heppnaðist það.  
 him.DAT succeeded that  
 ‘He succeeded at that.’  
 b. Honum ætlar að heppnast það.  
 him.DAT intend to succeed that  
 ‘He seems like he is going to succeed at that.’  
 c. \*Honum ætlar sér að heppnast það.  
 him.DAT intend REFL.DAT to succeed that

For another example, the meaning of *hugsa* ‘think’ is quite different depending on the presence or absence of a reflexive dative. This difference is difficult to pin down with just a simple translation, so I leave it untranslated in (21) and explain further below.

- (21) a. Hann hugsar þetta.  
 he.NOM thinks this.ACC  
 b. Hann hugsar sér þetta.  
 he.NOM thinks REFL.DAT this.ACC

The difference is as follows. (21a) is more of a thought, and is appropriate in a context like (22).

- (22) **Context:** I was in an accident, but I and my family managed to survive unharmed. Someone else tells me that I am very lucky that things went the way they did. I reply:  
 Ég hugsar þetta á hverju einasta kvöldi áður en ég fer að sofa.  
 I think this on every single night before I go to sleep  
 ‘I have that thought every night before I got to bed.’

In contrast, (21b) is more of an intention, and is appropriate in a context like (23).

- (23) **Context:** The linguistics department had a celebration, and there are leftovers. Someone asks me if I am going to send out an email inviting people to come by and help themselves. I reply:  
 Nei, ég hafði eiginlega bara hugsað mér þetta sjálfur.  
 No, I had actually just thought REFL.DAT this.ACC self.NOM  
 ‘No, I was actually just thinking of taking it myself.’

The difference in meaning between these two uses is clearly substantial and substantive.

In some cases, this can work in tandem with other elements of idiosyncratic meaning computation. For example, some verbs take ORDs only with particular direct objects, which themselves condition particular, idiosyncratic meanings:

- (24) Jón gaf {sér /??sjálfum sér /\*Pétri } þessa forsendu.  
 Jon gave {REFL.DAT /??self REFL.DAT /\*Pétur.DAT } this premise.ACC  
 ‘Jón proposed this premise.’

(Adapted from Árnadóttir et al. 2011:79)

Normally, if the dative argument with *gefa* ‘give’ is going to be reflexive, it must be a complex SELF-reflexive. However, in the context of the object *þessa forsendu* ‘this premise.ACC’, it has a special meaning—it doesn’t refer to transfer of possession anymore—and now the dative cannot be a non-coreferential ordinary DP or even a SELF-reflexive, but must be a simple dative reflexive. In some cases, this leads to quite restricted, idiomatic expressions, such as *kenna sér meins* ‘feel pain’. Many more examples of this kind have been reported in the literature (Jónsson 2000, 2005; Maling 2002).

Thus, the presence or absence of the dative reflexive can make a rather big difference in terms of how the verb root is interpreted, and I will argue below that this supports the view that ORDs should fall out of the argument-introduction system. We generally find with argument-introducing heads that they can sometimes be freely added, sometimes lexically selected, and sometimes they can be added but condition special meanings of the verb roots or events that they are added to. For example, Voice can introduce an external argument freely on top of certain change-of-state vPs, leading to alternations such as *The vase broke* and *She broke the vase*. Voice can appear to be required or even lexically selected for certain verbs, leading to obligatory external arguments for verbs like *murder* or *paint*. And some verbs get special meanings when they lack, or have, a Voice head (see Wood 2016 for detailed discussion and illustrations). The same can be said of general Appl heads: indirect objects can be freely added (English benefactives), lexically required (English verbs like *give*, *hand*), or condition special meanings of the verb. I have argued that lexical selection and special meanings are two sides of the same coin, and that both are derived by rules that condition the meaning of a root in the context of a structure (Wood 2015, 2016, 2017, 2020). “Lexically selected” structures are roots that have no “elsewhere” interpretation in the absence of the structure that is being selected. What the facts discussed in this subsection show, then, is that root alloeme selection is sensitive to—is able to “see”—whatever it is in the structure that introduces the reflexive dative. I will argue in the next section that the relevant structural primitive is a particular kind of Appl head.

## 4 Syntactic Structure

Reflexives clitics or pronouns in general, and reflexive datives in particular, are sometimes argued to be the spellout of a specifierless Appl head, rather than an argument in an argument position such as SpecAppIP. This Appl head could get its features from an antecedent, and then move like a head, cliticizing to the verb as clitics do. However, this analysis does not seem likely for

Icelandic ORDs, which seem to distribute like phrases. First of all, their phrasal status is suggested by the fact that they can, and in fact *must* undergo Object Shift whenever object shift is possible (Jónsson 2011).<sup>6</sup>

- (25) Hún keypti { sér } ekki { \*sér } nýjan bíl.  
 she.NOM bought { REFL.DAT } not { \*REFL.DAT } new car.ACC  
 ‘She didn’t buy herself a new car.’

If it were just an Appl head, we might expect it to stay low in the structure. One way around this would be to assume that it cliticizes to the verb and gets to the OS position that way. But this is basically a non-starter, because we can see that it does not cliticize to the verb. Whenever the verb moves to C, as in (26a), or undergoes Stylistic Fronting, as in (26b), the ORD does not go with it.

- (26) a. Í gær keypti { \*sér } hún { sér } nýjan bíl.  
 yesterday bought { \*REFL.DAT } she.NOM { REFL.DAT } new car.ACC  
 ‘Yesterday, she bought herself a new car.’  
 b. Sá sem keypt { \*sér } hefur { sér } nýjan bíl.  
 the.one who bought { \*REFL.DAT } has { REFL.DAT } new car.ACC  
 ‘The one who bought himself a new car.’

These facts show that Icelandic ORDs distribute like phrases, not heads, which in turn suggests that they should be generated in ordinary specifier positions, even if there has to be something ‘syntactically special’ about those positions or, as I will propose, the heads of those positions. With this much in place, I now turn to the properties of the reflexive pronoun and the head whose specifier it occupies.

Ideally, we would not want to propose that Appl can simply have a [+reflexive] feature; this would be stipulative, unmotivated, and rather crude use of formal features. It would not connect to a general theory of argument-introducing heads in any way, and there is no reason that something so specific would be so cross-linguistically robust. Instead, we would like the reflexives to emerge from a more general theory of features, in connection with independently motivated formal properties of reflexives. Eythórsson et al. (2015) argue that in general, Icelandic simplex reflexives are not DPs, but rather consist solely of  $\phi$ -features.<sup>7</sup> This relates also to the well-known proposal that pronouns can be DPs,  $\phi$ Ps or NPs (Déchaine and Wiltschko 2002, 2012; see also Cardinaletti and Starke 1999).<sup>8</sup> I will exploit this formal property, and propose that this allows them to merge in positions that full DP arguments cannot.

<sup>6</sup>That is, they are like pronouns in this respect; they are not required to undergo OS in contexts where OS is not possible.

<sup>7</sup>Or rather, they can be DPs or consist solely of  $\phi$ -features.

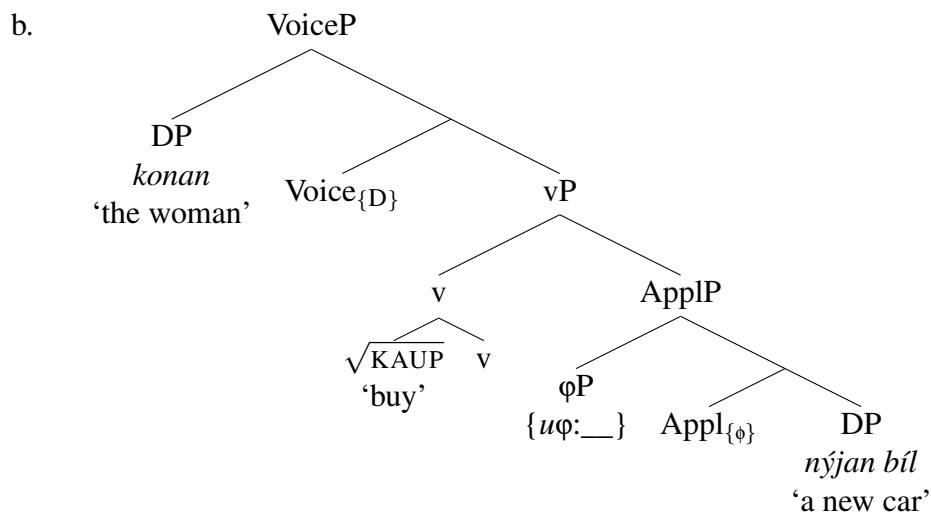
<sup>8</sup>However, we must abandon the assumption that  $\phi$ Ps are always clitics, an assumption that seems to lack theoretical motivation in the first place.

Specifically, I propose that argument-introducing heads like Appl come in three syntactic flavors:  $\text{Appl}_{\{D\}}$ ,  $\text{Appl}_{\{\phi\}}$ , and  $\text{Appl}_{\{\}}.$  These heads have the following properties:

- (27) a.  $\text{Appl}_{\{D\}}$ : Takes a specifier with a D-feature.  
 b.  $\text{Appl}_{\{\phi\}}$ : Takes a specifier with  $\phi$ -features (no D-feature).  
 c.  $\text{Appl}_{\{\}}$ : Takes no specifier.

Assuming that Icelandic has no high applicatives (Wood 2015), this leads us to the structure in (28b) for the ORD sentence in (28a).

- (28) a. Hún keypti sér nýjan bíl.  
 she.NOM bought REFL.DAT new car.ACC  
 ‘She bought herself a new car.’



Following Schäfer (2015, 2017), the unvalued  $\phi$ -features of the reflexive are valued under an Agree relation with its antecedent (see also Wurmbrand 2016).<sup>9</sup>

We might, however, wonder what forces the specifier to be a reflexive  $\phi$ P, rather than an ordinary pronoun. The first step of an answer is that  $\text{Appl}_{\{\phi\}}$  selects for a  $\phi$ P with unvalued  $\phi$ -features, assuming reflexive pronouns are uniquely characterized by this property. But how does that work? Why should it select for an unvalued  $\phi$ P? In principle, it would be possible to select for a valued  $\phi$ P, and then we might expect that some persons and/or numbers would be ruled out.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Florian Schäfer (p.c.) points out that SE-reflexives can sometimes alternate with full DPs freely—in many languages also in the spec of Appl. He suggests that selection of SE must be a subset of selection of DP, so that SE can merge where DP can merge but not necessarily the other way around. Another approach would be to assume that in such languages, SE is ambiguous, in that it may or may not have a D-feature, in a way that is not reflected in its morphology. That, in fact, is the proposal in Eythórssón et al. (2015) that I adopt here. For now, however, I set the issue aside as an intriguing topic for future research.

<sup>10</sup>Whether it is possible to select for a  $\phi$ P regardless of its features, including pronouns and reflexives, depends on whether one assumes “ $\phi$ ” to be a primitive categorial feature, as the terminology suggests, or whether it is simply shorthand for a collection of  $\phi$ -features. I set this matter aside for now.

Řezáč (2003) and Béjar (2008) discuss some cases where argument introducing heads do seem to be picky in exactly this way.

I would like to implement the analysis by making use of a proposal by Harbour (2007), which is that unvalued features prior to Agree, involve not *underspecification* of features, but *overspecification*. So [ $\mathbf{uF}$ ] really means [ $-F +F$ ]. When [ $-F +F$ ] enters into Agree with a Goal (say, something that is [ $+F$ ]), the result is the intersection of features (rather than the union) (in this case [ $+F$ ]). Assuming  $\phi$ -features include at least [ $\pm$ PARTICIPANT  $\pm$ AUTHOR],  $\text{Appl}_{\{\phi\}}$  selects a  $\phi$ P specifier with the full set:

- (29) { [+PARTICIPANT], [-PARTICIPANT], [+AUTHOR], [-AUTHOR] }

This set then enters into a Reverse Agree relation with its antecedent (Schäfer 2015, 2017; Wurmbrand 2012, 2016).

(30) **Reverse Agree**

A feature  $F: \_$  on  $\alpha$  is valued by a feature  $F: \text{val}$  on  $\beta$ , iff

- (i)  $\beta$  asymmetrically c-commands  $\alpha$  AND
- (ii) There is no  $\gamma$ ,  $\gamma$  distinct from  $\beta$ , with a valued interpretable feature  $F$  such that  $\gamma$  c-commands  $\alpha$  and is c-commanded by  $\beta$ .

Under the present proposal, of course,  $F: \_$  would mean [ $+F, -F$ ]. This pair of contradictory features would be replaced by the valued feature of the c-commanding antecedent. The advantage here is that smaller and smaller subsets of features would become more and more marked, making it possible in principle to select for particular bundles of  $\phi$ -features (without the expectation that such situations would be common).

So the existence of ORDs follows from the taxonomy of argument-introducing heads because such heads select for the category of their specifier. In addition to selecting for a DP, they can select for a  $\phi$ P, and the most basic, unmarked way to select for a  $\phi$ P is to select for the full set of  $\phi$ -features. This is a featurally distinct  $\text{Appl}$  head, which can now be understood to serve as the locus for lexical selection and special root semantics (if there is a difference between those two things). Verbs like *notfæra* ‘make use of’ and *ávinna* ‘earn’ require a dative reflexive because they select for an  $\text{ApplP}$  headed by  $\text{Appl}_{\{\phi\}}$ . Verbs that get special interpretations in the context of a dative reflexive are conditioned to get those interpretations in the context of an  $\text{ApplP}$  headed by  $\text{Appl}_{\{\phi\}}$ . Finally, just as the ordinary low  $\text{Appl}$  head can be added to the direct objects of verbs of creation in English and get a benefactive interpretation, in Icelandic  $\text{Appl}_{\{\phi\}}$  can be added in the same context to get this interpretation.

In sum, ORDs are derived through basic c-selection: the ability of argument introducing heads to select the category of their specifier. They make use of a basic option: select for something

slightly smaller than a DP—a  $\phi$ P. I have argued that a  $\phi$ P with unvalued  $\phi$ -features is the most basic kind, and that this derives a simplex reflexive. Importantly, the featural makeup I have proposed does not presuppose any specific semantics—so languages can use these same syntactic structures to different semantic ends (Myler 2014; Wood and Marantz 2017). It may be the case that many languages use these structure to add non-truth-conditional pragmatic meaning, but nothing forces this always to be the case.<sup>11</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper, I have focused on a cross-linguistically frequent morphosyntactic signature: an “indirect object” dative pronoun that must refer to the subject, where this pronoun must be morphologically simple—a SE-reflexive. Despite how frequently we encounter this kind of structure, different languages use it in different ways. Icelandic uses it quite readily for benefactives with creation verbs, but also uses it for other, lexically-restricted kinds of constructions. These facts show that it must be possible to “freely add” the relevant structure, or select for it. I have proposed that because Icelandic SE-reflexives are structurally smaller than DPs—they are  $\phi$ Ps—they can be selected by a specific kind of Appl head. Such selection is encoded in the featural makeup of the Appl head in question. This featurally distinct kind of Appl head can then (a) be selected for by particular verbs, (b) trigger for special root semantics, and (c) serve as the semantic locus for different interpretive contributions across languages and constructions. A more general conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that syntactic features—the features responsible for basic structure building—underdetermine their semantic interpretation. Languages, then, vary not only in terms of the feature structure of their functional lexicon, but also in terms of the way those features are used in the semantics.

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<sup>11</sup>Drawing from an intuition in the literature, then, consider the explanation that Arsenijević (2012) gives for why the extra dative argument in Serbo-Croatian must be reflexive: “As Horn (2008) indicates, there was probably a fortunate match between a niche in the set of frequent pragmatic patterns and the entailments of the particular syntactic structure with a referent with the evaluative capacity being both the evaluator and controller of an event. This guaranteed a high frequency of the configuration, leading its establishment as a construction, with the set of restrictions less directly related to its entailment varying across languages.” As I understand it, this is closely related to my own intuition: the structure is generally available, and languages might have a tendency to use it one way or another, but are also free to vary in the specifics, along the lines indicated in this paper.

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