

Locating variation in the dative alternation*

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This paper investigates the structure of the dative alternation in dialects of Northwest British English. This includes theme passivization of apparent Double Object Constructions (*It was given her*). Detailed investigation shows that different dialects use distinct licensing strategies to derive the Theme passive structure. The main variety discussed is Liverpool English, where Theme passivisation is shown to derive from a prepositional dative with a null preposition. In contrast, Manchester English, a neighbouring variety, derives Theme passives of the Double Object Construction, via an Applicative configuration (Haddican 2010, Haddican and Holmberg 2012). The study shows that a range of syntactic properties and restrictions on a structure can be traced back to variation in the functional lexicon.

Keywords: Ditransitives; dialectal variation; syntactic variation; null preposition; parameters

1. Introduction

This paper takes as its starting point the availability of Theme passives of ditransitive verbs in ‘Northwest British dialects’, linguistic varieties spoken in Northwest England.

- (1) a. It was sent him.
- b. It was given her.

Previous studies on the Northwest have noted the availability of pronominal Theme passives across the region, including in varieties in Southwest Lancashire

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(Siewierska & Hollman 2007), Manchester (Haddican 2010, Haddican and Holmberg 2012), and Ormskirk (Myler 2011, 2013). Corpus-based study has also identified the structure as a feature of the region (Gerwin 2013, 2014).

In addition to pronominal Theme passives, new data shows that speakers of Liverpool English permit Theme passivisation of definite NPs:¹

- (2) a. **The book** was given the teacher.
- b. **The package** was sent her nan's.

(2) does not appear to be accepted in other varieties of English, including other Northwest varieties.²

This paper shows that the Theme passives in (1) have different underlying syntactic structures in the closely related Northwest varieties. I argue that Theme passivisation derives from a prepositional dative with a null preposition in the Liverpool variety. In contrast, following previous work, in Manchester English theme passives derive from a Double Object Construction, in an Applicative configuration (Haddican 2010, Haddican and Holmberg 2012).

The data seem to constitute an example of parametric variation, where 'parameter' refers to a single morphosyntactic shift that results in a systematic and predictable array of phenomena through the rest of the grammar. The case study also supports the hypothesis that apparent syntactic variation reflects variation in the distribution of morphosyntactic features on functional heads, rather than variation in the types of syntactic operation available in the derivation, or (for this particular set of data) variation in the post-syntactic component. The distinct licensing strategies result in systematic differences between the varieties for a range of diagnostics, notably in Theme passivization, as well as restrictions

1. Crucially (2) involves definite NPs in surface subject position. It is well known that British English generally allows Theme passivisation of indefinite NPs (Woolford 1993, Ura 2000; McGinnis 1998, 2001; Anagnostopoulou 2003; Jeong 2007):

- (i) A reward was offered the man. (Jespersen 1927:279, cited in Woolford 1993: fn.8)
- (ii) A watch was given him.

Speakers outside of the Northwest typically do not accept pronominal or definite Theme passives. The widespread availability of indefinite Theme passivisation suggests it is a distinct phenomenon from the Theme passivisation found in the Northwest. I leave this to future research.

2. Speakers from Chester seem to accept the full NP in limited environments; for example with the verb *give*, (2a) is judged possible, but (2b) is not. This may reflect influence from the Liverpool variety. Chester is located around 20 miles south of Liverpool, and 40 miles south-west of Manchester. Thanks to Rebecca Woods for judgements and discussion.

on (a) the status of the type of Theme that occurs in these datives (pronoun *vs.* noun), (b) the class of ditransitive verb, and (c) the compatibility of different Goal arguments.

Section 2 lays out the scope and methodology of the paper. Section 3 shows that in Liverpool English, Theme passives derive from an underlying prepositional dative structure with a null preposition. Section 4 presents an analysis of the syntax of the null preposition. Section 5 contrasts Liverpool judgements with 'Manchester English' (as reported in Haddican 2010), and shows that the analysis of the dative alternation in Haddican and Holmberg (2012) correctly establishes a set of restrictions on the dative alternations in 'Manchester English' that are systematically distinct from those found in 'Liverpool English'. Section 6 discusses the locus of this variation in the grammar.

2. Scope and methodology

This paper investigates the variable availability of a set of constructions in varieties of Northwest British English. It reports on the results of a survey of groups of speakers of different regional backgrounds, but of closely related linguistic varieties (details given below), based on the premise that comparison of closely related linguistic varieties controls the set of possible grammatical variables, allowing for systematic and precise identification of varying features between groups of speakers (Kayne 2005).

Data were collected from a grammaticality judgement questionnaire. For the survey, speakers were told at the outset that dialectal judgements were of interest, rather than their knowledge of prescriptive grammatical forms. Examples of forms from other dialects of English (*I'm going t' pub*) that were known not to be part of the Northwest speakers' grammars were included in the survey to illustrate to consultants what might be considered a dialectal item, and to provide a control from which speakers could assess whether they would or would not accept a particular form in their own variety.

The survey comprised constructed sentences. Questions were delivered simultaneously in verbal and written form. Consultants judged sentences as 'acceptable', 'marginally acceptable', 'marginally unacceptable', 'unacceptable', or 'don't know'. Examples judged marginal will be indicated through use of a question mark, or discussion of the example in the main text. Consultants were also given the option to rank minimal pair examples relative to one another, and of providing their own comments on their intuitions. Each consultant was presented with roughly a third of the data reported in this paper; there was concern that the full set would induce judgement fatigue.

The ‘Liverpool English’ results reflect the judgements of five male and four female speakers aged between 20–30. These consultants lived in the city of Liverpool (specifically, in one or more of 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. None have studied linguistics or have any linguistic-related training. 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 did not appear to be relevant factors in whether a particular linguistic form was deemed acceptable or not, although it is possible these factors might affect the tendency to use or produce particular forms.³

The same questionnaire was also delivered to a speaker from Southport⁴ (age 27) and to two Manchester English speakers (ages 25 and 29). These speakers gave systematically distinct judgements from the Liverpool speakers, but which correspond to the judgements reported in Haddican (2010) for ‘Northwest’ speakers. Haddican (2010) does not control for precise regional background of participants (Haddican p.c.).⁵ I label the judgements reported in Haddican (2010) and Haddican and Holmberg (2012) as ‘Manchester English’.

Next, as will be discussed in Section 3, the same survey was delivered to speakers from Liverpool over the age of 60. These speakers again gave distinct

3. Use is not examined here, as the small size of the survey does not lend itself to meaningful exploration of this question, and data sets of sufficient size are not readily available. A key problem is the rarity of the ditransitive structures in natural contexts. Bresnan and Ford (2010), Siewierska and Hollman (2007), and Gerwin (2014) *a.o.* give full discussion of the frequency of different types of ditransitive verb, and the forms those verbs typically take in corpora. Gerwin (2014) presents a detailed study of the dative alternation in these varieties based on FRED and the BNC; however, these corpora were compiled in the 1970s and 1990s, and are not expected to include the Liverpool English data, which appears to be a more recent innovation (see Section 4.1).

4. Southport is around 20 miles north of Liverpool and 40 miles northwest of Manchester.

5. Haddican (2010:2427) actually reports acceptability of full NP Theme-Goal Ditransitives (the pattern I label ‘Liverpool English’) amongst a small group of speakers I label ‘Manchester English’. Similarly, Gerwin (2014:152) identifies seven attestations of full noun Theme-Goal ditransitives form across England in a corpus-based study. It is possible that these individual speakers have the grammar I label ‘Liverpool English’. The claim of this paper is not that certain linguistic forms will only occur in precise geographical regions. Rather, the claim is that the availability of such a construction will correspond to systematic and productive variation in other aspects of that individual’s grammar.

judgements from the younger group of Liverpool speakers, patterning with the Manchester speakers.

Finally, the questionnaire was delivered to two ‘Southern’ (Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire) speakers as a control. These speakers gave different judgements from all of the Northwest English speakers, but consistent with the dative alternation judgements reported in the syntactic literature. This variety is labelled ‘Standard (British) English’.

The labels applied post-hoc to different groups are adopted to highlight the systematic nature of the variation between the grammars of groups of speakers.

3. Variation in the dative alternation

3.1 Background: The dative alternation in Northwest varieties

The dative alternation is known to have variant forms in Northwest varieties, and it seems likely that the theme passives in (1)–(2) derive from these local variants.

In most varieties of English, ditransitive verbs are associated with two possible structures. The first is a Prepositional Dative, where NP_{Theme} precedes NP_{Goal} (or recipient, or source, etc.), with NP_{Goal} marked by a preposition (3a). The second is the double object construction (DOC), where NP_{Theme} follows NP_{Goal} (3b), and NP_{Goal} is not marked by a preposition. This pair of constructions is known as the dative alternation.

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----------------------------|-------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| (3) | a. | John gave the book to Mary. | THEME | > | _{PP} GOAL | <i>Prepositional Dative</i> |
| | b. | John gave Mary the book. | GOAL | > | THEME | <i>DOC</i> |

At least superficially, Northwest British English varieties appear to permit local object movement, giving rise to a Theme>Goal order in ditransitives (Hughes and Trudgill 1979; Gerwin 2013). I refer to the Theme>Goal ordering as a Theme-Goal ditransitive, abbreviated to TGD, following Haddican (2010) and Haddican and Holmberg (2012). In a TGD the Theme precedes the Goal (as in a Prepositional Dative), but the Goal is not marked by a preposition (as in a DOC).

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|-----|----|----------------------|-------|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| (4) | a. | John gave it to her. | Theme | > | _{PP} Goal | <i>Prepositional Dative</i> |
| | b. | John gave her it. | Goal | > | Theme | <i>DOC</i> |
| | c. | John gave it her. | Theme | > | Goal | <i>Theme-Goal ditransitive</i> |

TGDs, like Theme passives, are known to be associated with Northwestern and Western varieties of England (Hughes & Trudgill 1979); TGDs are also associated with the Midlands (Gerwin 2013), the region immediately south of Liverpool and

Manchester. The structure is also reportedly accepted by some speakers in Wales and from certain southern varieties, including London and Cornwall (Hughes and Trudgill 1979; Siewierska and Hollmann 2007; Haddican 2010:2425; Haddican and Holmberg 2012; Gerwin 2013, 2014). There do not appear to be any reports of TGDs in Northeastern English or Scottish varieties.

This geographic pattern has led to the suggestion that the availability of the Theme passive (5a) correlates with, and may be the result of, the availability of TGDs (5b) (Haddican 2010, Haddican and Holmberg 2012; see also Anagnostopoulou 2003).

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|-----|----|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| (5) | a. | Mary gave it him. | <i>Theme > Goal</i> |
| | b. | It was given him (by Mary). | <i>Theme passive</i> |

A second reason for believing there may be a correlation between the availability of TGDs and the availability of a Theme passive relates to a correlation in the type of noun phrases permitted in the two structures. The following examples show that Manchester speakers only permit pronominals in TGDs, and only permit pronominals as the derived subject of Theme passives. They do not permit full NP Themes in either TGDs, or in Theme passives.

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|-----|----|----------------------------------|--|
| (6) | a. | Mary gave it the teacher. | (^{OK} Liverpool, ^{OK} Manchester) |
| | b. | It was given the teacher. | (^{OK} Liverpool, ^{OK} Manchester) |

Liverpool speakers accept the pronominal structures in (6), but also accept NP Themes in both TGDs and in Theme passives.

- | | | | |
|-----|----|---|---|
| (7) | a. | Mary gave the book the teacher. | (^{OK} Liverpool, *Manchester) |
| | b. | The book was given the teacher. | (^{OK} Liverpool, *Manchester) |
| (8) | a. | Mary sent the package her nan's. | (^{OK} Liverpool, *Manchester) |
| | b. | The package was sent her nan's. | (^{OK} Liverpool, *Manchester) |

The correlation between the two constructions and pronominal sensitivity further suggest that the Theme passive construction may depend on the availability of TGDs.

Haddican (2010) and Haddican and Holmberg (2012) discuss this correlation as a possible one-way implication, where the availability of Theme passives is reliant on the possibility of TGDs in the same dialect:

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|
| (9) | The availability of Theme passivisation correlates with the availability of TGDs. | | |
| | (Haddican 2010, Haddican and Holmberg 2012: 199) | | |

Following McGinnis (1998, 2001), short direct object movement, giving rise to the TGD, might be taken to feed derivation of the Theme passive. We return to this possibility in more detail in Section 5.

3.2 Theme passives and TGDs in Liverpool English

This Section presents evidence that Liverpool English TGDs do not derive via local direct object (NP_{Theme}) movement in a DOC, but instead derive from the Prepositional Dative.

Building on Haddican (2010) we can establish the underlying structure of the TGD using the well-known observation that use of the different forms of the dative alternation in English is constrained by a host of factors such as the semantics of the ditransitive verb (Green 1974, Oehrle 1976, Pesetsky 1995, Harley 2002; cf. also Haddican 2010). The traditional distinction between the two constructions is that the DOC implicates transfer of possession, while the Prepositional Dative encodes transfer of location, but not necessarily possession. The generalisation can be illustrated through negation (Oehrle 1976):

- (10) a. James taught the students Japanese, ??but they didn't learn anything.
 b. James taught Japanese to the students, ✓but they didn't learn anything.

The argument goes that it is not felicitous to negate possession in (10a), as DOCs necessarily imply transfer of possession (here, knowledge of Japanese). In contrast, a Prepositional Dative does not necessarily imply transfer of possession, so it is possible to negate a possession relation (10b). Leaving aside the adequacy and analysis of this generalisation, the intuition captures the observation that speakers systematically use and interpret the Prepositional Dative ditransitive structure with allative semantics, and the DOC with possessive semantics. The distinction holds across a range of verb classes, and therefore provides a diagnostic to determine the underlying structure of TGDs (as in Haddican (2010)), and consequently the structure underlying the availability of theme passivisation.⁶

First, 'verbs of continuous imparting of force' (*carry, pull, push, lift, lower, haul*) are fully acceptable as Prepositional Datives, but are degraded in DOCs (Pinker 1989, Levin 1993; Bresnan and Nikitina 2009). This contrast is consistent with Liverpool speakers' judgments. Liverpool speakers accept TGDs with verbs of continuous imparting of force, suggesting they treat TGDs as Prepositional Datives. Crucially, these speakers reject verbs of continuous imparting of force as DOCs.

6. Further diagnostics distinguishing prepositional datives from the DOC include animacy and idiom-based tests. As the results of these grammaticality judgement tests (although consistent with the conclusions drawn here) were less clear than for those diagnostics reported in the main text, I do not discuss them. I could not find any evidence of a PCC effect amongst the Liverpool English speakers. This result is again consistent with the prepositional dative analysis, but as this is a subtle judgement I leave discussion to one side.

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|------|----|---|-----|
| (11) | a. | She hauled her shopping to the front door. | PD |
| | b. | *She hauled the front door her shopping. ⁷ | DOC |
| | c. | She hauled her shopping the front door. | TGD |
| (12) | a. | She pushed/hailed/lifted it to me. | PD |
| | b. | *She pushed/hailed/lifted me it. | DOC |
| | c. | She pushed/hailed/lifted it me. | TGD |

(Liverpool)

'Manner of communication' verbs (*whisper, yell, bark, grumble, mutter*) also typically occur as Prepositional Datives, and are reported as degraded in DOCs (Bresnan & Nikitina 2009: 165). Again, this verb class is compatible with TGDs in Liverpool British English, but not in DOCs.

- | | | | |
|------|----|---------------------------------------|-----|
| (13) | a. | She muttered the answer to my friend. | PD |
| | b. | *She muttered my friend the answer. | DOC |
| | c. | She muttered the answer my friend. | TGD |
| (14) | a. | She whispered/shouted it to me. | PD |
| | b. | *She whispered/shouted me it. | DOC |
| | c. | She whispered/shouted it me. | TGD |

(Liverpool)

Finally, 'latinate'⁸ verbs (*contribute, distribute, exhibit, reveal, conceal, clarify, compose, release*) are also typically judged better in Prepositional Dative structures

7. Some speakers (of both Liverpool and non-Liverpool British English) report the DOC examples in (11b) and (12b) as acceptable, in contrast to the judgments described in the main text. However, acceptability seems to be linked to a benefactive interpretation, 'on behalf of'. Crucially this is not the reading associated with the TGD, and for this reason I exclude this judgement. The status of such 'benefactives' could provide rich ground for future investigation. For example, Liverpool speakers permit passivisation of certain benefactive classes: 'The toy was bought the child' was accepted by all consultants; in contrast Haddican (2010) reports this structure is not accepted by Manchester English speakers. An anonymous reviewer also points out that some Northwestern dialect speakers permit Theme-beneficiary orders such as '*She baked/bought it me*'. This structure is also available in Liverpool English, as is the full NP Theme-beneficiary version: '*I bought the toy the child*' (cp. 11b, 12b). Other examples such as *'I made the cake (for) Bill'*, were possible for some speakers, but only where the Goal (*Bill*) was interpreted as possessing the cake. True benefactives of intransitives (**I danced Mary*) were ungrammatical.

These structures were not tested systematically in the present study, and from this limited data it is not clear that the analysis adopted here for prepositional datives (see Section 4) should be extended to this class. I leave full investigation to future research.

8. 'Latinate' is an insufficient etymological characterization of the class, as many verbs (such as *refuse*: REFUTARE or *deny*: *DE+NEGARE) are of latinate origin (Adam Ledgeway, p.c.), but, as discussed in the text, exhibit a distinct behaviour. I adopt 'latinate' for consistency with previous literature.

than in DOCs. Once again, TGDs pattern with Prepositional Datives among Liverpool speakers.

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|-----|
| (15) | a. | She donated her loose change to the Alder Hey fund. | PD |
| | b. | *She donated the Alder Hey fund her loose change. | DOC |
| | c. | She donated her loose change the Alder Hey fund. | TGD |
| (16) | a. | She donated it to him. | PD |
| | b. | *She donated it him. | DOC |
| | c. | She donated it her. | TGD |
| | d. | She donated it it. | TGD |
- (Liverpool)

Next, and crucially, speakers of Liverpool English reject TGDs with verbs that are generally rejected as Prepositional Datives. For example, 'prevention of possession verbs' (*refuse*, *cost*, *deny*) as well as verbs including *issue*, *ask*, and *envy*, are canonically accepted in DOCs but degraded in Prepositional Dative structures (Levin 1993; Bresnan and Nikitina 2009: 167). As predicted, Liverpool speakers do not accept these verb classes in TGDs. The data strongly suggest that Liverpool speakers treat TGDs as Prepositional Datives.

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|-----|
| (17) | a. | *The car cost five grand to Beth. | PD |
| | b. | The car cost Beth five grand. | DOC |
| | c. | *The car cost five grand Beth. | TGD |
| (18) | a. | *She denied the ice cream to the child. | PD |
| | b. | She denied the child the ice cream. | DOC |
| | c. | *She denied the ice cream the child. | TGD |
| (19) | a. | *She envied the ice cream to the child. | PD |
| | b. | She envied the child the ice cream. | DOC |
| | c. | *She envied the ice cream the child. | TGD |
| (20) | a. | *She refused it to me. | PD |
| | b. | She refused me it. | DOC |
| | c. | *She refused it me. | TGD |
- (Liverpool)

These data are unexpected if the Liverpool TGD derive from a DOC. If TGDs are Prepositional datives with a null preposition, it is plausible to conclude that the Theme passive derives from a Prepositional Dative that lacks an overt preposition.

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|----------------------------------|
| (21) | a. | It was given [<i>to</i> _{NULL}] her. | <i>Theme passive</i> |
| | b. | I gave it [<i>to</i> _{NULL}] her. | <i>TGD/ Prepositional Dative</i> |
- (Liverpool)

If Theme passives derive from TGDs, and TGDs themselves are Prepositional Datives, Theme passives should only be available with those verb classes

canonically associated with Prepositional Datives. This prediction appears to be true: in the Liverpool variety, Theme passivisation is possible with manner of communication verbs, verbs of continuous imparting force, and latinate verbs, but not with verbs of prevention of possession.

- (22) a. Her shopping was hauled the front door by a kindly neighbour.
 b. The code was whispered Mary before Sally knew what was happening.
 c. The answer was muttered my friend, who passed it on to me.
 d. The winnings from last week's draw were donated Alder Hey Hospital.
- (23) a. It was whispered her before she knew what was happening.
 b. It was donated the hospital last week.
- (24) a. *Five grand was cost the car.
 b. *The ice cream was denied the child.
 c. *The ice cream was envied the child.
 d. *It was refused her.

(Liverpool)

In short, the Liverpool variety exhibits the same patterns in the dative alternation observed in more familiar varieties of English, including in the availability of passives of ditransitives; this variety simply has a null preposition that is not available in 'standard' varieties.

4. Preposition-drop

4.1 The syntax of preposition-drop

This Section determines the syntax of [*to*_{NULL}], focusing on its capacity to license the Goal in both active and passive contexts.

The availability of [*to*_{NULL}] in Liverpool appears to derive from the availability of preposition-drop found across the region, of the following kind:

- (25) a. I want to go (to) Chessington.
 b. John came (to) the pub with me.
- (Haddican and Holmberg 2012: 74; Myler 2013: 189)

This phenomenon has been reported in a number of varieties of Northwest British English, including Manchester (Haddican 2010), and South-West Lancashire and Merseyside (Myler 2011, 2013). In each variety, it is the preposition *to* that is variably null. As Myler (2013) observes, the optional use or non-use of the overt preposition triggers no difference in thematic or truth-conditional meaning, and speakers appear to be unconscious of the use or non-use of the overt form in discourse. Nonetheless its availability is highly systematic. For example, Myler (2011,

2013) observes that Ormskirk *p*-drop is restricted to a narrow class of verbs: verbs of motion (whose Goals can only be interpreted as directional) such as *go*, *run*, *drive*, *jog*, *pop*, and *nip* ('to go somewhere with the intention of returning quickly'); and the ditransitives *take* and *send* (Myler 2013: 190).

The Liverpool variety permits far more extensive preposition-drop than these neighbouring varieties.⁹ First, Liverpool speakers accept preposition-drop in a range of allative *to* contexts, such as non-allative and manner-of-motion contexts:

- (26)
- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| a. | Swim the end and back. | = 'Swim to the end and back.' |
| b. | She ambled the shop. | = 'She ambled to the shop.' |
| c. | He's flying Germany tomorrow. | = 'He's flying to Germany tomorrow' |
| d. | The USSR was the first to fly the moon. | = '...to fly to the moon.' |
| e. | He meandered his way the office. | = 'He meandered his way to the office.' |
| f. | Joe plodded the pub. | = 'Joe plodded to the pub.' |

In addition, and again in contrast to the Ormskirk variety (Myler p.c.), Liverpool speakers can leave stative *at* phonetically unrealised. This is possible with (at least) stative predicates, the copula, and unaccusative predicates.

- (27)
- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---|
| 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.' |
| c. | He's his dad's this weekend. | = 'He's at his dad's house this weekend.' |
| d. | She'll be the office late tonight. | = 'She'll be at the office late tonight.' |
| e. | He just arrived the gym. | = 'He just arrived at the gym.' |

I re-label [*to*_{NULL}] as 'κ' as a neutral label to cover the distribution of the null form as interpretable as both directional *to* and stative *at*.

The availability of *at*-drop is the first clue that Liverpool null prepositions are significantly different from preposition-drop in the rest of the Northwest: (26) and (27) are ungrammatical in the Ormskirk variety (Myler p.c.), and preliminary investigation suggests preposition-drop in the rest of the Northwest region corresponds to the system Myler (2013) identifies for Ormskirk.

The distribution of κ is not completely free in Liverpool English, however: only *to* and *at* may be null; the source preposition *from*, containment *in*, and apparently all other prepositions must be overt.

- (28)
- | | |
|----|--|
| a. | He started *(from) the station. (<i>source</i>) |
| b. | This cheese comes *(from) Lanarkshire. (<i>provenance, origin</i>) |
| c. | He put the beers *(in) the fridge. (<i>containment</i>) |

9. Ormskirk is around 13 miles north of Liverpool.

- d. The plane will shortly be ^{*/?}(in) the air. (*surrounding*)
- e. Can you finish ^{*}(in) three hours? (*duration*)
- f. She's ^{*}(in) a coma. (*state*)
- g. She went ^{*}(with) her friends. (*alongside*)
- h. The bread was cut ^{*}(with) a knife. (*by means of*)
- i. She'd lived ^{??/*}(on) that street her whole life.¹⁰
- j. I haven't got any money ^{*}(on) me.
- k. He left everything ^{*}(on) the table for you.

(Liverpool)

The prepositions that may be dropped in Liverpool English – *to* and *at* – thus fit the typology proposed in Caponigro and Pearl (2008: fn.383), who suggest, 'across languages, only the unmarked stative and directional Ps *at* and *to*, not the marked source directional preposition *from*, can fail to be pronounced.'¹¹

This restricted distribution offers a first diagnostic to relate the availability of κ to the availability of Theme passivisation in Liverpool English. If Liverpool English TGDs and Theme passives are Prepositional Datives with null κ , they should not be available with prepositions other than *to* and *at*. This prediction is borne out:

- (29) a. Beth put the beers ^{*}(in) the cooler.
- b. The beers were put ^{*}(in) the cooler.
- (30) a. Beth exchanged notes ^{*}(with) Pete.
- b. Notes were exchanged ^{*}(with) Pete.

(Liverpool)

Evidence from language change also supports a connection between κ and the availability of Theme passivisation in the dialect. The judgements reported so far are taken from a survey of nine native speakers of Liverpool English aged between 20–30 (cf. Section 2.2). The same survey was extended to six native speakers of Liverpool English over the age of 60. In contrast to the younger speakers, the older speakers restrict TGDs to pronominal themes, the pattern in the rest of the Northwest. Crucially, the older speakers also reject generalised

10. This example is more acceptable relative to the rest, but appears to be also available in varieties outside of the Northwest. For example, in the British English Bedfordshire variety, 'How long have you lived Bedford?' Michelle Sheehan (p.c.) is fully acceptable. An anonymous reviewer points out that Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006: 69) similarly observe that missing *in* is possible in some varieties of American English, as in 'She lives Ø Coal City'.

11. In fact many of the languages with preposition-drop have a morphologically syncretic form for *to* and *at* (such as Greek *se* 'to, at'). The restriction is, however, observable in Standard English *home*, which requires an overt source preposition, as in *He came ^{*}(from) home*, but the null stative and directional, as in *He stayed/went home* (see Collins 2007).

preposition-drop (or rather, κ), and report the system of preposition-drop that seems to be available in the rest of the Northwest (the system described in Myler 2013). This suggests a correlative (and plausibly causative) relation between speakers' innovation of κ , and the availability of full noun phrase theme passivisation.

4.2 The syntax of κ : κ Case licenses Goals

The next step is to determine the role of κ in the grammar. κ appears to be a lexical item, present in the syntax. Initial evidence is the availability of *straight*-modification, a classic diagnostic of prepositions (Emonds 1985).¹² Liverpool speakers accept *straight*-modification without the overt preposition, suggesting that, despite the absence of overt material, the syntax treats the Goal as if it is marked by a preposition:

- (31) 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.'¹³

Past accounts of p-drop vary, but most take as their starting point den Dikken's (1995, 2010) suggestion that an inherently null functional head must incorporate (to the verb) to be licensed as null, and thus that 'PF-variability' is sensitive to syntactic environment.¹⁴ This Section shows that Liverpool p-drop does not involve incorporation through comparison with Myler's (2013) account of Ormskirk English p-drop, which does involve incorporation.

12. P-drop examples with *right*-modification, the other classic modification diagnostic of P, were not generally accepted by speakers. This may reflect a register issue, as it was also difficult to get speakers to accept *right*-modification examples with the overt preposition.

13. An anonymous reviewer suggests that the availability of *straight*-modification is problematic if (anticipating Section 4.3) κ bears only u[F], as apparently similar athematic case markers assumed to bear only u[F], such as *of* (*The destruction straight of the city) or *by* (*The book was written straight by John), do not permit *straight*-modification. I assume that *straight*-modification is category sensitive, restricted to modification of spatial p/P. It can therefore modify κ (category *p*) but not *of* (D) or *by* (Voice) (cf. Collins 2005) or *for* (Comp). Similarly, use of κ does not extend to substitute for *by* or *of* or *for* elsewhere because it is not of an appropriate category.

14. P-incorporation seems to be the most widespread strategy licensing p-drop cross-linguistically, as has been discussed for Greek dialects (Ioannidou and den Dikken 2009; Terzi 2010; Gehrke and Lekakou 2013), Veneto dialects (Longobardi 2001:289), Gungbe (Aboh 2010:229), and English *home* (Collins 2007).

Myler (2013) shows that in Ormskirk English, preposition-drop is syntactically restricted. Myler proposes that in Ormskirk English, in a structure like *John came the pub*, the Goal argument (which exhibits properties of both direct objects and PP objects) is the complement of a directional preposition (silent) TO, and that, following (den Dikken 1995, 2010), this inherently null functional head must incorporate (to the verb) to be licensed as null. Myler (2013) argues that in Ormskirk English, a null directional TO must incorporate to license its inherent null-ness. Myler argues that this incorporation is available in the context of unaccusative Voice. On standard assumptions, transitive v inherits ϕ from the phase head Voice (Chomsky 2008), licenses DP_{Theme} , and attracts DP_{Theme} to its specifier. In contrast, unaccusative Voice does not bear ϕ to 'pass down' to v , and unaccusative v does not license DP_{Theme} . Where null P incorporates, it raises to v ,¹⁵ so that TO ends up in the same complex head as v . Following Svenonius (2007) (a.o.), adpositions bear ϕ -features, which license the Goal argument; through movement of p , v inherits the ϕ -features of p , and the otherwise unaccusative v can ϕ -license a Goal. As v ϕ -licenses the Goal, the Goal raises to spec- vP . This gives rise to a range of syntactic effects, some of which we describe below. 'Preposition-drop' is thus only possible if an inherently null lexical item is licensed in a strictly defined of syntactic environment.

Myler's account (many details of which are omitted here) yields a rich array of empirical facts of preposition-drop in Ormskirk English. Crucially, though, these properties are not found for Liverpool English preposition-drop. Two points are sufficient to make the distinction clear.

First, Myler (2011, 2013) observes that Ormskirk p-drop is sensitive to a restricted class of verbs; it is this limited class of verbs that permits p-incorporation. The last Section showed that Liverpool p-drop does not exhibit such sensitivity.

A second consequence of the incorporation account is that in Ormskirk English, p-drop is licit only where the Goal is adjacent to the verb.¹⁶ In contrast, the Liverpool variety permits preposition-drop in contexts in which the verb and Goal are non-adjacent.

First, in Liverpool English the unmarked Goal can be embedded in a nominal domain, non-adjacent to the verb:

15. Myler's (2013) null preposition includes a lexical head P responsible for selecting a complement, which is contained by a functional layer p that is responsible for ϕ -licensing the complement of P (cf. Svenonius 2007).

16. Crucially for Myler (2013), 'adjacency' means that the Goal has moved to a position canonically associated with the direct object, rather than linear adjacency. For ease of exposition I simply refer to adjacency here; Liverpool English permits p-drop where a nominal is non-adjacent (either linearly or syntactically) to the verb.

- (32) a. An errand the shops is called for.
 b. He was on his way the library when...
 c. A trip the pub is called for! (Based on Myler 2013: 198)

Next, in Liverpool English, an additional prepositional phrase may intervene between the verb and the Goal, such that the Goal is non-adjacent to the verb (33). (34) gives examples of ditransitives, where NP_{Theme} intervenes between the verb and the Goal.

- (33) a. Come **with** me (to) the pub.
 b. He took them **both** (to) the zoo.
 (34) a. I took Joey the hospital.
 b. He sent the package (back) his nan.

The Goal is possible not only in positions non-adjacent to the verb, but can undergo discourse-shift independently of the verb. (35) shows Liverpool speakers can topicalise the unmarked Goal, and (36) shows that the Goal is compatible with *it*-clefts.

- (35) She said we'd go the pub, and the pub we went.
 (36) a. It's the shops we're going, not the pub!
 b. She said it's Chester they're moving.
 c. It's the office he'll be working today.

The availability of clefting has consequences elsewhere. In (37a), non-Liverpool English speakers report an ambiguity between a directional and a locational reading, but once clefted (37b), only the locational reading is available.

- (37) a. Suarez ran on the pitch.
 b. It was on the pitch that Suarez ran.
 (Based on Stringer 2006: 64, cited in Cinque 2010: fn.12)

Although noting a preference for a non-directional reading in the cleft, Liverpool speakers volunteer that ambiguity also holds in the non-adjacent environment in (37b).¹⁷

17. Implementing this ambiguity is complex. One possibility is that might follow from the semantic and structural complexity of the adposition in question, here, *on*. The internal structure of PPs is usually argued to directly reflect its conceptual complexity, whether or not that structure is overtly realised (Jackendoff 1983, Svenonius 2010 i.a.). For example, a directional functional projection PathP (sometimes realised by e.g. *to*) is taken to always embed a stative functional projection PlaceP (sometimes realised by e.g. *at*) (Jackendoff 1983, Koopman 2000 i.a.), whether or not the stative is overt.

In (37), *on* may correspond only to PlaceP, or it may additionally include PathP; the two structural possibilities would give rise to ambiguity. We could then argue, in the spirit of

In addition, the data show that the syntax of Liverpool preposition-drop is very different to that of preposition-drop in the rest of the Northwest, where p-drop is precisely restricted to those contexts in which the Goal is adjacent to the verb, consistent with an account where the Goal is licensed via p-incorporation (Myler 2013). All examples in this Section are ungrammatical in Ormskirk English (Myler 2013, Myler p.c.), as well as all the other Northwest dialects tested.¹⁸

Kayne (2004), that the directional functional projection is headed by the non-pronounced preposition TO, whose non-pronunciation is licensed by movement of overt material to a specifier (Kayne 2004; cf. Koopman and Szabolcsi 2000, Collins 2007). The overt material is, in turn, licensed through (syntactic) adjacency with the verb, making available the interpretation *Suarez ran TO on the pitch* in (37a). Where that overt material is not licensed, it cannot move to the specifier, and a directional reading requires the overt preposition (*It was onto(*TO) the pitch that Suarez ran*).

18. It has been suggested that, alternatively, Liverpool p-drop could be the kind of p-drop found with nouns such as *home* in (presumably all varieties of) English, as described in Collins (2007). It is well known that English exhibits obligatory and optional p-drop (depending on the syntactic environment) of *to* and *at* with a closed set of nouns: r-pronouns such as *there*, light nouns such as *place* or *someplace*, and (directional) *home*. Following Kishimoto (2000), Collins (2007) argues that these 'light' nominals obligatorily raise to the specifier of their embedding XP, locative TO/AT. Collins proposes that the raising of the light noun licenses the non-pronunciation of TO/AT, if something like Koopman and Szabolcsi's (2000:4) *Generalised Doubly Filled Comp Filter* holds, which states that no projection has both an overt specifier and an overt head at the end of a derivation.

As the examples throughout Section 4 show, p-drop in Liverpool English does not show a comparable sensitivity to nominal type. We could nonetheless extend Collins' analysis by stating that null TO/AT in Liverpool English triggers generalised movement of any nominal complement to SpecP. Leaving aside the question of what would trigger this generalised movement, a raising-to-spec analysis makes incorrect predictions with respect to word order. For example, following Collins, raising to Spec-P should mean that the nominal always precedes an adjective where a preposition is not overt. This analysis correctly predicts that both (1a) and (1c) should be fine, and (1b) excluded, in Standard English. However, (1b) is fine in Liverpool English. This suggests that raising-to-Spec is not the condition on non-pronunciation of the prepositions *to* and *at* in Liverpool English.

- (1) a. They went someplace beautiful/mysterious.
 b. They went some beautiful/mysterious place.
 (*Standard English/^{OK}Lpool English)
 c. They went to some beautiful/mysterious place.
 (Collins 2007: 11 (36), plus Liverpool judgement for (b))

The availability of the Liverpool type of null prepositions does not exclude Collins' analysis of r-pronouns in Northwest varieties. Rather we can distinguish at least three types of 'p-drop' that could co-exist in English: non-pronunciation as a product of raising-to-spec (Kayne

Sections 4.3 and 4.4 show that it is variation in the adpositional functional lexicon that results in variation in the availability of Theme passivisation across Northwest varieties.

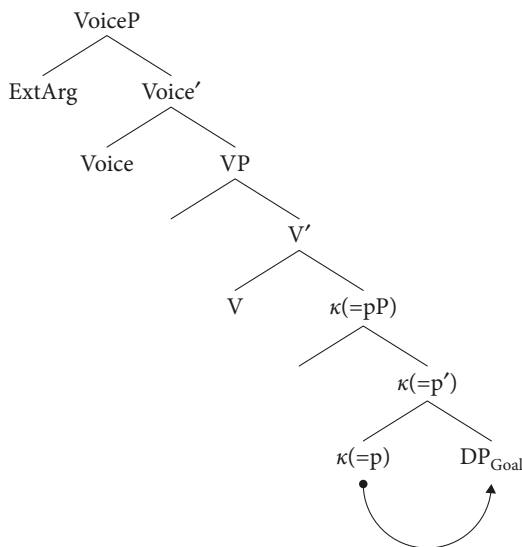
4.3 The structure of κ

The data in the previous Section pointed to the independence of the morphologically unmarked Goal from the verb in Liverpool English. If the unmarked Goal can occur in contexts non-adjacent to the predicate, the licensing of the Goal must be independent of the verb. I propose that the null element κ itself licenses the Goal.

If κ licenses Case, we need to establish by what mechanism. I propose that Liverpool κ corresponds to the functional head p , and that κ (p) licenses Case on $\text{NP}_{\text{Ground}}$. (I continue to label this item κ as the role of p is more usually identified as the introducer of the external argument of the adposition (Svenonius 2007, 2010), an issue that is not of direct concern here).

κ is equivalent to a functional category p that bears only $u[F]$, but lacks a 'lexical' head P (reminiscent of Collins' (2005) 'dummy prepositions', where a dummy preposition is a functional head that bears only $u[F]$; Collins' (2005) dummy preposition is the passive *by* 'ByP', where *by* is the head of VoiceP).

(38) κ in Liverpool English



Following much previous work on adpositions, notably Rezac (2008), I assume that the $u[F]$ borne by adpositions are ϕ -features, and that Case is valued

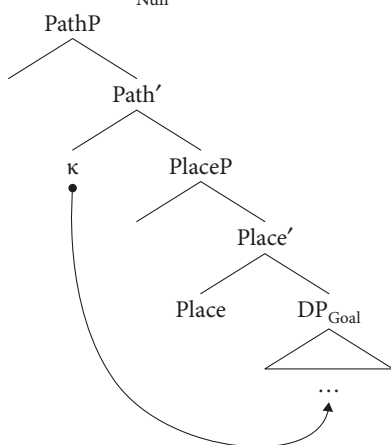
2004, Collins 2007) for *home*; p-drop as p-incorporation (den Dikken 2010, Myler 2013); and the availability of null, purely functional adpositional elements, such as κ .)

through Match and valuation of these features, as in standard Probe-Goal Agree (Chomsky 2000, 2001).

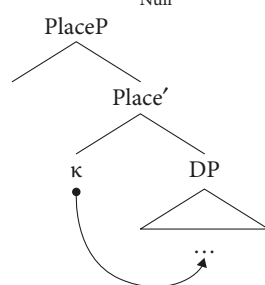
An alternative, that I will reject, is that κ corresponds to a lexical head that both introduces an argument ($\text{NP}_{\text{Ground}}$) as its complement, and is responsible for Case licensing. As noted in the previous Section, much research on adpositions has shown that there must be multiple lexical projections internal to the extended projection of P, which include PathP and PlaceP (Jackendoff 1990, Koopman 2010, Svenonius 2010, a.o). If κ corresponds to a lexical head, we expect there to be two null κ heads in English, one relating to directionality ('dropped' *to*), and one to stativity ('dropped' *at*).

(39) κ as the lexical projections PathP/PlaceP

a. κ as TO_{Null}



b. κ as AT_{Null}



Close examination of the distribution of κ suggests that Case licensing is the core function of κ (consistent with (38)), but that κ does not make a semantic contribution; this is suggested to correspond to a lack of any semantic-related internal projections at all (compare (38)–(39)).

Pseudo-passives contribute initial evidence that Case licensing, rather than a semantic contribution, is the core role of κ : Liverpool speakers do not permit κ in pseudo-passives, instead requiring the overt preposition.

- (40) a. John was talked **(to)*.
 b. The music was listened **(to)* carefully.
 c. After hours of discussion the contract was finally agreed **(to)*.¹⁹

19. As an anonymous reviewer points out, Liverpool English does not otherwise allow *agree* as a transitive verb without a PP, as in '*They agreed it*', an option that is apparently available in many American dialects.

The syntactic structure of pseudo-passives, and especially their relation to their active counterparts, is controversial (see Hornstein and Weinberg (1981) and Baltin and Postal (1996) for discussion). The only point that is crucial here is that, as the object of the pseudo-passive is probed and Case licensed by T, the preposition of the pseudo-passive must not be a Case-licenser; the preposition still presumably supplies semantic information to the otherwise intransitive verb, however.²⁰ I propose that it is this semantic contribution that means κ is incompatible with the pseudo-passive.²¹

The contrast between the overt P and κ in terms of semantic contribution also gets us the distinction between the availability of κ in prepositional datives and pseudo-passives: prepositional dative verbs subcategorise for – but do not Case license – the Goal argument; in the pseudo-passive construction, T is responsible for Case licensing NP_{Theme}, but does not subcategorise for it, and nor does the intransitive pseudo-passive verb.

20. Much previous work has shown that complex spatial concepts must be directly encoded in the internal structure of spatial adpositions (Jackendoff 1990, Koopman 2000, Svenonius 2010), that may or may not be realised. For example, in Italian the complex relation *under* might be taken to have the structure ‘AT under (the sea)’, as AT (in Italian, and, I think, marginally in English) can be realised in the environment of measure of phrases: *Si trova (a) due metri sotto il livello del mare* ‘It is found (at) two meters under sea level’ (Cinque 2010:6). I take the preposition in pseudo-passives such as (40) to be required to contribute a complex conceptual semantics; in the spirit of UNDER, I take the preposition in (40a) to have the structure, *John was talked WITH to*. Assume that κ corresponds to *p* without a lexical complement; without a lexical P complement, κ cannot denote WITH; the semantic bleached-ness of κ then excludes it from the pseudo-passive. In contrast, an overt preposition has a lexical layer, and this layer may realise (potentially multiple) lexical layer(s) P. The restricted semantics of κ/p means it is not freely interchangeable with any preposition, null or otherwise (cf. examples in (28); for discussion of the narrow semantic contribution of κ , see (ahead) fn. 23).

21. A reviewer likens the pseudo-passive facts to Collins (2007) observation that *r*-pronouns (such as *somewhere* and *nowhere*) are ungrammatical in pseudo-passives:

- (1) a. We drove (*to) somewhere interesting.
- b. Nowhere interesting can be driven (*to) in under 5 minutes.

(Collins 2007: (15))

A null preposition cannot be stranded, if, as Collins argues, non-pronunciation is sensitive to a Doubly Filled Comp Filter: fronting the nominal in the pseudo-passive obviates the filter. In Liverpool English *p*-drop is available without raising-to-spec (fn. 18), so we take this to be a separate phenomenon.

On a related topic: it is difficult to assess whether a total ban on null *p*-stranding holds in the Liverpool grammar. For example, Liverpool English allows A-bar extraction from prepositional complements with a null preposition (*Who did she give it?* is fully acceptable), but in this environment is not clear whether the null preposition has simply undergone pied-piping.

- (41) a. I talked *(to) John.
b. I muttered the answer (to) John.

There is further evidence for the semantic bleachedness of κ , and its non-equivalence to the overt preposition. For example, where *at* has a manner reading, κ is ungrammatical:

- (42) a. She was singing *(at) the top of her lungs.
b. She's moving *(at) a snail's pace.

κ is impossible wherever the complement of *at* has a more semantically complex reading than location.

- (43) a. What are you getting *(at)?
b. He hit *(at) the wasp with a newspaper, but that only made it more angry.
c. Keep *(at) your job and some good luck might turn up...
d. I don't know when I'm going to get *(to) that paper.

If κ were semantically equivalent to overt *at*, it should be available in this environment.²² Again, this suggests that κ represents a subset of the semantic functions associated with its overt counterparts.

Finally, we have already seen that κ is available in contexts where the verb has an allative semantics. κ is impossible where the complement is an idiom, or where *P* has a more complex reading than allativity:

- (44) a. You've got to pick a plan and stick *(to) it.
b. He looks up *(to) her.

If the distribution of κ were to follow from itself supplying an allative-type θ -role or selecting a strictly allative complement, its compatibility with ditransitive verbs such as *donate*, or manner of communication verbs such as *whisper*, *yell*, *bark*, *grumble*, *mutter* is unexpected. If, however, the ditransitive verb supplies the subcategorisation or selectional frame, highly plausible for ditransitive verbs, their compatibility with κ is unsurprising.

Together the distributional data show that the syntactic object κ can be formally distinguished from overt prepositions by the absence of thematic-related functional structure, such that it does not have a direct overt counterpart. This suggests we are not dealing with PF-variability.

22. A reviewer questions how the interpretation of κ can be constrained. One point to emphasize is that as κ is realised in the functional layer *p*, it is expected to only denote spatial relations.

This would be comparable to the necessarily eventive interpretation of light verbs, or other functional projections in the vP shell, including German examples like, *Ich muss nach hause* (which, following van Riemsdijk (2002), contains a null featurally light motion verb [e]_{GO}).

Finally, this conclusion predicts an argument/ adjunct asymmetry with respect to κ . Adjuncts are not (usually) selected by the verb, and should therefore not be compatible with κ . In contrast, arguments of the verb are (usually) selected by the verb, and should therefore be compatible with κ . The following adjuncts are incompatible with κ , requiring an overt preposition:

- (45) a. Let's meet *(at) six.
 b. I'll find you *(at) last orders.
 c. Sell it *(at) 180.
 d. I'm offering it (to) them *(at) cost.

Further argument/ adjunct asymmetries can be seen with the noun *home*. *Home* is one of the few English nouns with which (all varieties of) English permit (and sometimes require) a null preposition (cf. Collins 2007).

- (46) a. I'll stay/go (*at/*to) home.
 b. I'll be (at) home tonight.

The preposition is even obligatorily null with ditransitives (again for all speakers). This is true regardless of whether NP_{Theme} is inanimate or animate.

- (47) a. I'm sending this letter (*to) home.
 b. I'm sending him (*to) home.

The only context in which a preposition is obligatorily overt with *home* nouns is in adjuncts.

- (48) a. I'm cooking *(at) home tonight.
 b. I'll work *(from) home tomorrow.

(Liverpool and Standard English)

Prepositions must likewise be overt in adjuncts in Liverpool English, indicating κ is not compatible with adjuncts.²³ This sensitivity holds both with the noun *home* (i.e. Liverpool judgements are the same as the judgements given in (47) and (48)), as well as with non-*home* nouns such as *gym*:

- (49) a. She'll stay/go (at/to) the gym.
 b. She'll be (at) the gym.
 c. She's working out *(at) the gym tonight.

(Liverpool)

In short the restrictions on the distribution of κ suggest that κ can license arguments, but it otherwise lacks the functional projections that introduce complex semantic content in adpositions.

23. With some exceptions: examples such as *Working (AT) the library* (27b) are judged licit, for reasons that are not clear.

4.4 Consequences of the analysis

The availability of Theme passivisation follows from the availability of κ to Case license the Goal, in limited semantic contexts.

First, we have seen that the Liverpool dialect only drops the prepositions *to* and *at*. If TGDs (Theme-Goal ditransitives) and Theme passivisation are really Prepositional Datives with null κ , then TGDs and Prepositional Datives should not be possible with prepositions such as *from* (Source) or *in* (Containment), regardless of the lexical frame of the verb. As predicted, TGDs and Theme passivisation are unavailable with these preposition classes:

- (50) a. Beth put the beers *(in) the cooler.
 b. The beers were put *(in) the cooler.
- (51) a. Beth exchanged notes *(with) Pete.
 b. Notes were exchanged *(with) Pete.

(Liverpool)

In addition, as Liverpool English κ is free wherever the verb provides an allative semantics (or stative semantics), TGDs and Theme passivisation should be available in any allative context.²⁴ Evidence that this is the case comes from verbs-of-motion with inanimate or non-recipient Goals. In both 'standard' and Liverpool English, verbs-of-motion are incompatible with the DOC; the combination is possible only if the inanimate or non-recipient Goal is marked by the preposition *to*:

- (52) a. I sent the letter to France.
 b. *I sent France the letter.

If Liverpool TGDs are available in any context where *to* has a default allative interpretation, Liverpool TGDs should be possible with the inanimate Goal, regardless of the thematic properties of the Goal. The judgements from Liverpool speakers show that this prediction is correct:

- (53) a. He sent the letter to France.
 b. *He sent France the letter.
 c. He sent the letter France.

24. An anonymous reviewer points out that Liverpool English should therefore be unlike Ormskirk English (as described in Myler 2013:195) in allowing for p-drop with non-location goals with motion verbs. This prediction is partially borne out. In the following example, Ormskirk English does not permit p-drop. Liverpool English permits p-drop with the full DP but only allows the pronominal if the pronominal receives focal stress.

(1) He came (to) me / the man for help. *Ormskirk; ??/OK Liverpool (Myler 2013:195)

I have not explored the interplay between stress and p-drop or TGDs, but such an investigation could be very revealing (especially given a second anonymous reviewer's judgments; see fn. 25).

- (54) a. Betty sent Joe to the pub.
 b. *Betty sent the pub Joe.
 c. Betty sent Joe the pub.

(Liverpool)

Finally, Theme passivisation is also available with inanimate Goals of verbs-of-motion and with non-recipient Goals (55a, 56a). (55b, 56b) demonstrate that as in 'standard' varieties of English, Goal passivisation is not possible in this context:

- (55) a. The letter was sent France.
 b. *France was sent the letter.
 (56) a. John was sent the pub.
 b. *The pub was sent John.

In contrast to Liverpool English, Manchester English does not accept inanimate Goals with verbs of motion, either in TGDs or in Theme passives.

- (57) a. I sent the letter to France.
 b. *I sent France the letter.
 c. *I sent the letter France.

(Manchester, Haddican 2010: 2430; Ormskirk, Myler p.c.)

- (58) It was sent France. (*Manchester, *Ormskirk)

These latter contrasts follow if the Manchester TGD and Theme passive derive from a distinct underlying syntactic structure, namely the DOC, rather than the Prepositional Dative.

5. The systematic nature of regional variation: Evidence from Manchester English

Haddican (2010) and Haddican and Holmberg (2012) present convincing evidence that TGDs derive from a DOC in the Northwest, with the direct object (NP_{Theme}) undergoing local object movement to form the TGD.

- (59) a. It was given her. *Theme passive* (OKManchester, OKOrmskirk)
 b. I gave it her (it). *TGD/ DOC* (OKManchester, OKOrmskirk)

First, Manchester English speakers (and speakers of the other Northwest varieties) reject TGDs with verbs of continuous imparting force, manner of communication verbs, and latinate verbs:

- (60) a. She pushed/hailed/lifted it to me. PD
 b. *She pushed/hailed/lifted me it. DOC
 c. *She pushed/hailed/lifted it me. TGD

- | | | | |
|------|----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| (61) | a. | She whispered/shouted it to me. | PD |
| | b. | *She whispered/shouted me it. | DOC |
| | c. | *She whispered/shouted it me. | TGD |
| (62) | a. | She donated/contributed it to me. | PD |
| | b. | *She donated/contributed me it. | DOC |
| | c. | *She donated/contributed it me. | TGD |

(Manchester, Haddican 2010: 2428; Ormskirk, Myler p.c.;
Southport, own investigation)

Second, Manchester English speakers (and speakers of the other Northwest varieties) accept TGDs with verbs of prevention of possession (such as *refuse*, *deny*):

- | | | | |
|------|----|------------------------|-----|
| (63) | a. | *She refused it to me. | PD |
| | b. | She refused me it. | DOC |
| | c. | %She refused it me. | TGD |

(Manchester, Haddican 2010: 2428; own fieldwork)

This suggests that in the Northwest speakers treat TGDs as if they were DOCs. If there is a correlation between the availability of Theme passivisation and TGDs, only those verb classes compatible with TGDs should be compatible with Theme passivisation. Again this prediction is borne out: verbs of prevention of possession are compatible with Theme passivisation in Manchester English, but verbs of continuous imparting force, manner of communication verbs, or latinate verbs are not (a–c). I found that the former class is only marginally acceptable (d), but the trend is nonetheless clear.

- | | | | |
|------|----|---------------------|-------------------------|
| (64) | a. | *It was pushed me. | |
| | b. | *It was shouted me. | |
| | c. | *It was donated me. | |
| | d. | ?It was denied her. | (‘Northwest’ varieties) |

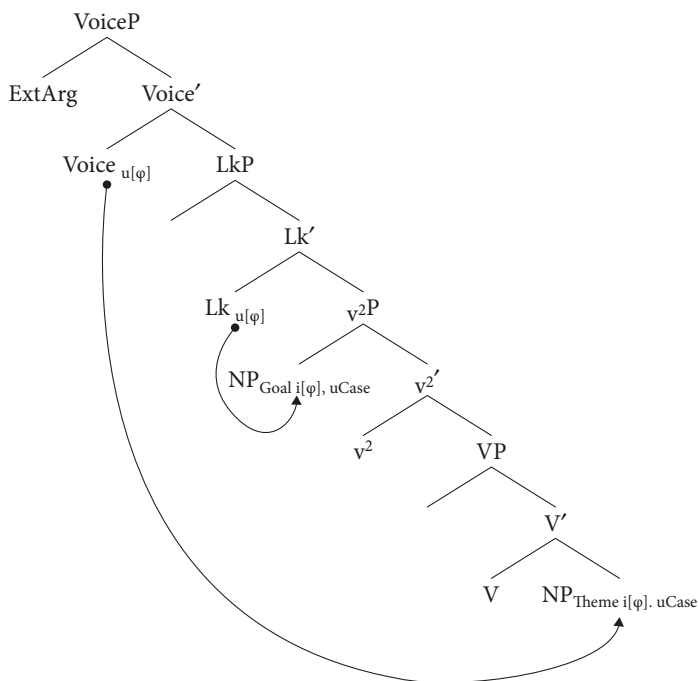
The theme passive might then taken to be a product of the availability of short direct object movement, if, say, speakers of Northwest varieties permit the Theme pronominal to undergo local object movement in a DOC as a reflex of an EPP feature on an Applicative projection introducing the indirect object (McGinnis (1998, 2001), Anagnostopoulou (2003) (a.o.)).

This ‘pure locality’ approach predicts that the availability of short object movement and Theme passivisation should be a bi-conditional, such that wherever TGDs are available, Theme passivisation should also be possible. However, there are many British dialects that permit TGDs that do not exhibit Theme passivisation (Haddican and Holmberg 2012; Gerwin (2013) on the Midlands). Haddican and Holmberg (2012) argue that it is also necessary to invoke Case and agreement features, and that these features have distinct distributions across the functional

structure of different dialects. This allows for a more fine-grained account of the possibility of local object movement.

Haddican & Holmberg (2012) propose that speakers of dialects that permit TGDs and theme passivisation derived from DOCs have innovated a LinkerP (in the sense of Baker and Collins 2006) that can merge between Voice and v^2 in DOCs, where v^2 is the applicative-like head proposed in Adger and Harbour (2007). LkP merges bearing uninterpretable $[\phi]$, such that a relation with it results in (structural) Case valuation. Crucially, still following Haddican & Holmberg (2012), $[\phi]$ may be merged with *either* LkP or v^2 .

(65) *Manchester Double Object Constructions/ Theme-Goal Ditransitives*



LkP Probes for its most local Goal, which, here, is the Goal argument in Appl. Under Agree, LkP values the $u[Case]$ on the Goal. This 'deactivation' of the Goal means it is no longer a possible intervener for Agree (Chomsky 2001 *i.a.*). Where LkP values the features of the Goal, the Theme is the most local argument to Voice. $u[\phi]$ on Voice thus probes the Theme, with which it Agrees under Match. It is the Agree relation between v and the pronominal Theme that results in the Theme>Goal word order.

Next we have to account for the restricted relationship between little v and the Theme. TGDs in Manchester English are mostly restricted to pronominal themes:

- (66) a. She gave it him. pro > pro
 b. She gave it the boy pro > DP
 c. (?) She gave the ball him. DP > pro²⁵
 d. (??/★) She gave the ball the boy. DP > DP

(Haddican 2010: 2426)

Agree in the derivation in (65) therefore entails that NP_{Theme} is licensed, but not that it ‘moves’. Haddican & Holmberg (2012) propose that pronominal Theme ‘movement’ in TGDs is actually incorporation, in the sense of Roberts (2010a).

Roberts’ system takes as its starting point the familiar Agree relation, where features are copied onto the categories that Agree. Roberts (2010a) proposes that where an element α contains a proper subset of the features of a second element β , and α enters an Agree relation with β , the element α is a ‘defective’ goal. Roberts (2010a: 66) proposes that when a defective goal enters an Agree relation, copying the features of the goal exhausts the contents of the goal. Just as in Chain Reduction where all identical copies of a chain are deleted leaving only the highest (Nunes 2004), a defective goal will be realised in the structural position of its probe, and the goal itself ‘deletes’. It is the realisation of the goal in the Probe’s structural position that yields the appearance of incorporation.

For Roberts (2010b) and Haddican & Holmberg (2012), pronouns are φ Ps. In Roberts’ (2010a) terms, then, pronouns (φ Ps) are proper subsets of the $u[F]$ on little ν , as little ν also contains features such as the category and the thematic information of the external argument. In the context of a pronoun (a φ P) undergoing valuation by Voice, all feature values of the φ P are represented on the Probe Voice; as such, the φ P is essentially a copy of the Probe, and thus, for Roberts (2010a), may ‘incorporate’ to Voice. Chain Reduction, as above, yields the overt ordering of the Theme preceding the Goal (a TGD).

Incorporation results in the nominal/ pronominal asymmetry in both TGDs and Theme passives. Under ‘incorporation’, only an XP bearing a subset of the features of the Probe is a potential Goal. It is for this reason that pronominal Themes (φ Ps), but not definite Themes (DPs), occur as TGDs in this dialect: Voice may probe a DP Theme, but as DP does not constitute a subset of the features on Voice, the DOC order is realized. It then follows that only incorporated φ Ps (pronominals) are sufficiently local to T to occur in the Theme passive.

25. A reviewer with DOC-type TGDs finds example (c) acceptable with focal stress on the pronominal. It is possible that this type of stress is also required of Manchester speakers, but this was not tested in the survey carried out here. Interestingly, the same reviewer finds (d) acceptable. As this grammar is not captured by Haddican and Holmberg’s (2012) incorporation analysis, variation is even more extensive than that reported here.

There are still further dialects (noted in Haddican and Holmberg 2012, and which an anonymous reviewer speaks) that permit DP TGDs, but not DP Theme passives. There may be an additional locus of variation that restricts the availability of Theme passives; I leave this to future investigation. For now the availability of short object movement in TGDs in the Manchester variety can be taken to follow from the distribution of φ -features across Voice, LkP, and ν^2 , in an Applicative configuration.

6. The locus of variation

The usual view in comparative syntax is that syntactic variation follows from variation in the inventory of syntactic features and their distribution across functional heads (in the spirit of Borer 1984); as such all variation is ultimately variation in the functional lexicon.

Alternatively, it has been suggested that all variation is PF-variation (Berwick & Chomsky 2008); PF-variation might include the pronunciation or not of a given syntactic object. Preposition-drop in Liverpool English might seem a highly plausible example of PF-variability, where, for example, κ might actually be the elided or non-phonetically realised versions of *to* or *at*. However, in the Liverpool case at least, preposition-drop also seems to be best represented at the level of the functional lexicon.

In particular, Section 3 proposed that in the Liverpool dialect, apparent Theme passives derive from Prepositional Datives with a null preposition. Section 4 showed that this null preposition has the same Case licensing capacity associated with overt prepositions, but lacks the semantically contentful projections of its overt counterparts. This suggests that κ is not (morpho-)syntactically equivalent to the overt prepositions *to* and *at*. The non-equivalency of κ to the overt prepositions *to* and *at* suggests preposition-drop is not an example of PF-variability. The distribution of the null form was taken to indicate that it has a distinct functional structure, so is a morpho-syntactically distinct functional item, whose realisation is inherently null.

In Section 5, following Haddican (2010) and Haddican and Holmberg (2012), Manchester English was shown to contrast with the neighboring Liverpool English dialect in deriving the active Theme-Goal order (and consequent Theme passive) via short object movement. This possibility was a product of Applicative(-like) functional projections.

Locating variation at the level of functional heads may have broader implications for work on the underlying structure of the dative alternation in English. There has been much debate over whether either the prepositional dative or the Double Object Construction is transformationally related to the other, so that both

have the same underlying structure (cf. Oehrle 1976, Larson 1988 *i.a.*). In particular, the restriction of the null preposition to the prepositional dative indirectly supports an analysis where the Prepositional Dative and Double Object Construction have distinct underlying structures. The present study suggests that at the very least speakers are able to finely distinguish the contribution of different licensing heads – identified here as prepositional licensors from Applicative-related licensors – even in the context of ambiguous strings.

Variation as variation in the distribution of a set of features on functional heads was shown here to be powerful, capturing the systematic syntactic restrictions on theme passivisation that differ across the Northwest region, including (a) the class of the ditransitive verb that can participate in theme passives (prepositional dative vs. double object construction dative) (b) restrictions on the compatibility of certain goal arguments with theme passivisation (goals marked by *in*; inanimate goals), and (c) the type of theme argument that may undergo passivisation (pronominal vs. nominal). This variation therefore seems a good candidate for a parameter, in the sense that it yields a range of syntactic properties traceable to a single point of variation. It is these ‘microparameters’, variation in the mental grammar, that give rise to micro-variation in the forms available in closely related linguistic varieties in Northwest varieties.

7. Summary

This paper has examined the availability of Theme passivisation in Manchester and Liverpool English. Investigation showed that the different Northwest varieties employ distinct strategies to license variants of the dative alternation. Liverpool English has a null preposition, so that Theme passives derive from Prepositional Datives with a null preposition. Manchester English uses an Applicative configuration that allows short object movement, which can feed Theme passives in a Double Object Construction (Haddican 2010). This corresponds to the regional differences in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of Theme passive and Theme-Goal ditransitive in Northwest varieties

	Full DP Theme	Prepositional Dative	Inanimate Goal
<i>Liverpool</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Manchester</i>	✗	✗	✗

I suggested the availability of κ in ditransitives extends from the increasing availability of p-drop in Liverpool English, where p-drop is available in a much wider

range of contexts than elsewhere in the Northwest, and specifically Ormskirk English (as described in Myler 2013). Table 2 summarises some of the differences found across the region.

Table 2. Environments in which preposition-drop is possible

	Directed motion	Location	Nominal non-adjacent to V
<i>Liverpool</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Ormskirk</i>	✓	✗	✗

Section 4 argued that the null preposition in the Liverpool dialect is an innovated null element κ . It was argued that κ licenses Case on NP_{Goal}, but that κ (=p) lacks the semantic projections that are usually assumed to introduce conceptual content in spatial adpositions (Jackendoff 1983, Koopman 2000, Svenonius 2010). This accounted for the restrictions on its distribution. Variation in P reflects variation in the functional lexicon.

Comparison of these closely related varieties demonstrates that variation in the licensing properties of two functional heads can result in significant and systematically different constraints. This was described as parametric variation, in the sense that it yielded a range of syntactic properties traceable to a single alternation in the functional grammar.

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