How roots do and don’t constrain the interpretation of Voice*

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1 Introduction

- A question that spans a variety of frameworks: what is the relationship between a particular “verb word” and the syntactic rules of a language?
  - For example, English speakers have the intuition that *grow* but not *bloom* can occur in transitive sentences like the following:

  (1) a. Julia is growing tomato plants in our backyard.
      b. * Julia is blooming tomato plants in our backyard.
  - Along similar lines, Icelandic speakers have the intuition that ‘kill’ but not ‘murder’ can occur in intransitive sentences like the following:

  (2) a. Hundurinn drapst.
        dog.the.NOM killed-ST
        ‘The dog died.’
         man.the.NOM murdered-ST

→ What is responsible for contrasts like (1) and (2)?

- Today I will address this question in a way that divides the question into two kinds of issues:
  - On the one hand, there is the **distribution and interpretation of roots** in different structures.
  - On the other hand, there is the **interpretation of Voice** in the context of different verbs/verb phrases.

→ I will propose that the burden of explanation for both of these issues lies in the rules for interpreting syntactic structures in the semantics.

### The specific proposal

- Roots bear **no** structural features related to argument structure. From a syntactic perspective, **any root can merge in any structure**.
  - However, the rules that interpret syntactic structure restrict the distribution of roots, and the interpretation of verbs and verb phrases:
    - The **interpretation of a root** can be sensitive to surrounding syntactic features.
    - The **distribution of a root** across structures is derived by the absence of an “elsewhere” interpretation.
    - The **interpretation of Voice** is determined by the overall interpretation of the vP, but not any specific root or feature within the vP.

### Roadmap

§2 The causative alternation in Icelandic
§3 Non-alternating roots
§4 Idiosyncratic root interpretation
§5 Contextual allosemy and roots
§6 The interpretation of Voice
  - The agentive *vera með* ‘be with’ construction
  - Voice and roots in the causative alternation
§7 Conclusion

* Abbreviations/symbols used: γ = web-attested example (Horn 2013), ACC = accusative, AGR = agreement morphology, COS = change of state, DAT = dative, EXPL = expletive, F = feminine, INTR = intransitive, NA = -na morphology, NOM = nominative, PASS = passive, PST = past, REFL = reflexive, SBJV = subjunctive, ST = -st morphology, TR = transitive.
2 The causative alternation in Icelandic

- I assume that the causative alternation is a Voice alternation, having fundamentally to do with whether or not an external argument is projected (Schäfer 2008; Alexiadou et al. 2015).

- More specifically, I propose that Voice comes in two syntactic flavors (Wood 2015):
  - \(\text{Voice}_{[\text{D}]}\) has a D-feature that must be checked—usually by merging something of category “D” in SpecVoiceP.
  - \(\text{Voice}_{[]}\) has no D-feature, and may not take a specifier.

- A typical causative alternation will then look like this:¹

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(3)} & \quad \text{a. John broke the window.} \\
& \quad \text{b. The window broke.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(4)} & \quad \text{a.} & T' & \quad \text{b.} & T' \\
& & \text{VoiceP} & & \text{VoiceP} \\
& & \text{DP} & & \text{DP} \\
& \quad \text{‘John’} & \text{vP} & & \text{V} & \text{‘the window’} \\
& & \sqrt{\text{ROOT}} & & \sqrt{\text{ROOT}} & \text{v}
\end{align*}
\]

- There is, however, at least one other way to derive an anticausative: by merging an “expletive” in the specifier of \(\text{Voice}_{[\text{D}]}\).

- In Icelandic, the -st clitic serves this function (Sigurðsson 2012; Wood 2015).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(5) Two kinds of anticausative structures in Icelandic} \\
\text{a.} & \quad \text{VoiceP} & \quad \text{b.} & \quad \text{VoiceP} \\
& \quad \text{vP} & & \quad \text{vP} \\
& \quad \text{v} & \quad \text{DP} & & \quad \text{v} & \quad \text{DP} \\
& \quad \sqrt{\text{ROOT}} & \text{v} & & \sqrt{\text{ROOT}} & \text{v}
\end{align*}
\]

- The structure in (5a) is realized morphologically in at least three different ways in Icelandic:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(6) \quad \text{Voice}_{[]} \leftrightarrow \text{-nu} / \text{-na}} \\
\text{a.} & \quad \text{Jón braut gluggana.} \\
& \quad \text{John.NOM break.PST windows.the.ACC} \\
& \quad \text{‘John broke the windows.’} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \text{Gluggarnir brotnu-ðu.} \\
& \quad \text{windows.the.NOM break-NA-PST} \\
& \quad \text{‘The windows broke.’}
\end{align*}
\]

- Distinct stem morphology

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(7) \quad \text{Wrong}} \\
\text{a.} & \quad \text{Deir brenndu bókina.} \\
& \quad \text{they.NOM burn.TR.PST book.the.ACC} \\
& \quad \text{‘They burned the book.’} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \text{Bókin brann.} \\
& \quad \text{book.the.NOM burn.INTR.PST} \\
& \quad \text{‘The book burned.’} \quad \text{(Sigurðsson 1989:277)}
\end{align*}
\]

- No morphological distinction

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(8) \quad \text{Wrong}} \\
\text{a.} & \quad \text{Fólk dýp-ka-ði skurðinn.} \\
& \quad \text{people.NOM deep-en-PST ditch.the.ACC} \\
& \quad \text{‘People deepened the ditch.’} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \text{Skurðurinn dýp-ka-ði.} \\
& \quad \text{ditch.the.NOM deep-en-PST} \\
& \quad \text{‘The ditch deepened.’} \quad \text{(Thráinsson 2007:299)}
\end{align*}
\]

¹ In this talk I will follow Marantz (2013) in assuming that a verbal root is generally adjoined to \(v\), and not merged in the complement of \(v\); the major points do not hinge on this, however.
The structure in (5b) is realized morphologically in one way: with transitive stem morphology (cf. (7a)) and -st encliticized to the verbal complex.

(9) a. Hún opna-ði hurðina.  
   she.NOM open-PST door.the.ACC  
   ‘She opened the door.’

b. Hurðin opna-ði-st.  
   door.the.NOM open-PST-ST  
   ‘The door opened.’

As proposed more generally in Alexiadou et al. (2015), there seem to be no consistent semantic differences between the two anticausative structures (Wood 2015).

→ Given that, we still need some way to understand how roots “choose” which anticausative structure to occur in.

3 Non-Alternating Roots

The problem of how roots choose an anticausative structure is nowhere more pronounced than in cases of non-alternating anticausatives.

For alternating anticausatives, one can identify various factors that affect the choice. Verbs that are more frequent in the causative use will tend to take Voice{D}+ -st in the anticausative (Haspelmath et al. 2014).

→ This is part of a more general phenomenon of “marking the unexpected form.”

→ We might expect that non-alternating anticausatives would always appear with Voice{1}... but this is not the case.

→ While some non-alternating roots indeed occur with -na morphology or without anticausative morphology, others occur with -st instead.

(12) Naturally Disjoint

a. Jón elskar sig.  
   John loves self.ACC  
   ‘John loved himself.’

b. * Jón elskast.  
   John loves-ST

→ -st is not a general “reflexive marker” in Icelandic.

→ See Wood (2014) and Wood (2015:171–204,283–298) for discussion of the cases where -st does appear on a limited class of verbs with apparent reflexive meanings.

3 Non-Alternating Roots

A note on “inherent -st verbs”

• It is important to note that “inherent -st verbs” are not inherent reflexives.

• In Icelandic, inherent (and “natural”) reflexives involve a case-marked reflexive pronoun, and not -st.

• Nor can naturally disjoint verbs form reflexive -st verbs.

(10) Inherent Reflexive

a. Jón heðar sér vel.  
   John behaves REFL.DAT well  
   ‘John behaves well.’

b. * Jón heðast vel.  
   John behaves-ST well

(11) Natural Reflexive

a. Jón rakaði sig.  
   John shaved REFL.ACC  
   ‘John shaved.’

b. * Jón rakaðist.  
   John shaved-ST

(13) No anticausative morphology

   Mary.NOM has greened car.the.ACC  
   ‘Mary has greened the car.’

b. Bíllinn hefur grænkað.  
   car.the.NOM has greened  
   ‘The car has become more green.’ (Sigurðsson 1989:272)
(14) -na morphology on anticausative
   a. * Aldurinn stirðir hónina.
      age.the.NOM stiffens hand.the.ACC
   b. Hónin stirð-na-r (með aldrinum).
      hand.the.NOM stiffen-NA-AGR (with age.the)
      'Your hand stiffens with age.' (Sigurðsson 1989:273)

(15) -st morphology on anticausative
   a. * Sólin hefur blómgað seljuna.
      sun.the.NOM has bloomed sallow.the.ACC
   b. Seljan hefur blómgast.
      sallow.the.NOM has bloomed-ST
      'The sallow has bloomed.'


→ How is it that verb roots are able to “choose” between (5a) and (5b)?
→ Moreover, why would there be a class of roots that don’t take an external argument, but nevertheless prefer to form their anticausatives with Voice[\(D\)]?

Are they really non-alternating?

• Recent work has shown that many roots once thought to be non-alternating in fact do alternate, sometimes under restricted circumstances (Rappaport Hovav 2014; Alexiadou 2010, 2014).

• In this respect, the following two examples are of some interest:

(16) a. γ ef hún er ræktuð og gerjuð af natni.

   if it.=f is cultivated and fermented with care
   'if it (the Malbec grape) is cultivated and fermented with care.'
c. ɣ Himinn gláð-na-di.
sky.NOM glad-NA-PST
‘The heavens cleared.’
d. það gláð-na-di yfir honum.
expl. glad-NA-PST over him
‘His face brightened up.’

(18) a. þú beygir orðið svoleiðis.
you bend word.the like.this
‘You inflect the word like this.’
b. Orðið beygist svoleiðis.
word.the bends-ST like.this
‘The word inflects like this.’

(19) a. þú beygir hilluna.
you bend shelf.the
‘You bend the shelf.’
b. Hillan bog-na-r.
shelf.the bend-NA-AGR
‘The shelf bends.’

• Cases like this show that we need to allow roots like √GLAD and √BEYG to occur in both structures, but get a special interpretation in one of them.

5 Contextual Allosemy and Roots

• The non-alternating roots and special interpretations of roots are reflexes of the same phenomenon: root allosemy selection.

– Harley (2014:244), for example, describes the various interpretations of the English word throw as a set of post-syntactic interface instructions.

(20) PF Instructions LF Instructions
a light blanket / [ n [ ] ]
{…other meanings in other contexts…} ← “throw” / elsewhere

– On the PF side, the root √THROW is given the phonemic representation /θrow/.
– On the LF side, the interpretation of that root is determined on the basis of surrounding structure.

• Now, notice that √THROW has an elsewhere interpretation that applies when none of the more specific syntactic configurations are present.

• Harley (2014) argues that some roots have no elsewhere interpretation. For example, the word cahoots, in English, is only interpretable in a very specific context, the phrase in cahoots.

(21) a. He was in cahoots with them.
b. * Those were some stunning cahoots.
c. * That was a useful and productive cahoot.

– Harley (2014:244) proposes the following interface interpretive rules for √CAHOOT.

(22) PF Instructions LF Instructions
√548 /kahut/ √548 “conspiracy” / [ in [ [ ] ] n n ] [ ] ]
No Elsewhere Interpretation

• Given this much, we have the means to explain how roots will have a limited syntactic distribution without having any specific syntactic selectional features; selectional features are, essentially, recast as sets of LF interpretative functions.

• The interpretation of √GLAD, then, will be something like this:

(23) PF Instructions LF Instructions
{…other meanings in other contexts…}
← “glad” / elsewhere
The interpretation of $\sqrt{\text{plöm}}$, however, will look something like this:

(24) **PF Instructions**
\[\sqrt{42} \leftrightarrow /\text{plom}/\]
\[\sqrt{42} \leftrightarrow "\text{bloom (lit.)}" / [\text{Voice}_{[D]} [\text{__} \text{v}]]\]
\[\leftrightarrow "\text{bloom (met.)}" / [\text{Voice}_{[D]} [\text{__} \text{v}]]\]
\[\leftrightarrow "\text{flower}" / [\text{__} \text{n}]\]
\{...other meanings in other contexts...\}

**LF Instructions**

No Elsewhere Interpretation

- This provides a kind of explanation for why Icelandic but not English allows anticausatives for words like ‘kill’ and ‘destroy’.

(25) a. * The dog killed. (* under relevant reading)
   b. * The chair destroyed.

(26) a. Hundurinn drapst.
   dog.the.NOM killed-ST
   'The dog died.' (Sigurðsson 1989:268)
   b. Stólinn eyðilagðist.
   chair.the.NOM destroyed-ST
   'The chair (became) destroyed.' (Thráinsson 2007:284)

- Rappaport Hovav (2014) proposes that kill and destroy lexically select an external argument.

- Here, this means that $\sqrt{\text{Kill}}$ and $\sqrt{\text{Destroy}}$ (or maybe just $\sqrt{\text{stroy}}$) find no interpretation in the context of Voice$_{[D]}$.

- In Icelandic, this just means that Voice$_{[D]}$ must be paired with -st to derive an anticausative.

- In English, however, there is no -st, so merging Voice$_{[D]}$ will necessitate a DP external argument that will need to be integrated semantically.

- This is similar in nature to the explanation offered in Alexiadou (2010, 2014), but note that we still don’t have an explanation for German, which, like Icelandic, has “expletive voice,” but which, like English, disallows anticausatives of ‘kill’ and ‘destroy’.

6 The Interpretation of Voice

- In this section, I would like to provide initial support for the idea that the interpretation of Voice is determined by the overall interpretation of the vP but not any specific root or feature within the vP.

(27) a. $\text{Voice}_{[D]} \leftrightarrow \lambda x, e_{x}. \text{AGENT}(x,e) / _{-}$ (agentive vP)
   b. $\text{Voice}_{[D]} \leftrightarrow \lambda x, s_{x}. \text{HOLDER}(x,s) / _{-}$ (stative vP)
   \{...other meanings in other contexts...\}
   c. $\text{Voice}_{[D]} \leftrightarrow \lambda P_{(x,t)}. P / _{-}$ elsewhere

- I will start by providing general support for this view from the vera með ‘be with’ construction in Icelandic. This construction may or may not be agentive, but the decision cannot be blamed on any specific root in the structure.

- I will then turn back to the causative alternation and discuss how the general idea works there.

6.1 Agentive Constructions with No Agentive Root

- The vera með ‘be with’ construction is best known for its uses expressing certain kinds of possession (Irie 1997; Levinson 2011; Myler 2014; Myler et al. in prep).

(28) a. Hann er með rautt hár.
   he.NOM is with red hair.ACC
   ‘He has red hair.’
   b. þeir eru með kvef.
   they.NOM are with cold.ACC
   ‘They have a cold.’
   c. Hún er með fimm bækur á sér.
   she.NOM is with five books.ACC on her
   ‘She has five books on her.’
However it can also be used to express agentive activities, as pointed out to me by Einar Freyr Sigurðsson.

(29) Hann var alltaf með einher furðulegheit.
    he was always with some weirdness
    'He was always acting weird.'

Strikingly, there is evidence that the subject in these constructions is in SpecVoiceP: the construction may be passivized.

(30) a. Það var alltaf verið með einher furðulegheit.
    EXPL was always been with some weirdness
    'There were always people acting weird.'
b. γ . . að ekki sé verið með neinar hótanir . . .
    ... that not is.SBJV been with any threats . . .
    ' . . . that threats are not being made . . . '
c. γ . . eins og það veri verið með kveikjara
    . . like EXPL.SBJV been with lighters
    upp við húðina á sér . . .
    against her skin . . .
    ' . . . [felt] like lighters were being held against her skin . . .'  

In Icelandic, impersonal passivization is generally possible when there is an external argument and it is agentive (Sigurðsson 1989:315–321; Thráinsson 2007:266–269).

For example, it is not enough to have a [+HUMAN] implicit argument.

    Paul.NOM blue-NPST from anger
    'Paul went blue from anger.'
b. * það var blá-na-d af bræði.
    EXPL was blue-NPST from anger
    INTENDED: 'People went blue from anger.'  

The passivization facts suggest the structure in (29) for the vera með 'be with' construction.

(32) VoiceP
    hann
    'he'
    Voice{D}
    vP
    v
    pp
    P
    með
    'with'
    DP
    DP
    einhver
    'some'
    nP
    n
    -heit
    aP
    -leg
    FURÐ
    'weird'

In this structure, the root is plausibly too embedded to make specific semantic demands on Voice{D}.

Moreover, in some cases, the roots build deadjectival nouns: such roots are not normally eventive, let alone agentive.

While I cannot go too deeply into the details of how the eventive interpretation of the vera með 'be with' construction works, a few brief remarks may help clarify what is going on.

In general, the vera með 'be with' construction expresses accompanied possession. This includes (a) body parts, (b) illnesses, and (c) possessed entities currently being carried by the possessor.

Naturally, body parts and illnesses accompany the possessor. As for (c), the meaning is something like English She has five books on her (even when the PP is not overtly expressed). This is generally construed as temporary possession.

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\footnote{For some context, the author here is describing his sister's account of what it feels like to have a tattoo removed with lasers.}
In the agentive vera með ‘be with’ construction, we have temporary possession of, say, “weirdness”.

So a subject that is temporarily accompanied by weirdness, as if the subject is “bringing weirdness with him”.

To the extent, then, that the vP in a vera með ‘be with’ is construed as denoting an agentive event, Voice_{D} will be interpreted as agentive (and passivization will be possible).

But there is no lexical root that is directly to blame for the agentive interpretation of Voice_{D}. It is the vP that is agentive.

### 6.2 Voice and Roots in the Causative Alternation

- Returning to the causative alternation, we are now in a position to show how the system will determine whether a root will form an alternating verb in the first place.

- (24), for example, says that √Blóm will get a meaning like ‘bloom’ in the context of Voice_{D}. But what rules out (33a) with the structure in (34)?

\[
\begin{align*}
(33) & \quad \text{a. } \ast \text{ Sólin hefur blómgð seljuna.} \\
& \quad \text{sun.the.NOM has bloomed sallow.the.ACC} \\
& \quad \text{b. Seljan hefur blómgast.} \\
& \quad \text{sallow.the.NOM has bloomed-ST}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
(34) \quad \ast \quad \text{VoiceP} \\
\quad \text{DP sólin ‘the sun’} \\
\quad \text{Voice_{D} vP} \\
\quad \text{v seljuna ‘the sallow’}
\]

- One kind of explanation is that verbs like ‘bloom’ describe internally caused events (Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995).

- Internally caused events are events construed in such a way that external causers will be semantically odd.

- We see the other direction as well: agentive events only allow the transitive structure.

\[
(35) \quad \begin{align*}
& \text{a. Konan myrti manninn.} \\
& \quad \text{woman.the.NOM murdered man.the.ACC} \\
& \quad \text{‘The woman murdered the man.’} \\
& \text{b. # Hraunstraumurinn myrti manninn.} \\
& \quad \text{lava.stream.the.NOM murdered man.the.ACC} \\
& \text{c. * Maðurinn myrti(st).} \\
& \quad \text{man.the.NOM murdered-ST}
\end{align*}
\]

- This basic explanation is on the right track: (33a) is out because Voice_{D} cannot be thematic and (35c) is out because Voice_{D} must be thematic (agentive, in this case).

- However, the way that the root determines this is indirect:

- Voice_{D} has no agentive features; it is in principle compatible with either an agentive interpretation or an expletive interpretation.

- Neither verbs nor verb roots are categorized as “internally caused”, “agentive”, etc.

- Rather, the entire verb phrase gets an interpretation that may be construed as compatible with various allosemes of Voice_{D}.

\[
(36) \quad \begin{align*}
& \text{a. Voice_{D} } \leftrightarrow \lambda x, \lambda e, \text{ AGENT}(x,e) / _\text{ (agentive vP)} \\
& \text{b. Voice_{D} } \leftrightarrow \lambda x, \lambda s, \text{ HOLDER}(x,s) / _\text{ (stative vP)} \\
& \quad \{ \ldots \text{other meanings in other contexts} \ldots \} \\
& \text{c. Voice_{D} } \leftrightarrow \lambda P(s,t), P / _\text{ elsewhere}
\end{align*}
\]

- What it means to be “internally caused” is, essentially, to be the kind of vP that is not readily compatible with an agent, causer, state-holder, etc.
• So *myrða* ‘murder’ generally disallows anticausatives because it generally forms **agentive verb phrases**.

- That is, a vP like \[\text{[vP murder the man]}\] is generally construed as denoting the a kind of event where the man dies due to agentive planning.

- Once this interpretation is determined, Voice{D} must get the **AGENT** alloseme.

• However, some speakers allow an anticausative of *myrða* ‘murder’ with a special interpretation:

  37 a. \(\gamma \text{Ég er að dreypast úr spenningi, ÆFRAM ÍSLAND!!!} \)  
    \(\text{I am to kill-ST from excitement, GO ICELAND} \)  
    ‘The excitement is killing me. GO ICELAND!!!’

  b. \(\gamma \text{Ég er gjörsamlega að myrðast úr spenningi hehe} \)  
    \(\text{I am totally to murder-ST from excitement hehe} \)  
    ‘The excitement is murdering me hehe.’

- Such speakers appear to be moving from (37a), which is a fairly well-established metaphorical use of the word *dreypa* ‘kill’, to (37b), by treating ‘murder’ not as an agentive version of ‘kill’, but more like a “more extreme” version of ‘kill’.

- That is, when √MYR ‘murder’ is involved in building a different kind of vP (through some extension of the root), it can occur as an -st anticausative.

- Put yet another way, (37b) is possible precisely because the vP \([\text{[vP [vP murder I] from excitement]}]\) is not an agentive vP.

→ So we don’t want to say that √MYR is an agentive root, at least not directly; what we say instead is that √MYR usually forms agentive vPs. It is the vP interpretation that determines how Voice{D} is interpreted.

• We see the same consideration in the other direction. The root √BLÖM can, in fact, occur with an external argument in some cases, but only when it builds a different kind of vP from those seen above.

(38) \(\gamma \text{peningaskorturinn […] blómgaði koskan fótbolta.} \)  
      \(\text{the.money.shortage bloomed Scottish football} \)  
      ‘the money shortage […] bloomed Scottish football.’

(39) \(\gamma […]\text{með það að markmiði að blómga gamla hafnarsvæðið.} \)  
      \(\text{[…] with it as goal to bloom old harbor.area.ACC} \)  
      ‘[…] with the goal of blooming the old harbor area.’

• Metaphorical “blooming” is compatible with some kinds of external arguments: a causer in (38) and an agent in (39).3

• The point is that we don’t really categorize a root independently of the syntactic structure it is embedded in.

• Putting this together with the previous observations, we have essentially the following flow of information:

(40) a. **Step 1**: Build the vP.

    b. **Step 2**: Merge VoiceP layer.

    c. **Step 3**: Spellout vP (assign its terminals a phonological and a semantic interpretation).

       i. **Step 3.1** Determine the “structural semantics” (“COS event”).4

       ii. **Step 3.2** Determine the set of root allosemes available.

       iii. **Step 3.3** Choose the root alloseme based on 3.1 and 3.2.

    d. **Step 4**: Choose the appropriate alloseme of Voice, given the overall meaning computed in Step 3.

3 I have not yet found examples of transitive ‘bloom’ with an “ambient conditions” type of subject (Rappaport Hovav 2014); initial investigations suggest that this kind of subject is not as readily available in Icelandic as in English (see also Svenonius 2002:200), but more research is needed.

4 See Wood & Marantz (submitted) for a detailed analysis of how the semantics of change-of-state vPs are read off of the tree.
Applying this to (41), we can now see where things go wrong.

\[\text{(41)} * \]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{VoiceP} \\
\text{DP} \\
\text{sólín} \\
\text{‘the sun’} \\
\text{Voice}_{[D]} \\
\text{vP} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{v} \\
\sqrt{\text{BLÖM}} \\
\text{v} \\
\text{DP} \\
\text{seljuna} \\
\text{‘the sallow’} \\
\end{array}
\]

- **Step 3.1**: “COS” event; little \(v\) denotes a change of state on the DP complement.
- **Step 3.2**: In the context of \(\text{Voice}_{[D]}\), \(\sqrt{\text{BLÖM}}\) is compatible with a literal or metaphorical “blooming”.
- **Step 3.3**: Given that the COS applies to a sallow tree, the literal alloseme is selected.
- **Step 4**: Since the vP denotes an internally caused event, \(\text{Voice}_{[D]}\) is interpreted as “expletive” \((=\lambda P_{[s,t]} P)\).

→ What goes wrong is that Step 4 has consequences: if \(\text{Voice}_{[D]}\) is expletive, then the DP in SpecVoiceP cannot be integrated into the semantics of Voice’ (cf. Alexiadou et al. 2015:110).

In (38), things go differently. Given that the change of state applies to Scottish football, the metaphorical meaning is chosen, so that the overall vP denotes an event of Scottish football “coming into its own”; this is not necessarily internally caused, so for that vP, \(\text{Voice}_{[D]}\) can introduce a causer.

### 7 Conclusion

- There are essentially two ways that semantic interpretation governs the relationship between particular roots and the structures they are embedded in.
  
  (i) The root’s interpretive contribution is governed by contextual allosemy. This can have at least two effects:
  
  – a root may make an idiosyncratic contribution in some contexts
  – a root may make no contribution at all in some contexts

  (ii) The overall interpretation of the vP will determine which alloseme of Voice is selected.

- These two things may interact:
  
  – a particular internal argument (Scottish football) may affect the interpretation of the root (metaphorical),
  – which will affect the overall interpretation of the vP (externally caused),
  – which will affect the interpretation of Voice (causer).

- But the two are distinct: nothing about the overall interpretation of the vP explains why \(\sqrt{\text{BLÖM}}\) requires \(\text{Voice}_{[D]}\) (more neutrally, the \(-st\) version of the anticausative).

- No structural diacritic on the root \(\sqrt{\text{MYR}}\) ‘murder’ should force \(\text{Voice}_{[D]}\) to be interpreted as agentive; the vP interpretation alone suffices for this.
Acknowledgments

For discussions directly related to this talk, special thanks to Einar Freyr Sigurðsson, Anton Karl Ingason, and Florian Schäfer. For ongoing discussions related to the material presented here, thanks to Alec Marantz, Neil Myler, Halldór Sigurðsson, and Itamar Kastner. Thanks to Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson and Ásgrímur Angantýsson for providing native speaker judgments on several of the sentences discussed here.

References


