Problem Set 2

due Wednesday, Nov 7 (by dawn on the 8th)

Problem One

The following Hebrew sentence is ambiguous:

(1) ha-yeladim zarku li ‘et ha-kadur le-tox ha-gina ‘al-yad ha-mitbax
the boys threw to-me ACC the ball into the garden next-to the kitchen
‘The boys threw my ball into the garden next to the kitchen’
‘The boys threw the ball into my garden next to the kitchen’
‘The boys threw the ball into the garden next to my kitchen’

There are some things, however, that the sentence cannot mean. For example, it cannot mean
‘My boys threw the ball into the garden next to the kitchen’.

Now, consider the following data about li:

(2) ha-‘uga ne’exla li
the cake was-eaten to-me
‘My cake was eaten’

(3) ha-mitriya nafla li
the umbrella fell to-me
‘My umbrella fell’

(4) ha-xalon nišbar li
the window broke to-me
‘My window broke’

(5) *ha-kelev šaxav li
the dog lay to-me
‘My dog lay down’

(6) *ha-po’alim ‘avdu li
the workers worked to-me
‘My workers worked’

What kind of condition on li might capture these data?
Problem Two

Consider the effects of movement on binding demonstrated in (7):

(7)  a.  *It seems to himself, that John is smart.
    b.  John seems to himself to be smart.
    c.  It seems to her, that she is smart.
    d.  *She seems to her to be smart.

Explain the contrasts in (7). How does movement interact with binding? If you need to draw trees to explain your theory, you may need to make some new assumptions about structure—which is fine, as long as you explain your assumptions.

Problem Three

Bearing your answer to Problem Two in mind, consider the following examples:

(8)  a.  To seem to oneself to be smart is important.
    b.  *To seem to one to be smart is important.  (with the meaning in (8a))
    c.  To think that one is smart is important.

Explain the contrasts in (8), bearing in mind that there may be DPs in these sentences that are not pronounced. Tell us everything about the lives of the DPs in these sentences, visible and invisible; where are they first Merged, and where do they end up, and if they move, why do they move?

Problem Four

We learned earlier that Icelandic subjects are usually nominative, but can appear in other cases, depending on the verb:

(9)  a.  Strákarnir komust í skóla
       the.boys-NOM got to school
       ‘The boys got to school’
    b.  Strákana vantaði í skólann
       the.boys-ACC lacked in the.school
       ‘The boys were absent from school’
    c.  Strákunum leiddist í skóla
       the.boys-DAT were.bored in school
       ‘The boys were bored in school’
    d.  Strákanna var getið í ræðunni
       the.boys GEN was mentioned in the.speech
       ‘The boys were mentioned in the speech’

We have also talked about a phenomenon known as 'quantifier float', exemplified in (10):
The boys have all left.

In (10), *all* is a 'floating quantifier'; that is, it's a quantifier which isn't anywhere near the DP it's understood as quantifying over (namely, *the boys*).

Icelandic also has floating quantifiers, and they agree in case, number, and gender with the DP they quantify over:

(11)  
a. Strákarnir komust **allir** í skóla  
the.boys-NOM got **all-NOM.PL.MASC** to school  
’The boys all got to school’

b. Strákana vantaði **alla** í skólann  
the.boys-ACC lacked **all-ACC.PL.MASC** in the.school  
’The boys were all absent from school’

c. Stráknunum leiðdist **öllum** í skóla  
the.boys-DAT were.bored **all-DAT.PL.MASC** in school  
’The boys were all bored in school’

d. Strákanna var **allra** getið í ræðunni  
the.boys-GEN was **all-GEN.PL.MASC** mentioned in the.speech  
’The boys were all mentioned in the speech’

You don't need to try to develop a theory of how floating quantifiers manage to do this; just take it for granted that somehow, a floating quantifier ends up with the morphology that's appropriate for the DP that it's associated with. Now consider the examples in (12):

(12)  
a. Strákarnir vonast til að komast **allir** í skóla  
the.boys-NOM hope to get **all-NOM.PL.MASC** to school  
’The boys hope to all get to school’

b. Strákarnir vonast til að vanta ekki **alla** í skólann  
the.boys-NOM hope to lack not **all-ACC.PL.MASC** in the.school  
’The boys hope to not all be absent from school’

c. Strákarnir vonast til að leiðast ekki **öllum** í skóla  
the.boys-NOM hope to be.bored not **all-DAT.PL.MASC** in school  
’The boys hope to not all be bored in school’

d. Strákarnir vonast til að verða **allra** getið í ræðunni  
the.boys-NOM hope to be **all-GEN.PL.MASC** mentioned in the.speech  
’The boys hope to all be mentioned in the speech’

Why do the floating quantifiers in (12) have the form that they do? Does this have any effect on the theories we've developed so far in class?