

Beginnings in North Sámi*

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1. Introduction

Verbs that refer to the beginning of an event, also called inceptive verbs, like *begin* and *start*, have attracted attention within the generative paradigm at least since the seventies, being discussed in works like Perlmutter (1970), Newmeyer (1975), Emonds (1976) and Freed (1979). More recently, they have been addressed e.g. by Rochette (1999), Cinque (2006) and Fukuda (2008).

Cinque (2006) takes as his starting point the so-called cartographic approach to clause structure (see e.g. Cinque & Rizzi (2008)), and suggests that inceptive verbs and other markers of inceptive aspect can be located in two different positions in the extended verbal projection, one above Voice (the head that hosts the passive marker) and one below Voice. In addition, he takes there to be an abstract verb present whenever an inceptive seemingly has a nominal complement, so that there is no principled structural difference between inceptives with verbal complements and inceptives with nominal ones.

Fukuda (2008) also proposes that there are two positions for inceptives, at least in English, but he takes the higher one to be immediately above vP whereas the lower one is between v and VP. He further relates the structural difference to a morphological difference in the complement, such that a vP complement of an inceptive verb will be spelled out as an infinitive but a VP complement will appear as a gerundive.

In this paper, I examine three different inceptives in North Sámi and compare my findings above all to the proposal of Cinque (2006), but also to the others just mentioned. The first North Sámi inceptive to be addressed is the verb *álgit* ‘begin’, which combines with verb phrases of various types and also with nominal complements. I conclude that the syntactic behaviour of *álgit*, when it takes a verbal complement, is compatible with the higher inceptive position proposed by Cinque. However, when *álgit* appears with a nominal complement, it is in a very low position. Since it then also determines the case of its complement, I conclude that *álgit* is then the main verb of the construction.

More specifically, my proposal builds on the model of the verb phrase introduced in Ramchand (2008), according to which three different heads can be present in the syntactic structure underlying a lexical verb: one head encoding initiation, another head encoding process, and a third head encoding result. Applying this model to the syntax of *álgit*, I take *álgit* with a nominal complement to be a realisation of the initiation head. A similar structure is proposed for cases where *álgit* appears with no arguments other than its subject.

The second North Sámi inceptive I deal with is the auxiliary verbal suffix *-goahtit*, which can only take verbal complements. It turns out that the syntax of *-goahtit* is

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similar to the syntax of *álgit* with a verbal complement. We will also see that *álgit* and *-goahtit* can co-occur, just like *start* and *begin* in English. But when the relative frequencies of *álgit* and *-goahtit* are considered, it turns out that there is an overall preference for *-goahtit* in inceptives based on verbs, and that this preference is even stronger for some individual verbs.

Finally, I discuss a class of inceptive suffixes that only attach to processual or stative intransitive verbs. Since these suffixes interact morphologically with the roots that they attach to, and since they always immediately follow the root, I conclude that they are also realisations of the initiation head. Accordingly, I call them “low” inceptives.

2. The inceptive verb *álgit* ‘begin’

As already mentioned, one way of expressing the beginning of an event in North Sámi is with the inceptive verb *álgit* ‘begin’. We will now first look at the behaviour of *álgit* in combination with verb phrases of different types. After that, I try to identify the position of *álgit* when it has a verbal complement, and finally, we turn to cases where *álgit* takes a nominal phrase as its complement. The conclusion is that when *álgit* takes a verbal complement, it is located relatively high up in the functional domain, but when it takes a nominal complement or appears with a subject only, it spells out the initiation head, which is a part of what we traditionally call the VP.

2.1 Verbal complements of *álgit* ‘begin’

The North Sámi inceptive verb *álgit* ‘begin’ can take verb phrases of many types as its complement. Below, we see *álgit* with agentive complements in (1) and (2), with a non-agentive processual verb in (3), and with a stative psych verb in (4).^{1,2}

- (1) *Álggii munnje savkalit.*
begin.PAST.3SG me.ILL whisper.INF
‘S/he began whispering to me.’
- (2) *Olmái njuikii čáhcai ja álggii vuodjat.*
man.NOM jump.PAST.3SG water.ILL and begin.PAST.3SG swim.INF
‘The man jumped into the water and began to swim.’
- (3) *Bihkka álggii duoldat.*
tar.NOM begin.PAST.3SG boil.INF
‘The tar began to boil.’

¹ The North Sámi examples presented in this paper are found in the corpus at Sámi Giellatekno at the University of Tromsø (see giellatekno.uit.no). Some of them are slightly adjusted.

² The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: ACC=accusative, ADJ=adjective, ADV=adverbial, CAUS=causative, COM=comitative, COMP=comparative, COND=conditional, CONT=continuative, ESS=essive, FREQ=frequentative, GEN=genitive, ILL=illative, IMP=imperative, INC=inceptive, INF=infinitive, LOC=locative, NEG=negation, NOM=nominative, PASS=passive, PL=plural, POSS=possessive, PRES=present, PROG=progressive, PRT=particle, PTC=past participle, SG=singular.

- (4) *De son álggii hirbmadit liikot vivva-s-is.*
 then s/he begin.PAST.3SG intensely like.INF son.in.law-ILL-POSS.3SG
 ‘Then she took to liking her son-in-law very much.’

It should be noted that the stative predicate in (4) is stage-level. According to Rochette (1999), stage level stative predicates combine more easily with aspectual verbs than individual level predicates. (4) is in accordance with Rochette’s observation.

And since it will become relevant when we get to the discussion of “low” inceptives, I will point out here that ordinary transitive verbs, with accusative objects, are also fully acceptable as complements of *álgit*:

- (5) *Dál leat nuorat álgán mobil-telefuvnnaid geavahit.*
 now are young.PL.NOM begin.PTC mobile-phone.PL.ACC use.INF
 ‘Now young people have started to use mobile phones.’

- (6) *Son velledii johk-gáddái ja álggii juhkat*
 s/he lie.down.PAST.3SG river-bank.ILL and begin.PAST.3SG drink.INF
čázi.
 water.ACC
 ‘S/he lay down on the river bank and started to drink water.’

It also seems clear that *álgit* ‘begin’ is a raising verb, at least when it takes a verbal complement. The surface subject of *álgit* is also the logical subject of the complement of *álgit*, and when the complement does not have an overt subject, as in (7), the construction as a whole will not have any overt subject.

- (7) *Lei juo álgán sevnñjodit.*
 was already begin.PTC get.dark.INF
 ‘It had already begun to get dark.’

This indicates that *álgit* is theta transparent – it does not assign any theta roles and is not an argument taker.

Further, one can note that when *álgit* combines with a verb phrase representing a non-punctual eventuality (a processual event or a state), the inceptive verb marks the onset of a single event. The onset itself can be conceived of as punctual (perhaps the most natural interpretation of (1) and (2)), or as gradual (for example in (4)). This is in line with the observation in Smith (1991) that inceptive verbs can form derived achievements (instantaneous onsets) or derived accomplishments (gradual onsets). When *álgit* combines with a verb phrase denoting a punctual event, on the other hand, it triggers a non-punctual reading of the base event. More specifically, the reading that a punctual event gets under *álgit* can be habitual or iterative, as in (8), which does not report one single losing event but rather a series of such events:

- (8) *Mis ledje sávzzat álgán massit lábbáid.*
 us.LOC be.PAST.3PL sheep.PL.NOM begin.PTC lose.INF lamb.PL.ACC
 ‘Our sheep had begun losing their lambs.’

The iterative reading of the base event in (8) is a consequence of the plurality of the object *lábbáid* ‘lambs’. In the absence of plurality, the base event can be conceived of as stretched out in time, i.e. as a process. This is illustrated in (9), where the coming of water is going on for some time:

- (9) *Čáhci maid álggi boahtit.*
 water.NOM also begin.PAST.3SG come.INF
 ‘Water also began to come.’

The conceptual manipulation of punctual verbs under inceptives is however not particular to North Sámi. It is probably a property of inceptives in general, since inceptives marks onsets, and in order to have an onset that can be discerned from the event as a whole the event must have temporal extent. Exactly the same phenomenon is seen for example in English, as shown in (10)–(12):

- (10) *I found this in a book of film criticism on Woody Allen.*
 (11) *I began to find islands of ease within the chaos of my life.*
 (12) *When I began to find my roots, I was absolutely convinced that “my family's file” was out there somewhere.*

The verb *find*, normally denoting an achievement, as in (10), is forced into a non-punctual reading when it appears in the complement of *begin*. In (11), which contains a plural object, *find* gets an iterative reading, but in (12), where the plural object refers to a coherent whole, most natural interpretation appears to be one where the finding of roots is a process that goes on for some time.³

2.2 The position of *álgit* ‘begin’ with verbal complements

I will now go on to investigate in some detail the position of *álgit* when it takes a verbal complement. Firstly, many of the examples in 2.1 showed that *álgit* is lower than tense, since it can be inflected for tense. The examples below show that *álgit* also follows after modal verbs, like the obligational *fertet* ‘must’ in (13), the obligational or intensional *galgat* ‘shall’, shown in (14), and the permissive *sáhttit* ‘can’ in (15).⁴ Hence, it seems clear that *álgit* is situated below these markers of root modality.

- (13) *Giđđat ferte álgit ráhkkanit bivdui.*
 spring.ADV must.3SG begin.INF prepare.INF hunt.ILL
 ‘In spring one must begin to prepare for the hunt.’
 (14) *Skovis galggat almmuhit goas galggat álgit bargat.*
 form.LOC shall.2SG announce.INF when shall.2SG begin.INF work.INF
 ‘In the form you must indicate when you are going to start working.’

³ The effect of plural objects is also noted by Rochette (1999), who refers to it with the term *multiplexing*, borrowed from Lamiray (1987).

⁴ *Sáhttit* expresses permission or circumstantial possibility. Ability, or dispositional possibility, is expressed with the auxiliary *máhttit* (see also Magga (1982)).

- (15) *Juohkehaš sáhhtá álgit taksiin vuodjit.*
 everyone.NOM can.3SG begin.INF taxi.COM drive.INF
 ‘Everyone can/may start driving a taxi.’

To this can be added the example in (16), which shows that *álgit* is below the sentential negation:

- (16) *Mii eat luohte šat sutnje, jus ii álgge*
 we NEG.1PL trust any.more 3SG.ILL if NEG.3SG begin
gulahallat earáiguin.
 communicate.INF other.PL.COM
 ‘We don’t trust her anymore if she does not begin to communicate with others.’

Moreover, *álgit* is also below the head that encodes conditional mood, since the conditional mood marker, which is a verbal suffix in North Sámi, can be suffixed to *álgit*:

- (17) *Mii sáva-šeimmet ahte dát joavku álggá-šii fas*
 we wish-COND.1PL that this group.NOM begin-COND.3SG again
čuojahit.
 play.INF
 ‘We would wish that this group would begin to play again.’

Similarly, it can be shown that *álgit* is lower than the marker of progressive aspect, since *álgit* can appear with a progressive suffix, the progressive then taking scope over the inceptive, as in (18a). Having the progressive on the lower verb instead is ungrammatical, as shown in (18b).

- (18)a. *Lean odne álgi-min fárret.*
 am today begin-PROG move.INF
 ‘Today I am beginning to move (house).’
 b. * *Odne álggán fárre-min.*
 Today begin.PRES.1SG move-PROG

So far, what we have seen is in accordance with the proposal in Cinque (2006), according to which all inceptives are lower than root modals and also lower than progressive aspect. The data are also compatible with Fukuda (2008), who takes the highest inceptive position to be immediately above vP.

However, a potential problem for Fukuda is the fact that *álgit* can embed verbs that carry certain types of aspectual marking, such as the frequentative in (19) and the continuative in (20).

- (19) *De fáhkkestaga álgá Biera jeara-halla-t eatni-s.*
 then suddenly begin.PRES.3SG Biera ask-FREQ-INF mother-POSS.3SG
 ‘Then suddenly Biera begins to ask his mother over and over.’

- (20) *Loahpas dolkkai, válddii rehpo sealggis ja*
 end.LOC get.tired.PAST.3SG take.PAST.3SG backpack.ACC back.LOC and
álggii bora-d-it.
 begin.PAST.3SG eat-CONT-INF
 ‘Finally she got tired, took the backpack from her back and begun to eat.’

Since there is no absolute and clear distinction between frequentative and continuative in North Sámi, it is possible that *-halla-* in (19) and *-d-* in (20) represent the same aspectual head, which must be sitting relatively low in the extended verbal projection. In any case, on the reasonable assumption that these markers are sitting above the minimal vP, they are an indication that *álgit* is higher than the position where Fukuda takes English aspectual verbs to be located.⁵

On the other hand, Cinque (2006) also claims, on the basis of Italian, that there is a higher and a lower position for inceptives, and that there is a semantic difference between these two positions, such that the higher inceptive marks the beginning of a bounded or unbounded process at an arbitrary point, whereas the lower inceptive marks the beginning of a bounded process at its natural starting point. It follows that only an inceptive of the latter type can be passivised. We see in (21) that this holds for Italian: *iniziare* ‘begin’ can be passivised in (21a), where its complement represents a bounded process, contrasting with (21b), where the complement of *iniziare* represents an unbounded process, and passivisation of *iniziare* is not possible (data from Cinque (2006:70)). This contrast is an indication that *iniziare* is located below Voice in (21a) but above it in (21b).

- (21)a. *Furono iniziate a costruire solo due case.*
 were begun to build only two houses
- b. * *Furono iniziate a costruire case.*
 were begun to build houses

As for the North Sámi inceptive verb *álgit*, it appears that it cannot be passivised, as shown in (22a).⁶ Native speakers also tend to reject constructions with a passive verb as the complement of *álgit*, as in (22b):⁷

- (22)a. * *Visti lea álgo-juvvo-n hukset.*
 building is begin-PASS-PTC build-INF

⁵ Nielsen (1932) gives some examples of *álgit* with aspectual suffixes: the frequentative *álgá-laddat* ‘begin several times’, the subitive *álgilit* ‘begin hastily’, and the diminutive *álggestit* ‘slowly begin’. However, I don’t find examples of these forms in the Giellatekno corpus or on the internet, and moreover, the native speakers that I have consulted reject them. Hence, I conclude that *álgit* can no longer be embedded under aspectual heads. Moreover, it is not clear from Nielsen’s examples whether the derived verbs took verbal complements, nominal complements, or both.

⁶ Note that the passive in North Sámi is a suffix which is different from the past participle. In perfect constructions it co-occurs with and precedes the participial suffix.

⁷ The example in (22b) is found in the Giellatekno corpus (see fn. 1). However, since it is the only example in that corpus of *álgit* embedding a passive verb, and since the native speakers that I have consulted reject it, I think it should be set aside.

- b. * *Visti lea álgán hukse-juvvo-t.*
 building is begin.PTC build-PASS-INF

The verb phrase *hukset visti* ‘build a/the house’ denotes a bounded process, just like the complement of *iniziare* in (21a). Hence, if *álgit* could occur at all in the lower inceptive position that Cinque identified in Italian, (22a) should be a case in point. The ungrammaticality of (22a) indicates that there is no Voice head over *álgit*. Hence, Cinque’s argument does not carry over to North Sámi. However, (22b) is also ungrammatical, indicating that there is no Voice head below *álgit* either. The data in (22) are therefore inconclusive as far as the relation between inceptive and Voice is concerned.

Let us now look at the interaction between *álgit* and the causative. Note first that *álgit* can embed a causative verb, as in (23):

- (23) *Dál álget Porsáŋggus oahpa-h-it beatnagiid ohcat*
 now begin.PRES.3PL Porsáŋgu.LOC learn-CAUS-INF dog.PL.ACC search-INF
ráppiid.
 carrion.PL.ACC
 ‘In Porsáŋgu they are now beginning to teach dogs to search for carrion.’

However, *álgit* cannot be causativised when it has an infinitival complement. Thus, starting from a construction like (24a) one cannot add a causative and get (24b):

- (24)a. *Sii álge heivehit boazo-logu.*
 they begin.PAST.3PL adjust-INF reindeer-number.ACC
 ‘They began to adjust the number of reindeer.’

- b. * *Eiseválddit álggá-hedje sin heivehit*
 authority.PL.NOM begin-CAUS.PAST.3PL them adjust-INF
boazo-logu.
 reindeer-number.ACC
 Intended meaning: ‘The authorities made them begin to adjust the number of reindeer.’

Note the similarity between (24b) and the complement of *álgit* in (23): in both cases there is a causative verb embedding an infinitival verb with an accusative subject (the causee in relation to the causative) and an accusative object. Hence, what makes (24b) ungrammatical must be that *álgit* is the causativised verb.

The behaviour of *álgit* ‘begin’ as seen in this section leads to the following conclusions. When *álgit* has a verbal (infinitival) complement, it is located below root modals, and also below sentential negation and the head encoding progressive aspect, but above causative and frequentative/continuative. This is in accordance with Cinque’s (2006) conclusions concerning the higher inceptive, while we have no indication that a lower position is available for *álgit*, at least not as long as it has a verbal complement.

As for the proposal put forward in Fukuda (2008), we have seen that verbal complements of *álgit* always show up in the infinitive. Hence, there are no morphological indications of two positions for inceptive in North Sámi. Moreover, the investigation has shown that *álgit* with a verbal complement is located not only above vP but also

above causatives and above certain aspectual heads. Hence, Fukuda's proposal for English does not carry over to North Sámi, at least not as far as *álgit* is concerned.

2.3 The position of *álgit* 'begin' with nominal complements

Just like inceptive verbs in many other languages, the North Sámi *álgit* does not obligatorily take a verbal complement. It can also appear in nominal contexts. One possibility is that *álgit* makes reference to the initial boundary of its subject, which then must represent either an event or an object with serial properties or spatial extent. This is shown in the following examples, where the subject of *álgit* is an event in (25), an object with serial properties in (26), and an object with spatial extent in (27).

- (25) *Oaggun-gilvu álggii diibmu ovttas.*
 fishing-competition.NOM begin.PAST.3SG hour one.LOC
 'The fishing competition began at one o'clock.'
- (26) *Geavaheaddje-namma ferte álgit smávva bustávain.*
 user-name.NOM must.3SG begin.INF small letter.SG.COM
 'The user name must begin with a small letter.'
- (27) *Guivvi bálggis álgá Suttessjogas.*
 Guivi.GEN path.NOM begin.PRES.3SG Suttessjohka.LOC
 'The path to Guivi begins at Suttessjohka.'

In other cases, *álgit* does not refer to the initial boundary of its subject, but to that of an event represented in the syntax by a nominal complement of *álgit*. A couple of examples are shown in (28) and (29).

- (28) *Lean álgán iežan-ovddidan-kursii.*
 be.PAST.1SG begin.PTC self-development-course.ILL
 'I have started (attending) a self-development course.'
- (29) *Ránnjá-gánda ii lean vel álgán skuvlii.*
 neighbour-boy.NOM NEG.3SG be.PAST yet begin.PTC school.ILL
 'The boy next door had not started school yet.'

It has been argued that when inceptives appear to take nominal complements, they actually select an abstract verbal complement (see e.g. Pustejovsky (1995), Jackendoff (1997), Cinque (2006)). However, constructions like those in (28) and (29) pose a problem for this view. Note that the complement of *álgit* here carries illative case. The illative case appears to be dependent on *álgit*. Compare (29), where *skuvla* 'school' has illative case, to (30), where the verb *vázzit* 'go' is inserted between *álgit* and *skuvla*, and *skuvla* has accusative case (which it normally has in the collocation *vázzit skuvlla* 'go to school').

- (30) *Mun álgen vázzit skuvlla 1946:as.*
 I begin.PAST.1SG go.INF school.ACC 1946-LOC
 'I started going to school in 1946.'

Hence, if there is an abstract, phonologically empty verb following *álgán* in (28) and (29), that verb cannot be *vázzit* or any other verb assigning accusative case. My claim is that there is no such verb. Instead, *álgit* can take its own object and assign illative case to it, without any verb intervening.

The use of the illative case after *álgit* is in line with other uses of the illative in North Sámi. The North Sámi illative is sometimes a structural case, marking indirect objects as well as causees in causatives formed from transitive verbs. In addition, it marks directional adverbials, and it also appears in certain predicates denoting a change of state, as exemplified in (31):⁸

- (31) *Ahkku šattai illui.*
 grandmother.NOM become.PAST.3SG happiness.ILL
 ‘Grandmother became happy.’

The difference between (31) on the one hand and (28) and (29) on the other is that the illative in (31) marks the nominal that represents the state that the subject enters into, whereas in (28) and (29), it marks the nominal representing the event-like entity that the subject enters into. Thus, the semantics of the illative is fairly consistent (see also Svenonius (to appear)).

In (32) and (33) we also have *álgit* followed by nominals. However, these examples are arguably different from (28) and (29). In (32) and (33) the silent verb is easily recoverable from the context, and moreover, the nominals have the case marking that they would also have if the verb was present: *bargat šibihiguin* ‘work with cattle’, *bargat journalistan* ‘work as a journalist’. Hence, I will assume that there really is a phonologically empty verb below *álgit* in these cases.

- (32) *Olbmot leat álgán fas šibihii-guin.*
 people.NOM be.PAST.3PL begin.PTC again cattle-PL.COM
 ‘People have started (working) with cattle again.’

- (33) *Ludmila lea álgán journalist-an.*
 Ludmila.NOM is begin.PTC journalist-ESS
 ‘Ludmila has begun (working) as a journalist.’

Also note that the nominals marked with illative case are more object-like than the nominals following *álgit* in (32) and (33), which are more adverbial-like and correspond to prepositional phrases in English.

Given the data shown above, I take the truly nominal contexts for *álgit* to be contexts where *álgit* refers to the initial boundary of its subject, as well as contexts where *álgit* has a complement in the illative. In neither case is there an abstract verb below *álgit*. This claim is further supported by some striking differences between these cases and cases when *álgit* has a verbal complement, which will be presented below.

But note first that also in nominal contexts, *álgit* is below root modals, see (34)–(36), and below the sentential negation, see (37):

⁸ This example is taken from Svenonius (to appear), a paper which gives a unified analysis of local and non-local uses of the illative case in North Sámi.

- (34) *Dát bargu ferte álgit ruovttuin.*
 this work.NOM must.3SG begin.INF home.PL.LOC
 ‘This work must begin in the homes.’
- (35) *Min buvttadus-hoavda galgá álgit eará virgái.*
 our production-manager.NOM shall.3SG begin.INF other employment.ILL
 ‘Our production manager is going to start a new job.’
- (36) *Láhka guoská dasa gii sáhttá álgit*
 law.NOM concern.PRES.3SG it.ILL who can.3SG begin.INF
boazo-dollui.
 reindeer-husbandry.ILL
 ‘The law deals with who can/may start up in the reindeer husbandry business.’
- (37) *Nuorra olbmot eai álgge vuodđo-ealahusaide.*
 young people.PL.NOM NEG.3PL begin primary-industry.PL.ILL
 ‘Young people do not start in the primary industries.’

The example in (38) shows that just like *álgit* with a verbal complement, *álgit* in a nominal context can appear with a progressive suffix, which means that *álgit* is below the head encoding the progressive. In this case there is of course no lower verb that could combine with the progressive.

- (38) *Ráhkkanan-barggut gal leat juo smávvat álgi-min.*
 preparation-work.PL.NOM PRT be.PRES.3PL already little.ADV begin-PROG
 ‘The preparation works are already slowly beginning.’

Now recall that *álgit* with an infinitival verbal complement could not be causativised. In nominal contexts, things are different. In (39), we see a fully grammatical causativisation of *álgit*:

- (39) *Eiseválddit álggá-h-edje boazo-logu*
 authority.PL.NOM begin-CAUS-PAST.3PL reindeer-number.GEN
heiveheami.
 adjustment.ACC
 ‘The authorities initiated the adjustment of the number of reindeer.’

Here *álgit* combines with the nominalised verb *heiveheapmi* ‘adjustment’, which is the subject of *álgit* before causativisation. A causer is added and becomes the surface subject of the whole construction, while the subject of *álgit* ends up as the object of the causativised verb. We also see that this differs minimally from the ungrammatical (24b), where we have the infinitive *heivehit* ‘adjust’ instead of the nominalisation *heiveheapmi*.

In (40) and (41) I show two more examples of causativised *álgit* with nominal complements:

- (40) *Odne mearrida Ruota riikkabeaivi álggá-h-it*
 today decide.PRES.3SG Sweden.GEN parliament.NOM begin-CAUS-INF
guorahallama.
 investigation.ACC
 ‘Today the Swedish parliament decides to get started an investigation.’
- (41) *Ovdamearkka dihte sáhtá-šii álggá-h-it sierra*
 example.GEN for can-COND.3SG begin-CAUS-INF separate
giella-oahpahusa.
 language-teaching.ACC
 ‘For example one could get started separate language training.’

We have also seen that *álgit* with a verbal complement cannot combine with the passive. As demonstrated in (42), this holds even for cases where *álgit* has a covert verbal complement, as in the examples that were given in (32) and (33):

- (42) * *Lea álgo-juvvo-n šibihii-guin/journalista-n.*
 is begin-PASS-PTC cattle-PL.COM/journalist-ESS

Concerning passivisation of *álgit* when it has a nominal complement, there are indications in the Giellatekno corpus that this is possible. Two of the examples of passive *álgit* found in the corpus are shown in (43) and (44). Note that in both cases, *álgit* does not have a verbal complement, only a nominal complement which is promoted to surface subject as a result of the passivisation:

- (43) *Mánáid-valášállan-skuvla Kárášjogas álgo-juvvo.*
 children-sport-school.NOM Kárášjohka-LOC begin-PASS.PRES.3SG
 ‘A sport school for children is started in Kárášjohka.’
- (44) *Plána-áigodaga vuoruh-uvvo-n mihttomearit leat álgo-juvvo-n.*
 plan-period.GEN prioritise-PASS-PTC goal.PL.NOM are begin-PASS-PTC
 ‘The goals that have priority in the planning period have been started up.’

However, the native speakers that I have consulted do not approve of passivisation of *álgit*. They prefer instead to passivise the causativised *álgit*, as in (45):

- (45) *Ohppiide 1.-4. klássas álggá-h-uvvo*
 pupil.PL.ILL 1st-4th class.LOC begin-CAUS-PASS.PRES.3SG
skuvlla-asto-áige-fálaldat.
 school-spare-time-offer.NOM
 ‘For the children in year 1-4 an after school program is being started.’

Here the base verb *álgit* has a nominal subject, which has become the object of the causative verb, and then, after passivisation, again promoted to surface subject of the whole verbal complex.

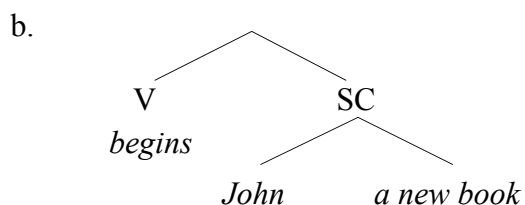
It is striking, though, that in the Giellatekno corpus there are more examples of passive *álgit* than of *álgit* with both causative and passive marking, although the absolute numbers are admittedly modest: 11 versus 9 altogether (as of February 2012). I

take this to mean that *álgit* can indeed be passivised in today's North Sámi, as long as it does not have a verbal complement.

Taken together, the data that we have seen in this section suggest that when *álgit* does not have a verbal complement, but instead appears with an illative complement, or with a subject as its only argument, it is situated lower than all verbal functional heads. Hence, the difference between *álgit* with a verbal complement and *álgit* without a verbal complement cannot simply be that there is a phonologically empty verb present in the latter case. The difference is more fundamental than that. In fact, *álgit* with a nominal complement shares many characteristics with main verbs, which points to the conclusion that *álgit* then *is* the main verb. Expressed in structural terms, *álgit* is the phonological realisation of the head at the bottom of the verbal projection.

A similar analysis of inceptives with nominal complements is proposed by Rochette (1999), who takes the surface subject and the surface object to originate in a small clause structure embedded under the inceptive verb, as sketched in (46):

(46)a. *John begins a new book.*



This structure is meant to be consistent with the idea that inceptive verbs (and other aspectual verbs) are always raising predicates, and to capture the intuition that the surface subject is also the semantic subject of the implicit process associated with the object.

However, Rochette (1999) also notes that the inceptive in (46a) can be passivised, as in (47). This is a problem for the structure in (46b), since only external arguments can normally be demoted in passivisation. Moreover, passivising *begin* when it has a verbal complement is much worse than passivising *begin* with a nominal complement—compare (47) to (48):

(47) *A new book was begun by John.*

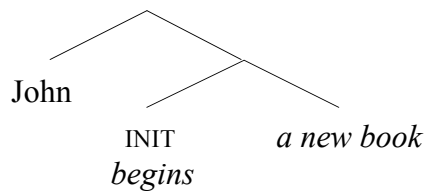
(48)a. *John began to read a new book.*

b. * *To read a new book was begun by John.*

These facts suggest that unlike *begin* with a verbal complement, *begin* in (47a) does have an external argument. This is captured in the structure I will propose, which is based on the model of event structure presented in Ramchand (2008). For Ramchand, three heads are the basic building blocks of the syntactic representation of event structure: a head encoding initiation, another head encoding process, and a third head encoding result. Individual lexical verbs as well as morphologically complex verbs and verb phrases involve one, two or all three of these heads. My suggestion is that when *begin* takes a nominal complement, as in (46a), it spells out the initiation head, which then has a nominal complement representing the entity with the relevant initial boundary. The initiator, if there is one, will be the specifier of the initiation head. This

means that the verb phrase has the structure shown in (49). In this structure, the initiator is an external argument, and consequently, passivisation can apply in the usual manner.

(49)



The structure shown in (49) is also the structure of the North Sámi inceptive verb *álgit* when it does not have a verbal complement. When an initiator is present, this argument will end up as the surface subject and have nominal case, while the nominal in complement position will carry illative case. When there is no initiator, as in (25)–(27), the nominal complement of *álgit* will instead end up as the surface subject and have nominative case.

This means that North Sámi provides support for the claim in Cinque (2006) that clauses have two positions for inceptives. However, whereas Cinque argues that both inceptives appear with verbal complements, while differing slightly in their semantics, we are lead to conclude that the main difference is between inceptives with infinitival complements and inceptives with nominal complements. Moreover, since the *init* head corresponds to the little *v* in the model that Fukuda (2008) is assuming, the conclusions reached here do not tie in completely with Fukuda’s proposal either.

In the following sections, we will see that other markers of inceptive in North Sámi also do not conform perfectly neither to Fukuda’s nor to Cinque’s proposals.

3. Inceptives in *-goahtit*

I will now turn to the suffix *-goahtit*, which adds inceptive meaning to its base verb. I start by showing, in (50), *-goahtit* combined with a selection of base verbs:

- (50)a. *ballat* ‘fear’ > *ballagoahtit* ‘begin to fear’
- b. *borrat* ‘eat’ > *borragoahtit* ‘begin to eat’
- c. *lohkat* ‘read’ > *lohkagoahtit* ‘begin to read’
- d. *láigohit* ‘rent’ > *láigohišgoahtit* ‘begin to rent’
- e. *muitalit* ‘tell’ > *muitališgoahtit* ‘begin to tell’

Note that the final *-t* in the base verb is the infinitival ending. Thus, we see that *-goahtit* attaches to the verbal stem when the base is an even-syllabled verb, as in (50a)–(50c). In (50d) and (50e), where the derivation bases are odd-syllabled verbs, the infinitival *-t* is replaced by *-š* in front of *-goahtit* (an illustration of the importance of syllable numbers in North Sámi morphology). For this reason, the inchoative suffix is sometimes taken to include an initial fricative (see e.g. Sammallahti 1977 and Szabó 1987). For the present purpose I will nevertheless refer to the inceptive suffix as *-goahtit*.

Except for the fact that it is a bound form morphologically, *-goahtit* shares many properties of ordinary disyllabic verbs. It is inflected in the same way as disyllabic verbs

of the *-it* conjugation class. We see this clearly in (51), where some forms from the paradigm of *-goahtit* are given alongside the corresponding forms of *boahtit* ‘come’.⁹

(51) Partial paradigms of *boahtit* ‘come’ and *-goahtit*

INFINITIVE	<i>boahtit</i>	<i>-goahtit</i>
PRESENT 1SG	<i>boadán</i>	<i>-goadán</i>
PRESENT 2SG	<i>boadát</i>	<i>-goadát</i>
PRESENT 3SG	<i>boah tá</i>	<i>-goah tá</i>
PAST 1SG	<i>bohten</i>	<i>-gohten</i>
PAST 2SG	<i>bohtet</i>	<i>-gohtet</i>
PAST 3SG	<i>bođii</i>	<i>-gođii</i>

Another property that sets *-goahtit* apart from most verbal derivational suffixes is the possibility of conjunction reduction, noted by Ylikoski (2009:124) and shown in (52) (originally from Hætta & Bær (1982:88)):

- (52) *De neavvui válddi dulka daid nieiddaid movt galget*
 then advice.PAST.3SG bailiff.GEN interpreter those girls.ACC how shall.3PL
čohkkát geresis, goppos geres hállaniš- ja
 sit.INF sledge.LOC to.which.direction sledge lean- and
šleangasiš-goahtá, doppil galget eret hállet geresá.
 rock-INC.PRES.3SG in.that.direction shall.3PL away bend.INF sledge.ACC
 ‘Then the bailiff’s interpreter gave those girls advice on how to sit in the sledge, that when the sledge begins to lean and rock in one direction, they must bend the sledge away from that direction.’

A closer inspection of the syntactic properties of *-goahtit* suggest that it is very similar to *álgit*. The main differences between *álgit* and *-goahtit* is, firstly, that *-goahtit* attracts the head of its complement and combines with it morphologically, and secondly, that *-goahtit* can never take a nominal complement. To illustrate this I will start from one of the examples given earlier of *álgit* with a nominal complement, namely (29), where we have *algan skuvlii* ‘started school’. If we instead have the root *skuvl-* as the complement of *-goahtit*, it will necessarily get a verbal interpretation, as in (53):

- (53) *Julggaštus ávžžuha universitehtaid skuvle-goahti-t*
 manifesto.NOM encourage.PRES.3SG university.PL.ACC school-INC-INF
priváhta fitnodagaid.
 private company.PL.ACC
 ‘The manifesto encourages universities to start schooling private companies.’

I take this to mean that *-goahtit* can never spell out the *init* head. It can only represent an inceptive head found higher up in the functional sequence of the verbal projection. In other words, *-goahtit* is always an aspectual auxiliary.

Apart from this difference, *-goahtit* is like *álgit* in its ability to combine with verbs and verb phrases of many types. Below, I show examples of *-goahtit* with agentive

⁹ The alternation between *-ht-* and *-đ-* in the consonant centre is an example of the grade alternation that pervades the inflectional morphology of North Sámi.

activity verbs in (54) and (55), the latter also having an accusative object, then *-goahtit* with a non-agentive activity verb in (56), with an accomplishment verb phrase in (57), and with a degree achievement verb in (58).

- (54) *Dál lea áigi bargat-goahtit.*
 now is time work-INC-INF
 ‘Now it’s time to start working.’

- (55) *Stipeanda ulbmil lea oaččuhit eanet studeanttaid lohka-goahtit sámegiela.*
 grant.GEN purpose.NOM is get-INF more student.PL.ACC
 read-INC-INF sámelanguage.ACC
 ‘The purpose of the grant is to get more students to start reading Sámi.’

- (56) *Biegga bossu-godii garraseappot.*
 wind.NOM blow-INC.PAST.3SG hard.COMP.ADV
 ‘The wind began to blow harder.’

- (57) *Sii leat hukse-goahtá-n hotealla.*
 they are build-INC-PTC hotel.ACC
 ‘They have started to build a/the hotel.’

- (58) *Sámekultuvra lea rievda-goahtá-n.*
 sámelculture.NOM is change-INC-PTC
 ‘The Sámi culture has begun to change.’

It is also possible for *-goahtit* to take a stative verb as its complement. I give examples of this in (59)–(61):

- (59) *Stáhta lea eaiggádiš-goahtá-n Finnmarkku eatnamiid.*
 state is own-INC-PTC Finnmark.GEN land.PL.ACC
 ‘The state has begun to own the land of Finnmark.’

- (60) *Muhtun vuovde-rádje-lagežat leat sulastahtti-goahtá-n eppel-muoraid.*
 some forest-limit-mountain.birch.PL.NOM are resemble-INC-PTC
 apple-tree.PL.ACC
 ‘Some mountain birches near the forest limit have begun to resemble apple trees.’

- (61) *Sii leat dovda-goahtá-n vuostehágu skuvlii.*
 they are feel-INC-PTC aversion.ACC school.ILL
 ‘They have begun to feel aversion towards school.’

The above examples already suggest that *-goahtit* is a raising verb, just like *álgit* in its auxiliary function. That *-goahtit* does not take any arguments of its own is seen even clearer in (62), where *-goahtit* has combined with the verb *borgat*, which means ‘drift (of snow)’ and does not take a subject. Notably, the combination of *borgat* and *-goahtit* does not have an overt subject either. This shows that *-goahtit* does not take arguments.

- (62) *De šattai dálvi, borga-godii ja joavggai*
 then become.PAST winter.NOM drift-INC.PAST.2SG and pack.PAST.3SG
gitta návet-lásiid bajá-beallái.
 up.to barn-window.PL.GEN upper-edge.ILL
 ‘Then winter came, snow began to drift and packed as high as the top of the barn windows.’

Moreover, *-goahtit* is like *álgit* in triggering a non-punctual reading of its complement. Thus, the base event gets an iterative reading in (63) and a processual reading in (64):

- (63) *1800-logu loahpa-geahčen Avviljoga guovlluin*
 1800-number.GEN end-towards Avviljohka.GEN district.PL.LOC
gávdna-gohte golli.
 find-INC.PAST.3PL gold.ACC
 ‘Towards the end of the 1800’s they started to find gold in the district of Avviljohka.’
- (64) *Pragmáhtalaš girjjálašvuoda oaidnu dál lea vuoiti-goahotá-n*
 pragmatic literature.GEN view.NOM now is win-INC-PTC
formalalašvuoda badjel.
 formalism.GEN over
 ‘A pragmatic view of literature has now begun to win over formalism.’

Concerning the position of *-goahtit*, we have already seen that it is inflected for tense when it is the highest verb in its clause. Consequently, *-goahtit* must be situated below tense. Further, the examples in (65)–(69) show that *-goahtit* is situated below root modals, below the conditional mood head, and also below the progressive:

- (65) *Searvi ferte čuovvu-goahhti-t Máze ovdamearkka.*
 organisation.NOM must.PRES.3SG follow-INC-INF Máze.GEN example.ACC
 ‘The organisation must begin to follow the example from Máze.’
- (66) *Ođđa ávdnasa sáhtta studere-goahhti-t boahtte čavčča.*
 new subject.ACC can.PRES.3SG study-INC-INF coming autumn.GEN
 ‘One can begin to study the new subject next autumn.’
- (67) *Mii galgat baicca dološ árbevieruide fas máhcca-goahhti-t.*
 we shall.PRES.1PL rather old tradition.PL.ILL again return-INC-INF
 ‘We should rather start returning to the old traditions.’
- (68) *Dalle jáhkán Kárašjohka beaggi-goadaš-šii guhkkelabbui.*
 then think.PRES.1SG Kárašjohka.NOM be.known-INC-COND.3SG further
 ‘I think that Kárašjohka would then begin to be more widely known.’
- (69) *Son lea Guovdageainnus muohta-kino ráhkadiš-goahhti-min.*
 s/he is Guovdageaidnu.LOC snow-cinema.ACC prepare-INC-PROG
 ‘S/he is beginning to prepare a snow cinema in Guovdageaidnu.’

But just like *álgit*, *-goahtit* can embed frequentative and continuative verbs, as in (70) and (71):

- (70) *Rávis-olbmot maid leat jeara-hiš-goahdá-n sámi oahpahus-fálaldagaid.*
 adult-people.NOM too are ask-FREQ-INC-PTC Sámi education
 opportunity.PL.ACC
 ‘Adults too have begun to ask for education opportunities in Sámi.’

- (71) *Go rievvárat bora-diš-gohte, de jápme.*
 when bandit.PL.NOM eat-CONT-INC.PAST.3PL then die.PAST.3PL
 ‘When the bandits began to eat, they died.’

If we now try to combine *-goahtit* with the passive, it turns out that passive forms of *-goahtit* are not available at all. The lower verb, on the other hand, can be passivised, as in (72) and (73):

- (72) *Sátni adno-juvvo-gođii davvi Ruota hálddahuslaš juohkima oktavuodas.*
 word.NOM use-PASS-INC.PAST.3SG north Sweden administrative split.GEN
 in.connection.with
 ‘The word began to be used in connection with the administrative split of Northern Sweden.’

- (73) *Du oaivilat ádde-juvvo-gohtet buorebut.*
 your opinion.PL.NOM understand-PASS-PRES.3SG better
 ‘Your opinions are beginning to be understood better.’

This shows that *-goahtit* is higher than Voice. From the following examples, we see that *-goahtit* is also higher than causative, since the complement of *-goahtit* can be a causativised verb:

- (74) *Sii oahpa-hiš-gohte bártni čuojahit.*
 they learn-CAUS-INC.PAST.3PL son.ACC play.INF
 ‘They started to teach their son to play (an instrument).’

- (75) *Rieban duoldda-hiš-gođii biergo-gievnni.*
 fox.NOM boil-CAUS-INC.PAST.3SG meat-pot.ACC
 ‘The fox started to get the meat pot to boil.’

Together, what we have seen of *-goahtit* so far indicates that it is in the same position as *álgit*, when *álgit* has a verbal complement. In other words, in a North Sámi clause there appears to be one position for inceptive aspectual markers somewhere in the middle of the functional sequence, in addition to the possibility of spelling out the *init* head as *álgit*.

To this could be added the example in (76), which shows that the inceptive is situated lower than the habitual verb *lávet*:

- (76) *Sii lávejit ieža soahta-goahtit čáhce-bissui-guin.*
 they be.in.the.habit.of.PRES.3PL self.PL fight-INC.INF water-gun-PL.COM
 ‘They themselves used to begin to fight with water guns.’

However, the following shows that *lávét* is even higher than the root modal *sáhttit*, for which we have already concluded that it is higher than *álgit* and *-goahtit*:

- (77) *Máilmmálaš áššiide mii gal lávet sáhttit buktit*
 worldly issue.PL.ILL we PRT use.to.PRES.1PL can.INF bring.INF
oaiviliid.
 opinion.PL.ACC
 ‘It is usually possible for us to bring forward opinions on worldly issues.’

Hence, finding the habitual *lávét* in a position above the inceptive does not come as a surprise. In fact, Cinque (2006) places the habitual higher than all other aspectual heads, and also higher than root modals. In this respect, the Sámi data we have seen so far are in accordance with Cinque’s proposal.

Summing up, we have seen in this section that *-goahtit* is very much like *álgit*, when *álgit* appears with a verbal complement, except that *-goahtit* attracts its verbal complement and ends up suffixed to it.

4. *Álgit* and *-goahtit* in combination and comparison

Interestingly, it turns out that *álgit* and *-goahtit* can be combined, appearing in one and the same functional sequence. Since we already know that *álgit* is in a very low position when it takes a nominal complement, we would not be too surprised to see *-goahtit* over *álgit* in these cases, as in (78). However, it is also possible to have *-goahtit* over *álgit* when *álgit* has a verbal complement, as in (79). In both cases *álgit* ends up as the first part of the complex verb:

- (78) *Ruški álgi-goah tá, go čuovga-mearri*
 time.when.leaves.turn.yellow.NOM begin-INC.PRES.3SG when light-amount.NOM
geahppána.
 decrease.PRES.3SG
 ‘The time when the leaves turn yellow starts beginning when the amount of light decreases.’

- (79) *Plánat álgi-gohte ollašuvvat.*
 plan.PL.NOM begin-INC.PAST.3PL fulfil.INF
 ‘The plans started to begin to get fulfilled.’

But in fact, having *álgit* over *-goahtit* is probably even more common. Then *álgit* is followed by a third verb which is suffixed by *-goahtit*:

- (80) *Son orui sullos dan made guhká ahte biebmu*
 s/he stay.PAST.3SG island.LOC so long that food.NOM
álggii nohka-goahtit.
 begin.PAST.3SG end-INC.INF
 ‘S/he stayed on the island for so long that s/he began to run out of food.’
- (81) *Diibmu álggii lahkoniš-goahtit beal-ovtta.*
 clock.NOM begin.PAST.3SG approach-INC.INF half-one
 ‘It was beginning to start getting close to half past twelve.’

Neither in (79) nor in (80)–(81) can *álgit* spell out the *init* head, since there are verbs below *álgit* that represent the equivalent to vP. Hence, both *álgit* and *-goahtit* must be located in the functional domain, presumably around the position where these verbs are normally found. And since *álgit* and *-goahtit* can appear in any order, it cannot be the case that there is one position specifically dedicated to each of these inceptive verbs. Rather, it is possible to merge first one and then the other in that area of the functional domain where inceptives have their place.

Note that this must also be true of e.g. English, since *begin* and *start* can co-occur. This combination often takes the form *begin to get started*, as in (82), but *begin to start*, *begin starting*, *start to begin* and *start beginning* are all possible—see the examples in (83)–(86).

- (82) *The 6:00 PM arrival time on the invitations meant that things would begin to get started at 6:45.*
- (83) *During the fourth week, they begin to start walking and using their legs well.*
- (84) *When will Apple begin starting to restore email access for MobileMe?*
- (85) *I just love it when babies start to begin walking.*
- (86) *Javascript functions, how can I start beginning to understand them?*

This is not the place to give a full account of inceptives in English, but I will nevertheless point out that it follows from the proposal in Fukuda (2008) that when two inceptive verbs co-occur, the lower inceptive should appear in the infinitive form and have a gerundive complement. Recall that on his account, the higher inceptive takes an infinitival complement, whereas the lower inceptive takes a gerundive complement. This is compatible with what we see in (83) and (85). The pattern in (84) and (86), on the other hand, with a gerund followed by an infinitive, is not predicted by Fukuda, as far as I can see.

On the semantic side, when an inceptive verb embeds another inceptive verb, in English or in North Sámi, the lower inceptive will refer to the initial part of an event, while the higher incentive verb, taking scope over the lower one, must refer to the preparation for or the onset of the event.¹⁰

¹⁰ It has been argued, for English, that an infinitival complement of an inceptive verb indicates potentiality, whereas a gerundive complement signals actual involvement (see e.g. Duffley

There is however still the possibility that inceptive verbs inherently have different semantics. For English, it has been shown that *start* and *begin* are not completely synonymous. As Duffley (1999:308) observes, “in practically all uses of *begin* it is possible to substitute *start*, but the inverse is not true”. There appears to be general agreement that *begin* comes closer to being a purely inceptive verb than *start* (see e.g. Leitner (1994), Duffley (1999), and references cited in these works). *Start* is characterised by Freed (1979) as referring to the onset of an event (which can be cancelled, since starting to do something does not entail doing it), and by Duffey (1999:309) as encoding “the notion of breaking out of a state of rest or inactivity”. In addition, it has been argued that *start* preferably appears in agentive contexts, whereas *begin* is more usual in non-agentive contexts (see e.g. Lipka & Schmid (1994)).

The question is now if there are semantic differences between *álgit* and *-goahtit*. One difference is of course that *álgit* is the only inceptive verb to appear in nominal contexts. But when it comes to verbal complements, we have seen that both *álgit* and *-goahtit* can embed verbs of different transitivity, of different situation aspectual types, as well as agentive and non-agentive verbs. Still, it appears that the two inceptives *álgit* and *-goahtit* are not equally frequent in all contexts. In order to get an indication of the relative frequencies of the two inceptives in actual linguistic usage, I searched for *álgit* and *-goahtit* in combination with certain verbs in the Giellatekno corpus (as of December 2011).

The first verb to be investigated was the agentive verb *hukset* ‘build’, which was searched up in the subcorpus *news*, which is a very large subcorpus containing newspaper texts. It turned out that in *news*, *hukset* combines with *álgit* 45 times and with *-goahtit* 190 times. That is, of all inceptives formed with *hukset*, 81 % involve *-goahtit* whereas 19 % involve *álgit*. For the sake of illustration, I show an example with *álgit* in (87) and one with *-goahtit* in (88). As we see, the two varieties appear in very similar contexts:

(87) *Dál leat álgán hukset odđa Sámedikki vistti.*
 now are begin.PTC build.INF new Sámi.parliament.GEN house.ACC
 ‘Now they have begun building the new house for the Sámi Parliament.’

(88) *Son čilge ahte sii leat hukse-goahtán guokte vistti.*
 s/he explain.PRES.3SG that they are build-INC.PTC two.ACC house.GEN
 ‘She explains that they have begun building two houses.’

Since it has been suggested to me that inceptives of verbs that take experiencer or undergoer subjects are preferably formed with *-goahtit*, while agentive verbs readily combine with *álgit* as well as with *-goahtit*, I will take the relative frequencies of *álgit* *hukset* and *huksegoahtit* as a benchmark for the relative frequencies of *álgit* and *-goahtit* in verbal contexts more generally.

Turning then to verbs that take experiencer or undergoer subjects, I examined the 1200 first inceptives found in the Giellatekno corpus and found 253 clear cases of inceptives involving verbs of the relevant types. Of these 253 inceptives, 184, or 73 %,

(1999) and references given there). Having an infinitive over a gerund, as in *start to begin walking*, should denote a potential for actual walking, whereas the opposite order, *start beginning to walk*, should indicate the actuality of a potential.

are marked with *-goahtit* and 69, or 27 %, with *álgit*. In other words, inceptives with *-goahtit*, as compared to *álgit*, are no more frequent with non-agentive verbs taking experiencer or undergoer subjects than with an agentive verb like *hukset* ‘build’. On the contrary, the figures given here suggest that the opposite is the case. However, since the absolute numbers are relatively small, I will only conclude that I have so far not found any tendency for *-goahtit* to be more strongly preferred with non-agentive verbs than with agentive verbs.

It can nevertheless be noted that the relative frequencies of inceptives with *álgit* and *-goahtit* may differ considerably between individual verbs. As an example of a verb with an experiencer subject I picked *ballat* ‘fear’, which in the subcorpus *news* occurs ten times as the complement of *álgit*, as compared to 62 occurrences of *ballagoahtit* (in various person, number and tense forms). The percentages are 86 % *-goahtit* and 14 % *álgit*, which is quite similar to the percentages for *hukset*, as given above. And again, the choice between *álgit* and *-goahtit* does not seem to depend on the context:

- (89) *De álget lunttat ballat ahte dál manná hejot.*
 then begin.PRES.3PL boy.PL.NOM fear.INF that now go.PRES.2SG badly
 ‘Then the boys begin to fear that it is going badly.’
- (90) *Mii balla-godiimet ahte juoga lei dáhpáhuvván sutnje.*
 we fear-INC.PAST.1PL that something.NOM was happen.PTC 3SG.ILL
 ‘We began to fear that something had happened to her.’

Then there is *jáhkkít* ‘believe’, which combines with *álgit* three times in the subcorpus *news* but with *-goahtit* 22 times. Since these figures are very small, I searched the whole Giellatekno corpus for inceptives with *jáhkkít* and found an additional 11 occurrences of *jáhkkigoahtit* but no occurrences of *jáhkkít* combining with *álgit*. In total, then, the relative frequencies are 8 % *álgit jáhkkít* (3 occurrences) as compared to 92 % *jáhkkigoahtit* (33 occurrences). This means that although *álgit jáhkkít* and *jáhkkigoahtit* can appear in similar contexts, as (91) and (92) illustrate, *jáhkkigoahtit* is clearly preferred:

- (91) *Dasa leat eanas olbmot álgán dál jáhkkít.*
 it.ILL be.PRES.3PL most people.PL.NOM begin.PTC now believe.INF
 ‘Most people have now begun to believe it.’
- (92) *Mun maid smávvat jáhkki-goađán dasa.*
 I too little.ADV believe-INC.PRES.1SG it.ILL
 ‘I am also slowly beginning to believe it.’

Contrasting with the verbs we have hitherto looked at, all showing a certain amount of variation with respect to the choice of inceptive, we have *beaggit* ‘be reported, be known’, which combines with *álgit* once but with *-goahtit* one hundred times in the news subcorpus. Hence, while (93) is at best marginal, (94) clearly represents the preferred way to form an inceptive from *beaggit*:

- (93) *Dat ášši álggi fas beaggit dán geasi.*
 that case begin.PAST.3SG again be.known.INF this summer.GEN
 ‘The word began to be spread again about that case this summer.’
- (94) *Árat dan geasi beaggi-godii ahte Deanus lea mearkkašahtti unnán luossa.*
 earlier that summer.GEN be.known-INC.PAST.3SG that Deatnu.LOC is
 remarkably little salmon.NOM
 ‘Earlier that summer it began to be known that there is remarkably little salmon in the Deatnu river.’

Since *beaggit* in this respect differs from *ballat* ‘fear’ and *jáhkkít* ‘believe’, one might think it relevant that *ballat* and *jáhkkít* are stative psychological predicates, whereas *beaggit* ‘be reported, be known’ is dynamic (but non-agentive). It involves the notion of the word being spread, and it can appear with adverbs that only go with dynamic predicates, like *johtilit* ‘quickly’ in (95):

- (95) *Dát sáhka diedusge bekkii johtilit.*
 this message.NOM of.course be.known.PAST.3SG quickly
 ‘These news of course were spread quickly.’

There might seem to be a generalisation such that psychological verbs can combine with *álgit* and *-goahtit*, while other non-agentive verbs are only good with *-goahtit*. This is probably not correct, however, since there are psychological verbs that do not show the same variation as *ballat* and *jáhkkít*. For example, *háliidit* ‘want’ only combines with *-goahtit* in the investigated corpus. There are no occurrences *álgit háliidit* but ten examples of *háliidišgoahtit*, as in (96):

- (96) *Bárdni háliidiš-godii vuolgit áhči-s lusa.*
 boy.NOM want-INC.PAST.3SG go.INF father.GEN-POSS.3SG at.ILL
 ‘The boy began to want to go to his father.’

The frequencies of *álgit* and *-goahtit* with the verbs and verb types mentioned above are shown in table 1:

Table 1: The frequency of *álgit* and *-goahtit* with some selected verbs and verb types, in the Giellatakno corpus.

Verb or verb type	<i>álgit</i>	<i>-goahtit</i>
Agentive: <i>hukset</i> ‘build’	19 %	81 %
Non-agentive verbs	27 %	73 %
<i>ballat</i> ‘fear’	14 %	86 %
<i>jáhkkít</i> ‘believe’	8 %	92 %
<i>háliidit</i> ‘want’	0 %	100 %
<i>beaggit</i> ‘be known’	0 %	100 %

The absolute numbers are admittedly small, too small to allow any firm conclusions to be drawn, but there nevertheless appears to be a tendency that some individual verbs

form inceptives more or less exclusively with *-goahtit*, whereas others also combine with *álgit*. The agentivity of the verb does not seem to be decisive.

Summing up, we have seen that the two North Sámi inceptives *álgit* and *-goahtit* are similar in many ways but also slightly different. Although both can take verbal complements, *-goahtit* is preferred over *álgit* in the verbal domain—and more strongly so with some individual verbs. In any case, when *álgit* and *-goahtit* take verbal complements they are located somewhere around the middle of the verbal functional sequence, below root modals, sentential negation and the head encoding progressive aspect, but above causative and frequentative/continuative. However, *álgit* can also appear with nominal complements (which move to subject position if there is no other subject candidate), and in these cases, *álgit* arguably spells out the *init* head proposed by Ramchand (2008).

5. “Low” inceptives

We will now turn to a class of North Sámi inceptives that at first look very different from *álgit* and *-goahtit*, discussed in the preceding sections. From some verbs one can derive an inceptive verb by changing the theme vowel, as in the examples given in (97).

- (97)a. *buollat* ‘burn (intr)’ > *buollát* ‘begin to burn’
 b. *johtit* ‘travel’ > *johttát* ‘begin to travel’
 c. *vardit* ‘bleed’ > *vardát* ‘begin to bleed’
 d. *doarrut* ‘fight’ > *doarrát* ‘begin to fight’
 e. *duoldat* ‘boil (intr)’ > *duldet* ‘begin to boil’
 f. *čierrut* ‘cry’ > *čirrot* ‘begin to cry’

Recall that *-t* is the infinitival marker. Hence, the verbal stem is what precedes the *-t*. And notably, the stem-final vowels, or theme vowels, are subject to variation depending on the context that the stem appears in. For example, the verbal stem *johti-* ‘travel’, in (97b), can be compared to the noun *johtu* ‘movement’. As we see, the root *joht-* is the same but the final vowels are different. I therefore take the vowels to represent the elements that assign lexical categories to roots. That is, I take *-i* in *johti-* to represent a verbalising head, and *-u* in *johtu* to represent a nominaliser.¹¹

The fact that the inceptive derivations shown in (97) involve changes in the thematic vowels then suggests that these derivations take place very low down in the verbal projections, close to the root.¹² The fact that transitive verbs cannot undergo the derivation points in the same direction, suggesting that the input to the derivation does not contain any head that introduces external arguments. This means that the derivations in (97) take place in that part of the clause which is often referred to as the vP-domain, where the basic event structure and basic thematic relations are represented.

If we consider the base verbs in (97), in the left hand column, we see that they all are activity verbs; that is, they denote unbounded processes. The corresponding inceptives in the right hand column are bounded, denoting a change from no activity to activity. The contrasting aspectual properties are shown in the examples below—compare (98) to (99):

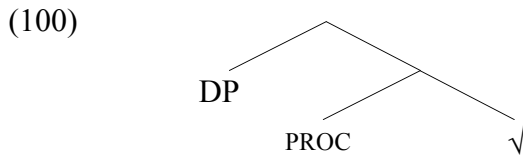
¹¹ More generally, verbs, nouns and adjectives do not appear as bare roots in North Sámi. There is always an additional morphological element that can be taken to represent the category.

¹² The monophthongisation that we see in the roots in (97e) and (97f) is a phonological consequence of the change of thematic vowel.

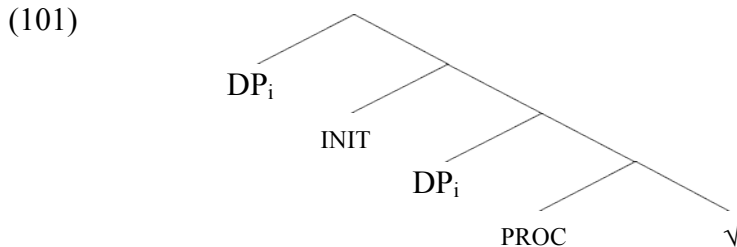
- (98) *Divtte smávvat duoldat sullii 20 minuhta.*
 let.IMP little.ADV boil.INF around 20 minute.ACC
 ‘Let simmer for around 20 minutes.’

- (99) *Gáffe duldii 5 minuhtas.*
 coffee.NOM boil.INC.PAST.3SG 5 minute.LOC
 ‘The coffee started to boil in 5 minutes.’

Again building on Ramchand (2008), I take the base verbs in (97) to consist of roots that have combined with heads encoding *process*. The process heads are the verbalisers that get spelled out as thematic vowels. The subjects of the base verbs originate as specifiers of the process heads, which causes them to be interpreted as undergoers of the processes. The syntactic structure underlying the base verbs is then as shown in (100).



As for the derived inceptive verbs, I take them to be formed by the addition of an initiation head on top of the structure shown in (100)—see (101). Since the inceptives have the same number of arguments as the base verbs, the adding of an initiation head does not involve adding an initiator. Instead, the argument that is the specifier of the processual head will raise to the specifier of the initiation head, thereby ending up as the subject of the derived inceptive verb.¹³



It follows that the thematic vowels in the derived inceptive verbs must represent the initiation and the processual head taken together. Also note that the choice of thematic vowel depends on the choice of root, in the base verbs as well as in the inceptive verbs. Moreover, it is not possible to infer from the thematic vowel in the base verb what the vowel will be in the inceptive. That is, when it comes to phonological realisation, there is a close relation between the root and the verbalisers in all these verbs. The combinations of root and thematic vowel must all be listed in the lexicon. In this respect, the low inceptives in (97) are very different from the inceptive *-goahtit*, which, as we have seen, simply attaches to the stem without altering it when it combines with an even-syllabled verb stem, but introduces a stem-final *-š* when it combines with an odd-syllabled stem. Hence, there is more morpho-phonological interaction between the low inceptives and the base verb than between *-goahtit* and the base verb, a fact that

¹³ Thanks to Gillian Ramchand for discussion of this point.

matches the different structural distance between, on the one hand, *-goahtit* and the base verb and, on the other hand, the low inceptives and the base verb.

Now while the base verbs in (97) all represent activities, it is also possible to derive low inceptives from stative base verbs, mainly psychological ones. Some examples are given in (102):¹⁴

- (102)a. *ballat* ‘fear’ > *ballát* ‘begin to fear, become afraid’
 b. *bivvat* ‘keep warm’ > *bivvát* ‘get warm’
 c. *diehtit* ‘know (that)’ > *diehttát* ‘get to know’
 d. *goallut* ‘feel cold’ > *goallát* ‘begin to feel cold’
 e. *gohcit* ‘be awake’ > *gohccát* ‘wake up’
 f. *máhttit* ‘know (how)’ > *máhttát* ‘learn, begin to know’

As we see, just like in (97) the overt manifestation of the derivations in (102) is the change of thematic vowel, which means that here too we have examples of “low” inceptives, with the inceptive added close to the verbal root.

Morphologically, the derivation of low inceptives from statives appears to be more regular than the derivation of low inceptives from activity verbs, since in the inceptives in (102) the thematic vowel is invariably *-á-*, whereas in the inceptives in (97) there is considerable variation. This does not mean, however, that *-á-* can generally be characterised as a marker of inceptive. It also appears in non-derived stative verbs, such as *čohkkát* ‘sit’ and *veallát* ‘lie’, as well as in derived stative verbs, such as *vielgát* ‘look white or pale’, from *vielgat* ‘white’, and also in some non-inceptive non-stative verbs, such as *cummát* ‘kiss’ and *gurpát* ‘tie together in a bundle’. In none of these verbs can the *-á-* be taken to represent inceptive. It is only in combinations like those in (104), where the *-á-* replaces the thematic vowel in a stative base verb, that it represents inceptive aspect.

Unlike the base verbs, inchoative verbs derived from statives are dynamic. This is illustrated in (103) and (104):

- (103) *Mun árvidan ahte geatki ballái*
 I understand.PRES.1SG that wolverine.NOM fear.INC.PAST.3SG
go gulai skohtera.
 when hear.PAST.3SG snowmobile.ACC
 ‘I understand that the wolverine got scared when it heard the snowmobile.’

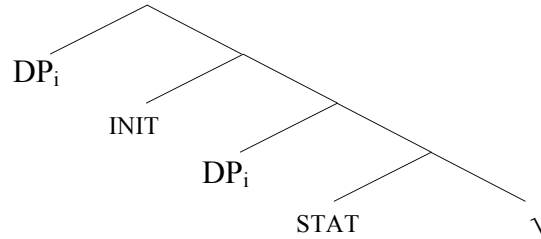
- (104) *Mun in diehtán das in maidege vuohččan,*
 I NEG.1SG know.PAST it.LOC NEG.1SG anything.ACC at.first
muhto de fáhkkestaga diehtt-á-jin.
 but then suddenly know-INC-PAST.1SG
 ‘I didn’t know anything about it at first, but then suddenly I got to know.’

On the background of the data given above, I propose that the inceptive verbs in (102) are formed by adding an initiation head over a structure that is similar to the

¹⁴ Verbs that refer to events of entering into a state are usually called inchoatives. However, I follow Smith (1991:77) and use the term inceptive for all beginnings, of states and of events, since the focus here is on the similarities between the two types.

structure shown in (101) except that the processual head is replaced by a head that represents the state. The syntactic structure of inceptives derived from stative verbs is then as shown in (105):

(105)



The stative verbaliser in (105) is related to the stative little *v* proposed in Kratzer (1996) and also to the stative verbaliser v_{BE} in Folli & Harley (2007), and very similar to the stative perceptive verbaliser v_{perc} that McGinnis (2000) takes to be present in the syntactic representation of subject experiencer verbs. The main difference between McGinnis' proposal and mine is that she takes the complement of the stative verbaliser to be VP, whereas I take it to be the root.

We can also now reject the analysis of stative verbs suggested, albeit somewhat tentatively, in Ramchand (2008), which takes stative verbs to be realisations of initiation heads. Since initiation heads can be added to statives and to processual verbs in the same way, the stative heads themselves cannot be initiation heads.

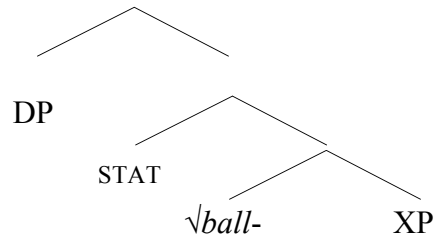
However, it has to be added concerning the structure in (105) that the $\sqrt{}$ can represent a projection of the root, containing not just the root itself but also what Ramchand (2008) calls rhematic material; that is, material that does not represent participants in the event but rather is part of the description of the state of affairs. Constituents representing the target of emotion or the subject matter of a psychological predicate are rhematic material in this sense. This is relevant for some of the base verbs in (102): *ballat* 'fear' takes an internal argument representing the target of emotion, whereas *diehtit* 'know (that)' and *máhttit* 'know (how)' take internal arguments representing subject matter. These arguments can also be present when the root appears in a nominal context, which shows that they are not dependent on the verbaliser or on functional elements related to the verb. The root *ball-* 'fear' can be taken as an example. As we see in (106), this root can combine with a DP that represents the target of the emotion and carries locative case, regardless of whether the root appears in its verbal or in its nominal disguise:

(106)a. *Son ballá boahhte-áiggis.*
 s/he fear.PRES.3SG coming-time.LOC
 'She fears the future.'

b. *Sus lea ballu boahhte-áiggis.*
 s/he.LOC is fear.NOM coming-time.LOC
 'She has fear for the future.'

Consequently, I take the locative phrase in (106ab) to belong to the projection of the root, as indicated in (107), which shows the structure of the verb *ballat* 'fear':

(107)



The designation XP indicates that the category of the complement of the root can be subject to variation. It can be nominal, as in (106ab), or clausal, as in (108ab):

- (108)a. *Keskitalo ballá ahte olles dát ášši*
K. fear.PRES.3SG that whole this.NOM case.NOM
šlivge-juvvo skuffii.
toss-PASS.PRES.3SG drawer.ILL
‘Keskitalo is afraid that this whole case will be tossed into a drawer.’

- b. *Lea ballu ahte Ártisii sajáiduvvan guolle-nálit*
is fear.NOM that Arctic.ILL establish.PTC fish-species.PL.NOM
duššet oalát.
disappear.PRES.3PL completely
‘There is fear that fish species that are established in the Arctic will disappear completely.’

The following examples serve to demonstrate that the roots *máhtt-* ‘know/competence’ and *dieht-* ‘know/information’ also take phrases representing the subject matter as their complement, in verbal as well as in nominal contexts.

- (109)a. *Juohke viđát sáme-gielat máhttá dušše njálmmálaš*
every fifth Sámi-language.ADJ know.PRES.3SG only oral
giela.
language.ACC
‘Every fifth Sámi speaker knows only the spoken language.’

- b. *Sin máhttu dárogiela lohkamis lei headju.*
their skill.NOM Norwegian reading.LOC was bad
‘Their skills in reading Norwegian were bad.’

- (110)a. *Maid dii diehtibehtet Ecstasy birra?*
what.ACC you.PL.NOM know.PRES.2PL Ecstasy.GEN about
‘What do you know about Ecstasy?’

- b. *Sus ii leat go formálalaš diehtu*
s/he.LOC NEG.3SG be PRT formal knowledge.NOM
boazo-doalu birra.
reindeer-husbandry.GEN about
‘She has nothing but formal knowledge about reindeer husbandry.’

- c. *De bodii diehtu ahte skuvla lea*
 then come.PAST.3SG information.NOM that school.NOM is
buollán.
 burn.PTC
 ‘Then the information came that the school had burned.’

If we now focus on the initiation projection instead, we see that an initiation head that has a verbal complement (dynamic or stative) will be spelled out as an alternation of the verbaliser. We have seen earlier, however, that when an initiation head does not have a verbal complement, it will be spelled out as *álgit* ‘begin’. In other words, the low verbal inceptive is structurally similar to *álgit* with a nominal complement.

6. Conclusions

We have seen in this paper that there are differences as well as similarities between the three inceptives in North Sámi. The inceptive verb *álgit* ‘begin’ can be an auxiliary, situated relatively high up in the functional domain and taking a verbal complement. It is then a raising verb. Alternatively, *álgit* can be the realisation of the initiation head which is the highest head in the vP-domain. In the latter case, *álgit* takes its own nominal arguments, and assigns illative case to its object.

The inceptive *-goahtit* is similar to auxiliary *álgit*, except that *-goahtit* is a bound form morphologically. Moreover, the fact that *álgit* and *-goahtit* can be combined, in any order, shows that it cannot be the case that there is one position specifically dedicated to each of these inceptive verbs. Rather, it is possible to merge first one and then the other in the area of the functional domain where inceptives have their place.

On the other hand, the low inceptives, manifested as alternations of thematic vowels, are similar to inceptives consisting of *álgit* and a nominal complement. When the initiation head has a nominal complement, it is spelled out as *álgit*, but when it has a verbal complement, it is spelled out as the thematic vowel of the verb.

The last point to be dealt with in this paper was the parallel between psychological stative verbs on the one hand and processual verbs on the other, as can be seen in the low inceptives. It appears that low inceptives based on processual verbs are derived in a parallel fashion to low inceptives based on psychological stative verbs, which indicates that the syntactic structure of these two classes of base verb are also maximally similar, consisting of a stative or processual verbaliser merged over a verbal root.

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