

Revisiting dative constructions: A VP-shell based approach

Several recent approaches to DOCs assume that these structures project an applicative head (Pylkkänen 2002; Torres Morais & Lima-Salles 2010; Pineda 2016; a.o). It has also been argued that Romance languages exhibit dative alternation due to the presence of dative clitics (e.g. Demonte 1995 for Spanish) or to different word order patterns (Torres Morais & Lima-Salles 2010 for Brazilian Portuguese (BP)). We will argue against these claims and propose an alternative, derivational analysis, using a VP-shell structure.

We argue against the presence of an applicative head in dative constructions in Romance languages on the following grounds. First, Pylkkänen (2002/2008) claims that low applicatives relate two arguments and involve a transfer relation, which means they always co-occur with non-stative verbs; however, in languages for which low applicatives have been proposed (English, Spanish, Portuguese), non-argument datives (i) do not always involve transfer (1a), (ii) co-occur with non-stative unaccusative verbs (1b), and (iii) co-occur with stative verbs (1c). Second, dative constructions in these languages are substantially different from applicative constructions found in Bantu languages, which do not only come in a variety of types (causative, dative, locative, etc.) but also exhibit specific verbal extensions associated to different thematic roles. The Ganda dative *-er/-ir* extension in (2a-c), for instance, introduces beneficiaries, locations and instruments. As such, these applicatives closely parallel oblique arguments in other languages (Larson 2015) and contrast with the structure of Bantu core dative verbs, in particular prototypical ‘to give’, which yield non-derived datives (2d). We also argue against the claim that Romance languages may exhibit dative alternation of the English type. Torres Morais & Salles’ (2010) claim that the two possible word orders OD-OI and OI-OD (3a vs 3b-c) involve two different prepositions *a* introducing the same dative object. We depart from this analysis by taking into account the lexical-semantic properties of verbs and of the prepositions they combine with, using Rappaport-Hovav & Levin’s (2008) distinction between core dative verbs and non-core dative verbs. In European Portuguese (EP), core dative verbs, such as *dar* ‘to give’ in (3), only select Recipients introduced by a [-dir,-loc] preposition, irrespective of word order, whereas non-core dative verbs, such as *enviar/atirar* ‘send/throw’, can select both Recipients introduced by the [-dir,-loc] preposition *a* (4a-b) and Goals introduced by the homophonous [+dir,+loc] preposition *a* (or *para* ‘toward’) (4c-d).

Similarly to Ormazabal & Romero (2010), we adopt a version of the classical Larsonian VP-shell analysis to derive ditransitive constructions. However, following Pineda 2016, we will argue that in Romance languages, the IO of core dative verbs, instead of the DO, projects in [Spec,VP], whereas the DO moves to [Spec,vP] to check Case. In Germanic languages, on the other hand, the DO checks structural Case *in situ* and [Spec,vP] is available for the IO, which accounts for the presence of DOCs in these languages. In addition, we argue that the word order shown in example (3b) results from scrambling of the DO, contrary to what has been argued by Brito (2014, 2015). The possibility to interpolate a constituent in cases of clitic doubling in Portuguese, as shown in (5) and (6), is an empirical argument supporting our analysis. This analysis is also supported by syntactic microvariation exhibited in non-European varieties of Portuguese, namely in Santomean Portuguese (STP), which shows the English type dative alternation, where both ditransitive prepositional constructions and DOCs are able to express Recipients (Gonçalves, *forthc.*). In addition, directional *para* ‘to, toward’ in STP is being (re)analyzed as a functional preposition, as in BP (7). Finally, we will show that our analysis for core dative constructions can be straightforwardly extended to some possessor structures in different varieties of Portuguese (Rodrigues 2010, Munhoz & Naves 2012).

Examples

- (1) a. Mary baked him a cake for her birthday. (Boneh & Nash 2009)
 b. Nasceram os dentes ao bebé. (Miguel, Gonçalves & Duarte 2011)
 were.born the teeth to.the baby
 c. Juan le respecta las opiniones a María. (Pujalte 2010)
 Juan cl.dat respects the opinions to María
- (2) a. a=kol-**er**-a abaami babiri (Ganda, Schadeberg 2003:74)
 3SG=work-DAT-FV masters two 'he works for two masters'
 b. kol-**er**-a wano (ibidem)
 work-DAT-FV here 'work here!'
 c. a=tambul-**ir**-a ku-pikipiki (ibidem)
 3SG=travel-DAT-FV LOC-motorcycle 'he travels by/on motorcycle'
 d. A-ka-inka fishi nkaanga. (Sambaa, Riedel 2009: 27)
 SMIS-CONS-give 5.hyena 10.peanuts 'He gave the hyena peanuts.'
- (3) a. Dei um livro ao João. / Dei ao João um livro.
 I.gave a book to.the João / I.gave to.the João a book
 b. Dei-lhe um livro.
 I.gave-cl.dat a book
- (4) a. Enviei/atirei um livro ao João. / Enviei/atirei ao João um livro.
 I.send/threw a book to.the João / I.send/threw to.the João a book
 b. Enviei/atirei-lhe um livro.
 I.send/threw-cl.dat a book
 c. Enviei a empregada ao mercado. / Atirei os papéis para o lixo.
 I.sent the maid to.the market / I.threw the papers to the trash.
 d. Enviei a empregada para lá. / Atirei os papéis para lá.
 I.sent the maid over there / I.threw the papers over there.
- (5) Apresentei-[a a ela] aos meus amigos. *Apresentei-[a] aos meus amigos[a ela].
 I.presented-cl.do to her to.the my friends / I.presented-cl.do to.the my friends to her
- (6) Dei-[lhes a eles] um livro. / Dei-[lhes] um livro [a eles].
 I.gave-cl.dat to them a book / I.gave-cl.dat a book to them
- (7) a. Dá dinheiro às / para as pessoas.
 S/he.gives money to.the / to the people.
 b. Entrega senhor uma cerveja.
 Give the man a beer.'

Selected references: Brito 2015. Two base generated structures for ditransitives in European Portuguese. In Simões Barreiro *et al.* (eds.) *Oslo Studies in Language* 7(1). Demonte 1995. Dative alternation in Spanish. *Probus* 7. Gonçalves (forthc.). Construções ditransitivas no português de São Tomé. PhD Dissertation. Univ. of Lisboa. Munhoz & Naves 2012. Construções de tópico-sujeito: uma proposta em termos de estrutura argumental e de transferência de traços de C. *Signum: Estudos Linguísticos* 15. Ormazabal & Romero 2010. The derivation of dative alternations. In Duguine, M. *et al.* (eds.) *Argument Structure and Syntactic Relations from a Crosslinguistic Perspective*. Amst./Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Pineda 2016. *Les fronteres de la (in)transitivitat: estudi dels aplicatius en llengües romàniques i basc*. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Mòn Juïc. Pylkkänen 2002/2008. *Introducing Arguments*. PhD Diss, MIT. Rappaport-Hovav & Levin 2008. The English dative alternation: the case for verb sensitivity. *Journal of Linguistics* 44. Rodrigues 2010. Possessor raising through thematic positions. In Hornstein & Polinsky (eds). *Movement theory of Control*. Amst./Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Torres Morais & Lima-Salles 2010. "Parametric change in the grammatical encoding of indirect objects in Brazilian Portuguese", *Probus* 22 (2), 181-209.