

Parameterising Germanic ditransitive variation: A historical-comparative study

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Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Theoretical Analysis
- 3 Swedish Data
- 4 Historical English Data
- 5 Conclusions and Questions

Contributions

- ① New analysis of recipient ditransitives: **Recipients are universally introduced as dative PPs in the specifier of an applicative phrase**
- ② Complete syntax framework: Complete set of additional syntactic machinery to explain Germanic recipient ditransitive data
- ③ Typological summary: Collection of all of the relevant data on Germanic recipient ditransitives in one place
- ④ New historical data: Collection of new data on the history of English from parsed corpora
- ⑤ New historical methods: Applications of new techniques to use historical data in theoretical syntax investigations

Theory Outline

- What is a recipient?
- What is a dative PP?
- Where is the specifier of an applicative phrase?
- What syntactic mechanisms do we need to posit for empirical coverage?
- Why should we prefer this analysis **on conceptual grounds**?

Theta Role Theory

- Recipient is one of a number of theta roles
- Building on Dowty (1991):
 - Theta roles are morphosyntactic categories (like singular/plural)
 - Each role is associated with prototypical features
 - Prototypes **guide** assignment of theta roles to arguments
 - Ambiguous cases are determined by local cultural/linguistic norms

Recipients

- Recipients are the endpoint of a transfer of possession event (that may or may not involve movement)
- GIVE is the prototypical recipient action (an AGENT transfers a THEME to a RECIPIENT)

Structural vs. Non-structural case

- Long history of a distinction between structural and non-structural case (Woolford (2006) gives a summary of arguments)
- Structural cases alternate, while non-structural cases do not
- Dative case (typical for recipients) has usually been regarded as non-structural

Prepositional theory of non-structural case

- Non-structural case can be distinguished by the addition of an extra structural layer (Bittner and Hale, 1996; Bayer et al., 2001)
- Recent proposals associate this extra layer with prepositional phrases (Asbury, 2005, 2007; Rezac, 2008; Caha, 2009)
- As a non-structural case, the case marking on recipients (often called dative) is actually just the morphological reflex of a preposition

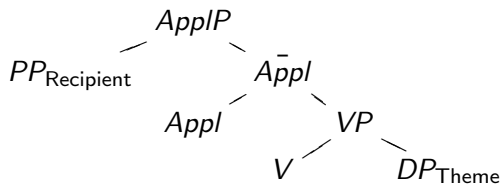
Prepositions, thematic roles, and case

- The preposition that introduces an argument (or adjunct) is **syntactically** associated with the thematic role of the argument
- All recipients are introduced with a recipient P
- Dative case is the syncretic realization of multiple different P heads (or DP concord with a governing P head)
- Example: [$P_{recipient}$ [DP Recipient]]

Structural cases

- Nominative and accusative (structural cases) are features of ungoverned DPs (i.e., not embedded in PPs)
- DPs under prepositions do **not** receive syntactic structural case (although the reflexes of non-structural case may be morphologically syncretic with structural cases)

Applicative Analysis



Properties of Analysis

- Applicatives do **not** assign thematic roles (prepositions do)
- Applicatives only provide a syntactic position for applied arguments to enter the derivation
- Completely exchangeable with a Larsonian VP-shell analysis (Larson, 1988)

Five morphosyntactic operations

- ① Contextual allomorphy
- ② VP-internal scrambling
- ③ Cliticisation
- ④ P-incorporation
- ⑤ Locality/intervention effects

English Examples

(1) Active

- a. I gave the woman the book.
- b. I gave the book to the woman.
- c. I gave it the woman

Contextual allomorphy

- The realization of recipient P is subject to allomorphy
- In some languages, this allomorphy is determined contextually by adjacency to particular words
- Same mechanism that determines "many dog-s" vs. "many sheep"

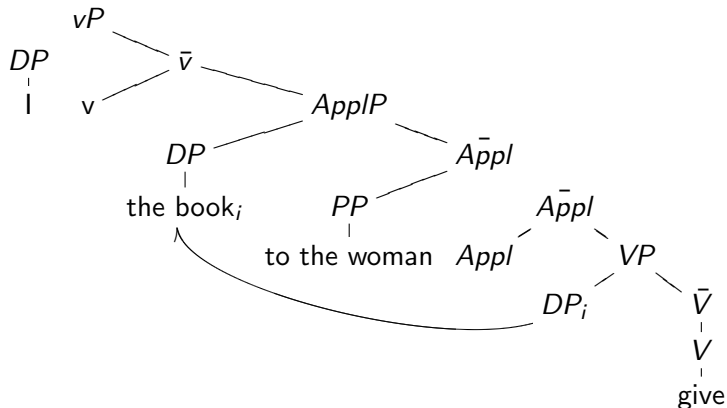
English

I gave Ø the woman the book

VP-internal scrambling

- Many languages allow two word orders for recipients and themes (RT vs TR)
- RT word order is base generated; TR derived by VP-internal scrambling (Takano, 1998; Lenerz, 1977)
- Theme moves to a higher specifier of the ApplP (McGinnis, 1998)

Scrambling Analysis:



(2)

Cliticisation

- For the purposes here, can be treated as head movement of a pronoun into a higher element
- Allows two constructions (“violating” locality):
 - 1 Theme cliticisation: John [gave it] \emptyset him.
 - 2 Recipient cliticisation: The book was [given \emptyset him].

English Examples

(3) Active

- a. The woman was given the book.
- b. To the woman was given the book.
- c. The book was given to the woman.
- d. The book was given the woman.

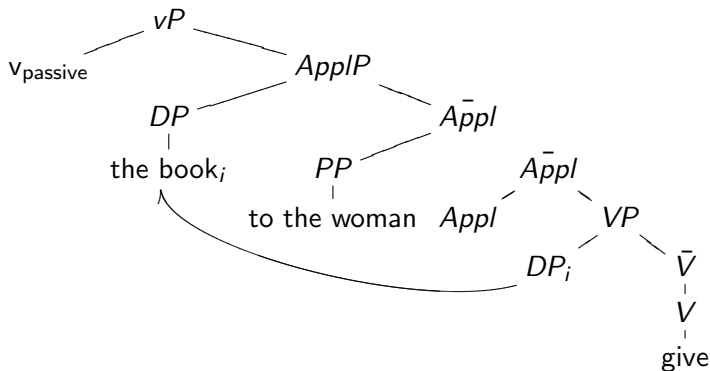
P-incorporation

- P-incorporation allows dative-to-nominative conversion (Alexiadou et al., 2014)
- P-incorporation is a type of head movement
- **Head Movement Targeting Condition:** When head movement is triggered, the head triggering the movement adjoins to the nearest head that asymmetrically c-commands the highest position of the triggering head.

English

The woman was [given \emptyset] the book

Incompatibility with VP-internal scrambling



Passivisation and Properties of T

- Two crucial properties: Locality and Argument Validity
- Assumptions:
 - ➊ Only DPs (not PPs) can receive nominative case
 - ➋ Languages vary in whether or not PPs can move to subject position
 - ➌ Language vary in whether they can inspect multiple arguments for movement/case assignment

subject and ACC theme object

One Argument

DAT recipient subject and NOM theme object

?DAT recipient subject and ACC theme object

subject and DAT recipient object

One Argument

NOM theme subject and DAT recipient object

Ungrammaticality

Swedish Introduction

- Swedish provides best evidence for prepositional analysis of recipient case
- Necessary facts about Swedish:
 - No remaining synthetic accusative–dative distinction
 - V2 language

Swedish Incorporation

- **Swedish shows P-incorporation overtly** (Holmberg and Platzack, 1995)
- Verbs without prepositional prefixes (e.g., *gav* 'give'):
 - Allow TR and RT orders
 - Allow overt prepositional marking on the recipient
 - Only allow theme passivisation (with prepositional marking on recipient)
- Verbs with prepositional prefixes (e.g., *er-bjud* 'offer'):
 - Only allow RT orders
 - Never allow prepositional marking on the recipient
 - Only allow recipient passivisation

Swedish Non-Particle Verbs: Active

(4) Swedish:

Jag gav Johan en bok.

I gave John a book.

'I gave John a book (Holmberg and Platzack, 1995).'

(5) Swedish:

Jag gav en bok *(til) Johan.

I gave a book to John.

'I gave a book to John (Holmberg and Platzack, 1995).'

Swedish Non-Particle Verbs: Passive

- (6) *Pelle gavs ett pple
 Pelle gave.PASS a apple
 'Pelle was given an apple (Anward 1989, Lundquist 2006).'
- (7) Ett pple gavs *(til) Pelle.
 An apple gave.PASS *(to) Pelle.
 'An apple was given to Pelle (Anward 1989, Lundquist 2006).'

Swedish Particle Verbs: Active

(8) Han erbjöd Jan ett nytt jobb

he.NOM offered John a new job

'He offered John a new job'

(9) ?? Han erbjöd ett nytt jobb till Jan

he.NOM offered a new job to John

'He offered a new job to John'

(10) * Han erbjöd ett nytt jobb Jan

he.NOM offered a new job John

'He offered a new job to John'

Swedish Particle Verbs: Recipient Passive

(11) Recipient passive:

Han erbjds ett nytt jobb
 he.NOM offered.PASS a new job

‘He was offered a new job (Anward 1989, Lundquist 2006).’

Swedish Particle Verbs: Theme Passive (Take 1)

(12) Recipient clitic passive:

Ett nytt jobb erbjds=honom.

A new job offered.PASS=him.OBL.

'A new job was offered to him (Anward 1989,Falk 1990,Lundquist 2006).'

(13) "Theme passive":

Jobbet erbjds mannen med den lnga svarta
job.DEF offered.PASS man.DEF with the long black
kappan.
coat

'The job was offered to the man with the long black coat
(Lundquist, 2004, ex 26).'

Problem!!!

- Theme passive with P-incorporation should be impossible (without recipient cliticization)
- But theme passives are reported grammatical with particle verbs in Swedish!!!

Problem!!!

- Theme passive with P-incorporation should be impossible (without recipient cliticization)
- But theme passives are reported grammatical with particle verbs in Swedish!!!
- Solution: In V2 languages, preverbal position is **not** an unambiguous subject position

Swedish Particle Verbs: Theme Passive Redo

(14) Between auxiliary and participle:

- a. **DET jobbet** har Kalle tilldelats.
that job.DEF has Kalle

assigned.PART.PASS

'THAT job, Kalle has been assigned (Lundquist, 2004, ex. 59).'

- b. ?? **DEN mannen** har jobbet
that man.DEF has job.DEF
tilldelats.

assigned.PART.PASS

'To THAT man, the job has been assigned (Lundquist, 2004, ex. 58).'

Conclusion

Swedish verbs show P-incorporation overtly

Historical Outline

- 1 Background on Technique
- 2 Case #1: Introduction of P-incorporation
- 3 Case #2: Introduction of recipient “to”

Background

- Syntactic variation is caused by “competing grammars” (Kroch, 1989)
- The choice between grammatical options can be modelled using logistic regression
- Time based regression models captures **diffusion** of a syntactic option

Linking Hypothesis

Shared historical behaviour **implies** shared syntactic representation

Technical Details

- Bayesian models used with weakly informative priors
- Results interpretation: Probability distribution over parameter values
- All models fit with STAN

Technical Takeaway

Interaction term of zero **suggests** shared historical behaviour

Shared Property

- The existence of P-incorporation permitted two surface constructions:
 - 1 Nominative recipient passives
 - 2 Pseudopassives

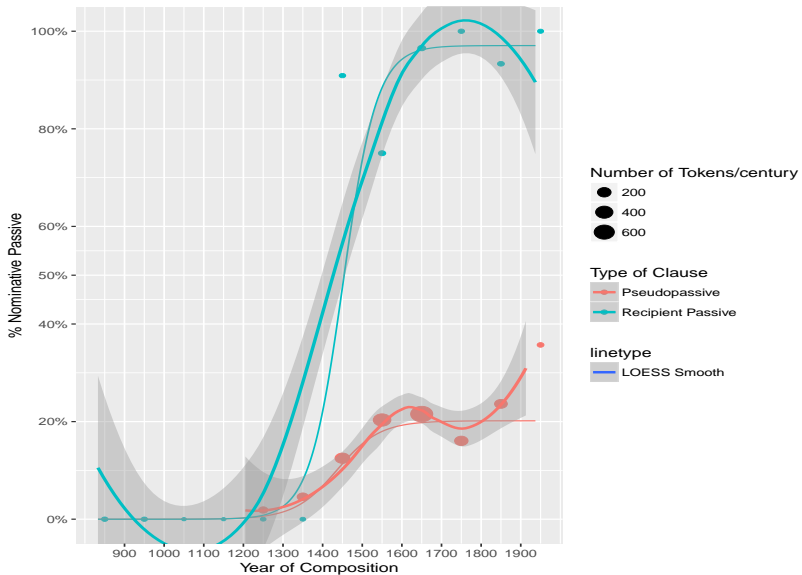
Recipient Passive

- (15) Middle English (Kroch and Ann Taylor, 2000) and Early Modern English (Kroch et al., 2004)
- a. to thy holy name be given laude and praise
(STOW-E2-P2,581.96)
 - b. the king Gurthym, that we clepteth Gurmundus, were
i-yeve the provinces of Est Anglia and Northumbria
(CMPOLYCH-M3,VI,377.2770)
 - c. for the prioress is given a matter to proud in the
beginning of her ordinance
(CMBENRULE-M3,43.1346)

Pseudopassive

- (16) Pseudopassive:
- I slept in the bed.
 - The bed was slept in.

Graph



Parameter Estimates

	5%	Point Estimate	95%
Intercept	2.21	3.03	4.11
Recipient Passive	-0.97	0.41	2.14
Year of Composition (z-scored)	2.06	2.88	3.90
(*)Recipient Year Interaction	-0.68	0.72	2.57

Table: Parameter results from Bayesian Inference, (*) indicates rows relevant for the Constant Rate Effect

Conclusions

- Recipients are base-generated as PPs in the specifier of an applicative phrase
- Historical data can provide independent evidence for syntactic theory

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

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