THE DOUBLE OBJECT CONSTRUCTION IN INUKTITUT

Julien Carrier
University of Toronto

Abstract

In Inuktitut, there is an alternation very similar to the one found in English between a prepositional ditransitive construction (PDC), like *I gave the money to Peter*, and a double object construction (DOC), like *I gave Peter money.* More precisely, an construction with the ergative morphology in Inuktitut resembles a PDC when the direct object (DO) is case-marked with the absolutive and triggers verbal agreement while the indirect object (IO) is case-marked by the allative, as in (1a), but a DOC when DO is case-marked with the instrumental whereas IO is now the argument case-marked with the absolutive and triggers verbal agreement, as in (1b).

1) a. *joni-up*   **pirutsia-t**   *tujur-tangit*   **Miali-mut**   PDC
    John-ERG   flower-PL.ABS   send-IND.S3S.O3P   Mary-ALL.SG
    'John has sent flowers to Mary'
    b. *joni-up*   **Miali**   *tujur-taa*   **pirutsiar-nit**   DOC
    John-ERG   Mary.ABS   send-IND.S3S.O3S   flower-INST.PL
    'John has sent Mary flowers'

Although some derivational issues regarding this alternation in Inuktitut have already been discussed in the literature (e.g. Johns 1984, Bittner & Hale 1996), the distinctive properties of each construction have never been fully analysed and compared to the ones of their corresponding variant in other languages. On the other hand, this kind of alternation has generated quite a lot of interest in the literature and many fundamental properties of those constructions have been revealed through discussion. For example, Bars & Lasnik (1986) demonstrate that DO asymmetrically c-commands IO in PDCs, while it is the opposite in DOCs. It has also been noted that the alternation holds only when the constructions express a transfer of possession since IO cannot refer to a location in DOCs, as in *The editor sent the article to Philadelphia* versus **The editor sent Philadelphia the article* (Harley 2002: p.35). In this talk, I use such observations regarding PDCs and DOCs as diagnostic tests to demonstrate that the constructions in (1a) and (1b) are in fact respectively a PDC and a DOC in Inuktitut. Also, I analyse further examples in which the incorporation of DO is possible in either PDCs or DOCs, as in (2a) and (2b), but in which the incorporation of IO is systematically prohibited, as in (2c).

2) a. *Miali-up*   **ujami**-*liuq-taa*   **Diane-mut**   PDC
    Mary-ERG   necklace-make-IND.S3S.O3P   Diane-ALL.SG
    'Mary has made a necklace for Diane'
    b. *Miali-up*   **Diane**   **ujami**-*liuq-taa*   DOC
    Mary-ERG   Diane.ABS   necklace-make-IND.S3S.O3S
    'Mary has made Diane a necklace'
    c. **Miali-up*   **Diane**-*liuq-taa*   **ujami-mit**   DOC
    Mary-ERG   Diane-make-IND.S3S.O3S   necklace-INST.SG
    'Mary has made Diane a necklace'

Most recent proposals regarding DOCs involve a functional head that is generated below the lexical verb and introduces first DO and then IO (e.g. Harley 2002, Pylkkänen 2002). Thus, IO would be a better candidate than DO to undergo incorporation since it would be structurally closer to the verb, contrary to what example (2c) suggests. Following Georgala & al. (2008), I will argue that the functional head involved in DOCs introduces only IO and actually combines to VP, which explains why only DO can incorporate in such circumstances.

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