

Conceptual Categories and Linguistic Categories VI: A Crosslinguistic Verb-sensitive Approach to Dative Verbs

1 Revisiting possession

- Lecture I briefly explored possession as a grammatically relevant component of meaning,
- However, the approaches to event conceptualization examined so far have had little to say about this notion, with the exception of the localist approach: it takes possession to be a type of location. However, as we show here, the relation between the two notions with respect to argument realization is more complex than the localist approach suggests.

- Key points about the nature of possession from Lecture I:

— Possession is a relation between a possessor and a possessum—an entity over which the possessor exerts some form of control (e.g., Tham 2004).

— The grammatically relevant notion of possession is quite broad (e.g., Heine 1997, Tham 2004): it encompasses instances of both alienable and inalienable possession, both abstract and concrete possessums, including types of information, but is insensitive to certain real life types of possession, such as legal possession.

- The dative alternation was used to diagnose the presence of lexicalized possession:

- (1) a. Kim gave a ticket to tonight's concert to Jill. (*to* variant)
b. Kim gave Jill a ticket to tonight's concert. (Double object variant)

— *give*, a verb which lexicalizes nothing more than the causation of possession (e.g., Goldberg 1995, Jackendoff 1990, Pinker 1989), is perhaps THE canonical dative alternation verb.

— The double object construction, which is specifically associated with the dative alternation, has an entailment which involves the (noncausative) verbs of possession *have* or *get*: (1b) entails (2).

- (2) Jill has/got a ticket to tonight's concert.

2 Two approaches to verb meaning and, thus, argument realization

The “lexical” approach to verb meaning supported in these lectures can be contrasted to a second, “constructional” approach to verb meaning.

2.1 The constructional approach: Basic assumptions

- A verb—or its “root” (Pesetsky 1995)—lexically specifies very little meaning.
- Most of a verb’s meaning—and, thus, its grammatical properties—comes from its association with an event structure of some kind, where this event structure can be either lexically available or syntactically (i.e. constructionally) encoded.

2.2 The lexical approach: Basic assumptions

- A verb lexicalizes considerable meaning, determining major facets of its argument realization options.
- Lexicalized meaning is to be differentiated from contextually derived meaning.
- THE MONOTONICITY HYPOTHESIS (cf. Koontz-Garboden 2007, RH&L 1998): Facets of a verb’s lexicalized meaning cannot under normal circumstances be cancelled, though when a verb is used, further meaning components can be added via the use of explicit nonlexically selected XPs or can be understood from the larger context in which the verb is used.
- Not all constituents in a clause with a given verb are lexically determined by it; some may be licensed by contextual factors interacting with lexical factors.
(An example: the addition of a cause argument to a monadic verb; see Lecture V.)
- Contextual inferences can also play a part in determining argument realization, but need to be distinguished from lexicalized meaning.

3 The dative alternation as a probe into how much meaning a verb truly lexicalizes

The dative alternation provides an excellent domain for assessing the relative merits of the lexical and constructional approaches to verb meaning and argument realization.

3.1 The uniform multiple meaning approach to the dative alternation

A wide range of influential analyses of the dative alternation can be broadly construed as constructional (e.g., Beck & Johnson 2004, Goldberg 1995, Green 1974, Hale & Keyser 2002, Harley 2003, Krifka 1999, 2004, Oehrle 1976, Pinker 1989).

THE KEY ASSUMPTION OF THE APPROACH:

— Much of the meaning of the variants is contributed by the constructions constituting the dative alternation.

— All verbs showing the dative alternations are associated with two constructions, each representing a distinct description—i.e. construal—of a happening involving caused possession, and each associated with its own morphosyntactic frame, as schematized in (3).

- (3) a. **Double object variant:**
 MORPHOSYNTACTIC FRAME: ‘NP V NP NP’
 EVENT DESCRIPTION: caused possession, roughly ‘x cause y to have z’;
 y is a recipient—a potential possessor
- b. **to variant:**
 MORPHOSYNTACTIC FRAME: ‘NP V NP to NP’
 EVENT DESCRIPTION: caused motion, roughly ‘x cause z to be at y’;
 y is the endpoint of a path, perhaps possessionally interpreted

On this approach, *give* and other verbs are found in both dative alternation variants, each of which is associated with one of the two types of event description.

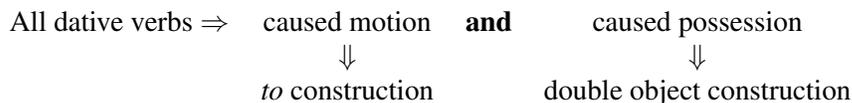
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE MORPHOSYNTACTIC FRAMES IN THE VARIANTS

- the preposition *to* marks spatial goals; it only marks recipients construable as spatial goals.
- The first object of the double object construction realizes recipients, but not spatial goals.

THE KEY CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS ANALYSIS OF THE DATIVE ALTERNATION:

Since all verbs showing the alternation are found in both morphosyntactic frames and, thus, are compatible with both types of event description, all dative verbs show identical argument realization and interpretive options. Thus, it is a uniform multiple meaning approach.

- (4) A summary characterization of the uniform multiple meaning approach:



3.2 The verb-sensitive approach to the dative alternation

3.2.1 The key assumptions of the approach

- Verbs come with lexicalized meaning. Some verbs lexicalize caused motion (e.g., *send*), some caused possession (e.g., *give*), and some both caused motion and caused possession (e.g., *hand*).

- (5) a. *give*-type verbs: lexicalize caused possession and, thus, lexically select a recipient.
 EXAMPLES: *assign, give, lend, loan, offer, promise, rent, sell, ...*; includes verbs of future having: *assign, award, bequeath, offer, promise, ...*
- b. *send*-type verbs: lexicalize caused motion and, thus, lexically select a path, which may include an endpoint, a spatial goal.
 EXAMPLES: *forward, hand, mail, send, ship, ...*

(Will ignore verbs involving communication of a message/transfer of information.)

NOTE: *hand* is among the *send*-type verbs because they are parallel as to argument realization.

- For all verbs, the lexicalized meaning is present—and interpreted—in both variants.

- Lexicalized meaning is a factor in determining argument realization options.
- Besides lexicalized meaning, contextually derived meaning can affect argument realization.

3.2.2 The effect of lexicalized meaning on argument realization

- A verb's lexicalized meaning is critical to determining its argument realization options, as well as the interpretive properties of the event description it appears in.
- As *give*-type verbs lexicalize caused possession and, thus, only lexically select a recipient:
 - it is impossible to add a spatial path to such verbs;
 - they will ONLY appear in morphosyntactic frames that express caused possession.
- *send*-type verbs lexicalize caused motion and, thus, lexically select a path phrase:
 - they will be found in morphosyntactic frames that express caused motion and are always interpreted as involving caused motion;
 - however, they have a second option available: since animate spatial goals are understood as recipients via a conventional implicature—the Animate Goal as Recipient Implicature (see Section 4.3)—these verbs may participate in the expression of caused possession and may be found in morphosyntactic frames that express caused possession.

3.2.3 Dative verbs, event descriptions, and morphosyntactic frames

- Assumptions about the morphosyntactic frames defining the variants:
 - DOUBLE OBJECT VARIANT: It is used to express caused possession only; specifically, the first object is dedicated to the expression of a “projected possessor” (Goldsmith 1980:429; also Goldberg 1995, Green 1974, Oehrle 1976, Pinker 1989).
 - *to* VARIANT: It is used to express either caused motion or caused possession because *to* is underspecified, allowing its object to be one of various argument types, broadly falling under semantic notions covered by dative or allative cases of other languages (Haspelmath 2003); that is, the object of *to* can be a spatial goal or a recipient.
- The association of dative verbs with morphosyntactic frames and event descriptions:
 - *give*-type verbs, as they always lexicalize caused possession, will be found in both the double object and *to* variants, as each can express caused possession.
 - *send*-type verbs will be found in both the double object and *to* variants:
 - * The *to* variant may simply express pure caused motion, the meaning lexicalized by these verbs.
 - * By the Animate Goal as Recipient Implicature, the goal may be interpreted as a recipient, allowing the *to* variant to also express caused possession, effected via a spatially instantiated transfer.
 - * The double object variant expresses caused possession, but as the verbs lexicalize caused motion, the caused possession must be effected via a spatially instantiated transfer—i.e. involving a path.

THE KEY CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS APPROACH TO THE DATIVE ALTERNATION:

It is a verb-sensitive approach; the different lexical entailments associated with subclasses of dative verbs have repercussions for the analysis of each dative alternation variant.

CONSEQUENCE: Event description–morphosyntactic frame pairings are partly dependent on the verb; compare the uniform multiple meaning approach, where the pairing is verb-independent.

4 The verb-sensitive approach to the dative alternation explicated

4.1 *give* lexicalizes caused possession in both variants

A major assumption of the verb-sensitive approach is that the *to* phrase can mark a recipient or a spatial goal. The first step is to establish that with *give*, the *to* phrase NEVER marks a spatial goal.

4.1.1 *give* cannot appear with spatial paths

- On the verb-sensitive analysis, *send*, but not *give*, lexicalizes caused motion and, concomitantly, lexically selects a path, which may include an endpoint, a spatial goal.

- Thus, diagnostics for paths can be used to support this part of the verb-sensitive analysis.

- A STARTING POINT: Besides lexically selecting a theme argument, directed motion verbs such as *go* also lexically select a path as an argument (cf. Lecture III), providing a basis for comparison:

— *send* should pattern with *go*, especially with respect to properties related to the nature and expression of paths and spatial goals.

— As *give* lexically selects a recipient—and is never associated with a goal—independent of dative alternation variant, then it should not pattern with *go*.

NOTE: Since the goal of *send*-type verbs can be understood as a recipient, it is not possible to make comparable arguments about the lexicalized meaning of these verbs from examining the recipient.

- *send* in the *to* variant patterns with *go* with respect to various properties, while *give* lacks these properties; these observations follow if *send*- but not *give*-type verbs select a path, including a spatial goal (Jackendoff 1990, Levinson 2005, RH&L 2008).

(6) (In)ability to take a source phrase (even in conjunction with a *to*-phrase):

- a. Josie went from home plate to third base.
- b. Jill sent the ball from home plate to third base.
- c. *Josie gave the ball from Marla to Bill.

(7) (In)ability to select spatial prepositions beside *to*:

- a. Fred went under the porch/behind the tree/over the fence.
- b. Fred /sent the ball under the porch/behind the tree/over the fence.
- c. *Fred gave the ball at/behind/over Mary.

(8) (In)ability to question the *to* phrase with *where* (Levinson 2005):

- a. To whom/where did you go?
- b. To whom/where did you send the ball?
- c. To whom/*where did you give the ball?

(9) (In)ability to take path modifiers:

- a. Jake went all the way/halfway to Bill.
- b. Jake sent the ball all the way/halfway to Bill.
- c. * Susan gave the ball all the way/halfway to Bill.

• Thus, the simple ability to express one of its arguments in a *to* phrase is not on its own evidence that *give* in the *to* variant is found with a spatial goal.

4.1.2 *give* does not appear with places

- A spatial goal is a ‘place’ in Jackendoff’s (1983) terms.
- Some nouns can be ontologically classified as naming places: these include *desert*, *beach*, *city*, *jungle*, *house*, as well as place names like *Boulder*, *Denver*, and *Colorado*.
- Such nouns should be able to occur as goals with directed motion verbs, and, indeed they do.

(10) a. Devon went to the beach/the city/Boulder/Colorado.

• However, *give* cannot occur with place nouns, in either dative alternation variant.

(11) a. * Blake gave the ball to the beach/the city.
b. * Blake gave the beach/the city the ball.

• It can occur with place names, but only if they are understood metonymically as referring to an administrative, business, governmental, or other institution associated with that place, which, thus, could be understood as a recipient.

(12) a. # Blake gave the ball to Denver.
b. # Blake gave Denver the ball.

• *send* contrasts with *give*: While in the double object variant it patterns like *give* with respect to place nouns and place names, in the *to* variant it patterns both like *go* and *give*.

(13) a. Cory sent the documents to Denver.
(*Denver* understood as a place, as with *go*, or metonymically, as with *give*)
b. # Cory sent Denver the documents.
(only acceptable if *Denver* is understood metonymically, as with *give*)

This distribution is compatible with the proposal that *send* lexicalizes caused motion, but its goal may be interpreted as a recipient by the Animate Goal as Recipient Implicature.

- This distribution explains the oddity of the much cited (14b): as a place, a *border* does not qualify as a potential possessor.

- (14) a. We sent the package to the boarder/border.
b. We sent the boarder/#border the package.

(From Gropen et al. 1989:207, who attribute it to Joan Bresnan)

4.1.3 The expression of a recipient precludes the expression of a spatial goal

- It is likely that the *to* variant is taken to indicate a caused motion event description because the real world context of the prototypical caused possession event also involves a caused motion event.

— In the real world, when one person causes another to have possession of a physical object, the first person usually physically transfers it to the second person.

— Such a transfer, however, cannot be effected unless the first person has physical control over the object and, thus, is perceived as the source of a path from the giver to the recipient.

— Since in the world, caused possession is often instantiated via a physical transfer of possession, in a given context a recipient is also sometimes a spatial goal.

- Although event descriptions often include constituents that are not lexically licensed (e.g., resultative phrases with manner verbs), lexicalized meaning may sometimes preclude the addition of certain nonlexically licensed constituents.

- When a verb lexicalizes caused possession, a constituent encoding a spatial path CANNOT be included in the same clause; therefore, even if an event of caused possession is instantiated via caused motion, a spatial path cannot appear in its description.

- (15) Jerry gave the files to Pat to her office.

A REASON: Scalar uniqueness — An event description cannot contain more than one scalar change. (cf. Tenny 1994, Goldberg 1995, L&RH 1995; see Beavers 2011 on scalar change with dative verbs).

4.2 *give* lexicalizes caused possession, not transfer of possession

- Having established that *give* in neither variant can appear with a phrase denoting a path, the next question is precisely what this verb lexicalizes.

THE QUESTION: What is the invariant component of meaning that *give* contributes across its uses?

- We have been careful to say that *give* lexicalizes caused possession, not transfer of possession.
- THE REASON: Only some uses of *give* involve transfer of possession—the transfer of a theme from one possessor to a second—but they all involve caused possession—a possessor coming into possession of a theme.

- Two hypotheses about the meaning lexicalized by *give*-type verbs:

— TRANSFER OF POSSESSION: These verbs lexicalize the transfer of a theme from one possessor to a second; thus, these verbs lexicalize a path, whether instantiated in the physical domain or the possessional domain.

— ‘PURE’ CAUSED POSSESSION: These verbs simply lexicalize a possessor coming into possession of a theme.

- Distinguishing between the two hypotheses: The transfer of possession hypothesis predicts that *give*-type verbs should only be used in the description of events involving a path from a source to a goal, while the caused possession hypothesis does not require the presence of a source.

EVIDENCE FOR THE ‘PURE’ CAUSED POSSESSION HYPOTHESIS

- Abstract as well as concrete entities can be the themes—i.e. possessums—in possessive relations, including those brought about in a caused possession event.

- There are sentences with *give*-type verbs that have abstract entities such as custody, ideas, or headaches, as their theme, both in the double object and the *to* variant.

- (16) a. The music lent a festive air to the party.
b. The music lent the party a festive air.

- (17) a. The judge gave/awarded custody to the child’s uncle.
b. The judge gave/awarded the child’s uncle custody.

- (18) a. The new spray cleaner gave a streaked appearance to the mirror in the bedroom.
b. The new spray cleaner gave the mirror in the bedroom a streaked appearance.

- Such entities need not be possessed by the giver or even exist prior to the event; thus, *give* sentences involving such themes cannot instantiate transfer of possession.

- In fact, unlike most examples with concrete themes, these have a ‘cause to come into existence’ reading and, concomitantly, lack a source of transfer.

- As noted *give*-type verbs are associated with the caused possession event type in both dative alternation variants, and when they take abstract themes, they are also found in both variants, despite claims to the contrary (see Section 5.2).

- Even some instances of *give* with concrete themes involve pure caused possession.

- (19) a. We gave a fresh coat of paint to the house.
b. We gave the house a fresh coat of paint.

- Thus, caused possession may be effected even in the absence of a source of transfer; events of caused possession should be separated from their possible instantiation via transfer—whether physically or abstractly instantiated.

4.3 Recipients with *send*-type verbs

Section 4.1 illustrated that *send*-type verbs lexicalize caused motion; thus, this component of meaning should not be cancelled in any use of these verbs

THE NEW PROBLEMS:

— How can these verbs appear in the double object construction, which expresses caused possession, especially since we suggested that lexicalized caused possession is incompatible with the additional expression of caused motion?

— Moreover, even in the *to* variant, the object of *to* can be interpreted as a recipient.

(20) Cameron sent a get well card to Dale.

THE SOLUTION:

— *send* verbs lexicalize a path.

— The endpoint of a path is a goal.

— An animate being can serve as the endpoint of the path.

— It is difficult crosslinguistically to interpret animate entities as places.

— Therefore, when animates are selected as the endpoint of a path, languages interpret the animates in ways that are more compatible with our conceptualization of them.

— In English, animate goals are understood as recipients via a conventional implicature:
The Animate Goal as Recipient Implicature (Adler in prep.; cf. Aristar 1996).

— Concomitantly, an animate goal can then be realized as a first object as well as the object of *to*.

— When an animate is intended to be interpreted as a pure spatial goal, another preposition must be used in English.

(21) The kids threw the ball at Mary.

HOW VERBS LEXICALIZING CAUSED MOTION AND CAUSED POSSESSION DIFFER:

— If a verb lexicalizes caused possession ONLY, it will show only argument realization properties of caused possession, even in the *to* variant. It will NEVER show properties of a spatial goal.

— If a verb lexicalizes a spatial goal, the goal can sometimes be animate. When the goal is animate, it must be understood, by conventional implicature, as a recipient. In English, it may be expressed as the object of *to*, which is a possible expression of a recipient.

4.4 The cooccurrence of spatial goals and recipients

• *send*-type verbs, but not *give*-type verbs, can occur with both a spatial goal and recipient.

- (22) a. Brett sent the package to London to Mary.
b. *Brett gave the package to London to Mary.

This asymmetry follows on the verb-sensitive approach.

- It is well known that verbs can take two instances of a semantic role, precisely when one instance is a further specification of the other.

- (23) a. Terry put the book in the chest in the top drawer.
b. *Terry put the book in the chest in the bookcase.

- When a verb lexicalizing caused motion, as *send* does, takes an animate spatial goal, it is interpreted as a possessor; see Section 4.3.
- If this animate spatial goal is a further specification of a place spatial goal, the two can cooccur.
- When a verb lexicalizes caused possession, as *give* does, it lexically selects a recipient; a spatial goal cannot also be expressed as it is not a further specification of a recipient.

BOTTOM LINE: A recipient is a kind of spatial goal, but a spatial goal is NOT a kind of recipient.

4.5 Further implications

The verb-sensitive approach makes further distinctions among dative verbs; see Section 6.1.

First, we consider the implications of the evidence so far for the uniform multiple meaning approach.

5 Assessing the uniform multiple meaning approach

- The uniform multiple meaning approach assumes that all dative verbs, including *give*-type verbs, are associated with caused motion event descriptions in the *to* variant.
- Since this approach is intended to highlight the contribution of the construction, there should be some difference in the event description generated by each variant for all verbs, including *give*, which is a pure possession verb.
- In order to assess this approach, we must make explicit the difference between the contribution of the caused motion construction and that of the double object construction.
- There are two possible understandings of what caused motion can mean for a verb like *give*:
 - A spatial instantiation, where the theme moves to the location of the goal
 - An abstract instantiation, where the theme moves in the possessional field from the original possessor to the recipient
- As foreshadowed in the previous section, neither understanding of caused motion is adequate.

5.1 Caused motion is spatially instantiated

- On this understanding of caused motion, the *to* variant should only be used for those happenings in the world that involve caused possession if the happening is also physically instantiated, and it should be used with every dative verb when this is so.
- However, as shown in Section 4.1.1, the *to* phrases found with *give* and *send* pattern differently, with only the latter patterning like those found with directed motion verbs.
- The uniform multiple meaning approach does not predict this difference, nor can it explain it.
- The verb-sensitive approach provides insight into this difference: since *send*-type verbs lexicalize caused motion, these verbs can only be used to describe happenings in which the transfer is also spatially instantiated.

5.2 Caused motion is transfer in the possessional field

- On this understanding of caused motion, the *to* variant is used for event descriptions that involve transfer in a possessional field—that is, they necessarily involve a path from the original possessor to the recipient (Krifka 1999).
- Jackendoff (1983) suggests that a transfer of possession does not involve continuous movement over a path, so that a possessional path “degenerates into its endpoints” (1983:192)

The ways in which the *to* phrase found with *give*-type verbs differs from other PPs expressing spatial paths could be attributed to this.

- The *to* variant contrasts with the double object variant, which expresses pure caused possession.
- Thus, on this proposal, uses of *give*-type verbs with abstract themes should not be open to a caused motion interpretation: without a source of transfer, there can be no path constituent.

— Such uses, then, should be incompatible with the *to* variant.

— Indeed, proponents of the uniform multiple meaning approach (Goldberg 1992, Harley 2003, Krifka 2004) claim that the *to* variant is unavailable with abstract themes.

- (24) a. The kids gave me a headache.
b. ?? The kids gave a headache to me.

- (25) a. Interviewing Richard Nixon gave Norman Mailer a book. (Oehrle 1976:44)
b. * Interviewing Nixon gave a book to Norman Mailer.

— However, as shown in Section 4.2, abstract themes may be found in the double object variant.

— The reduced acceptability of (24b) and (25b) most likely is attributable to givenness and heaviness considerations (Bresnan et al. 2007, RH&L 2008, Snyder 2003); these are known to sometimes preclude one of the two realizations of the caused possession event type.

— Once these are controlled for, the verb–argument combinations in (24b) and (25b) improve.

- (26) a. This can give a headache even to a Tylenol. (<http://www.dilbert.com/>)
 b. Nixon's behavior gave an idea for a book to every journalist living in New York City in the 1970s. (Snyder 2003:35, (48))

• Thus, the uniform multiple meaning approach, which suggests that the *to* variant involves a caused motion description in the possessional domain, is further weakened.

6 The successful transfer inference reflects lexicalized, and not constructional meaning

Once a finer-grained classification of dative verbs is recognized, another set of evidence taken to support the uniform multiple meaning approach turns out to support the verb-sensitive approach.

6.1 More distinctions in the lexicalized meaning of dative verbs

• *give*, which is typically taken to be the core dative verb, lexicalize causing a change of possession in a theme—an instance of pure caused possession.

— OTHER *give*-TYPE VERBS: They lexicalize further meaning components in addition to caused possession, thus refining on the form of the caused possession:

e.g., *rent* and *lend* specify that the possession is temporary in some sense.

e.g., *promise*, like other verbs of future having, contributes a modal operator (Koenig & Davis 2001:85).

• *send*-TYPE VERBS: They lexicalize caused motion—causing a theme to move along a path to a spatial goal—and not caused possession, and, thus, lexically select a spatial goal.

• *throw*-TYPE VERBS: They basically describe two-participant events in which one entity instantaneously imparts a force on a second entity, the force recipient; as Pinker (1989) puts it they lexicalize “instantaneous causation of ballistic motion”. They differ in the manner in which the force is imparted or in the instrument used to impart the force.

— *throw*-type verbs may also be used in the description of caused motion events in combination with an explicit path, which may include a spatial goal, because events of imparting a force may cause the force recipient to move along a path.

The Animate Goal as Recipient Implicature introduced in Section 4.3 applies to *throw*-type verbs as well, allowing an animate goal to be interpreted as a recipient with these verbs.

6.2 The successful transfer inference

• Proponents of approaches that posit two event descriptions for dative alternation verbs, including proponents of the uniform multiple meaning approach, have suggested that the double object variant is associated with a SUCCESSFUL TRANSFER INFERENCE, which the *to* variant lacks.

- (27) a. Mary taught John linguistics.
 b. Mary taught linguistics to John. (Green 1974:157, (2))

(28) “Sentence (2a) [= (27a)] implies or entails that John learned linguistics, while (2b) [= (27b)] merely states that he was a student of linguistics, and is neutral as to whether his teacher Mary had any success in her efforts”. (Green 1974:157)

- This observation is unsurprising on the uniform multiple meaning approach, which assumes each dative alternation variant has its own meaning, and, thus, may be associated with its own inferences.
- However, the inference turns out to be sensitive to lexicalized meaning, rather than sensitive to a dative alternation variant; thus, it turns out to actually support the verb-sensitive approach.

6.3 Problems with a uniform multiple meaning account of the inference

- Deriving the successful transfer inference from the meaning of the constructions is problematic.

— CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS: Usually, *to* marks an attained goal as in (29) and should retain this interpretation in the *to* construction, which is associated with a caused motion reading, presumably understood in the possessional field (Gruber 1965, Jackendoff 1972, 1983), but this observation is at odds with the purported lack of—or at least noncommitment to—a successful transfer inference.

- (29) a. Mark went to the store.
b. The cup fell to the floor.

— EMPIRICAL PROBLEMS: If the successful transfer inference follows from the meaning of the double object construction, it should only be associated with this construction and, it should be found consistently. The distribution, however, is not as expected.

Sometimes the inference is easily cancelled (Baker 1997, Davidse 1996, Oehrle 1977), as in (30a); in other instances, successful transfer is entailed, not just implicated, as in (30b).

- (30) a. I taught them English for a year, but they don't seem to have learned a thing.
b. # Kim gave Lee a book, but Lee never got it. (contradiction)

6.4 The meaning lexicalized in the verb is the key to the successful transfer interpretation

Whether successful transfer is understood as an implicature or entailment is a property of a verb: its lexicalized meaning—not the construction that it appears in—accounts for the inference patterns.

- THE PROTOTYPICAL DATIVE VERB: *give*
Transfer is understood as successful in both variants since *give* lexicalizes successful transfer: it always means ‘cause to have’.

- (31) a. # Kim gave Lee a book, but Lee never got it. (contradiction)
b. # Kim gave a book to Lee, but Lee never got it. (contradiction)

- OTHER VERBS LEXICALIZING A TRANSFER OF POSSESSION: *lend, loan, rent, sell, serve, ...*
These verbs, like *give*, all entail successful transfer in both variants.

- (32) a. # Sam sold Alex his old car, but Alex never got it.
 b. # Sam sold his old car to Alex, but Alex never got it.
- (33) a. # Casey lent/loaned Tony some money, but he never got it.
 b. # Casey lent/loaned some money to Tony, but he never got it.

• VERBS OF FUTURE HAVING: *promise, owe, offer, ...*

As they lexicalize a sublexical modality, successful transfer is “with respect to a (modally restricted) subset of the set of possible circumstances” (Koenig & Davis 2001:85), irrespective of the variant.

- (34) a. My mother promised my brother a new car, and to my surprise she did buy him one/
 but he ended up with a used one.
 b. My mother promised a new car to my brother, and to my surprise she did buy him
 one/but he ended up with a used one.

• *send*-TYPE VERBS: As verbs lexicalizing caused motion, they do not lexicalize successful transfer and, thus, they never entail it in either variant.

- (35) a. I sent Molly a letter, but I misaddressed it, so it never arrived.
 b. I sent a letter to Molly, but I misaddressed it, so it never arrived.

In fact, with these verbs, the *to* variant need not even be understood as implying that there is an attained spatial goal (RH&L 2008); this property is shared with the *throw*-type verbs, and sets both types of verbs apart from verbs of continuous accompanied motion, such as *drag* and *push*.

• *throw*-TYPE VERBS: As verbs basically describing two-participant events and not lexically selecting either a spatial goal or recipient, they do not lexicalize successful transfer and, thus, never entail it in either variant.

- (36) a. I threw John the ball, but it didn't reach him because of the strong wind.
 (Baker 1997:89, (20b))
 b. I threw the ball to John, but it didn't reach him because of the strong wind.

A RESIDUAL ISSUE: Verbs which don't lexicalize caused possession may show a defeasible invited inference of successful transfer in the double object, but not the *to* variant: i.e. Green's (27).

A PROPOSAL: To the extent this inference is available, it is due to a Gricean implicature.
 — As the same proposition has two realizations, there must be a reason for choosing one.
 — This choice is usually made on heaviness and information structure grounds.
 — When these factors aren't relevant, expression of recipient as possessor generates successful transfer implicature (since the prototypical possessor realizes a possession relation), while expression of recipient as goal may generate an implicature of nonsuccess (theme reaches goal, but goal does not take possession).

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