

# Week 3

## Double object and applicative constructions

May 4, 2009

### 1 What we have done so far

In the previous weeks, we saw how passivization and *se* constructions can remove the external argument from a transitive structure. This week (and maybe the next) we'll focus on double object and applicative constructions, which add an extra argument to a transitive structure.

(1) *Double object – recipient*

Juan le dió el libro a María  
Juan CL gave the book to María

(2) *Double object – source*

Juan le robó la bicicleta a María  
Juan CL stole the bicycle to María

(3) *Double object – possession*

Juan le reparó la radio a María  
Juan CL fixed the radio to María

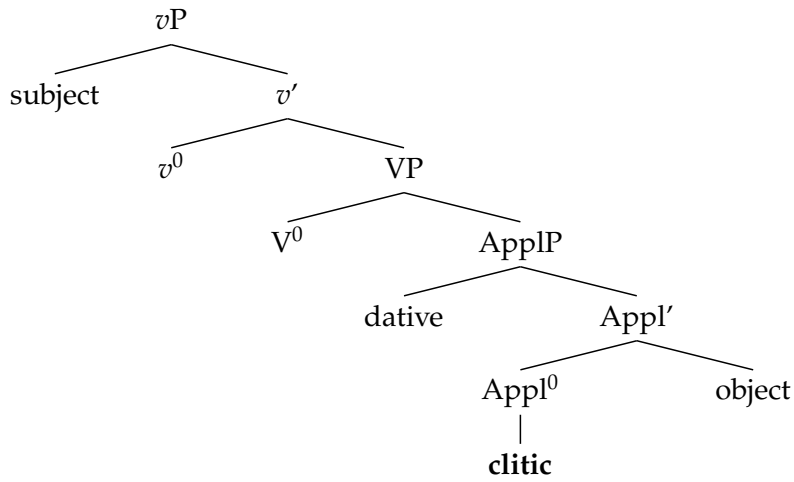
### 2 Structure of double object constructions

While the dative argument is usually doubled by a clitic, in some cases this is not necessary.

- (4) a. Juan le ofreció vino a María  
Juan CL offered wine to María  
b. Juan \_ ofreció vino a María  
Juan offered wine to María

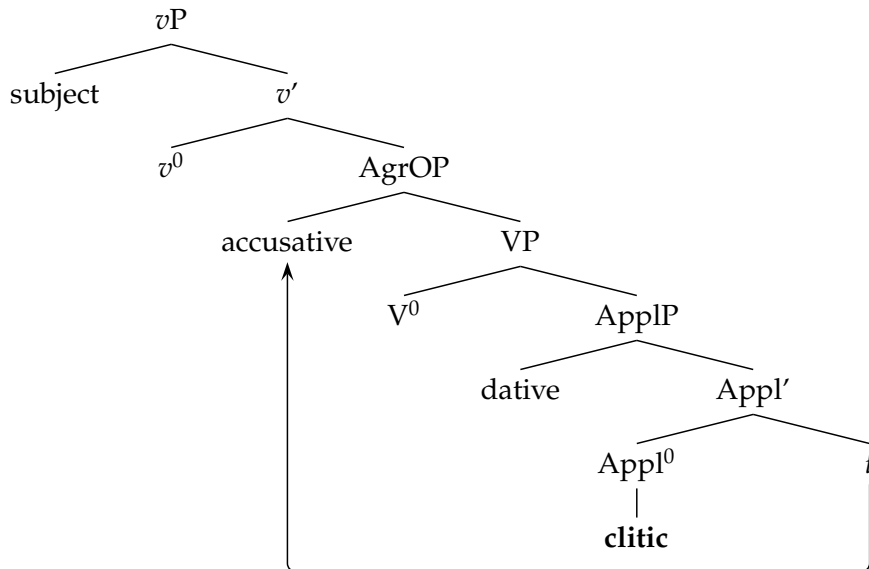
**Cuervo's (2003) analysis** The dative clitic is a functional head called Appl, for Applicative. Applied arguments are the goal, recipient, or source of the event denoted by the verb. Note that the *a* element is not a preposition, but a case marker.

(5)



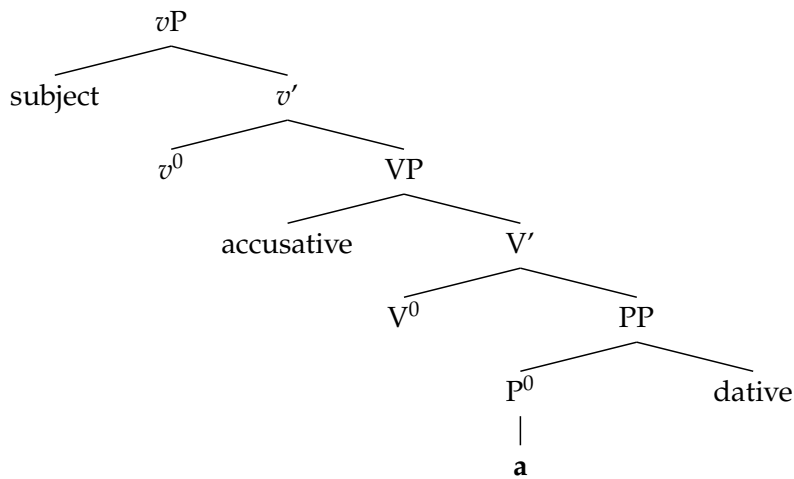
Note that this gives us the wrong word order. Cuervo proposes that the accusative object needs to move to a Case position above the dative object (which she keeps unnamed, but which we can call AgrOP).

(6)



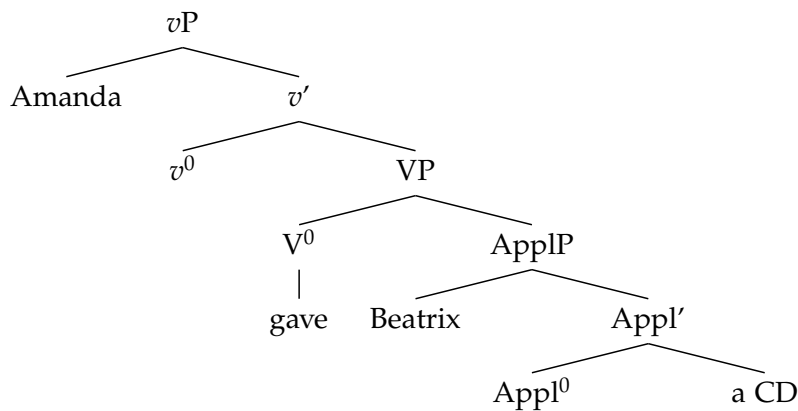
In contrast, in structures without a clitic, *a* is a preposition introducing a complement to the verb. Note that the order of the accusative and the dative is reversed.

(7)

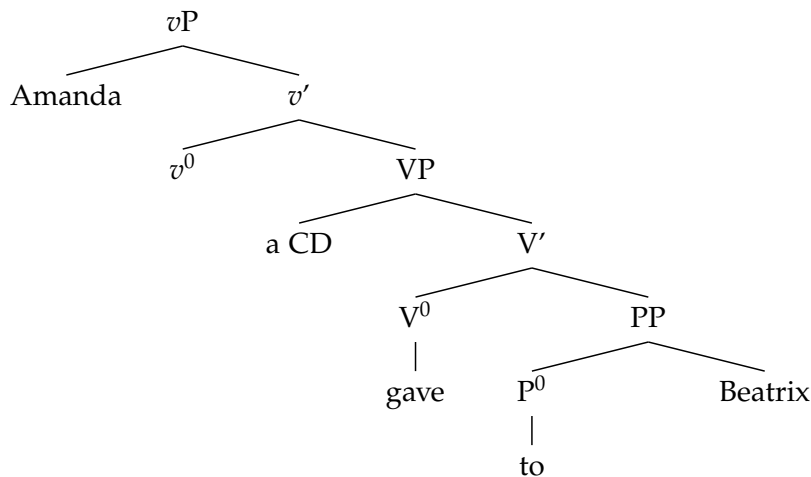


These are the same structures we get for the English double object construction and prepositional dative structures.

(8) Amanda gave Beatrix a CD.



(9) Amanda gave a CD to Beatrix



Therefore, we expect Spanish and English to show the same properties.

### 3 Structural diagnoses

Cuervo (2003) offers various arguments in favour of the two structures above.

#### 3.1 Binding

Cuervo focuses on the availability of the bound reading of possessive pronouns. This reading only arises when the possessive pronoun is c-commanded by an appropriate binder.

(10) The doctors visited their patients

- a. *Bound reading*: for each doctor, he/she visited his/her own patient.
- b. *Non-bound reading*: the doctors visited somebody else's patients

(11) Their doctors visited the patients.

- a. \* *Bound reading*: for each patient, he/she was visited by his/her own doctor.
- b. *Non-bound reading*: the doctors were visited by someone else's doctors.

The structures above predict that double object constructions will allow binding from the dative into the accusative, because that's what reflects the original hierarchy. In contrast, prepositional datives will only allow binding from the accusative into the dative. This is indeed the case in English.

(12) *Barss and Lasnik 1986*

- a. I showed John to himself in the mirror. [acc>dat]
- b. \*I showed himself to John in the mirror [dat>acc]

(13) a. I showed John himself in the mirror [dat>acc]  
 b. \*I showed himself John in the mirror [acc>dat]

(14) "Backward" binding in prepositional datives

- a. \*Entregamos sus<sub>i</sub> cheques a los<sub>i</sub> trabajadores  
 we.gave their paychecks to the workers  
 [dat>acc]
- b. \*Presentamos su<sub>i</sub> paciente a la<sub>i</sub> doctora  
 we.introduced her patient to the doctor  
 [dat>acc]

(15) "Forward" binding in prepositional datives

- a. La policía entregó los<sub>i</sub> bebés a sus<sub>i</sub> padres  
 the police gave the babies to their parents  
 [acc>dat]
- b. Presentamos la<sub>i</sub> doctora a su<sub>i</sub> paciente  
 we.introduced the doctor to her patient  
 [acc>dat]

(16) "Backward" binding in double object constructions

- a. Les entregamos sus<sub>i</sub> cheques a los<sub>i</sub> trabajadores  
 CL we.gave their paychecks to the workers  
 [dat>acc]
- b. Le presentamos su<sub>i</sub> paciente a la<sub>i</sub> doctora  
 CL we.introduced her patient to the doctor  
 [dat>acc]

(17) "Forward" binding in double object constructions

- a. \*? La policía les entregó los<sub>i</sub> bebés a sus<sub>i</sub> padres  
 the police CL gave the babies to their parents  
 [acc>dat]
- b. \*Le presentamos la<sub>i</sub> doctora a su<sub>i</sub> paciente  
 CL we.introduced the doctor to her patient  
 [acc>dat]

### 3.2 Scope

In a sentence containing two quantifiers, typically two readings are possible, corresponding to the two relative scopes (structural positions) of the quantifiers at Logical Form.

- (18) A girl kissed every boy.
- $\exists > \forall$  (surface scope): one single girl is such that she kissed every boy.
  - $\forall > \exists$  (inverse scope): for every boy, there is a different girl such that she kissed him.

Ambiguity also arises in the English prepositional dative. However, the English double object construction is exceptional in that scope is fixed: the dative necessarily takes scope over the accusative.

- (19) a. Mary gave some book to everyone. [ $\exists > \forall/\forall > \exists$ ]  
 b. Mary gave someone every book [ $\exists > \forall/*\forall > \exists$ ]

Spanish behaves in the same way as English in this respect.

- (20) *Scope in the prepositional dative construction*  
 Andrés mandó cada cuadro a un museo  
 Andrés sent each painting to a museum  
 [ $\exists > \forall/\forall > \exists$ ]

- (21) *Scope in the double object construction*  
 Andrés le mandó cada cuadro a un coleccionista  
 Andrés CL sent each painting to a collector  
 [ $\exists > \forall/*\forall > \exists$ ]

### 3.3 double object construction *a* is not a preposition

In double object construction, the dative argument is apparently headed by the preposition *a* 'to'. However this is only an illusion: *a* is not a preposition in this case. Two reasons exposed in Strozer (1976) are:

- **Clitic doubling** — no prepositions, including directional *a* can be clitic doubled.

- (22) a. Juan **le** dió el libro a ella  
 Juan CL gave the book to her  
 b. \* Todo **le** funciona sin ella  
 everything **cl** works without her  
 c. \* Juan **le** fue de compras a París  
 Juan CL went shopping to Paris

- **Pronouns and animacy** — in the double object construction, a dative pronoun can only be animate. Prepositions don't impose this restriction on their complements.

- (23) a. Juan le puso el mantel { $\checkmark$  a la mesa /\* a ella }  
 Juan CL put the tablecloth to the table to her  
 b. Juan renunció { $\checkmark$  a la mesa / $\checkmark$  a ella }  
 Juan renounced to the table to her

## 4 Semantics of applicative constructions

Cuervo (2003) explains the variability in meanings in double object constructions by claiming that there are actually three different types of Appl heads, each with a slightly different semantics.

- **Appl-to** (recipient)
- **Appl-from** (source)
- **Appl-at** (location/possession)

In contrast, in prepositional datives, each meaning may require a different preposition.

- (24) a. Valeria le puso el mantel a la mesa  
Valeria CL put the tablecloth to the table  
[double object construction – locative]
- b. Valeria puso el mantel en la mesa  
Valeria put the tablecloth on the table  
[prepositional dative – locative]
- (25) a. Valeria le robó la bicicleta a Andrés  
Valeria CL stole the bicycle to Andrés  
[double object construction – source]
- b. Valeria robó la bicicleta de Andrés  
Valeria stole the bicycle from Andrés  
[prepositional dative – source]

## 5 Some references

- Cuervo, María Cristina. 2003. *Datives at large*. Doctoral dissertation, MIT (<http://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/7991>)
- Demonte, Violeta. 1995. Dative alternation in Spanish. *Probus* 7:5-30.

Cuervo's dissertation might be a bit too difficult to read on your own, so if attempt to do so, ask me whatever questions you might have.