The Dative Alternation in Old English*

Tanja Milićev

University of Novi Sad

Abstract

In this paper I argue that Old English has no alternating structure with ditransitive verbs such as give, as is proposed by McFadden (2002), but that the accusative-dative order is derived by scrambling. The dative alternation similar to the Present-Day English type is observed with verbs such as sendan ‘send’, but in Old English the DP and PP alternate between the meaning of benefactor and recipient goal, respectively. I adopt Pykkänen’s (2000) high and low applicative structures, for they do not only capture the fact that benefactors and recipients act on a par with sendan ‘send’ in the double object frame, but also provide a potential account of the subsequent loss of all the datives found with abstract applicative heads expressing relation other than to, as well as the change in the properties of the double object constructions in Old English and Present-Day English. The applicative structure also makes it possible to establish a correlation between the abstract applicative head in the double object construction and the preposition ‘to’ as a semantically vacuous case marker.

1 The double object construction in Old English

Old English (henceforth, OE) generally shows no Dative Alternation with the double object verbs such as give, as is the case in Present-Day English (henceforth, PDE). Verbs such as sendan ‘give’ and gyfan ‘give’ have both arguments expressed as DPs. The theme argument is generally marked accusative, while the goal argument is dative.1 Exception-

1 I would like to thank Ana van Kemenade and Marjana Marej for their insightful comments and suggestions. Correspondence: tanjamilicev@yahoo.com


1 Cf. Mitchell (1985) and van Kemenade (1987), for instance, on other case combinations, such as accusative-accusative, accusative-genitive. I will follow Anagnostopoulou (2001) in assuming that ditransitive verbs with case combinations other than dative-accusative do not have the double object construction.
ally, these verbs realize the goal argument as PP, but this is not a general pattern.2

(1) And sael ceorl beagum be Petres messaged to Dam
And she each hearth-penny gave by Peter’s massday to the
biscopsteole.
biscopsteole.DAT.
‘By St. Peter’s Massday, she gave every hearth-penny to the bishopric.’
(OECC: HomU 22 [Nap 23] B3.4.22 [001 (1)])3

1.1 The ordering of arguments
The central issue in various works on the OE double object constructions has been the ordering of the two arguments. However, it was not until Koopman’s (1990) detailed study of the construction that the topic received a systematic account.4 Building upon van Kemenade’s (1987) seminal work on the OE syntax and, more specifically, her account of pronominal elements as significantly different from nominal elements due to their clitic-like status, Koopman distinguishes double object constructions with pronominal objects from those with nominal objects. Indeed, the quantitative study of the two shows very telling differences. While the ordering with one pronominal and one nominal object can in most cases be accounted for by the clitic-like property of personal pronouns, which forces them to precede the nominal object, the orderings of two nominal and two pronominal objects still remain puzzling. Whereas two pronominal objects in 97% of the cases examined are ordered accusative-dative, two nominal objects show the same kind of distributional frequency with both accusative-dative and dative-accusative (henceforth, ACC-DAT and DAT-ACC, respectively).5

In trying to decide what the base order of the two objects is, Koopman (1990) applies the familiar double object diagnostics (cf. Aoun and Li 1989; Larson 1988, among others.) Thus he notes that, although in the majority of cases the indirect object indeed binds into the direct object (2a) and (2b), there is one example in which the direct object binds into the indirect object (3).

(2) a. And syllan þam þearfum [heora æelcum] [his dell].
And gave the poor.DAT them each.DAT his part.ACC.

b. Ænd sceal cyning [þegum þær] [his yfel] seale.
And that king every-DAT these bishops GEN his gift.ACC gave.
(B: Bede, 3.194.27)

(3) He ageaf [þone cnapan, ecencum] [his, meder].
He returned the boy alive.ACC his mother.DAT.
‘He returned the boy alive to his mother.’
(AELS (Martin) 1027; Koopman (1990: 210))

Since in (3) no weak crossover effects are observed, this suggests that both arguments are in A-positions, i.e. that movement is not responsible for this ordering.

1.2 ACC-DAT orders: scrambling?
The option that ACC-DAT orders are the result of movement, however, should not be so easily dispensed with. As pointed out by Haider (1999), in order for the diagnostic tests to really work, both objects need to be quantificational, since non-quantificational objects sometimes do not lead to crossover even when A-moved. In fact, in German (4), Korean, Hindi, Modern Persian, Russian, and Serbian (5), which are A-scrambling languages, scrambling is known to mitigate weak crossover (cf. Ballyn 2002; Greweend and Sabel 1999; Stjepanovic 1999; Sugisaki 2002: among others). Mixed A- and A-properties of scrambling are known to be found in a great many of the scrambling languages.

Since his mother.NOM every student.ACC loves.
’since his mother loves every student.’
b. Weil [p jeden Studenten], [p sein, Mutter t liebt].
Since every student.ACC his mother.NOM loves.
’since every student loves his mother.’
(Greweend and Sabel 1999: 16)

(5) a. *Njegova, majka voli svakog,
His mother.NOM loves everyone.ACC
‘His mother loves everyone.’
b. Svakog, njegova, majka voli 4.
Everyone.ACC his mother.NOM loves.
‘Everyone, his mother loves.’

Even though the binding facts point to the dative-accusative order as the base order, Koopman (1990) finds it hard to find a suitable account for the reverse order in terms of
movement. Relying mainly on accounts which take scrambling to be driven by definiteness/specificity, Koopman dismisses the option of scrambling because these triggers do not seem to be observed in OE.7

It is commonly assumed that the condition on movement of definite expression is presuppositional (cf. Heim’s (1982) ‘novelty condition’ according to which only discourse-novel entities are allowed to stay within the VP, or Diesing’s (1992) proposal that definite move out of the scope of the existential closure operator at S-structure by moving out of the VP). Presuppositionality is usually indicated by the discourse. This is not a general rule, however. Consider, for instance the OE weak demonstrative pronoun, which in some cases functions as the determiner/definite article. The weak demonstrative/determiner is not associated with discourse presuppositionality (i.e. whether or not discourse referents are already established in the discourse; cf. Mitchell (1988: 135) for examples), but rather signals a sort of ‘existential assertion’8 based on the speaker’s knowledge of somebody’s existence, where it is irrelevant whether or not the hearer shares the knowledge. Similarly, any expression can be ‘existentially’ presupposed by the speaker, and then no reference to the previous discourse is needed in order for it to be able to scramble.

Still, even with a loose notion of presuppositionality, which can account for the ability of non-specific/indefinite expressions to scramble, the fact remains that definite/specific/presupposed elements are not forced to move. This kind of optionality is excluded by the semantic account.

1.3 ACC-DAT: structural reasons

1.3.1 Ambiguous binding

The reordering of the two arguments is sometimes triggered by structural reasons. The most consistent case is the one that involves the binding of the anaphoric possessive pronoun. OE personal pronouns are anaphoric, and with no direct signal that it is subject-oriented/bound by the subject, a possessive pronoun can naturally be bound by

7Koopman claims that definiteness plays no role in the ordering of the objects, since both definite and indefinite objects scramble, and definite are found to both precede and follow indefinites:

(i) Past he anglocyne sume brecowes andene. That be England.dat some teachers.acc sent.
   ‘That he would send some teachers to England.’
   (AEC/Her ii.9.74.81; Koopman (1990: 197))

(ii) Past he mannum past ribhte in seige. That be men.dat that must permissible.acc not says.
   ‘That he does not tell the people what is most permissible.’
   (WPol 2.1.1(jot)e110; Koopman (1990: 197))

8The term is borrowed from Matthewson, Bryant, and Hooper. (2001).

non-subject antecedents. In classes where the subject and the indirect object both serve as possible antecedents (agreeing in the relevant phi-features), the direct object containing a reflexive possessive must be outside the configuration which will allow undesirable binding by the indirect object c-commanding it (68) and (69).

(6)

a. And þes geaf Athelwulf cing. [his,ACC dohtar] [Burhred.
   And therefore gave Athelwulf king,NOM his daughter,ACC Burhred
   cing].
   king,DAT.
   ‘And therefore king Athelwulf gave his daughter to king Burhred.’
   (OEC: Chronic C (Rossiter) B17.7 [0275 (854.10)])

b. Swa age þes goda mann; [his,PL westm] [godas].
   So gave this good man,NOM his fruit,ACC God,DAT.
   ‘So this good man gave his fruits to God.’
   (OEC: BChom II, 6 B1.2.7. [0077 (59.195)])

That this is indeed a strong condition can be seen from the fact that even pronouns which usually act as deficient elements and undergo obligatory movement to a higher position (either immediately preceding or immediately following the nominal subject) - in these cases are allowed to stay in their presumably base position (7).

(7)

a. And Æþelstan, [his,ACC sweotor] [him], forgeaf.
   And Æthelstan,NOM his sister,ACC him,DAT gave.
   ‘And Æthelstan gave his sister to him.’
   (OEC: ChronD (Clasen-Harm) B17.8 [0462 (925.1)])

b. He [his,ACC dohtar] [him], sellan wolde.
   He,NOM his daughter,ACC him,DAT given wanted.
   ‘He wanted to give his daughter to him.’
   (OEC: Or 3 B9.2.4 [0147 (7.68.19)])

The same strategy is applied when the antecedent is outside the clause, and the possessive pronoun is not anaphoric but pronominal. If the indirect object has appropriate features to bind the direct object, the direct object will scramble to a position where it is not c-commanded by a legitimate but wrong antecedent (8).

(8)

Eac manige Frincisce men, ferleton heorn land. & ferdon ofer sac & se
   Also many French men forlet their land and travelled over sea and the
   cyng geaf [heorn,ACC land] þam munnum be him holde waren.
   king,NOM gave their land,ACC the man,DAT who him faithful were.
   ‘Also many French men left their land and went over the sea. And the king gave
   their land to the men who were faithful to him.’
   (OEC: Chronic B (Plummer) B17.9 [1426 (1087.80)])
1.3.2 Scope resolution

In a similar fashion, certain cases of ACC-DAT orders, such as (9), can be seen as the result of the scrambling of the direct object in order to resolve quantifier scope interactions.

(9) Pæt se sceppend ealra gesceafna hàsfo forgíen [мене лстав ки an
That the Creator all creatures.NOM has given one desire and one
gecyn] [cumult his gesceafum]; pæt is þæt hi woldon a blon.
origin.ACC all his creatures.DAT; that is that they would always be.
'That the Creator of all creatures gave all his creatures one desire and one origin;
that is that they procreate.'
(BC: BOETH, 03.20)

Although it is a well-known fact that in the PDE double object constructions with two quantified expressions, the first DP has wide scope with respect to the second (cf. Aoun and Li 1989; Larson 1990; Baker 1997), this does not seem to hold crosslinguistically. In Serbian for instance, the double object frame shows ambiguous scopal relations, i.e. either object can take wide scope with respect to the other (10). The ambiguity is resolved by moving the direct object to the position preceding the indirect object (11). Possibly, in OE as well, if the direct object is to take wide scope, it has to c-command the indirect object at S-structure.

(10) Úitiln je dao sva/kom studentu jedan zadatak.
Teacher.NOM is given every student.DAT one assignment.ACC.
'The teacher gave one assignment to every student.'
(every > one; one > every)

(11) Úitiln je dao jedan zadatak sva/kom studentu.
Teacher.NOM is given one assignment.ACC every student.DAT.
'The teacher gave every student one assignment.'
(one > every)

So, in the OE example in (9), the direct object containing the quantifier 'one' is moved to the position preceding the indirect object to take wide scope over the quantifier 'all'.

Let us return now to Koopman's binding "troublesmaker" from (3), here repeated as (12).

(12) He, ageaf [pone snapan; cucenene] [бiрнм мeder.
He returned the boy alive.ACC his mother.DAT.
'He returned the boy alive to his mother.'
(AELS (Martin) 1027; Koopman 1990: 210)

Having in mind that A-scrambling can take care of the weak crossover effects, and that OE is sensitive to ambiguous binding relations, nothing prevents us from assuming that the accusative DP is not in fact in its base position but has been scrambled in order to signal that 'the boy' is the binder of the anaphor 'his' in the dative argument, and not the subject pronoun 'he' which has the same phi-features. This movement does not prevent the subject pronoun to bind into the indirect object - it still c-commands the anaphoric pronoun at S-structure. The sentence is probably still ambiguous, since the subject pronoun can still bind the anaphor, as are the instances like English (13) or Serbian (14).

(13) Peter gave John his key.
(14) Peter je vratio deca, zdravo njegovoj majci.
Peter.NOM is returned boy.ACC healthy.ACC his mother.DAT
'Petar returned the boy alive to his mother.'

The effect of the movement in such cases is to provide the right structural configuration which also enables binding by the direct object.

1.4 ACC-DAT: optional [+/-Foc] feature

While it is always nice to have structural or semantic triggers for movement, scrambling included, the fact remains that in the left-over cases of accusative-dative orders, as in the other instances of reorderings (e.g. object-adverb), scrambling seems to be a stylistic, PF operation, driven by some sort of [+/-Foc] feature (Holmberg 1999: cf.). The presence of this feature is optional, and cannot be connected to any kind of semantic feature. Consider, for instance, the following case. Two versions of "Gregory the Great, Dialogues", Manuscript C and Manuscript H, show two different orderings of the objects. In Manuscript H, the indirect object precedes the direct object (15a), whereas in Manuscript C, the direct object is found to the left of the indirect object (15b).

(15) a. pa gehyrde dhrihten his bene & seald [Robecca his wife]
than heard the-Lord his request and gave Rebecca his wife.DAT
fertility.ACC.
'then the Lord heard his request and gave his wife Rebecca fertility.'
(OEC: GD 1 (H) B9.5.8.2 [0340 (8.55.21)])

b. pa gehyrde dhrihten his bene & seald [waesm] [Rebecca his wife].
(OEC: GD 1 (C) B9.5.2 [0277 (8.55.20)])

The direct object wæstm, has been mentioned in the previous line (that is his request to God), as is therefore "familiar", and the C-scribe chose to encode this, while the H-scribe chose to leave the direct object in its base position. Here one should bear in mind that the C manuscript dates back from 950-1050, i.e. is at least a century older than the H manuscript. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that, for instance, the order
DAT-ACC found in (15) is associated with the loss of scrambling. It also clearly points to the fact that scrambling in OE is optional, as much as most stylistic operations are.

1.5 Two different structures (McFadden 2002)

In order to offer a perspective on how the PDE dative alternation came into being, McFadden (2002), adopts the non-derivational/transformational analysis for Modern English double object/prepositional ditransitive constructions (Pesetsky 1995; Harley 2002) and proposes that OE goal-theme and theme-goal orders reflect two different structures. Specifically, following Harley (2002), he posits the following structures (16):

(16) a. Double object structure

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{id} \rightarrow \text{vP} \\
\text{vcause} & \rightarrow \text{PP} \\
\text{DPGOAL;POSSESSOR} & \rightarrow \text{P} \\
\text{PHAVE} & \rightarrow \text{DP THEME;POSSESSEE} \\
\end{align*}
\]

b. Double complement structure

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{id} \rightarrow \text{vP} \\
\text{vcause} & \rightarrow \text{PP} \\
\text{DP THEME} & \rightarrow \text{P} \\
\text{PLOC} & \rightarrow \text{PP TO-GOAL} \\
\end{align*}
\]

DAT-ACC orders in OE actually have the double object structure, i.e. the dative argument is projected as the specifier of the abstract preposition HAVE, and the theme argument in the complement position; the relationship of possession comes from the meaning of HAVE. DAT-ACC orders, on the other hand, come in the double complement structure, in which the locative preposition selects the theme argument as its specifier, and to-PP as complement; the preposition being locational, possession is not entailed in this structure. The major motivation for non-derivational approaches are the well-known lexico-semantic differences between the two frames (Green 1974; Kayne 1973; Oehrle 1976: cf.). The difference between (17a) and (17b), for instance, is that in the double object frame the students did learn French, whereas in the double complement frame, this does not have to be the case.

McFadden (2002) further assumes that with the loss of inherent dative case, the preposition “to” came to be used overtly as a case marker.

(17) a. John taught the students French.
    b. John taught French to the students.

(Larson 1988, fn. 44, citing Oehrle 1976)

The well-known animacy requirement on the indirect object in the double object frame (Oehrle’s Generalization; Oehrle 1976) is due to the goal’s interpretation of prospective possessor.

(18) a. The editor sent Sue the article.
    b. *The editor sent Philadelphia the article.

However, inanimate goals can be found in OE (19).

(19) And ἄντις God forgesa ἑαρὸν οἱ ὅραν.
    And that God gave the earth.DAT rains.ACC.
‘And that God gave rains to the earth.’
(OEC: SLS (George) B1.3.15(0045)166))

However, on a looser and more flexible definition of possession, inanimate goals still match the possession interpretation. Krifka (2000) explains that if, for instance, one gives the wall a new coat of paint, after that, the wall “has* a new coat of paint. Even so, what seems to be problematic for OE is that possession rather than transfer (of possession) is still found in the DO-to frame (20):

(20) Ecæ manægæ Franciscæ men forleton heora land. & ferdon ofer sæ. & sæ
Also many French men forlet their land and travelled over sea and the
cynig geaf [heora land] þam mannum be him holde wæron.
king.NOM gave their land.ACC the man.DAT who him faithful were.
‘Also many French men left their land and went over the sea. And the king gave their land to the men who were faithful to him.’
(OEC:ChronE (Plummer) B17.9 [1426 (1087.86)])

If the sequence in which the accusative argument precedes the dative argument would have the double complement structure, the theme arcs land ‘their land’ is to be interpreted as undergoing some sort of movement to þam mannum ‘the men’, the goal. This obviously is not the case here.

Apart from genuine semantic differences lacking in OE, McFadden’s account is problematic for the issue of the passive. He addresses the question of case, and proposes that in both structures the higher object receives structural case from the cause in v dominating it. The lower argument, i.e. the direct object, in the double object structure receives structural case from abstract HAVE, whereas the lower object in the double complement structure, i.e. the indirect object, receives oblique case from the preposition. In order to account for OE oblique datives, McFadden further assumes that in OE the
abstract LOC predicates generally subcategorise for obliques, which were realised as DPs with overt case. If both theme and goal argument can be assigned structural case, the prediction would be that indirect passives are also available in OE. Of course, they are not (van Kemenade 1987: cf.).

For all these reasons, I will assume that ACC-DAT and DAT-ACC orders do not reflect two different structures with semantic differences, and that the ACC-DAT order is the result of scrambling.

2 Dative alternation with sendan 'send'

In order to get a better insight into how the two structures/frames developed, it seems more reasonable to look at the OE verbs which do show the dative alternation. Verbs such as bringan 'bring' and sendan 'send' realise their goal argument both as PP and DP. Here I will look into the properties of the alternation with sendan.

The verb sendan 'send' can have both DP and PP goals. The preposition introducing the goal argument of sendan is allative in nature, in most cases it is the preposition to. Transition being always implied, a variety of other prepositions is also allowed (21), specifying how the final point is reached by the theme.

(21) a. Drihton þa sende on hle maran wrecce. Lord.NOM then sent on them more misery.ACC.
   'God then sent more misery to them.'
   (OEC: HomS 21 [BHom 6] B3.2.21 [0082 (228)])

b. Peþ þu sende ofer me þine bletsungu. That you send over me your blessing.
   'That you send your blessing to me.'
   (OEC: LS 20 [AssumptMor] B3.3.20 [0013 (25)])

Sendan can also have both recipient and directional/locational to-DPs expressed:

(22) þa δa þu sendeste me to HierasalemLOC to Alexander cunyngeREC.
   When then you sent me to Jerusalem to Alexander king.
   'When you sent me to Jerusalem to king Alexander.'
   (OEC: Nic (A) B6.5.2.1 [0015 (1.3.2)])

(23) a. And sende þa arclice þis arendewgarit him to. And sent then quickly this message.ACC him.DAT to.
   'And then quickly sent this message to him.'
   (OEC: ELS (Abdon and Sennes) B1.3.24 [0027 (86)])

b. And se bishop Marinus soma ... sende Theodosie arendewgarit. And the bishop Marinus.NOM soon ... sent Theodosie.DAT message.ACC.
   'And the bishop Marinus soon sent Theodosie a message.'
   (OEC: LS 34 [SevenSleepers] B3.3.34 [0205 (727)])

(24) þa sende se tunned sumne getryme arendewgaran to þam halgan Then sent the town-council some trusty messenger.ACC to the holy Martine, his helpers bidding.
   Martin his help. GEN bidding.
   'Then the town-council sent a trusty messenger to St. Martin, asking for his help.'
   (OEC: ELS (Martin) B1.3.30 [0302 (1219)])

This could serve as evidence that the double object frame is indeed associated with the transfer of possession. Arendewgar, being animate, is not expected to be possessed by someone, therefore, this DP can only be 'caused to go to/be at' or 'moved to' goal (Krifka 2001). However, this is not a general situation in OE, because animate themes can be found in the double object frame (25).

(25) a. And eft he him sumne sende & bi þane ofalogon & And again he them.DAT some.ACC sent and they that killed and manage ofre. many others.
   'And again he sent them someone and they killed him and many others.'
   (OEC: Mk (WSCP) B8.4.3.2 [0461 (12.5)])

b. þa senden he him Appius Claudius þone consul und futume. Then sent they him Appius Claudius the consul.ACC with help.
   'Then they sent him the consul Appius Claudius with help.'
   (OEC: Or 4 B9.2.5 [0123 (6.92.3)])

Derivational approaches to the dative alternation in PDE (cf. Larsen 1988, 1990; Baker 1997, among others), claim that possession in the double object frame is suggested
rather than asserted or implied. Baker, for instance, notes that there is no contradiction in (26), as would be expected if the indirect object is always a prospective possessor.

(26) I taught the children French, but they didn’t learn it at all.

2.2 Frame sensitive themes

Whereas animacy of the theme is not what determines its occurrence with DP or PP goals, some other differences between the two frames can still be observed. Certain themes seem to be very sensitive to the frame they appear in. One such theme is *gast* "ghost". When a ghost is sent from God to people it does so in a double object frame (27); when people send their ‘ghost’ to God, they do it in the double complement frame (28).

(27) a. Paest him God sendse his godcundne angal on his fultum.
That him.DAT God.NOM send his divine angel.ACC on his help.
‘That God sent him his divine angel to help him.’
(OEC: PaHead B8.2.2 [0057 (33.1)])

Without getting into the delicate details of the animacy of ghosts and angels, what they seem to have in common when they are found with DP goals is the mission to help or punish.

If we look more carefully at the animate themes in the double object frame, the same observation holds - animate themes are sent for the goal’s benefit (they help in fights, bring Christianity to those who ask for it, and so on) or punishment. This observation is further supported by the fact that *fultum* ‘help’ as theme always occurs in the double object frame, i.e. the goal is always expressed as DP as in (30).

(30) a. Ózius asende him maran fultum.
Ózius.NOM sent them.DAT more help.ACC.
‘Ózius sent them more help.’
(OEC: ÆHomM 15 (Ass 9) B1.5.13 [0106 (375)])

Since this is indeed the only difference that can be observed by the two frames, I will assume that the *sendan* double object frame carries the benefactive/malefactive flavour.

Interestingly, the double object frame is always followed by a sort of explication of the goal’s benefit or punishment. Some examples are given in (31).

(31) a. And sende heom þa tacna to eorcan þæt hi mihton
And sent him.DAT the sign.ACC to earth that they might
ongyton þæt he was so God on heofonum.
understand that he was true God on heaven.
‘And send them the signs to the earth so that they could understand that he was true God in heaven.’
(OEC: HomS 42 (Bæs-Cr) B3.2.42 [0008 (12)])

The noun *engel* ‘angel’ as theme shows a similar kind of distribution. Due to their intrinsic properties, angels can be sent from God, and the people they reach are realised as DP goals (29).

(28) a. And min gast sy asend on his sibæte to Drihtne.
And my ghost.NOM be sent on his journey to Lord.
‘And my ghost was sent on his journey to the Lord.’
(OEC: ÆLS (Martin) B1.3.30 [0345 (1361)])

b. He his gast to god fæder asende.
He his ghost.ACC to god father.DAT sent.
‘He sent his ghost to God.’
(OEC: HomS 28 B3.2.28 [0023 (60)].)

b. Donne sende he heom fultum þurh sumne deman.
Then sent he them.DAT help.ACC through some judge.
‘Then he sent them help through a judge.’
(OEC: ÆLet 4 (SigewerdB) B1.8.4.3 [0055 (436)])

The noun *engel* ‘angel’ as theme shows a similar kind of distribution. Due to their intrinsic properties, angels can be sent from God, and the people they reach are realised as DP goals (29).

(29) a. And asende me his engel, þe minne lichaman gehelod.
And sent me.DAT his angel.ACC, who my body held.
‘And sent me his angel, who held my body.’
(OEC: ÆLS (Agnes) B1.3.8 [0070 (184)])

b. And swa fela borningcneata asende ure Halend mancine to
And so many learning-men.DAT sent our Lord.NOM mankind.DAT to
bodienne þær bocu lære mid pam cristendome.
preach the book’s lore with the Christendom.
‘And our Lord sent mankind so many scholars to preach Christianity.’
(OEC: ÆLet 4 (SigewerdZ) B1.8.4.4 [0242 (1180)])
c. And  him  sumne harrow  sendon  he  his  leoda  mihte  to  Gode  
And him.DAT some teacher.ACC sent who his people could to God’s  
gewoman.
lead.

‘And sent him a teacher who could lead his people to God.’

(OEC: ÆLS (Oswald) B1:3.26 [0014 (48)])

This explication is absent with PP-goals (32).

(32) a. Eadsige archbishop  ...sende to me to Hrisbeorgan his twegen  
Eadsige archbishop.NOM ...sent to me to Hrisbeorgan his two  
cnultae & [had me hast ha forword moston standan.
servants.ACC and asked me that the agreements must stand.

‘The archbishop Eadsige sent his two servants to me to Hrisbeorgan and asked  
me for the agreements to hold.’

(OEC: Ch 1466 (Rob 90)B15.5.25 [0001 (1)])

b. &  þa  sende he his erendweocan to Wulfheard to Intanbeorgum [&  
And then sent he his messenger to Wulfheard to Intanbeorgum and  
heht þæt he cuome to him].
ordered that he came to him.

‘And then he sent his messenger to Wulfheard to Intanbeorgum and ordered  
that he come to him.’

(OEC: Ch 1432 (Rob 4) B15.5.1 [0002 (2)])

Therefore, we can assume that sendan indeed shows an alternation - between DP  
benefactor and PP-goal. The possibility of both locational and recipient goals being  
able to satisfy the theta-grid of sendan, in addition to the benefactor-goal alternation,  
indicates that sendan is not very sensitive to the exact type of theta-role that an argument  
would be assigned. The same is true of send in PDE as shown in (33):

(33) He sent his clothes to Utrecht.

3 The structure
3.1 Applicatives

In recent literature it has been proposed that double object constructions have an extra  
head, corresponding to the applicative head in Bantu languages (Marantz 1993; Harley  
1995; Anagnostopoulou 2001; Pyylkänén 2000). This applicative head takes the goal  
argument as its specifier. What can actually be applied to the goal is not uniformly  
assumed. Marantz (1993) and Anagnostopoulou (2001), for instance, propose that the  
applicative head relates the goal to the VP, containing the verb and the theme argument  
(34).

\[ (34) \]
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{vP} \\
\text{vCAUSE} \\
\text{v_1} \\
\text{v_2} \\
\text{v_APPL} \\
\text{VP} \\
\text{V} \\
\text{Theme}
\end{array}
\]

On the basis of what is related to the applied argument, Pyylkänén (2000) distinguishes two types of applicatives: high and low. Low applicatives encode a relation  
between two individuals, two DPs, while high applicatives express the relation between  
an individual and an event. Thus the high ApplH takes a VP complement and a DP  
specifier (35), while the low ApplL takes a DP complement and a DP specifier (36).

(35) High applicative

\[ (35) \]
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{vP} \\
\text{vCAUSE} \\
\text{ApplP} \\
\text{Goal} \\
\text{Appl^l} \\
\text{VP} \\
\text{V} \\
\text{Theme}
\end{array}
\]

(36) Low applicative

\[ (36) \]
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{vP} \\
\text{vCAUSE} \\
\text{VP} \\
\text{V} \\
\text{ApplP} \\
\text{Goal} \\
\text{Appl^l} \\
\text{Theme}
\end{array}
\]

The division into the two types of applicatives has primarily been made in order to  
account for transitivity differences found with benefactive datives: certain benefactors  
allow verbs with theme incorporation, while others disallow them. Pyylkänén (2000)  
argues that the transitivity properties of applicative constructions arise from a semantic  
difference. It is the presence of the applicative head in low applicatives that prevents  
theme incorporation by the verb. High applicative benefactors, being applied a relation
with the event, never involve a directional or "prospective possessor" relation with the theme. In low applicative constructions, possession is a structural meaning, and is always entailed.

The double object construction is a low applicative: an applicative head relates the theme argument with the goal argument, and then, the ApplPhrase expressing this relation merges with the verb. The applicative phrase correctly captures both semantic and structural properties of the double object constructions (the goal is interpreted as a prospective possessor of the theme since it is applied an abstract relation with the theme; being generated in SpecApplP, the goal asymmetrically c-commands the theme argument). According to Pylkkänen (2000, 2003), the low applicative head itself expresses two kinds of directional relations: TO and FROM. With a TO-App, the indirect object is interpreted as recipient/benefactor, whereas with the opposite directionality, the source interpretation arises.

Cuervo (2003) builds upon Pylkkänen (2000, 2003) and extends the analysis to Spanish, analysing all datives as affected arguments selected by Appl heads. She quite successfully manages to account for most of the datives found in Spanish by combining the light verb meanings (vdo, vgo, vbr) with different types of applicative heads (TO, FROM, AT) for low applicatives. She assumes that the applicative head assigns inherent case to the indirect object. For high applicatives, she introduces the option of having the embedded/non-embedded events applied. Making this distinction, she can analyse causatives and inchoatives with datives as embedded events, the former having a vdo, the latter vgo.

3.2 Applied datives in OE

Manipulating the abstract meanings of applicative heads, many of the OE datives can fit into an applicative type of analysis. On the applicative approach, both recipient and benefactive datives, such as (37) involve the relation TO with the theme argument.

(38) a. And hit þam geleæfullum æfyrsege þere brounge forhtunge.
   And it those believing.DAT remove that suffering four.ACC.
   'And it removed that suffering fear from the believers.'
   (BC: AELIVE.I,216.119)

b. Se ðe hine deþp nimeþ.
   He who him.ACC death.DAT takes.
   'He who takes him from death.'
   (ASD: Beo,Th.887; B.441)

c. And þam ungeleæfullum þa yfelan þösse ofeo.
   And those unbelieving.DAT that evil bliss.ACC remove.
   'And take away the evil bliss from the unbelieving.'
   (BC: AELIVE.I,216.119)

OE also seems to have bi-eventive applicative structures, since datives found with causative verbs such as 'unlock' in (39) can be said to have been applied a vp. Notice the lack of the possession relation of the dative 'believing persons' and 'the church'.

(39) And þa cyrcan unlucan geleæfullum mannum.
   And that church.ACC unlock believing persons.DAT.
   'And they unlocked the church for the believers.'
   (BC: AELITE4,8.30)

OE also has a substantial amount of possessive datives. Generally, there are two kinds of approaches to possessive datives. On one, the dative is assumed to be in two places at the same time - in the higher position as a DP, in the lower position, as PRO (Borer and Grodzinsky 1986) or trace (Landaal 1999), indicating the possession relationship with the possessive-DP. On the other approach (Pylkkänen 2003), possessive datives are the same as indirect objects, generated in the specifier of the low applicative head (SpecApplP), which unlike the head of the "classical" double object constructions denotes the source relation to the complement DP, i.e. FROM-THE-POSSESSION-OF.

(40)

Ditransitive verbs such as afororien 'remove' (38a), nimon 'take' (38b), and oftean 'take, remove' (38c) can be said to involve the FROM-App.

13She introduces a third type of applicative head, static AT to account for non-directional trransitive activity verbs such as 'wash', which give the dative a possessor interpretation.

14The verb afororien also shows an alternation with the from-PP.

(41) Seo cwen het þa ðæm cnyinge þet heafod of accorufan. That queen.NOM commanded then that king.DAT that head.ACC of cut-off.
   'The queen ordered that the king's head be cut off.'
   (BC: OROSIU,76.31)
3.3 Datives with PPs

There is a very interesting instance of datives found with PP adjuncts. Although it is hard to apply the applicative structure to these cases, some general ideas behind the applicative analysis can be used to account for some of the properties of these constructions. Certain datives found with PPs can be interpreted as possessive datives, others as benefactors. In Milicic (2004), it is observed that all datives found with PPs are benefactors. That the dative and the PP form a structural unit can best be seen from the fact that personal pronouns, which generally act as deficient elements and undergo movement to a position in the higher domain, are allowed to stay low down, immediately preceding the PP (42).

(42) a. Done macedon þa hæðenan eac heom [to maran gode].
    That.ACC made those heathens.NOM also them.DAT to greater benefit.
    (BC: WULF4,223,65)

b. And ic bidde þihere dohtor me [to gemæccan].
    And I ask your daughter me to make.
    'And I ask for your daughter to be my wife.'
    (BC: APOLOLO,6.4.8)

The differences in the interpretation of the dative arise from the level at which something is applied to them. Abstracting away from the details of their syntactic representation, possessive interpretation arises because the dative is in a low-applicative type of structure, whereas the dative is interpreted as pure benefactor when it has a high-applicative type of structure. When a PP adjunct establishes a modifying relation with the theme argument, it is found in a "low applicative", and the dative can be interpreted as possessor; no possession is entailed when the dative is applied to the whole event expressed by the VP, with a PP adjunct specifying the benefactive/malefactive interpretation. PP adjuncts seem to fall into two classes in this respect. Roughly, they divide into PPs with relational nouns, and PPs with "benefactive" nouns, such as fultum ‘help’, boar ‘use, service, profit’, toom ‘injury’, brice ‘use, service’, not ‘use, profit, advantage’, god ‘good, benefit, welfare’, weor_Bymg ‘honor’. PPs with relational nouns usually correspond to low applicatives, whereas PPs with "benefactive" nouns to high applicatives.

"High" benefactive datives are compatible with recipient datives in the double object construction (43), "low" benefactive datives can only be realised as reflexive pronouns when found with ditransitives (44).

15Pykkänen (2003), discussing possessive datives found with PP modified unergatives, admits that these cannot be applicative structures because it would be impossible for a low applicative head to relate an indirect object to an DP inside a PP.

(43) Da aspended be his feoh unforb hafenleasum munnum þam
    Then spent be his money.ACC destitute persons.DAT the
    hæsende [to lofe].
    savior.DAT to glory.
    'Then he fearlessly spent all his money on destitute people to God's glory.'
    (BC: AELive, 1, 308.12)

(44) & him þa Carl Francena cyning his dohtor gef ume
    And him.DAT then Carl Franks’ king.NOM his daughter.ACC gave him.DAT
    [to cuene]-
    to queen.
    'And then Charles the king of Franks gave him his daughter to become his wife.'
    (ChromA (Plummer) B17.1 [0333 (855-4)])

Furthermore, while the recipient argument can establish a relation with the noun in the PP with low applicatives, (45), this is impossible with high applicatives, (46), and the reflexive pronoun seems to be obligatory in such cases.

(45) þat he gef me his ancnanedan dohtor [to gemæccan].
    That gave me.DAT his only-begotten daughter.ACC to mate.
    'That he gave me his only daughter to be my wife.'
    (BC: APOLOLO,36.48.21)

(46) Ac he forgeaf us mannum middaneardlice bing us sylfum [to
    But he gave us men.DAT worldly things.ACC us selves.DAT to
    breyc].
    use.
    'But he gave us worldly things for our own use.'
    (OEC: vEom 31 B1.4. [0008 (35)])

Although DAT+PP constructions have yet to receive a proper syntactic representation, I believe that the differences in the possession potential of the dative conceptually match the semantic differences known to exist between high and low applicatives.

The incompatibility of two DP datives, recipient and "low" benefactors with PPs, seems to indicate that there cannot be two applied arguments within the same applicative phrase. The benefactor on PPs in such cases can only be expressed as a reflexive pronoun because reflexive pronouns are known not to introduce new arguments and, therefore, do not disrupt the argument/thematic structure of the verb.

4 Sendan (applied) benefactor/PP-goal alternation - gateway to the Dative Alternation

Returning now to the case of sendan and its benefactor/PP-goal alternation, it can be said that it really alternates between an applied argument and a non-applied argument.
Whether the applied argument is associated with the recipient or benefactor theta-role is not crucial, as long as the TO relation is involved.

Both recipient and benefactor occupying the same structural position - the specifier of low ApplP - the exploitation of beneficaitiveness/maleficaitiveness present with the double object frame is needed to in order to disambiguate the benefactor from recipient.

So, while sendan does not show the “classical” dative alternation, it is in a way responsible for its subsequent development, by offering an alternative frame for the recipient double object construction as well. Why the alternative was needed was probably due to the change in the double object frame itself, since the double object construction in OE and PDE differ significantly. The change most likely targeted the abstract preposition TO, which no longer was seen as able to assign inherent/morphological case to the goal argument. Whether or not it also affected the way the abstract relation with the theme is applied to the indirect object still remains to be seen, since the entailment/suggestion of possession in the double object construction seems to be stronger in PDE than in OE.

The greatest appeal of the applicative type of analysis is that it, at least descriptively, captures a substantial number of historical facts. The development of the structures involving datives can be seen as featuring the loss of high applicatives, as well as low applicatives with the abstract FROM relation. This is why benefactors with causatives (47), source-double object constructions (48), possessive datives (49) are no longer acceptable in Standard PDE.

(47)  *They unlocked me the church.
(48)  *Peter stole Mary the ring.
(49)  *Peter broke me the heart.

That only the low TO-APpl is featured in the PDE double object construction ties in with the fact that its head, abstract as it is, still corresponds to the preposition which is found with PP-goals. There are reasons to believe that with goals, ‘to’ is a semantically vacuous preposition (cf. Rooryck 1996, Marej 2004). However, the applicative type of analysis is not without problems. In treating recipients and benefactors as the same kind of “indirect objects”, occupying the same kind of position, we lose insight into the asymmetries found with them. Firstly, benefactors are optional, recipient/goals are not. While passivization is available to goals/recipients, benefactors are impossible as subjects in passives as shown in (50).

(50)  *Peter was made a birthday cake.

If they involve the same position in the applicative phrase, this is unexpected. However the structural case in the double object construction may be assigned to the indirect object, it should be assigned the same way to goals/recipients and benefactors, making

them eligible to passivise. This is something that certainly needs to be addressed in further research.

5 Conclusion

In the previous approaches to OE facts as a source for the PDE dative alternation, it has been assumed that the overwhelming presence of DAT-ACC and ACC-DAT orders with ditransitive verbs reflects two different structures (explicitly assumed in McFadden 2002, and suggested in Koopman 1990). Since the semantic difference, which is at the core of the idea of alternating structures, is lacking in OE, we see no way how the non-derivational analysis of these facts can be maintained. Rather, the word order variation seems to be accountable in terms of scrambling as a stylistic operation. Moreover, we believe that the dative alternation present in OE, i.e. the alternation between a benefactive and a recipient goal with verbs such as sendan ‘send’, could provide new insights into the puzzling properties of the PDE dative alternation. An applicative-type of analysis looks very promising since it can capture the properties that “affected” arguments - nominal benefactives and recipients - are assumed to have in common. Finally, it should be noted that the correlation between the OE and PDE dative alternation is far from being straightforward, mainly because different properties of OE and PDE double object constructions/prepositional ditransitives stem from the difference in assigning case to the goal/recipient argument.
References


