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(Citation)

Proceedings of the International Argument Alternation Workshop:59-66

(Issue Date)

2026-01-20

(Resource Type)

conference paper

(Version)

Version of Record

(JaLCD0I)

<https://doi.org/10.24546/0100499708>

(URL)

<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14094/0100499708>



Beyond dative alternation: Four types of Korean ditransitives*

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1. Proposal

English has very productive ‘Dative Alternation’, exemplified in (1).

- (1) a. John gave Mary a book. (Double Object Construction, ‘DOC’)
- b. John gave a book to Mary. (Prepositional Dative Construction, ‘PDC’)

Interestingly, this alternation is restricted when the *giving* is abstract or idiomatic (2), when the construction involves a beneficiary Indirect Object (IO) as in (3), or when the ditransitive verb conveys ‘anti-possession’ (4).

- (2) a. John gave Mary a cold.
- b. *John gave a cold to Mary. (Green 1974, Larson 1988, Bruening 2010a i.a.)
- (3) a. John bought Mary a car.
- b. *John bought a car to Mary. (Kittilä 2005, Song 2010)
- (4) a. The boss denied George his pay.
- b. %The boss denied his pay to George. (Larson 1988, Bruening 2010a; 2010b)

A well-known analysis related to this restriction comes from Harley (2002), who proposes that the (a) and (b) variants are not identical in meaning. Intuitively, DOC *give* means ‘cause to have’ while PDC *give* means ‘cause to be located at’. The fine details might differ, but many scholars have subsequently agreed that such a distinction is largely correct. Harley and Jung (2015) later revise Harley’s initial proposal, converging on (5). Roots are manner-adjoined to *v* in their DOC structure.

- (5) a. DOC: [_{VP} *v* [_{HAVEP} IO [_{HAVE} DO]]]
- b. PDC: [_{VP} DO [_{giveV} IO]] (accepting Bruening’s (2010b) proposal)

The notion that DOCs have a special HAVE component seems to be compatible with the initial restrictions (e.g., a *cold* can be *had* but not *located*). However, the following four pieces of Korean data are very puzzling if the proposal is fully correct.

* I am grateful to Heejeong Ko, Seungho Nam, Daniel Plesniak, Semoon Hoe, and Chorong Kang for their mentorship; to Claire Robertson and Lindsay O’Neill for their assistance with the English data; and to Shigeru Miyagawa and Mamoru Saito each for an enjoyable Zoom meeting. I also thank Kiyoko Toratani, Hideki Kishimoto, Caroline Heycock and Kyle Johnson for their supportive commentary. This paper was presented at *The International Argument Alternation Workshop* held on July 16 and July 17, 2025, hosted by the Graduate School of Humanities, Kobe University.

- (6) a. *John-i Mary-eykey chayk-ul cwuessta.* (PDC)
 John-NOM Mary-DAT book-ACC gave
 ‘John gave a book to Mary.’
 b. *John-i Mary-lul chayk-ul cwuessta.* (DOC)
 John-NOM Mary-ACC book-ACC gave
 ‘John gave Mary a book.’
- (7) a. *John-i Mary-eykey yengkam-ul cwuessta.* (PDC)
 John-NOM Mary-DAT inspiration-ACC gave
 ‘John gave inspiration to Mary.’
 b. **John-i Mary-lul yengkam-ul cwuessta.* (*DOC)
 John-NOM Mary-ACC inspiration-ACC gave
 ‘John gave Mary inspiration.’

Korean *cwu-* ‘give’ normally participates in dative alternation (6). The alternation restriction observed in English (2) carries onto Korean (7), except in the exact opposite direction. It is the PDC variant that is grammatical, and the DOC variant that is not.

Even more puzzling is that the animacy restriction in DOCs applies in a *parallel* fashion for the two languages. (8a) is only felicitous if ‘London’ is construed as an office or some group of people (Oehrle’s (1976) ‘London office effect’). This effect does not exist in PDCs. In Korean as well, the indirect object must be an animate entity capable of possession, only in DOCs and not in PDCs (Jung and Miyagawa 2004).

- (8) a. I sent *London the letter. (cf. I sent the letter to London.)
 b. *Mary-ka hakkyo-{ey/*lul} ton-ul cwuessta.*
 Mary-NOM school-{DAT/*ACC} money-ACC gave
 ‘Mary gave money to the school.’

So we are faced with seemingly contradictory evidence. Korean does align with English animacy restrictions, but alternates in the opposite direction when the *giving* is abstract.¹

The goal of this paper is to provide a coherent account of this puzzle. In what follows, I reexamine the English ‘DOC-only’ cases, proposing a new syntactic structure for them. I will then show how the analysis works in Korean as well, proposing a Case parameter that causes the difference between (2) and (7). The central claims of this paper are as follows:

- (9) a. High applicatives that introduce Affectees, Benefactives and Malefactives (Pykkänen 2002; 2008) exist in English, too.²
 b. English DOC-only cases arise when the indirect object must play a ‘double’

¹ By abstract *giving*, I refer to cases which Larson (1988: 376) describes as ‘when the direct object cannot be understood as undergoing motion along some path’. Another possible understanding is Bruening’s (2010b: 557), who states that ‘one can only *have* a headache and not *receive* one’, which is what causes **give a headache to X*. I assume their descriptions to be correct. If this is true, *to*-phrases must be what I refer to as ‘physical’ or ‘concrete’ recipients of *giving*.

² As Cuervo (2003) and Bosse and Bruening (2011) point out, each of these Applicative heads have slightly different positions. These distinctions will be inconsequential for the current proposal, so I ignore them for now.

- role, as a possessor and also as a high applied argument.
- c. Such double theta roles are assumed through A-movement from a base-generated possessor position (cf. Hornstein 1999).
 - d. The parameter setting is such that English High Applicative does not license Case, while Korean High Applicative does.

2. Background

Applicative heads introduce extra, non-core arguments into the syntax (think of how ‘Voice’ introduces external arguments). Pylkkänen (2002; 2008) famously posits two basic kinds of Applicative heads – Low and High. A Low Applicative (L.Appl) directly relates two individuals, while a High Applicative (H.Appl) relates an entity in its specifier to a vP event in its sister. A sketch of their syntax and semantics is given in (10).

- (10) a. [_{L.ApplP} DP [**L.Appl** DP]]
 ‘My specifier DP possesses my sister DP.’
 b. [_{H.ApplP} DP [**H.Appl** vP]]
 ‘My specifier is an affectee/beneficiary/maleficiary/etc. of my sister vP event.’

Especially for L.Appl, note how it is analogous to the HAVE element characteristic of DOCs (Harley and Miyagawa (2017) recognize HAVE and L.Appl as ‘notational variants’). On top of the animacy restrictions noted above in (8), there exists much more evidence for positing a L.Appl ‘HAVE’ in DOCs (See Cuervo (2003) for Spanish, Jung and Miyagawa (2004) for Korean, and Georgala et al. (2008) for Mandarin).

Capitalizing on such facts, Oehrle (1976), Pinker (1989), Jackendoff (1990), and Pesetsky (1995), among others, have led the field to a relatively broad consensus that dative alternation is lexical in nature, i.e. the variants are derivationally unrelated. This departs from Larson’s (1988) influential proposal where DOCs are syntactically derived from a base-generated PDC.

That (i) DOCs ‘uniformly’ involve some kind of possession subevent (Bruening 2018), and that (ii) the PDC and DOC variants are derivationally unrelated will be background assumptions throughout this paper.

3. Abstract *giving* as idiomatic

Now, let us examine what kinds of themes exactly pattern with (2), repeated as (11).

- (11) a. John gave Mary a cold.
 b. *John gave a cold to Mary.
 (12) Themes that pattern with (11): *cold, kiss, black eye, ideas, punch...*

To *give* these themes has a noticeably idiomatic flavor, and Larson (1988) makes another important observation that such DOCs involve some kind of special meaning: “There seems to be an extra dimension of affectedness at work...that favors the double object versus the oblique construction.” Indeed, if we test with ‘What happened to X was Y’, utilized in Cruse (1973: 13) and Jackendoff (1990: 125), we see that idiomatic DOC IOs display some kind of extra affectedness meaning.

- (13) a. ??What happened to John is that Mary gave him a letter.
 b. ??What happened to John is that Mary gave him a coconut.

- c. What happened to John is that Mary gave him a cold.
- d. What happened to John is that the lighting here gave him a headache.

The proposal, then, can apply straightforwardly. In abstract *giving*, the IO is base-generated as a DOC possessor and moves to the specifier of an Affectee Applicative (14). In concrete *giving*, the DOC possessor remains in situ and does not get the extra Affectee role.

- (14) [_{H.ApplP} IO_i [_{H.Appl_{AFF}} [_{VP} V [_{L.ApplP} IO_i [_{L.Appl} DO]]]]]
 Base structure: IO has DO ((a) and (b))
 Shifted structure: IO_i is AFFECTed by the event of IO_i getting DO ((c) and (d))³

Going further, Bruening's (2010b: 532) Principle of Idiomatic Interpretation (15) can be utilized to explain why **giving a cold to someone* does not arise. As can be seen in (16), DOC idioms can be thought of as involving [IO [_{L.Appl} DO]] (Harley and Jung 2015). Since PDCs have their themes in the specifier of the lexical V head (5b), the structural configuration necessary for idiomatic interpretation does not exist.

- (15) X and Y may be interpreted idiomatically only if X selects Y.
 (16) L.Appl + Theme idioms (Harley and Jung 2015)
 a. His boss gave John the boot.
 b. John got the boot.
 c. Mary's support gave John heart.
 d. John took heart (from Mary's support).

Finally, the proposed Case parameter (9d) accounts for why dative alternation goes in the opposite direction for the two languages in question. Parametrization of Case assignment by Applicatives is something independently developed by Woolford (2006), who assumes that languages differ with respect to whether each Applicative head licenses inherent Case. In English (17a), the IO must get Case before movement as H.Appl does not assign Case. In Korean (17b), the IO gets inherent DAT at [Spec, H.Appl_{AFFP}]. A nice consequence is that this analysis rules out the English data in (18), which is often cited as evidence against the existence of H.Appl in English (McGinnis 2008). In effect, both languages have movement applied to a base-generated DOC, to yield a derived DOC (English) and PDC (Korean) respectively.⁴

- (17) a. IO_{ACC}: [_{H.ApplP} IO_i [_{H.Appl_{AFF}} [_{VP} V [_{L.ApplP} IO_i [_{L.Appl} DO]]]]] (English)
 b. IO_{DAT}: [_{H.ApplP} IO_i [_{H.Appl_{AFF}} [_{VP} V [_{L.ApplP} IO_i [_{L.Appl} DO]]]]] (Korean)
 (18) *John ran Mary_{AFF}. (with 'Mary' as an affectee of John's running)

³ Some DOCs, especially those that occur exclusively in the DOC, have underlying possession subevents in the form of dynamic GET or TAKE rather than stative HAVE (Richards 2001).

⁴ This is different from e.g. Larson's (1988) proposal, where the DOC is derived by raising a *to*-phrase from an underlying PDC. I assume underlying PDCs and DOCs to be distinctly generated (Section 2).

4. Benefactive ditransitives

Next, I turn to DOCs which involve a benefactive recipient. The initial data is as follows (19).

- (19) (repeated from (3))
a. John bought Mary a car.
b. *John bought a car to Mary.

That the (a) sentence involves some kind of ‘hybrid role’ has been noticed by scholars like Kittilä (2005) and Song (2010). For them, the fact that *John bought Mary a car* alternates with (i.e., has similar meaning with) *John bought a car for Mary* is taken to be a diagnostic of a benefactive argument. Furthermore, (20) shows that in the DOC variant *Mary* is not just a benefactive, but also a prospective possessor.

- (20) Context: Mary wants to make her friend Sue happy. She decides to buy a car as a present for Sue, but doesn’t have the time to go buy one herself. She asks John to go buy a car *in her stead*. John directly gave the car to Sue on Mary’s behalf.
a. John bought a car for Mary. (^{OK}proxy reading)
b. #John bought Mary a car. (#proxy reading)

Again, I apply my initial proposal to this data where *Mary* assumes two theta roles at once (21). The Case parameter setting rules out the impossible English sentence in (22), where the logical possibility of applying a beneficiary argument above *v* is tested. As for why the *to*-variant is ungrammatical, notice that *make* or *bake* are originally monotransitive verbs (23) that would *require* an Applicative head to involve two internal arguments. This is different from *give* or *send* that can take two arguments themselves, yielding a PDC. In a nutshell, these verbs simply do not have a lexical entry that would end up realizing a *to*-argument (This would apply to *deny*, *spare*, and *cost* as well).

- (21) [H.AppIP Mary_i [H.Appl_{BEN} [_{VP} V [L.AppIP ~~Mary_i~~ [L.Appl a cake]]]]]
(22) *She went_i [H.AppIP me_{BEN} [H.Appl_{BEN} [_{VP} t_i to the market]]].
(23) a. Mary made a paper plane. → (Application) → Mary made X a paper plane.
b. John baked a pie. → (Application) → John baked X a pie.
c. (out of the blue) *Mary gave a paper airplane./*John sent a pie.

5. Anti-possession ditransitives

Yet another DOC-only configuration comes from anti-possession verbs like *deny*, *spare*, and *cost*. The initial observation carries onto all three of them as in (24).

- (24) a. John denied Mary the ice cream.
b. %John denied the ice cream to Mary.
c. John spared me the gruesome details.
d. *John spared the gruesome details to me.
e. The bike cost her 20 dollars.
f. *The bike cost 20 dollars to her.

A tricky part about straightforwardly applying my proposal is that these verbs somehow mean the exact opposite of what L.Appl (HAVE or GET) is supposed to mean. Nonetheless,

the requirement that the IOs at least be able to possess something still stands (25).

- (25) a. John denied the student some pencils.
b. #John denied the drawer some pencils.

A possibility, then, would be to decompose the verbs into CAUSE-NOT-HAVE/GET. Indeed, Beck and Johnson (2004) briefly allude to the possibility of positing a ‘NOT HAVE’ predication but leave it unexplored, presumably because it complicates the theory too much. Others such as Bruening (2010b) and Harley and Jung (2015) leave *deny* as a true ditransitive verb that lexically selects for *both* of its internal arguments. A downside is that for them, the prospective possessor restriction in (25) becomes a pure coincidence.

For this problem, I will extend an already-existing proposal from Beavers (2011). His starting point is that depending on the verb, caused possession can be cancelled (26).

- (26) a. #John gave Mary a book, but Mary never got the book.
b. John sent Mary a book, but Mary never got the book.

Beavers’ solution is to modalize the possession subevent with a $\Diamond$ operator in the case of *send*. Although he does not provide an explicit syntactic structure with this operator, it can reasonably be incorporated as in (27). The extension that I make is (27c), which means that the subevent is true in no worlds.

- (27) a. [ModalP $\Box$ [L.ApplP Mary L.Appl a book]] (*give*)
b. [ModalP $\Diamond$ [L.ApplP Mary L.Appl a book]] (*send*)
c. [ModalP $\neg$ [L.ApplP Mary L.Appl a book]] (*deny*)

Under this structure, the proposal can finally apply to yield (28). It would mean ‘IO_i is a maleficiary/beneficiary of IO_i not getting DO’. As (29) shows, *deny* involves a maleficiary IO while *spare* involves a beneficiary IO. Their distinct argument structure can be attributed to the respective types of H.Appl – H.Appl_{MAL} and H.Appl_{BEN}.

- (28) [H.ApplP **IO_i** [H.Appl_{MAL/BEN} [vP v [ModalP $\neg$ [L.ApplP **IO_i** [L.Appl DO]]]]]]]
(29) a. #Deny me the ordeal.
b. Spare me the ordeal.

A notable property of the structure in (28) is that the IO is A-moved above the NOT operator. This makes some predictions about quantifier scope and NPI licensing. For the proposal to hold water, (i) the IO must always outscope NOT, and (ii) only the DO and not the IO should be a viable position for NPIs.

Both predictions are borne out. First, in (30) we notice that *every* always takes higher scope despite its surface position being lower than overt *deny*. Next, in (31) we see that the anti-possession verbs uniformly license NPIs only in DO position ((a)-(d) examples from Bruening (2010b)).

- (30) I denied every worker a raise.
a. *NOT >> every: It is not the case that every worker got a raise.
b. every >> NOT: For every worker, that worker did not get a raise.

- (31) a. They denied me any chance of redeeming myself.
 b. *They denied any worker a raise.
 c. That mistake cost me any chance of redeeming myself.
 d. *That mistake cost anyone their marriage.
 (cf. That mistake didn't cost anyone their marriage.)
 e. The well-prepared documentation spared me any potential trouble.
 f. *The well-prepared documentation spared anyone potential trouble.

6. Conclusion

So far, I have proposed a new understanding of English DOC-only ditransitives as well as Korean PDC-only *give*. A summary of my analyses is given as <Table 1>.

Type of DOC	Analysis
Physical <i>give</i> - John gave Mary a book.	$[_{VP} V [_{L.ApplP} IO [_{L.Appl} DO]]]$ 'IO is caused to HAVE DO'
Abstract/idiomatic <i>give</i> - John gave Mary a cold. - (Kor.) 'to give inspiration/heart'	$[_{H.ApplP} IO_i [_{H.Appl_{AFF}} [_{VP} V [_{L.ApplP} IO_i [_{L.Appl} DO]]]]]$ 'IO is AFFECTed by result of being caused to HAVE DO'
Benefactive DOCs - John bought Mary a car.	$[_{H.ApplP} IO_i [_{H.Appl_{BEN}} [_{VP} V [_{L.ApplP} IO_i [_{L.Appl} DO]]]]]$ 'IO BENefits from being caused to HAVE DO'
Anti-possession DOCs (<i>deny</i>) - John denied Mary her pay.	$[_{H.ApplP} IO_i [_{H.Appl_{MAL}} [_{VP} V [_{ModalP} \neg [_{L.ApplP} IO_i [_{L.Appl} DO]]]]]$ 'IO is MALeficiary of being caused NOT to HAVE DO'

<Table 1> Summary

Theoretically, this paper bases itself on and supports the idea that DOCs uniformly involve possession meaning and that dative alternation is lexical, not syntactic. It also makes use of Hornstein's (1999) A-movement implementation of Control, which lets us account for the difference in Case assignment between English and Korean. Beavers' (2011) idea that DOCs involve a special kind of sublexical modality was extended to account for anti-possession ditransitives. Finally, Chomsky's (2001) Strong Uniformity is respected, such that without a strong reason to do otherwise, I have assumed an almost identical syntax for English and Korean. Surface differences can hereby be ascribed to a minimal difference on a functional head. The same semantic distinction (physical/literal vs. abstract/idiomatic) is shown to cause similar reflexes across the two languages in this regard.

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