The role of dative clitic doubling in (Romance) ditransitive constructions

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0. Goal

The purpose of this talk is to assess the role of dative clitics in Romance DITRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS (DITRCONSTR). In particular, DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING and its interaction with syntax will be analyzed.

1. Introduction: What has been said?

- In English and other languages, two types of DITRCONSTR exist:

  (1) Prepositional Construction (PC): Mary gives a book to John

  (2) Double Object Construction (DOC): Mary gives John a book

- For several clitic-doubling languages (especially Romance), it has been claimed that the two types exist too, and that the difference is DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING.

  (3) Prepositional Construction (PC): María da un libro a Juan

     Mary gives a book to John

  (4) Double Object Construction (DOC): María le da un libro a Juan

     Mary CL gives a book to Juan

(For Spanish, this view has been defended by Demonte 1995, Cuervo 2003, a.o.)

2. Our proposal

DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING makes no structural difference in DITRCONSTR.

↓

With or without clitic, the syntactic structure of DITRCONSTR remains the same.

↓

Provided that a transfer of possession is expressed, the DITRCONSTR is a DOC.
3. Ditransitive Constructions in English

- PC and DOC differ regarding the relationship between DO and IO:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ditransitive constructions in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5) Prepositional Construction (PC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Double Object Construction (DOC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymmetric c-command can be appreciated when looking at:

- anaphors
- binding of possessives and availability of distributive readings
- frozen scope
- passivization

(See Barss & Lasnik 1986, Aoun & Li 1989)

- Anaphors

(7) PC: DO c-commands IO

a. *I showed [\(\text{to } \text{John}\)] [\(\text{to } \text{himself}\)] (in the mirror)
b. *I showed [\(\text{to } \text{himself}\)] [\(\text{to } \text{John}\)] (in the mirror)

(8) DOC: IO c-commands DO

a. *I showed [\(\text{to } \text{himself}\)] [\(\text{to } \text{John}\)] (in the mirror)
b. I showed [\(\text{to } \text{John}\)] [\(\text{to } \text{himself}\)] (in the mirror)

- Possessives and distributive readings

(9) PC: DO c-commands IO

a. I denied [\(\text{to } \text{each paycheck}\)] [\(\text{to } \text{its i}\), owner]
b. *I denied [\(\text{to } \text{his \text{paycheck}}\)] [\(\text{to } \text{to each worker}\),

(10) DOC: IO c-commands DO

a. *I denied [\(\text{to } \text{its \text{owner}}\)] [\(\text{to } \text{each paycheck}\)]b. I denied [\(\text{to } \text{each worker}\)] [\(\text{to } \text{his \text{paycheck}}\)]
4. **Ditransitive Constructions in Romance Languages**

- Romance counterpart of English DOC → traditionally considered absent (Kayne 1984)
- However, some authors (such as Demonte 1995 and Cuervo 2003 for Spanish, and Diaconescu & Rivero 2007 for Romanian) have recently claimed that DITRCONSTR with and without DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING are structurally different:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PC</th>
<th>DOC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td>a. <em>John gave a book to Mary</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spanish</strong></td>
<td>a. <em>Juan dio el libro a María</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Romanian</strong></td>
<td>a. <em>Mihaela trimite Mariei o scrisoare</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- These authors claim that DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING signals a structural difference:

(14) **Spanish**

a. *Juan dio el libro a María (PC)*

b. *Juan le dio el libro a María (DOC)*

Diagrams:

**PC**

- **Juan**
- **PP**
- **el libro**
- **P**
- **DP**
- **a**
- **María**

**DOC**

- **Juan**
- **AppiP**
- **DP**
- **María**
- **Appi’**
- **le**
- **el libro**

*Clitic = Appi head*

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1 For Romanian ditransitive constructions where the IO is not morphologically dative-marked but introduced by a “preposition”, see Diaconescu & Rivero (2007) and Pineda (2014: chapter 3):

(ii) a. *Mihaela trimite o scrisoare la Maria*  
Mihaela sends a letter to Maria  

b. *Mihaela îi trimite o scrisoare la Maria*  
Mihaela cl sends a letter to Maria
5. **NEW APPROACH TO DITRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN ROMANCE**

### 5.1. CLITIC-DOUBLING LANGUAGES

- Once we carefully revisit the data and grammaticality judgments, we can conclude that **DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING makes no structural difference.**

- Regardless of the clitic, none of the objects asymmetrically c-commands the other, but there is bidirectional c-command between DO and IO.


**Evidence: Bidirectional c-command DO ↔ IO**

#### Spanish

(15) a. *La profesora* (le) *entregó* [\textit{io su} dibujo] [\textit{io a cada niño}]. (IO c-com DO)

   The teacher (CL.DAT) gave his draw to each kid

b. *La profesora* (le) *entregó* [\textit{do cada dibujo}] [\textit{io a su autor}] (DO c-com IO)

   The teacher (CL.DAT) gave each draw to its author

#### Romanian

(16) a. *Eu* (i) *-am dat* [\textit{io muncitorului}] [\textit{do cecul său}]. (IO c-com DO)

   I (CL.DAT) have given the worker.DAT his paycheck

b. *Poliția* (i) *-a dat* [\textit{io tatălui său}] [\textit{do copilui, pierdut}] (DO c-com IO)

   The police (CL.DAT) have given his father.DAT the lost boy

#### Catalan

(17) a. *La professora* (li) *va donar* [\textit{do el seu dibuix}] [\textit{io a cada nen}]. (IO c-com DO)

   The teacher CL gave his draw to each kid

b. *La professora* (li) *va donar* [\textit{do cada dibuix}] [\textit{io al seu autor}] (DO c-com IO)

   The teacher CL gave each draw to its author
5.2. NON-CLITIC-DOUBLING LANGUAGES

Evidence: Bidirectional c-command $\text{DO \leftrightarrow IO}$

**French**


(18) a. *Marie a donné [\text{DO} son crayon] [\text{IO à chaque garçon}].* (IO c-com DO)
   Marie gave his pencil to each boy

   b. *Jean a présenté [\text{DO} chaque institutrice] [\text{IO à ses élèves}].* (DO c-com IO)
   Jean introduced each teacher to her pupils

**Italian**


(19) a. *Una lunga terapia ha restituito [\text{DO se stessa}] [\text{IO a Maria}].* (IO c-com DO)
   A long therapy restored herself to Maria

   b. *Una lunga terapia ha restituito [\text{DO Maria}] [\text{IO a se stessa}].* (DO c-com IO)
   A long therapy restored Maria to herself

**Portuguese (Eur.)**

(Brito 2014)

(20) a. *A professora entregou [\text{DO o seu desenho}] [\text{IO a cada criança}].* (IO c-com DO)
   The teacher gave his draw to each kid

   b. *A professora entregou [\text{DO cada desenho}] [\text{IO ao seu autor}].* (DO c-com IO)
   The teacher gave each draw to its author

(And Torres Morais p.c. admits that asymmetrical c-command argued for in Torres Morais & Salles 2007 is dubious.)

5.3. INTERIM CONCLUSION

Regardless of dative clitic doubling, in Romance DITRCONSTR the IO can c-command the DO and the other way around.

- And they correspond to the DOC pattern, provided that a transfer-of-possession meaning is expressed (and not a transfer-of-place one).
6. TOWARDS A (UNIVERSAL) DEFINITION OF DOUBLE OBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS

• We should not identify DOC on the basis of its structural characteristics in English (I give Mary a book), especially on the basis of its contrast wrt the prepositional paraphrase (I give a book to Mary)...

• We propose to find out which are the truly inherent properties of the DOC pattern.

• With this less restrictive conception, it will be possible to detect DOC in a larger number of languages, crucially avoiding the (annoying) search for properties parallel to those found in English.

• This leads us to... a fundamentally semantic definition:

  ⇒ The definition of DOC must refer to the meaning of the construction, whereas the particular manifestation of arguments is not relevant, is language-specific. (Goldberg 1995; Malchukov, Haspelmath & Comrie 2007)

  ⇒ «La construction à double objet (CDO) comprend un sujet Agent et deux autres DP, qui sont des objets verbaux reliés l'un à l'autre par une interprétation de transfert de possession (réussi ou inféré), sans interprétation de transfert de lieu». (Fournier 2010)

This semantic definition of DOC allows very powerful generalizations and links various DITRCONSTRS across languages (which otherwise would be considered different due to their various syntactic peculiarities).

NOTA BENE:

• Given the fundamentally semantic definition, a particular morphosyntactic manifestation of arguments is not an inherent property of DOC → asymmetric c-commanding relations between IO and DO = particular of English DOC, not a sine qua non condition for (universal) DOC

• But, if DOC always correspond to a structure with an APPL head, how can we explain morphosyntactic differences?

  Answer: Case-assignment differences.

  (See Appendix 2)
7. DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE CLITIC IN ROMANCE DOC

In the Generative framework, authors agree in representing the structure of DOC as follows:

\[(21)\]

Briefly, the functional head Low Applicative related the IO and the DO and establishes a transfer-of-possession relation between them. (See Appendix 1)

- If dative clitic doubling can appear without modifying the structure, it is expected that (21) includes a position which can be optionally filled by a dative clitic: **APPLICATIVE HEAD**

- Importantly, whether this position is filled or not has no consequences for the structural relation between objects, against what had been assumed for Spanish and other Romance doubling languages.

8. TYPOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

- The optional filling of the **APPLICATIVE HEAD** can also be seen in other non-Romance doubling languages, such as:

  - Spanish: *María (le) dio un libro a Juan*
  - Romanian: *Mihaela (ii) trimite Mariei o scrisoare*
  - Catalan: *La Maria (ii) ha donat un llibre al Joan*
  - (Colloquial Italian: *(Gli)* ho dato il regalo a Maria)

  - Portuguese: *O João deu o livro à Maria*
  - French: *Marie a donné un livre à Jean*
  - Stand. Italian: *Ho dato il regalo a Mario*

  - Trentino: *(Ghe) dago el regal al Mario* (Cordin 1993)

- A dative morpheme within the verb, comparable to a clitic, can optionally appear:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Italian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>He gave me something</em></td>
<td><em>O João deu o livro à Maria</em></td>
<td><em>Marie a donné un livre à Jean</em></td>
<td><em>Ho dato il regalo a Mario</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Greek: «In Greek, an indirect object DP bearing genitive case can be (optionally) doubled by a pronominal clitic». (Anagnostopoulou 2003: 15, 2005: 110)

  - *(Tu) ἔδωσα τον Ιάνιον τον Βιβλίον (CL.GEN) gave.1SG the Jianis.GEN the book.ACC*
9. DO CONTACT-SENSITIVENESS OR LANGUAGE-INTERNAL EVOLUTION PLAY A ROLE?

- The Romance map does not seem to indicate that **DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING** is entirely a contact-sensitivity phenomenon: absolutely absent in French and Standard Italian.

- However, especially in the case of the contact between Catalan and Spanish, a mix between contact-sensitivity and language-internal evolution seems to be at play.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING</strong> stems from the conjunction of several factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In Catalan</strong>, it has been claimed to depend on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...properties of the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(tri-argumental verbs &lt; bi-argumental verbs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...properties of the IO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(referentiality, definiteness, animacy; degree of implication in the event; <em>giveness</em> or thematicity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Todolí 1998, 2002; Pérez-Saldanya 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In Spanish</strong>, it has been claimed to depend on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...properties of the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(type of predicate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...properties of the IO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(internal structure, referentiality, animacy, <em>giveness</em> or thematicity and semantic interpretation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NGLE 2009, Aranovich 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doubling is optional: dialectal and idiolectal variation

- **In Catalan**, **DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING** can be defined as a phenomenon of dialectal variation (it is far more frequent in Valencian and in the Barcelona area) and even idiolectal variation (more frequent among young people).
  
  (Todolí 2002, Pineda 2014)

- **In Spanish**, the same. **DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING** is far more frequent in American varieties than in Spain.
  

- **In Spanish**, it is far more frequent in colloquial and oral registers.
  
  (NGLE 2009, Aranovich 2011)

Towards general systemlicity

- **In Catalan**, **DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING** is becoming systematic in Valencian as well as in the area of Barcelona, especially among young people.
  
  (Todolí 2002, Vallduví 2002)

- **In Spanish** **DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING** is becoming more and more widespread, to the point that “lots of speakers feel rare not to have the clitic”.
  
  (NGLE 2009)

But... these areas and segments of population are also the most exposed to **Spanish influence**!
Even with non-prototypical IOs (non-animate, non-human):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cat.</td>
<td>Li va pegar un colp a la porta</td>
<td>CL gave a bang to the door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp.</td>
<td>Le pegó un golpe a la puerta</td>
<td>CL gave a bang to the door</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Doubling is compulsory: 100% systematic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Trentino</td>
<td>*(Ghe) dago el regal al Mario</td>
<td>(Cordin 1993)</td>
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**10. CONCLUSIONS**

1. Romance DITRCONSTRS expressing a transfer-of-possession meaning are DOC (semantically-based definition).

2. **DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING** cannot be claimed (as Demonte 1995, Cuervo 2003 and others assumed) to be the result of a free choice made by speakers between two syntactically different structures (DOC, PC) where DO and IO allegedly maintain different relationships.

But, instead:

3. **DOC patterns** can **optionally** host a doubling dative clitic: the APPL head can be phonologically full or null. (And, in some Romance varieties, **DATIVE CLITIC DOUBLING** is becoming or has become a systematic phenomenon.)
11. REFERENCES

APPENDIX 1: APPlicative HEADS

DOCs in all languages can be derived from the very same structure wherein a **Low Applicative head** introduces the IO as its specifier and takes the DO as its complement:

![Diagram of Applicative Head Structure]

**Origin**: verbal affixes in **Bantu languages** that introduce several IOs: goals, recipients, beneficiaries, locatives, instrumentals... (Marantz 1984, 1993, Baker 1988, McGinnis 2008):

(2) Applied arguments in Kinyarwanda

   a. *Umugore a-ra-kor-*er-*a* umugabo (**beneficiary role**)
      woman she-PRES-work-BEN-ASP man
      ‘The woman works for the man’

   b. *Umwaana a-ra-ri-*ish-*a* ikanya (**instrumental role**)
      kid he-PRES-eat-INSTR-ASP fork
      ‘The kid eats with the fork’

   c. *Umuhuungu a-r-iig-ir-iir* ishuuri imibare (**locative role**)
      boy noi he-PRES-study-APPL-LOC school maths
      ‘The boy studies maths at school’

Importantly, applied arguments alternate with non-applied, prepositional ones (no applicative morpheme in the verb):

(3) Alternance in Chichewa

   a. *Mbidzi zi-na-perek-*a msampha kwa nkhandwe
      zebras they-PAST-hand-ASP trap to fox
      ‘The zebras handed the trap to the fox’

   b. *Mbidzi zi-na-perek-*er-*a nkhandwe msampha (**goal role**)
      zebras they-PAST-hand-APPL-PAS fox trap
      ‘The zebras handed the fox the trap’


(4) English alternation

   a. PC: *John gave the book to Mary*  
   b. DOC *John gave Mary the book*

   (but no overt *APPL* morpheme)
**APPENDIX 2: WHERE DO DIFFERENT MORPHOSYNTACTIC PROPERTIES COME FROM?**

- In English DOC, IO asymmetrically c-comands DO, as seen.
- In Romance DOC, there is bidirectional c-command, as seen

The explanation is to be found in different case assignment procedures.

**Fournier’s (2010)’ Generalization:** «Si une langue possède un Cas inhérent compatible avec la sémantique du verbe et qui peut s’associer au rôle sémantique du Récepteur/But/Possesseur, la tête ApplB° vérifie ce Cas inhérent dans sa position de Spec. → ROMANCE (2). Sinon, elle vérifie le Cas inhérent par défaut de son complément (soit ACC) → ENGLISH (1)»

(1) English-like Appl

![Diagram of English-like Appl](image)

English Appl assigns inherent ACC case to its complement (DO/Theme)

The IO/Goal must go up an check structural accusative case in v

*John gave [ACC Mary] [ACC the book]*

(2) Romance-like Appl

![Diagram of Romance-like Appl](image)

Romance Appl assigns inherent DAT case to its specifier (IO/Goal)

The DO/Theme must go up an check structural accusative case in v

*Juan dio [ACC el libro] [DAT a María]*

**Proof:** arguments with structural case passivize:

(3) a. *Mary was given the book*  
   b. *The book was given Mary*

(4) a. *El libro fue dado a María*  
   b. *María fue dada el libro*

**Structural analysis of asymmetrical c-command in English:** The IO/Goal is always higher than the DO/Theme (1).

**Structural analysis of bidirectional c-command in Romance:** Initially, the IO/Goal is higher than the DO (2). However, the DO moves past the IO to check structural case in v (5). Therefore, the two structural relations exist during the derivation.