The Distribution of Verbs and Verb classes in the English *For*-Dative Alternation: A Lexico-paradigmatic Approach

La distribución de verbos y clases verbales en la alternancia de dativo con *for* en inglés: Un enfoque léxico-paradigmático

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This article explores the role of verbs and verb classes in the *for*-dative alternation against the background of the long-held debate between projectionist and constructionist (or syntagm-based) accounts of syntactic alternations. My main is to show that a lexico-paradigmatic approach, where "paradigmatic generalizations logically *precede* structural interpretation" (Davidse, 1998: 294) and where information structure factors are also taken into account, can be useful to determine the distribution of verbs in the so-called "benefactive" alternation, as illustrated in *Mary carved a toy for the baby/Mary carved the baby a toy* (Levin, 1993: 49). The double-object variant of the alternation can be regarded as an argument-structure construction in its own right (see Goldberg, 1995; Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 1998) as long as we assume that the ability to occur in the benefactive construction is also verb-class specific, as claimed by Croft (2003: 49).

Keywords: for-*dative alternation; "benefactive" alternation; lexico-paradigmatic; constructionist; projectionist*

Este artículo explora el papel de los verbos y clases verbales en la alternancia de dativo con *for* en el contexto del antiguo debate entre enfoques proyeccionistas y construccionistas (o de base sintagmática). Mi principal objetivo es mostrar que un enfoque léxico-paradigmático, donde las "generalizaciones paradigmáticas *preceden* lógicamente a la interpretación estructural" (Davidse, 1998: 294) y en el que también intervienen factores de la estructura de la información, puede ser útil para determinar la distribución de los verbos en la denominada alternancia "de beneficiario", p.ej. *Mary carved a toy for the baby/Mary carved the baby a toy* (Levin, 1993: 49). La variante de doble objeto puede considerarse una construcción de estructura argumental en sí misma (véanse Goldberg, 1995; Rappaport Hovav y Levin, 1998), si asumimos que la compatibilidad de un determinado verbo con la construcción benefactiva está también determinada por la semántica de la clase léxica verbal, como sostiene Croft (2003: 49).

Palabras clave: *alternancia de dativo con* for*; alternancia de beneficiario; léxico-paradigmático; construccionista; proyeccionista*

1. INTRODUCTION

Levin and Rappaport Hovav (2005: 225) point out that argument alternations are "manifested by limited and apparently coherent classes of verbs". However, as the authors go on to argue, it is not easy to determine the distribution of verbs in particular instances of argument realization typified by pairs of sentences with the same verb.

The main aim of this paper is to explore the role of verb classes and alternations in one particular instance of multiple argument realization in English: the so-called "benefactive" alternation, as illustrated in (1), where the prepositional variant involves the benefactive preposition *for*:

(1)   a. Martha carved a toy for the baby. (Levin, 1993: 49)
        b. Martha carved the baby a toy.

The "dative" alternation, illustrated by the sentence pair in (2), differs from the "benefactive" alternation in involving the goal preposition *to*:

(2)   a. Bill sold a car to Tom. (Levin, 1993: 46)
        b. Bill sold Tom a car.

As Levin and Rappaport Hovav (2005: 234) point out, accounts of argument alternations (like the dative and benefactive alternations) must be able to determine the distribution of verb classes across these alternations, including cases of limited productivity, with verbs that are generally considered not to alternate. As the authors argue (2005: 226), "treating the ability to alternate as an idiosyncratic, lexically listed property of certain verbs is not the answer".

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents a critical overview of two alternative analyses of the dative alternation in the linguistic literature: i.e. the lexical rule approach (Pinker, 1989; Gropen, Pinker, Hollander, Goldberg & Wilson, 1989) and the syntagm-based approach adopted by Goldberg (1995, 2002, 2006). Section 3 explores the relevance of an (alternation-based) lexico-paradigmatic methodology (Levin, 1993; Davidse, 1998, 2011) to account for the so-called "*for*-dative" or "benefactive" alternation in English. Section 4 offers some concluding remarks.

2. REVISITING THE LEXICAL RULE-CONSTRUCTION DEBATE

2.1 *The lexical rule approach*

On the lexical-rule approach to multiple argument realization (Pinker, 1989 and Gropen et al. 1989), which Goldberg (1995: 9) herself considers to be "directly comparable" to her own constructionist approach, alternations are analysed as involving the application of (language-specific) lexical rules to a verb's lexical semantic structure. Pinker (1989: 103) proposes "broad-range" lexical rules, which determine the necessary conditions for a semantic verb class to occur in a particular alternation, and "narrow-range" rules, which apply to *narrow conflation classes* of verbs and provide the sufficient conditions for the alternation.

In Pinker's (1989) analysis, the dative alternation embraces the "*to*-dative" and the "*for*-dative" alternations. The alternation with *to* results from a broad-range rule that takes a verb with the semantics "X causes to go to Y" and produces a verb with the semantic structure "X causes Z to have Y" (1989: 82). The "thematic core" of the double-object dative "involves an actor acting on a recipient in such a way that causes him to possess something" (Pinker, 1989:

118). The alternation with *for* (Levin's "benefactive" alternation in (1)) is treated similarly. Verbs appearing in the *for*-dative expression, where the preposition *for* expresses a benefactive relation, contain the conflation "X acts-on Y for the benefit of Z" (1989: 113).[1]

"Dativizable" verbs in the *to*-dative and *for*-dative alternations have a semantic property in common: "they must be capable of denoting prospective possession of the referent of the second object by the referent of the first object" (Pinker, 1989: 48). The "possessor effect" with *to*-dative verbs is illustrated in (3) and (4):

(3)　　a. John sent a package to the border/boarder. (Pinker, 1989: 48)
　　　　b. John sent the boarder/*border a package.

(4)　　a. Rebecca drove her car to Chicago. (Pinker, 1989: 48)
　　　　b. *Rebecca drove Chicago her car

In the case of *for*-dative verbs, "the first object not only must be the beneficiary of an act but must come to possess a thing as the result of it". Pinker's examples in (4) illustrate the "possessor effect" with *for*-dative verbs:

(5)　　a. Bob made/got/stirred/tasted the cake for Phil. (Pinker, 1989: 48)
　　　　b. Bob made/got/*stirred/*tasted Phil the cake

On Pinker's approach to argument structure, alternations are analysed as involving the application of lexical rules to a verb's lexical semantic structure.[2] His account of the dative alternation is based on the assumption that only certain components of verb meaning are relevant to argument realization. In Pinker's (1989: 108) words, "it's not what possibly or typically goes in an event that matters; it's what the verb's semantic representation is choosy about in that event that matters".

Drawing upon Green's (1974) semantic characterization of ditransitive verbs, Pinker's narrow-range rules classify verbs into narrowly-defined *dativizable* subclasses: "giving"; "sending", "instantaneous causation of motion", "creation", "obtaining", etc. (Pinker, 1989: 119). Some of these "dativizable" subclasses are sensitive to the so-called Latinate morphophonological constraint, which involves the morphological or phonological shape of these verbs. Verbs of creation such as *construct, create*, *design* and *devise*, or verbs of obtaining such as *purchase*, *obtain* and *collect* are listed as non-alternating verbs (see also Section 3.1).

Groefsema (2001: 527-530) argues against Pinker's "colour-blind" account of the dative alternation and claims that the Latinate constraint is clearly insufficient to account for the inability of some verbs of obtaining and creation to occur in the double-object variant of the alternation. As Groefsema (2001: 533) points out, whether this morphophonological restriction applies or not depends on the semantics of the verb involved and cannot in fact predict which verbs do or do not allow the double-object form.[3]

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[1] On Pinker's (1989: 113) lexical rule approach to multiple argument realization, verbs of "creation" in the double-object form express the notion of "X causing Y to come into existence for the benefit of Z and then causing Z to have Y". In the class of verbs of "obtaining", "X does not initially possess Y, then comes to possess it for Z's benefit so that X can give it over to Z".

[2] Pinker's rules are stipulative, as the pairing of an idiosyncratic meaning and a structural meaning involves a degree of conventionalization. (See Levin & Rappaport Hovav, 2005: 227-228).

[3] Groefsema (2001) postulates the *Unique Effect Constraint* to account for the dative alternation. This constraint operates over verb-specific information assuming that the different forms of dative verbs do not only encode different conceptual representations of events but different perspectives on the event.

2.2 *Goldberg's syntagm-based analysis*

In her 1992 article, "The inherent semantics of argument structure: The case of the English ditransitive construction", Goldberg puts forward her proposal that "highly specific semantic constraints should be associated directly with the ditransitive argument, and not directly to the specific verbs involved" (1992: 37), as argued by proponents of the lexical rule approach (see Section 2.1).

According to Goldberg (2013: 20), the ditransitive construction "provides a very broad generalization if we attend to surface structure instead of to possible alternations". In Goldberg's constructionist analysis, ditransitives with beneficiary arguments, paraphrasable with *for*, as in (1a), and ditransitives with recipient arguments, paraphrasable with *to*, as in (2a), are subsumed under the same type of construction.

According to Goldberg, "each argument structure pattern is best analyzed on its own terms, without relying on implicit or explicit reference to a possible alternative paraphrase" (2006: 25). As the author goes on to argue, "verb-argument relations are located in the syntagmatic surface patterns" (2006: 33) and there is no empirical motivation to treat ditransitives that admit of distinct paraphrases as "more than minimal variants of each other. The robust generalizations are surface generalizations" (2006: 33).[4] In Goldberg's words:

> The Ditransitive construction (…) provides a very broad generalization if we attend to surface structure instead of to possible alternations. Although many linguists continue to treat (regular) ditransitives and benefactive ditransitives (such as *Mina baked Mel a cake*) as distinct constructions because of their different paraphrases (*Mina sent a book to Mel/Mina baked a cake for Mel*), both types of ditransitive examples pattern alike both semantically and syntactically. (Goldberg, 2013: 20)

For example, although only (6a) can be paraphrased by a ditransitive expression, it patterns alike with the constructions in (7):

(6)   a. Mina sent a book to Mel. (Goldberg, 2013: 21)
          b. Mina sent Mel a book.

(7)   a. Mina sent a book to Chicago. (Goldberg, 2013: 21)
          b. Mina sent a book toward the front of the room.

The "caused-motion construction", treated as a general construction independent of the ditransitive, captures the generalization across these examples (see Goldberg, 2006: 34).[5]

In Goldberg's (1992, 1995) analysis, the ditransitive is viewed a case of *constructional polysemy*, "where the same form is paired with different but related senses" (1995: 33). The six related constructional meanings postulated for the double-object ditransitive pattern are reproduced in (8):

(8)   1. "X causes Y to receive Z." (central sense)
          Joe gave Sally the ball.
          2. Satisfaction conditions imply: "X causes Y to receive Z."
          Joe promised Bob a car.

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[4] Against this analysis, Davidse (2011: 33) proposes that verb-specific alternations, which depend on specific meaning components of the verb, can form the basis for a "lexico-grammatically motivated classification" of verb meanings (see Section 3.1).
[5] The double-object alternate (*Mina sent Chicago a book) is not valid for (7a).

3. "X enables Y to receive Z."
Joe permitted Chris an apple.
4. "X causes Y not to receive Z"
Joe refused Bob a cookie.
5. "X intends to cause Y to receive Z"
John baked Bob a cake.
6. "X acts to cause Y to receive Z at some future point in time"
Joe bequeathed Bob a fortune.

The central sense of the ditransitive construction can be argued to be "the sense involving successful transfer of an object to a recipient, with the referent of the subject agentively causing this transfer" (Goldberg, 1995: 33). The five other senses are extensions of this first, central one. The fifth extension of the ditransitive is called the "benefactive" construction, where the polysemy link is one of "intended causation".

Goldberg (1995: 126) accepts the existence of "narrowly defined classes of verbs", associated with the ditransitive construction. In Goldberg's (1995: 38) analysis the constructional meanings in (8) are associated with Pinker's (1989) and Gropen et al.'s (1989) verb classes, as shown in (9):

(9)   **A. Central sense: Agent successfully causes recipient to receive patient**
       1. Verbs that inherently signify acts of giving: *give, pass, hand, serve, feed* etc.
       2. Verbs of instantaneous causation of ballistic motion: *throw, toss, slap, kick, poke, fling, shoot*, etc.
       3. Verbs of continuous causation in a deictically specified direction: *bring, take*, etc.
       B. Conditions of satisfaction imply that agent causes recipient to receive patient
       1. Verbs of giving with associated satisfaction conditions: *guarantee, promise, owe*, etc.
       C. Agent causes recipient not to receive patient
       1. Verbs of refusal: *refuse, deny*, etc.
       D. Agent acts to cause recipient to receive patient at some future point in time
       1. Verbs of future transfer: *leave, bequeath, allocate, reserve, grant*, etc.
       E. Agent enables recipient to receive patient
       1. Verbs of permission: *permit, allow*, etc.
       F. Agent intends to cause recipient to receive patient
       1. Verbs involved in scenes of creation: *bake, make, build, cook, sew, knit*, etc.
       2. Verbs of obtaining: *get, grab, win, earn*, etc.

The extended sense in F ("Agent intends to cause recipient to receive patient") covers double-object clauses prototypically associated with verbs involved in scenes of creation (including preparation), such as *bake, make, build, cook, sew, knit, toss* (a salad), *fix* (a meal), *pour* (a drink), etc. and with verbs of "obtaining", such as *get, buy, find, grab, win, earn, steal, order, win*, etc. (See also Goldberg, 1992: 39).
Goldberg (1992, 1995) admits there are cases of lexical idiosyncrasy or "partial productivity", as many non-alternating verbs are indeed semantically similar to verbs which do alternate, as illustrated in (10) and (11):

(10) Joe baked/*iced Mary a cake. (Goldberg, 1995: 121)

(11) John bought/*purchased Mary a CD. (Shibatani, 1996: 322)

According to Goldberg (1995: 133), "the existence of some degree of lexical idiosyncrasy should not be taken as counterevidence against the existence of narrowly defined semantic subclasses of verbs". The author offers the following explanation to account for the problem of the partial productivity of the ditransitive construction:[6]

> Narrowly defined productive verb classes, then, are implicitly represented as clusters of semantically related verbs known to occur with a given construction. New or previously unclassified verb forms are attracted to existing clusters on the basis of similarity to existing cases. (Goldberg, 1995: 133)

Productivity is directly correlated with *type frequency*, which refers "to the number of distinct words that occur in a particular construction" (Goldberg, 1995: 134). It is this type of frequency that is crucial in determining how likely it is that a polysemy link is extended to other forms.[7] On the other hand, there are also metaphorical expressions which are "severely restricted in their uses" (Goldberg, 1995: 150):

(12) Cry me a river. (Green, 1974: 96, in Goldberg, 1995: 150)

Examples like (12), which can be interpreted as cases of metaphorical transfer of possession (see also Pinker, 1989: 117), are regarded by Goldberg (1995: 36) as a limited extension of the central sense, which cannot be treated on a par with other examples.[8]

3. A LEXICO-PARADIGMATIC APPROACH TO *FOR*-DITRANSITIVES

We have seen how in Goldberg's constructionist analysis verb-argument relations are located in the syntagmatic surface patterns, which should be considered in their own terms. Against this analysis, Davidse (1998, 2011) argues for the usefulness of lexico-paradigmatic relations and verb-specific alternations in the identification of classes and subclasses of verbs.
Davidse's agnation methodology (based on lexico-paradigmatic relations) is presented in Section 3.1. In Section 3.2 I explore the relevance of a lexico-paradigmatic methodology, emphasizing the role of verb classes and verb-class-specific alternations to disentangle the semantics of the *for*-dative alternation.[9]

3.1 *Davidse's agnation methodology*

Davidse (1998) emphasizes the usefulness of verb-specific alternations and paradigmatic relations to unveil the semantics of verbs and constructions. She writes:[10]

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[6] On Goldberg's (1995: 139) account, the verb classes are understood to be conventionally associated with a construction and interpreted as "implicit generalizations over learned instances in order to account for small nonproductive subclasses".

[7] Boas (2011: 220) takes Goldberg's position that syntactic alternations are an epiphenomenon "caused by a significant type frequency of semantically related verbs".

[8] In Guerrero Medina (forthcoming, 2020) metaphor and metonymy are presented as external licensing factors motivating coercion in the benefactive construction.

[9] Davidse's lexico-paradigmatic methodology is also applied by Levin (1993) in her seminal work, which is guided by the hypothesis that the syntactic behaviour of a verb is determined by its meaning. See Section 3.2.

[10] Davidse's agnation methodology, which she applies to the area of ditransitivity, is based on the paradigmatic reasoning applied by authors like Gleason (1966) and Van den Eynde (1995).

> From the perspective of an agnation-based methodology, some mainstream linguistic descriptions could be said to still group together as structurally identical some construction types whose different agnation paradigms show them to be distinct structural configurations. (Davidse, 1998: 284)

Authors like Green (1974: 157) claim that the double-object construction in (13a) entails that the teaching was successful, whereas there is not such implication in (13b). (See also Pinker, 1989: 69):

(13)   a. Mary taught John linguistics. (Green, 1974: 157)
          b. Mary taught linguistics to John.

Similarly, invoking form-meaning isomorphism, Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 130), cited in Davidse (1998: 301), hold that *I taught Harry Greek* implies that the teaching had an effect, whereas *I taught Greek to Harry* does not imply that Harry actually learnt Greek.[11]

However, Davidse (1996a/b, 1998) challenges the idea that the double-object construction necessarily involves successful transfer of possession, and regards the position that the prepositional variant is intrinsically "less affected" or "less directly involved" as "a case of semantic in-reading" (Davidse, 1996a: 87), against which examples like (14), which the author considers to be compatible with a situation in which the addressee had not caught the lifeline, can be found:[12]

(14) I throw you a lifeline and you giggle. (Davidse, 1996a: 134)

In her 2011 article, *Alternations as a heuristic to verb meaning and the semantics of construction*, Davidse responds to Goldberg's (2002: 327) claim that "it is profitable to look beyond alternations and to consider each surface pattern on its own terms" and defends the position that alternations "can be shown to be semantically relevant *both* to verb meaning and to the semantics of constructions" (Davidse, 2011: 12).[13]

Davidse's (1998, 2011) position is developed with reference to Gleason's (1966) concepts like *agnation* and *enation*. The technical term *agnation* is used by Gleason (1966: 199) to refer to "the relation of systematic and regular grammatical *variation* existing between examples whose main lexical elements are identical" (Davidse, 2011: 13). For instance, (15a) displays an agnate relation to (15b):

(15)   a. The man saw a stranger. (Davidse, 2011: 13)
          b. A stranger was seen by the man.

As a complementary notion, Gleason put forward *enation*, "the relation of structural *identity* obtaining between examples which have an identical structure relating members from identical grammatical classes" (Davidse, 2011: 13). For instance:

(16)   a. The man saw a stranger. (Davidse, 2011: 33)
          b. The dean heard a dog.

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[11] See also Goldberg's (1995: 33) syntagm-based analysis of expressions like *Mary taught Bill French* (vs *Mary taught French to Bill*) and *Mary showed her mother the photograph* (vs *Mary showed the photograph to her mother*).

[12] Davidse (1998: 302) argues against the distinction made by Green (1974) and makes the case that "the syntagm NP - ditrans VP - NP *to* NP involves – generally overlooked – ambiguity".

[13] Broccias (2013: 216) thinks that Davidse's criticism of Goldberg (2002) is "probably too harsh", as Goldberg herself does not entirely dismiss the relevance of alternations to linguistic analysis.

Enation and agnation are two mutually defining notions. On the one hand, enate examples should display the same agnation relation, such as the passives in (17a) and (17b), corresponding to (16a) and (16b), respectively:

(17)   a. A stranger was seen by the man. (Davidse, 2011: 14)
        b. A dog was heard by the dean.

On the other hand, for examples to be enate, they should have identical sets of agnates. Examples sharing some agnates but not all could be "partially enate". In an agnation-based approach, the apparent identity of syntagms such as *Mina sent a book to Mel* and *Mina sent a book to Chicago* (Goldberg's examples in (6a) and (7a) above) is treated as a case of *false enation*, as shown by their different agnate relations in (18):

(18)   a. Mina sent a book to Mel / Mina sent Mel a book
        b. Mina sent a book to Chicago / but *Mina sent Chicago a book.

According to Davidse (1998: 294), all ditransitive agnates share some general characteristics which can be reflected by the semantic schema "causation by an Agent of a 'possessive' implication between Dative and Patient". However, at a more delicate level of analysis, she develops a classification based on the verb-specific "obligatoriness" and "inherency" of the two non-agentive participants, which she refers to as the *Dative* and *Patient* roles (Davidse 1996a/b, 1998, 2011).

Davidse's (2011: 21-22) alternation-based subclassification of ditransitive verbs is presented in (19):

(19)   1.   Those for which Dative and Patient are always obligatory
              e.g. *attribute, ascribe, accord, impute, grant,* etc.

        2.   Those for which constructions with both only Dative and only Patient are possible (but with these roles inherently implied when not expressed)
              e.g. *charge, pay, serve, feed, give; cable, phone, e-mail, telegraph, (tele)phone, radio, wire; ask, explain, show, advise, teach, tell, write, read, sing; permit, allow, refuse, forgive,* etc.

        3.   Those for which Patient is non-obligatory (but always implied)
              e.g. *reproach*, *address*.

        4a.   Those for which Dative is non-obligatory (but implied when not expressed)
              e.g. *book, send, keep*; many verbal processes: *advocate, suggest, propose, prescribe,* etc.
        4b.   Those for which Dative is non-obligatory (but not implied when not expressed)
              e.g. *bring, fling, throw, hurl, haul, drag, cast, shove;* most *for*-ditransitive verbs such as *create, bake, embroider, prepare, gather, clear; find, choose, fix, steal, select*.

As shown in (19), verbs in class 4 are subdivided into two subclasses: verbs for which the Dative is non-obligatory (but implied when not expressed) and verbs for which the Dative

is non-obligatory (but not implied when not expressed). Class 4b includes most *for*-ditransitive verbs of creation and obtaining (see Section 3.2).

This verb classification reflects a cline with respect to the inherency of the Dative in the process (Davidse, 1996a: 96). In class (4a) the Dative is not as inherent as the Patient, but still quite strongly so, i.e. semantically implied when not expressed. In class (4b) the Dative is clearly optional, rather than semantically entailed. Compare, for instance Davidse's (2011: 23) examples *He booked a seat* (where a beneficiary is necessarily implied) and *He found a seat* (where no beneficiary is inherently implied). Finally, in Green's (1974: 96) example *Cry me a river* the Dative is, as Davidse (1996a: 97) puts it, "least inherent".

As Halliday (1967: 55) suggests, the semantic inherency of the Dative in the process is manifested by the possibility of passives with the Goal as Subject and the Recipient as Complement, as in (20a):

(20)   a. The picture was given *John*. (Halliday, 1967: 55)
         b. *The picture was painted *John*.

Davidse (1996a/b) shows that the distribution of the double-object and prepositional variants in the dative alternation is largely governed by information-structure considerations. Interestingly enough, information structure considerations also play a role in Goldberg's syntagm-based approach to the ditransitive construction.[14] Goldberg (2006: 139) presents evidence of corpus studies and experimental studies to demonstrate that the recipient argument of the ditransitive construction is a secondary topic, "which rarely introduces a new argument into the discourse".

In Goldberg's (2006: 29) constructional analysis, "so-called *to* ditransitives and *for* ditransitives should be treated under the same general rubric" (see Section 2.2). However, as the author herself (2006: 28) mentions, "the existence of a corresponding passive has been thought to differentiate ditransitives into two types" and "it may be true that ditransitives that have paraphrases with *to* show a statistical tendency to passivize more easily than those that have paraphrases with *for*". In what follows the syntagm-based approach adopted by Goldberg is confronted to an alternation-based approach, based on lexico-paradigmatic relations and where information structure considerations also play a role.

3.2 *Verb and verb classes in the* for-*dative alternation*

Levin's (1993) work is based on the idea that the syntactic behaviour of a verb can be predicted from its meaning: "verbs that fall into classes according to shared behaviour would be expected to show shared meaning components." We have seen that the benefactive alternation is conventionally associated with two main subclasses of verbs in the linguistic literature: verbs of obtaining of the *get* subtype and verbs of creation of the *build* subtype.[15] The lists of verbs in (21) and (22) are from Levin (1993: 48):

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[14] As Levin and Rappaport Hovav (2005: 218) point out, the fact that the choice between the double-object and prepositional variants can be attributable to information-structure considerations might question the validity of a meaning-driven approach to the alternation.

[15] Verbs of obtaining such as *accept*, *accumulate*, *acquire*, *obtain,* etc. can take a benefactive *for* prepositional phrase, but are not found in the benefactive alternation (see Levin, 1993: 143). In the case of verbs of creation of the *create* subtype, only a few (*design*, *dig*, *mint*) allow the alternation (see Levin, 1993: 48). Levin attributes the inability of these verbs to occur in the double-object construction to the Latinate constraint (see also Pinker's lexical rule account of the alternation in Section 2.1)

(21)   *Get* verbs: book, buy, call, cash, catch, choose, earn, fetch, find, gain, gather, get, hire, keep, lease, leave, order, phone (doctor), pick (fruit, flower), pluck (flower), procure, pull (a beer), reach, rent, reserve, save, secure, steal, vote, win, etc.

(22)   *Build* verbs: arrange, assemble, bake, build, carve, cast, chisel, churn, compile, cook, crochet, cut, develop, embroider, fashion, fold, grind, grow, hack, hammer, hatch, knit, make, mold, pound, roll, sculpt, sew, shape, spin (wool), stitch, weave, etc.

Verbs of "preparation" such as *bake*, *blend*, *boil*, *brew* and *cook* in (32) also show an extended use as verbs of creation and transformation, when the creation is "done on someone's behalf" (Levin, 1993: 174-175):

(23)   Verbs of "preparing": bake (cake), blend (drink), boil (egg, tea), brew (coffee), clean, clear (path), cook (meal), fix (meal), fry (egg), grill, mix (drink), pour (drink), prepare (meal), run (bath), etc.

Finally, some verbs of performance are also included by Levin (1993: 178) as verbs of "creation and transformation" which allow the benefactive alternation (as in *Sandy sang a song for me/Sandy sang me a song*):

(24)   Verbs of "performance" (some): dance, draw (a picture), hum (tune), paint (picture), play (music, game), recite (poem), sing (song), etc.

The double-object expressions with the verb *play* in (34) are illustrative in this regard:

(25)   a. And they *played us* and read us *lyrics* and *played us some of the songs* they were going to record. (COCA, 2005)
b. One incident that has stuck with me was when he *played us the Queen of the Night's aria* from the Magic Flute (…). (BNC 195 H45)

The performances in (24), i.e. *lyrics*, *songs*, *the Queen of the Night's aria*, are themselves the effected objects (metaphorically) transferred to the beneficiary.

However, it is true that, as Colleman (2010: 222) points out, "a verb *need not* belong to one of these classes to be eligible for use in the benefactive double object construction." Langacker's example in (26c) shows that *clearing a place to sleep on the floor for somebody* can be interpreted as an act of creation and therefore expressed as a benefactive double-object construction.

(26)   a. I cleared the floor for him. (Langacker, 1991: 360)
b.*I cleared him the floor.
c. I cleared him *a place to sleep on the floor*.

There is no lexical rule disallowing *clear* in (28b) and allowing its use in (28c). Examples like these reveal that there must be a semantic constraint associated with the construction. However, as Croft (2003: 60) argues, the grammar must still sanction the use of *clear* in (28c) "to mean 'clear with intention to transfer (metaphorical) possession' with (at least) a verb-class-specific construction".

As Goldberg (1995: 2) herself admits, although constructions are contentful units themselves, it is not the case that they simply "impose" their meaning on unsuspecting verbs.

We have seen that the different constructional meanings postulated by Goldberg (1995: 75) and reproduced in (9) are indeed compatible with Pinker's *narrow conflation classes* of verbs.

Following Levin (1993) and Davidse (2011), I take the position that an alternation-based methodology, can be useful to identify verb meanings and to interpret the semantic difference between *to* ditransitives and *for* ditransitives.

I have explored the possibilities of passivization of some representative verbs of creation and obtaining, drawing on data from the BNC and COCA corpora.[16] I carried out an extensive corpus search with the passive forms of the verbs of creation *cook* and *bake* and I obtained no results with a beneficiary as Subject.[17] However, we can find some (marginal) examples in the literature, such as the ones with the verb *cook* presented in (27):

> (27) a. Mel *was cooked* a fine dinner by the new chef. (Goldberg, 2006: 28)
> b. Margaret *was cooked* a meal (by Uncle Jim). (Allerton, 1978: 31)

I also extracted examples with the verbs *choose* and *find*, two verbs of obtaining belonging to class 4b in Davidse's classification above, where the Dative is not inherently implied. The corpus search with *was chosen* gave no results; the corpus search with *was found* yielded the two examples in (28):[18]

> (28) a. *John was found* a post as a shipping clerk in the Lace Market, but was soon bored to tears with this work (BNC 161 EE6)
> b. Mr Keith Holloway was commenting on the case of teenager Kennedy, *who was found* a bed and breakfast place after months of living in a garden shed. (BNC 11024 K4W)

As expected, the number of examples with a recipient subject was considerably larger with *give,* a verb belonging to the class of prototypical ditransitive verbs with an inherently implied Dative in class 2. I reproduce four of the passive examples retrieved from the BNC in (29):[19]

> (29) a. I remember dark, solemn and suspicious looks, as *a travelling family was given* tea in the back-garden of a house in the country. (BNC 1703 A05)
> b. Last year *I was given* a beautiful pot hydrangea which I planted in the garden when it finished flowering. (BNC 2342 A0G)
> c. As a child *I was given* a grey plastic gun as birthday present (BNC 1125 A17)
> d. *The Princess was given* a serious fright. (BNC 1406 A7H)

These results confirm the more "object"-like quality of the recipient in the ditransitive double-object construction with *give*, a prototypical *to*-dative alternation verb (see Levin, 1993: 49).

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[16] Examples marked BNC have been taken from the *British National Corpus* (XML edition). BNC examples have been identified by means of a three-letter code, entirely arbitrary, and the sentence number within the text where the hit was found. Examples marked COCA have been taken from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (Davies, 2008-).

[17] I extracted the first 200 examples of *was cooked* and the first 200 of *was baked* from the COCA corpus.

[18] I extracted 200 examples of *was chosen* and 200 examples of *was found* from the COCA corpus. I also retrieved the first 100 examples of *was chosen* and the first 100 of *was found* from the BNC.

[19] The first 100 occurrences of *was given* retrieved from the BNC corpus contained 44 examples with a recipient subject, including cases of metaphorical extensions such as the one in (23d).

As illustrated by Davidse's examples in (30), the double-object construction with *for*-datives tends to be used when the beneficiary is given information,

(30)   a. Buy *him* a wreath. (Davidse, 1996b: 305)
         b. Get *me* a whisky.

After an extensive search involving the verb *bake* and its collocations in the COCA corpus, I retrieved only one instance where the beneficiary is not a referentially prominent participant. I reproduce this example in (31):

(31) "We baked *someone* a birthday cake after we got over the border", she said. (COCA, 1995)

As shown in (32), the double-object construction with *baked* is favoured with topical beneficiaries (typically pronominal):[20]

(32)   a. I thought you might be hungry sitting out here all day so I baked *you* some cookies. (COCA, 1994)
         b. In excavating her mind for memories of parties and presents, she'd only been able to dig up those concerning her sixth birthday when her mother baked *her* a yellow cake iced with raspberry jelly and gave her a real present to unwrap. (COCA, 2005)
         c. She always gave Eddie extra, she baked *him* lemon meringue pie, because he reminded her of her husband (…) (COCA, 2019)

Length is also a relevant factor to determine the choice between the double-object and prepositional variants, as emphasized by Haspelmath (2015: 27). The COCA examples with *bake* in (33) show that the *for*-variant is likely to occur when the beneficiary is realized by a long noun phrase:

(33)   a. No, I baked them *for the folks at the shelter*, didn't occur to me they couldn't eat them, no heads! (COCA, 1998)
         b. She baked birthday cupcakes *for all the customers on her route*, once she got to know them, and she always put their name and a candle on the little treat. (COCA, 2004)
         c. Chloe, who was jealous of Woodruff's wife. Story goes that Chloe baked a birthday cake *for Sara and the kids*, including poisonous oleander leaves in the treat. (COCA, 2012)

Following Croft (2003: 62), the semantics of the combination of verb + *for*-ditransitive construction can be divided into three components:

1)   The first is the *constant*, representing the "idiosyncratic component of meaning" (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 1998: 107) that differentiates verbs of the same class.
2)   The second is the additional meaning of "transfer of possession", associated with verbs of obtaining, verbs of creation and verbs of other classes showing an

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[20] I extracted 700 examples of *baked* as an active form in the past simple. These yielded 44 occurrences of *baked* in the double-object construction and 23 instances of the prepositional *for*-variant.

extended use as verbs of creation, when they occur in the benefactive construction.

3) The third component is what Croft (2003: 62) refers to as the *modulation*, i.e. whether the transfer of possession is actual or intended. The meaning of "transfer of possession" associated with the ditransitive construction is further modulated by the lexical semantics of regular *to*-ditransitives and benefactive *for*-ditransitives. For verbs of obtaining and verbs of creation (including the extended uses in (23) and (24)), occurrence in the double-object *for*-ditransitive construction adds both a modulation (intended) and a transfer of possession (not necessarily literal) as well, but only if the context allows for it.

Goldberg's construction-based approach can thus be reconciled with a more verb-sensitive approach (along the lines of Davidse and Levin) if we assume that the ability to occur in the benefactive construction is verb-specific or verb-class specific, as claimed by Croft (2003: 49).

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper I have analyzed the semantics of *for*-ditransitives against the background of the debate between projectionist and constructionist accounts of syntactic alternations.[21]

My main aim has been to show that an alternation-based methodology can be used to explore the semantics of the benefactive construction and of the verb classes that are compatible with it. As Lemmens (2006: 33) points out, "alternations do reveal the more hidden regularities of grammar", and Goldberg herself does not seem to ignore this fact entirely when she writes:

> It must be emphasized that is not being claimed that meaning is simply *read off* surface form. What is being suggested here is simply that by putting aside rough paraphrases and considering all instances with a formal and semantic similarity, broader generalizations can be attained. (Goldberg, 2002: 335)

Following authors like Davidse (1998, 2011) and Levin (1993), my own conclusion is that alternations can indeed serve as a heuristic to identify verb meanings and to interpret the semantic difference between *for*-ditransitives and *to*-ditransitives, associated with different verb classes and showing different passivization possibilities, in spite of their "shared surface form" (Goldberg, 2002: 330).

It has also been argued that information structure, referential prominence and length play an important role in determining the choice between the double-object construction and the prepositional *for*-variant in the benefactive alternation (see Haspelmath, 2015: 27).

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[21] According to Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998: 129), the constructionist and projectionist approaches share many elements, as they both recognize the same basic distinction between the "structural" and the "idiosyncratic" aspects of meaning.

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