Meaning construction and motivation in the English benefactive double object construction

Verbal and constructional semantics at work

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This paper explores the interaction between verbal and constructional semantics in the benefactive double object construction in English. My main aim is to disentangle the semantics of the construction exploring the constructional potential of the main alternating verb classes, i.e., verbs of "obtaining", "creation" and "preparing" (Levin, 1993), and spelling out the cognitive principles that motivate these and other extended uses as cases of lexical-constructional *subsumption* within the framework of the Lexical Constructional Model (cf. Galera Masegosa & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2012; Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013). Rather than advocating a polysemous analysis of the ditransitive, as proposed by Goldberg (1992, 1995), the position I take here is that ditransitives with beneficiary arguments and ditransitives with prototypical recipient arguments instantiate two different subconstructions which cannot be treated under the same general rubric, in spite of their "shared surface form" (Goldberg, 2002, p. 330).

1.   Introduction

This paper explores the issues of meaning construction and lexical-constructional integration in the English benefactive double object construction, where a beneficiary is "involved as the intended recipient of the direct object" (Colleman, 2010a, p. 222), as illustrated by the corpus examples in (1):[1]

(1)   a. You're a good baker, Ms. Washington, but I'll not leave until you have baked

me a cake to fill me up and bring tears to my eyes (…). (COCA, 2005)

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[1] Examples marked COCA have been taken from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (Davies, 2008).

b. This time, Laurel had booked *us* separate rooms, but Denise and I had spent much of the evening in one of them. (COCA, 2010)

c. I sat down at the table and brought my books out. His mother came back in and fixed *me* a cheese sandwich and a glass of milk. (COCA, 2015)

According to Shibatani (1996, p. 168), the most basic semantic problem associated with benefactive constructions has to do with the meaning difference between a benefactive expression such as *John bought Mary a book*, which implies that the book was meant to be given to Mary, and its paraphrase *John bought a book for Mary*, which is not necessarily associated with intended transfer. However, in Goldberg's syntagm-based analysis there is no empirical motivation "to treat ditransitives that admit of different paraphrases as more than minimal variants of each other" (Goldberg, 2006, p. 33). In the author's words:

> 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, p. 20)

In Goldberg's constructionist approach both instances of the ditransitive share many properties with each other and differ systematically from their paraphrases. The ditransitive construction "provides a very broad generalization if we attend to surface structure instead of to possible alternations" (Goldberg, 2013, p. 20). However, the

position I take here is that double object benefactives, paraphrasable with *for*, as in *Mina baked a cake for Mel*, and double object datives, paraphrasable with *to*, as in *Mina sent a book to Mel*, cannot be subsumed under the same general rubric, contrary to the Goldberg's (2002, 2006, 2013) claims.[2]

In spite of their "shared surface form" (Goldberg, 2002, p. 330), constructions such as *Mina baked Mel a cake* and *Mina sent Mel a book* offer different semantic characterizations, as evidenced by the particular constructional requirements of each subconstruction (ditransitive and benefactive). I will argue that a usage-based model like the Lexical Constructional Model (LCM; cf. Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013; Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera Masegosa, 2014) can provide us with the subtle explanatory tools to offer a motivated account of coercion in the English benefactive double object construction (S V Obj_1 Obj_2), where the indirect object (Obj_1) is not a prototypical recipient.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents Goldberg's (1995) polysemous analysis of the ditransitive construction as the starting point of my own study of the benefactive construction, here regarded as a construction in its own right. Section 3 deals with a number of internal and external constraints which regulate the conceptual process of lexical-constructional integration (or *subsumption*) into the English benefactive construction within the LCM framework. Section 4 offers some final remarks.

2. Goldberg's polysemous account of the ditransitive construction

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[2] Similarly, Hoffmann (1995, pp. 117-123) argues that the dative and benefactive have their own distinctive structures: whereas datives (e.g., *I gave a book to Chris* / *I gave Chris a book*) can be seen as bringing about a relation between the two objects of the verb, the benefactive preposition in *I baked a cake for Robin* describes a relation between the action described by the verb and the beneficiary. In Hoffmann's analysis the benefactive construction, unlike the *for*-variant, is realized in the lexicon.

In Goldberg's (1995, p. 33) construction grammar analysis the ditransitive form is associated with a set of systematically related senses. Thus, the ditransitive can be viewed as a case of *constructional polysemy*, whereby the same form is paired with different but related senses.[3] The six related inter-constructional meanings for the double object ditransitive pattern (Subj V Obj_1 Obj_2) postulated by Goldberg (1995, p. 75) are reproduced in (2):

(2)   A. "X causes Y to receive Z." (central sense)

      Joe gave Sally the ball.

    B. Satisfaction conditions imply: "X causes Y to receive Z."

      Joe promised Bob a car.

    C. "X enables Y to receive Z."

      Joe permitted Chris an apple.

    D. "X causes Y not to receive Z."

      Joe refused Bob a cookie.

    E. "X intends to cause Y to receive Z."

      John baked Bob a cake.

    F. "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 is 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, p. 33). The five other senses are extensions of

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[3] Goldberg (1995) puts forward a constructional view of Pinker's (1989) meaning-driven polysemy approach.

this first, central one. The extension of the ditransitive in E, called the "benefactive-ditransitive" construction, is represented in Figure 1:[4]
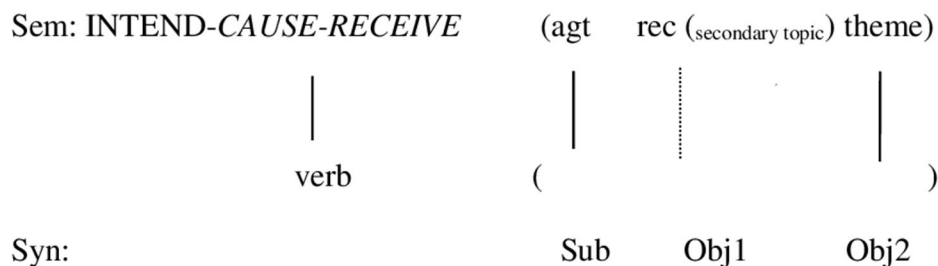
Sem: INTEND-*CAUSE-RECEIVE*   (agt   rec ($_{secondary\ topic}$) theme)

verb   (   )

Syn: Sub   Obj1   Obj2

Figure 1. The benefactive-ditransitive construction (Goldberg, 1995, p. 77; 2006, p. 20)[5]

In Goldberg's analysis "X (Agent) successfully causes Y (Recipient) to receive X (Patient / Theme)" is postulated as the central sense from which five other extended senses derive. The "polysemy link" motivating the benefactive extension in E is one of "intended causation",[6] licensing expressions such as *John baked Bob a cake*. This extended sense, where INTEND is now inserted as the highest predicate, 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 Goldberg, 1992, p. 39; Goldberg, 1995, p. 38).

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[4] Argument roles which are obligatorily fused with roles of the verb are indicated by solid lines. Dashed lines indicate that the argument role may be contributed by the construction. See Goldberg (1995, p. 51; 2006, p. 21).

[5] In Goldberg (2006, p. 20) the label *theme* (referring to the role of an entity undergoing motion) replaces the label *patient* used in Goldberg (1995, p. 77). Figure 1 also includes the specification that the *recipient* argument acts as secondary topic (and is therefore more topical that the *theme* argument).

[6] In Goldberg's theory, polysemy links reflect "the nature of the semantic relation between a particular sense of a construction and any extensions from this sense" (Goldberg, 1995, p. 75).

However, as claimed by Colleman (2010b, p. 205), this formulation in terms of "intended causation of reception" is insufficient to distinguish the benefactive subsense from the other subsenses of the double object construction. Clauses such as *Let's send him a letter* or *I'll throw you the ball* (instantiating the central sense of the ditransitive construction in Goldberg's polysemous analysis) can also be said to involve intended causation of reception, as they do not guarantee the idea of successful transfer. (See Section 3 for further discussion of the internal and external constructional requirements of the English benefactive construction within the context of the LCM).

On the other hand, as pointed out by Croft (2003) in his critique of Goldberg's approach, the ditransitive construction does not seem to be a case of true polysemy, as "each verbal semantic class is associated with only one sense of the ditransitive construction" (Croft, 2003, p. 55). In much the same vein, Kay (2005) argues for a more restrictive view of constructional polysemy, where three maximal subconstructions are distinguished, as against Goldberg's six polysemous senses in (2).[7] In Kay's words, "positing various senses of the [ditransitive] construction while also recognizing (sets of) semantic classes is largely redundant with regard to accounting for the differences in meaning" (Kay, 2005, p. 73).

Goldberg's (1992, 1995) account of the ditransitive construction as a case of *constructional polysemy* has been taken as the starting point of my lexico-constructional analysis of the benefactive construction in English in this paper. However, I do not embrace Goldberg's constructional approach to its full extent. Along the lines of Gonzálvez-García (2009), I rather believe that a family-resemblance account of the

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[7] The three maximal Recipient Constructions (RC) posited by Kay (2005, p. 76) are: the Intended RC, which corresponds to Goldberg's benefactive extension in E; the Direct RC, which corresponds to Goldberg's central sense; and the Modal RC, which corresponds to senses B, C, D and F.

ditransitive, where lower-level configurations are assigned a more central role, seems to be more adequate than the polysemous approach advocated by Goldberg.[8]

3. Lexical-constructional subsumption in the English benefactive construction.

Towards a motivated account of coercion

This section attempts to offer a motivated account of coercion in the English benefactive double object construction within the framework of the LCM, which in the words of Galera Masegosa and Ruiz de Mendoza (2012, p. 55), aims to be "a comprehensive meaning-construction account of language that explains the systematic ways in which different kinds of conceptual pattern interact, thus yielding complex meaning representations".

In the (verb-sensitive) lexico-constructional approach I put forward in this paper, the benefactive ditransitive is regarded as a conventionalized pairing of form and meaning / function in the Goldbergian sense. It is important to point out that the LCM introduces the more realistic notion of *replicability* into its definition of construction in order to deal with cases of novel linguistic input. More specifically, a form / meaning (or function / meaning) pairing "can be considered a construction, even if the pairing is not frequent, provided that it can be felt by competent speakers as being potentially replicable" (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013, p. 231).[9] Quoting Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera Masegosa (2014, p. 37), a construction in the LCM is not just a pairing of form and

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[8] Gonzálvez-García (2009) puts forward a usage-based, bottom-up analysis of object-related depictives in English and Spanish. The author investigates the most salient semantico-pragmatic properties of four lower-level configurations of the *subjective-transitive* construction, demonstrating that these subconstructions can be regarded as a family of constructions showing family-resemblance at a higher level.

[9] In the LCM there is no correlation between frequency of occurrence and entrenchment. Instead, the LCM correlates the notion of entrenchment with "the intersubjective perception that a form-meaning pairing is accepted by other speakers of the same community" (Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera Masegosa, 2014, p. 36).

meaning, but a "cognitive construct that results from speakers within a speech community making meaning productively within specific communicative contexts."

Although the interpretation of the phenomenon of coercion may vary in the literature, it can be defined as a process of *accommodation* whereby the meaning structure of a lexical unit which is semantically incompatible with its syntactic context is construed to be compatible with the meaning of the construction. Goldberg's (1995, p. 29) well-known example *Sam sneezed the napkin off the table*, where the construction "coerces" an intransitive verb like *sneeze* into a caused-motion interpretation, reveals that constructions are not necessarily projections of verbs. In Construction Grammar coercion can be understood as "the resolution of conflict between constructional and lexical denotata" (Michaelis, 2003, p. 7), in such a way that "the meaning of the lexical item conforms to the meaning of the structure in which it is embedded" (Michaelis, 2003, p. 10).

On the view taken by Goldberg, there needs to be a relationship between the inherent meaning of a particular lexical item and the "coerced" interpretation that the construction requires. Two principles determine which roles of the verb are "fused" with which argument roles: the Semantic Coherence Principle, according to which "[o]nly roles which are semantically compatible can be fused" (Goldberg, 1995, p. 50), and the Correspondence Principle, which stipulates that "[e]ach participant role that is lexically profiled and expressed must be fused with a profiled argument role of the construction" (Goldberg, 1995, p. 50).[10]

However, as Mairal Usón and Ruiz de Mendoza (2009, p. 166) rightly point out, these principles are too general to account for the mechanisms that regulate the

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[10] The LCM assigns no special role to the Correspondence Principle as a constraining factor in lexical-constructional integration at the argument structure level. See Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal Usón (2011, p. 64).

integration of a verbal predicate into the construction with which it is combined. The constructionist account needs to be refined in order to be able to set limits to the notion of constructional coercion. The notion of coercion is motivated, not arbitrary, and we thus need reliable principles that allow us to determine when coercion is possible and when it is not.

The LCM refines the notion of constructional coercion, which is now seen "in terms of the ability of lexical structure to be construed from different perspectives that will license its integration into constructional structure" (Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal Usón, 2011, p. 79). Constraints on lexical-constructional subsumption are divided into *internal* and *external* (see Galera Masegosa & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2012; Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013). The remainder of this section discusses these two types of constraints.

3.1 Internal constraints on subsumption

Using the explanatory tools of the LCM, I first explore in some detail the constraining factors that determine the conceptual compatibility between verbal and constructional semantics in the English benefactive construction. Following Ruiz de Mendoza (2013, p. 256), two main types of internal constraints on the process of lexical-constructional subsumption have been considered:

(i)   *vertical constructional constraints* on lexical structure on the basis of lexical class ascription, event structure specification and focal requirements, and

(ii)   *horizontal lexical constraints* on the instantiation conditions of constructional variables.

Vertical constructional constraints include the ***Lexical Class Constraint***, the ***Event Identification Condition*** and the ***Focal Compatibility Constraint***. The first of these

constraints, the *Lexical Class Constraint* refers to "the ability of lexical classes to *partially determine* whether a set of lexical items belonging to the same class or subclass can or cannot become integrated into a given construction" (Galera Masegosa & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2012, p. 56; emphasis mine).

The benefactive construction is conventionally associated with verbs of three semantic classes in the linguistic literature: verbs of "obtaining", verbs of "creation" and verbs of "preparing" (see, e.g., Pinker, 1989; Gropen, Pinker, Hollander, Goldberg, & Wilson, 1989; Levin, 1993; Goldberg, 1995). Some "performance" verbs such as *dance*, *draw*, *paint* or *sing* are also included by Levin (1993, p. 178) within the broader class of verbs of "creation and transformation" which allow the benefactive alternation, as in *Sandy sang a song for me* / *Sandy sang me a song*. In (3) I reproduce Levin's (1993, pp. 48-49, 178) list of the subclasses of verbs that allow the benefactive alternation in English:

(3)   a. Verbs of *obtaining* (*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.

b. Verbs of *creation* (*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.

c. 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), toss (salad), etc.

d. Verbs of *performance* (some): dance (waltz), draw (a picture), hum (tune), paint (picture), play (music, game), recite (poem), sing (song), spin (story), etc.

However, accounting for the integration of verbal predicates into the benefactive construction exclusively in terms of generally defined verb classes is not fully satisfactory. As argued by Colleman (2010a, p. 222), the construction can be used "more or less productively" within these classes. On the one hand, there are verbs belonging to the same semantic class which differ in their behaviour:

(4)   John bought / *purchased* him some food. (Goldberg, 1992, p. 41)

On the other hand, verbs that do not denote creation, preparation or obtainment can be accommodated into the construction, as shown by Langacker's example with *clear* in (5c):

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

According to Radden and Dirven (2007, p. 296), the "best" types of beneficial situation are those in which an agent creates a thing for a beneficiary, as shown in (6):[11]

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[11] Non-creative acts, on the other hand, are expressed by the *for*-alternate, as in *Honey, could you please fix my drawer for me?* (Radden & Dirven, 2007, p. 296).

(6)   Liese made *me* dinner in the Chinese style: miso soup, stir-fried vegetables, sweetsap for dessert. Afterwards she fixed *me* a potion she promised would tone up my whole system. (BNC 1916 ASW)[12]

But it is not easy to determine what is a creative act and can therefore be encoded as a benefactive construction. *Clearing a place to sleep on the floor for somebody* in (5c) can be interpreted as an act of creation and can therefore be expressed as a benefactive double object construction (see Goldberg, 1995, p. 230; Colleman 2010a, p. 223). As Shibatani (1996, p. 163) points out, benefactives "are not categorically definable in terms of lexical information" and we thus need to put emphasis on the construal of the situation in terms of the "give" schema.[13] In Allerton's (1978, p. 30) words, "there is a cline of 'indirect-objectiness' which gains in strength the more a clear act of giving is seen to be involved."

The second vertical constraint to be discussed in this section is the ***Event Identification Condition***, which has to do with "the compatibility between the event structure (or *Aktionsart*) characterization (…) of the lexical and constructional specifications" (Galera Masegosa & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2012, p. 56). The event structure of a lexical template and a constructional template must be the same to enable lexical-constructional subsumption (see also Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013, p. 258).

Verbs designating a state and verbs coding instantaneous changes are incompatible with the benefactive construction. The benefactive construction applies to

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[12] 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.

[13] The effect of external constraints, based on how lexical structure can be re-construed in order to be adapted to the requirements of the construction (see Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013, p. 256), is discussed in Section 3.2.

causative accomplishments (dynamic, telic and durative), subsuming verbs of "obtaining", "creation", "preparing" and "performance", where the resultant state of the act of obtaining or creation is focalized. Rosca's (2012) examples in (7) illustrate this constraint:

 (7)   a. Please *find* me a new mummy who will love me a lot and look after me.

         b. *Please *search* me a mummy who will love me. (Rosca, 2012, p. 169)

The telic verb *find* highlights the result of the act of obtaining (which is previous to the prospective act of transfer) and is therefore compatible with the double object benefactive construction in (7a). On the other hand, the ditransitive example with *search* in (7b) is ungrammatical as *search* expresses an unfinished event.

The third vertical constraint to be considered is the ***Focal Compatibility Constraint***, which stipulates "that lexical and constructional focal requirements must be compatible" (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013, p. 259). This constraint, which applies to the ditransitive and benefactive constructions equally, accounts for the different constructional behaviour of verbs like *give* and *contribute*. While *give* can be used both in the ditransitive and dative constructions (e.g., *He gave Mary ten dollars / He gave ten dollars to Mary*) the verb *contribute*, which "highlights the existence of multiple donors over the object and the recipient of the contribution" (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013, p. 259), is not compatible with the ditransitive construction (e.g., *He contributed the charity all his money*), as this construction focalizes the transfer of possession between the recipient and the object.[14]

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[14] See also Rosca and Ruiz de Mendoza (2016), who offer a critical review of Levin's (1993) semantic analysis of *contribute* verbs within the LCM framework.

In Levin's (1993) lexicalist account of the dative alternation, some of the dativizable subclasses of verbs in (3) are sensitive to the so-called Latinate morphophonological constraint (see also Pinker, 1989; Gropen et al., 1989; Goldberg, 1992, 1995). Verbs of "giving" such as *contribute* and *donate* and verbs of "obtaining" such us *purchase* or *obtain* are non-alternating verbs, as shown above.[15] Groefsema (2001) argues against the Latinate restriction, which is clearly insufficient to motivate the incompatibility of these verbs with the alternation, and postulates the *Unique Effect* constraint to explain the puzzle of the dative alternation. This constraint operates over verb-specific conceptual information assuming that the different forms of dativizable verbs do not only encode different conceptual representations of events but different perspectives on the event.

Groefsema's *Unique Effect* constraint resembles the *Focal Compatibility Constraint* in the LCM, as both are concerned with focal prominence factors.[16] The *Unique Effect* constraint says "that for a verb to occur with both syntactic frames, each one has to encode an effect which is not linguistically realised by any other VP" (Groefsema, 2001, pp. 536-537). On the other hand, the *Unique Effect* constraint predicts that a verb will not occur in the double object form "if there is no unique effect on the recipient, i.e. if the effect on the recipient is linguistically realised by a different VP" (Groefesma, 2001, p. 540). A verb like *donate*, which fails to occur in the ditransitive form (e.g., **John donated the museum the painting*), illustrates this constraint: *donate* is different from *give* in that its function is to ascribe a special status, that of being a donation, to the theme:

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[15] However, Goldberg (1995, p. 133) does not take the existence of some degree of lexical idiosyncrasy as counterevidence against the existence of "narrowly defined semantic subclasses of verbs" associated with the construction.

[16] Groefsema's *Unique Effect Constraint* could be considered as a special instance of the *Focal Compatibility Constraint* (Ruiz de Mendoza, p.c.).

Because the effects on the thing donated encoded by this conceptual representation differ from the effect encoded by the conceptual representation encoded by *give something to someone* this conceptual representation is linguistically realised by a different verb than *give*, i.e. *donate*. (Groefsema, 2001, p. 541)

As the verb *donate* encodes a special effect on the theme, it does not occur in the double object construction form, which should be more focused on the transfer of possession rather than on the transferred property itself.

The *Unique Effect* constraint can similarly explain why a verb of Latin origin like *purchase* does not occur in the double construction, as this verb is often specifically concerned with the effect on the theme (or rather with the special nature of the theme) and there is no unique effect on the intended recipient. Adopting the *Focal Compatibility Constraint*, we could also argue that the verb *purchase,* which encodes a more specific meaning than the native verb *buy*, has a focal prominence requirement whereby the purchased object, frequently a highly-priced, valuable entity as illustrated in (8), should be placed in a focal prominence position next to the verb (rather than after the beneficiary):

(8)   a. Mr Trump (…) *purchased* what is now **the Trump shuttle** from Eastern's

        parent company, Texas Air Corp, in April for $365 m. (BNC 389 A2V)

        b. The present owner *purchased* **the mill** in 1976 (…). (BNC 1084 A79)

        c. I recently *purchased* **an expensive pair of brown suede shoes**.

        (BNC 1590 A7N)

The clash between lexical and constructional focal requirements blocks out subsumption of *purchase* into the benefactive construction.

As to the second subtype of internal constraints regulating lexical-constructional subsumption in the English benefactive construction, two horizontal constraints will be considered: the ***Internal Variable Conditioning*** and the ***Constructional Variable Conditioning***.

In the words of Galera Masegosa and Ruiz de Mendoza (2012, p. 56), the former constraint "relates to the ability of parts of a lexical configuration to constrain the kind of elements that can instantiate the constructional arguments". We have seen that verbs of "cooking" and "preparing" in their extended uses as verbs of "creation and transformation" are very productive in the double object construction. However, the *Internal Variable Conditioning* constraint restricts the nature of the semantic relation between verb and theme. As the examples in (9) and (10) show, the referent of the second object must denote the created edible product, not the raw material or source (see Pinker, 1989, p. 395):

(9)   a. She cooked a pig / some pork for me.

        b. She cooked me some pork / *a pig. (Pinker, 1989, p. 395; note 8)

(10)   a. She tossed me a salad.

        b. *She tossed me some lettuce, tomatoes, and carrots.

                                        (Pinker, 1989, p. 395; note 8)

In cases where the verb takes a theme whose referent is ambiguous between raw material and created product (e.g., *fry an egg*, *pour some coffee*) the theme denotes the edible product (see Levin, 1993, p. 175). Finally, as Pinker (1989, p. 395; note 8) observes, when one of these verbs of "preparing" (like *bake*, for instance) is used with an object that does not turn into a new kind of object, the double object construction is blocked, as in *David baked the Plexiglas panel for me / *David baked me the Plexiglas panel*.

The *Internal Variable Conditioning* is also operative with verbs of "performance" in their extended uses of "verbs of creation and transformation". The performances described by these verbs (e.g., *picture* in *draw a picture*, *tune* in *hum a tune*, *poem* in *recite a poem*, *song* in *sing a song*, etc.) are themselves the effected objects (see Levin, 1993, p. 179).

The second horizontal constraint to be considered, the **Constructional Variable Conditioning**, derives from constructional requirements (see Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013, p. 258). As shown in (5) above, where the same verb can be either acceptable or unacceptable in the ditransitive construction, what appear to be lexical restrictions on the argument structure of verbs are best described as constraints conferred by the construction itself (Croft, 2003, p. 52).

The benefactive construction is associated with the so-called "intended reception" constraint (Colleman, 2010a, p. 222), i.e., the requirement that the beneficiary be involved as a projected recipient of the patient. The contrast between Goldberg's examples in (11a) and (11b) illustrates this constraint:

(11)   a. *Bill baked her a cake, but never intended for her to have the cake.

b. Bill baked a cake for Chris, but never intended for her to have the cake

−instead he did this as a favor for Chris because Chris was too busy to bake it

herself. (Goldberg, 2006, p. 29)

However, the intended reception constraint allows for a certain degree of flexibility.[17] The idea of intended transfer is indeed challenged by examples like (12), where the benefactive ditransitive construction with the verb *iron* does not necessarily evoke the notion of "giving" (see Allerton, 1978, p. 29; Colleman, 2010a, p. 224):

(12)   My woman always *ironed* me a new suit to wear. As I woke up the following

morning, I only found my vest and boxer shots nicely ironed and waiting for me.

(COCA, 2009)

It should be emphasized that, as Radden and Dirven (2007) note, the beneficial action *per se* does not involve transfer. Prototypical transfer (with verbs of "giving") and beneficial transfer are felt to describe similar situations, because "there is strong expectation that the beneficiary will eventually 'have' the object" (Radden & Dirven, 2007, p. 296).

Both regular *to*-ditransitives and benefactive ditransitives comply with the "animacy constraint" on the first argument, as illustrated by Goldberg's (2006, p. 27) examples *?Mina sent that place a box / ?Mina bought that place a box*, where *that place* does not qualify for the Recipient or Beneficiary roles. An additional construction-specific constraint on the English benefactive construction is the requirement that the

intended recipient be necessarily involved as a beneficiary of the subject's action. The examples in (13) and (14a/b) illustrate this constraint:

(13)   *Sally burned Joe some rice.

                          (Green, 1974, p. 92, cited in Goldberg, 1995, p. 146)

(14)   a. I got the cats some medicine.

        b. *I got the rats some poison. (Kay, 2005, p. 76)

As pointed out by Goldberg (1995, p. 146), an example like (13) is unacceptable if malicious intentions are attributed to Sally.[18] Similarly, Kay's example in (14b) is not acceptable on the intended interpretation "I plan to use the poison to kill the rats" (Kay, 2005, p. 76).

3.2 External constraints on subsumption

In order to offer a principled account of lexical-constructional subsumption in the benefactive construction, we also need to explore the effect of high level metonymy and metaphor, which act as external licensing factors on constructional coercion.

As Panther (2005, p. 363) points out, one insufficiency of Goldberg's Construction Grammar approach lies in the *unidirectionality* of the coercion process, always working from constructional meaning to lexical meaning:

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[18] In Old English, however, the indirect object referent is frequently a maleficiary, as in *þe deofol him scorteð his dazes* ("The devil shortened him his days", Lambert Homilies, 1175), cited in Visser, 1963, p. 689.

Constructions are assumed to have meaning and lexical items inserted in a construction do not necessarily have to fit the construction meaning "perfectly" but may, under certain circumstances, be coerced into a meaning determined by the construction meaning (see Goldberg, 1995). *But it is not impossible to imagine that lexical meaning might also "nibble at" constructional meaning and change it metonymically*. (Panther, 2005, p. 363; emphasis mine)

Goldberg herself acknowledges this possibility when she says that we may "consider certain verb inherent semantics to bear a *metonymic* relation to the semantics of the construction" (Goldberg, 1995, p. 65). As she puts it, verbs may designate "particular *preconditions* associated with the semantics of the construction" (Goldberg, 1995, p. 65). In *Sally baked Harry a cake*, for instance, the baking of the cake does not cause the transfer, but the creation of the cake is a necessary preparatory act, distinct from the prospective act of giving. Baking, obtaining, preparing, performing can thus be regarded as necessary preconditions for potential transfer in the English benefactive construction.

Geeraerts (2006, p. 186) uses the expression "precedent conditions metonymies" for the metonymical pattern where we find references to events preceding acts of transfer: conditions, preparations, preliminary actions, etc. In these cases, the beneficiary entity is defined as "the entity affected by an (explicitly mentioned) action that is preparatory with regard to an (unmentioned) functional transfer of which the entity is the recipient" (Geeraerts, 2006, p. 186). The participant acting as the indirect object in the benefactive construction is involved in a (preparatory) action which is metonymically associated with a process of transfer. Following Paszenda (2017, p.

254), this metonymic shift can be formulated as PRECONDITION FOR ACTION, exploiting the link between potentiality and actuality (see also Panther & Thornburg, 1999).[19]

Metaphor is also a relevant external licensing factor which motivates the English benefactive construction. Goldberg (1995, p. 150) proposes the metaphor ACTIONS PERFORMED FOR THE BENEFIT OF A PERSON ARE OBJECTS TRANSFERRED TO THAT PERSON as the motivation behind the English expressions in (15):

(15)   a. Cry me a river.

  b. Crush me a mountain. (Green, 1974, p. 96, cited in Goldberg, 1995, p. 150)

Instances of "relatively marked" examples like (15) can thus be argued to be related to the notion of "giving" via metaphorical extension (see Goldberg, 2002, p. 350; note 4). But the benefactive construction involves other examples of metaphorical transfer, as shown by Langacker's examples in (5) above. *Clearing the floor for someone* does not involve prototypical transfer *per se*. However, *clearing him a place to sleep on the floor* makes *him* a metaphorical possessor in the sense of "having that place at his disposal for a particular purpose" (Langacker, 1991, p. 360).

Finally, benefactive expressions with verbs of "performance" like *play* in (16), where there is no concrete entity being transferred into the possession of the beneficiary, also reveal the "inherent fuzziness in the intended reception constraint" (Colleman, 2010a, p. 225).

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[19] In her study of the family of ditransitive constructions in Polish, Paszenda (2017, p. 254) uses the more specific formulation ACCESSIBILITY FOR TRANSFER for this metonymic extension of the ditransitive prototype, where the transfer of an object to the dative referent is contingent on some other act. See also Rudzka-Ostyn's study of the Polish dative with reference to "acts of contingent acquisition" (Rudzka-Ostyn, 1996, pp. 346-347).

(16)   a. After cooking supper (…) he played us ***some medieval things*** on the organ
         and then ***some Elizabethan things*** on the clavicord. (BNC 1200 A08)

         b. He has played us ***excerpts from Wagner's Ring Cycle***. (BNC 932 FSN)

The entities qualifying as beneficiaries in these two examples are the metaphorical receivers of the performances described by the verb *play* (i.e., *some medieval things*, *some Elizabethan things*, *excerpts from Wagner's Ring Cycle*).

4. Final remarks

My main aim in this paper has been to show that a usage-based model like the LCM, where there is "projection of *enriched lexical meaning* through constructional meaning into syntax" (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013, p. 240; emphasis mine) is well-equipped to offer a motivated account of the internal and external mechanisms that license the incorporation of lexical structure into the benefactive double object construction in English.

   In the lexico-constructional approach I have put forward, the English benefactive construction has been regarded as a *conventionalized* form-meaning or form-function pairing. In accordance with the LCM notion of potential replicability (see Section 3), less frequent examples such as (15), where internal constraints are overridden through metaphorical re-construal, can be put on a par with other better examples of the benefactive construction, being naturally meaningful and potentially replicable by other speakers.

   I have started from the assumption that syntactic alternations are the result of *motivated* constructional coercion over lexical structure and that each member of an

alternation is a construction in its own right. [20] However, my analysis in this paper has not been fully consistent with Goldberg's syntagm-based idea that "the robust generalizations are surface generalizations" (2006, p. 33) and I have rather argued for a finer grained approach where the dative alternation and the benefactive alternation are not grouped together.

Acknowledgements

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[20] In the LCM the notion of syntactic alternation is treated as a side effect of the deeper process of lexical-constructional subsumption (see Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal, Usón, 2011, p. 79; Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera Masegosa, 2014, p. 19). Despite this epiphenomenal view of alternations, I believe that an alternation-based methodology can be effective to provide a motivated account of lexical-constructional subsumption in the English benefactive construction.

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