

## Microvariation in American English Applicative Structures

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**Overview** In this talk, we discuss implicational relationships among speaker judgments in the realm of dative constructions in American English. We analyze these relationships as arising from micro-variation in the properties of functional heads, including a special kind of Applicative head as well as the elements involved in building “presentative” sentences. More broadly, we show how this approach provides the formal means to capture fine-grained, one-way implications in acceptability judgments across speakers.

**Dative Constructions in American English** *Personal Datives* are obligatorily co-referential with the subject, despite the fact that they lack reflexive morphology. They are exemplified by the following sentences:

- (1) a. We had *us* a cabin... (Christian 1991)  
b. I love *me* some baked beans. (Webelhuth & Dannenberg 2006)  
c. I’m gonna write *me* a letter to the President. (Conroy 2007)

Hutchinson and Armstrong 2014 argue that the dative pronoun is introduced by a low Appl head, which relates a DP complement to its DP specifier. This is similar to the Appl head we find in double object constructions (Pylkkänen 2002), but with a special flavor: Appl<sub>SAT</sub> (for *satisfactive*) introduces a relation of satisfaction between the subject and the event denoted by the predicate.

- (2)  $[[\text{Appl}_{\text{SAT}}]] = \lambda x_e \lambda y_e \lambda P_{\langle e, st \rangle} \lambda e_s. P(e, x) \ \& \ \text{THEME}(e, x) : \text{MATTERS-TO}(x, y) \ \& \ \text{SATISFIED-THROUGH}(e, y)$

*Presentative Datives* occur in sentences with the function of pointing out the presence of an entity to a ‘presentee’ (Wood et al. 2015):

- (3) a. Here’s *you* a piece of pizza.  
b. Here’s *me* a good pair of jeans.  
c. Here’s *us* a gas station—pull over!

Though all speakers of English accept a presentative like *Here’s some money for you*, not all speakers of English accept the sentences with a dative in (1) or (3). The latter constructions are widely accepted in the South of the United States. We will present survey data showing that the speakers who accept sentences like (3) also accept the ones with a personal dative, as in (1), but not vice versa. How exactly do we capture the difference among the grammars of speakers who (a) do not accept personal datives, (b) accept only personal datives, (c) accept both personal datives and datives in presentative sentences?

**Presentative Structures** We assume that the *here* of presentative constructions is syntactically distinct from ordinary locative *here*. This is supported by the fact that many languages use a special “presentative” particle that does not have an independent locative function. An example of this from Italian is presented in (4) (see Zanuttini 2016 and references therein for detailed discussion):

- (4) a. Ecco-ti le chiavi.  
ECCO-you the keys  
‘Here’s you the keys.’  
b. \*Gianni è ecco.  
Gianni is ECCO  
INTENDED: ‘Gianni is here.’

Even in English, presentative structures have special properties; they are indexical not only to speech location, but also to speech time, as illustrated by the following contrast:

- (5) a. The pizza is (usually) here.  
 b. Here's {\*usually} the pizza {\*usually}.

In (5a), the predication [<sub>SC</sub> *the pizza here*] can be indexed to generic present tense. Since it needn't refer to the speech time, modifiers like *usually* are fully acceptable. In (5b), we have the same predication—note that (5b) entails that the pizza is in the denoted location. However, this same predication, in (5b), cannot be indexed to the generic present tense. It necessarily refers to the speech time, so modifiers like *usually* are ungrammatical. Wood & Zanuttini (2016) propose that in presentatives, *here* moves to a left-peripheral C<sub>L</sub> projection that indexes the speech location, and is selected by the hearer-oriented “ostensive Speech Act” head (SA<sub>h</sub>) discussed by Hill (2014:161–169). The structure of *Here's a pizza* is thus (6):

(6) [<sub>SA<sub>h</sub>P</sub> SA<sub>h</sub> [<sub>C<sub>L</sub>P</sub> [<sub>XP</sub> *here*] ... [<sub>SC</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> *a pizza*] <XP> ]]]] (Presentative)

What is important is that the raising of *here* is obligatory for the presentative interpretation to obtain. We are now in a position to show how the Presentative Datives in (3) are derived.

**Applied Datives in Presentative Structures** Drawing on the correlation mentioned above, we propose that Presentative Datives involve the same Appl<sub>SAT</sub> head as Personal Datives. In Presentative Datives, Appl<sub>SAT</sub> takes a small clause rather than a DP as a complement:

(7) [<sub>AppIP</sub> *you* [<sub>Appl'</sub> Appl<sub>SAT</sub> [<sub>SC</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> *a pizza*] [<sub>XP</sub> *here*] ]]]]

However, Appl<sub>SAT</sub> cannot always take a small clause as a complement. This is because the semantics of Appl<sub>SAT</sub> (cf. (2)) force it to combine with an entity-denoting constituent. The reason why Appl<sub>SAT</sub> can take a small clause complement in presentatives (cf. (7)) is that they force the predicate (*here*) to raise to a higher position in the clause, as discussed in (6):

(8) [<sub>C<sub>L</sub>P</sub> [<sub>XP</sub> *here*] ... [<sub>AppIP</sub> *you* [<sub>Appl'</sub> Appl<sub>SAT</sub> [<sub>SC</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> *a pizza*] <XP> ]]]] (Presentative dative)

Following Chomsky (2013), this raising effectively turns the complement of Appl<sub>SAT</sub> into a DP for the purposes of labelling. Moreover, if we assume that only the higher copy of *here* is interpreted, then the complement of Appl<sub>SAT</sub> is semantically an entity as well. The structure then converges semantically with no further stipulation: Appl<sub>SAT</sub> will first combine with *a pizza*, then with the dative in its specifier, and will return a constituent looking to combine with a predicate of type <e,<s,t>>, which is exactly the semantic type of the predicate *here*.

**Speaker Variation** We can account for speaker variation in terms of the features associated with Appl heads. All English speakers have the basic low Appl head. But only a subset of English speakers have Appl<sub>SAT</sub> in their grammar; those who do will allow Personal Datives. While all speakers who have Appl<sub>SAT</sub> allow it in the low position, where it combines with a DP, only a subset of the speakers who have Appl<sub>SAT</sub> allow it in a higher position, where it combines with a small clause. We take this fact to follow from two considerations:

- (i) The low Appl position is the unmarked position for Appl in English, so specific subcategories of Appl (such as Appl<sub>SAT</sub>) will generally be allowed in that position.
- (ii) Semantically, Appl<sub>SAT</sub> combines with two entity-denoting arguments (cf. (2)), so the low (as opposed to the high) position will be its unmarked position.

In general, we suggest that understanding microvariation as variation in the formal properties of functional heads allows us the formal precision needed for discrete grammars, the flexibility needed to capture small differences, and the power to capture strong implicational tendencies across distinct grammars.