On "Dimonotransitive" Structures in English

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Outline of the presentation

1. Basic clause patterns

"Dimonotransitive" structure: **S+V+Oi**

Restricted to a few number of verbs: beg, charge, deny, owe, pay, promise

The dimonotransitive structure **S+V+Oi** in the general grammars of English: Aarts and Aarts 1982; Biber *et al.*1999; Collins and Hollo 2000; Downing and Locke 1992; Greenbaum 1996; Huddleston 1988; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 2005; Leech 1981; Quirk *et al.* 1985.

Conclusion: **The pattern S+V+Oi, if it exists, seems to be a basic marginal structure**

The problem

Disagreement among linguists, mainly two opinions on the topic:

- those who think the pattern S+V+Oi is possible: Downing and Locke (1992), Leech (1981), Mukherjee (2005), Quirk *et al* (1985).

- those who oppose the previous statement; S+V+Oi does not exist in English since Oi=Od: Herriman (1995), Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Matthews (1981) or Wierzbicka (1988).

A working hypothesis

The structure S+V+Oi is possible in English (although it has a marginal character)

(1) Ghorbanifar: Here is where they have to pay **us** <BNC: ADL#193>

(2) I think I better show **you** <ICE-GB: S1a-017#035>

(3) And she came back and told **her husband** you know <ICE-GB: S1a-052#108>

... but the big issue

Does the Oi in S+V+Oi behaves similarly (syntactically, semantically and pragmatically) as it does in ditransitive structures in which the two objects are present S+V+Oi+Od?

We showed her a letter in the notes
<ICE-GB: S1b- 010#069>
Show me <ICE-GB: S1a-042#219>

2. Methodology

1. Corpus- based analysis

2. Two corpora used:

    ICE-GB for the most frequent ditransitive verbs (Mukherjee 2005): *tell*, *show*, *ask*

    BNC for the not-so frequent ditransitive verbs: *teach* and *pay*: sample of 500 examples from each verb

The analysis of the data

Verb	Occurrences of the verb	Ocurrences of S+ V+ O_i
TELL	794	**126 (15.8%)**
SHOW	634	9 (1.4%)
ASK	518	**61 (11.7 %)**
PAY	500	8 (1.6 %)
TEACH	500	10 (2%)
TOTAL	**2946**	**214 (7.2 %)**

The point of departure: a multidimensional concept of Oi

Oi

Syntactic Dimension ⟷ Semantic Dimension ⟷ Pragmatic Dimension
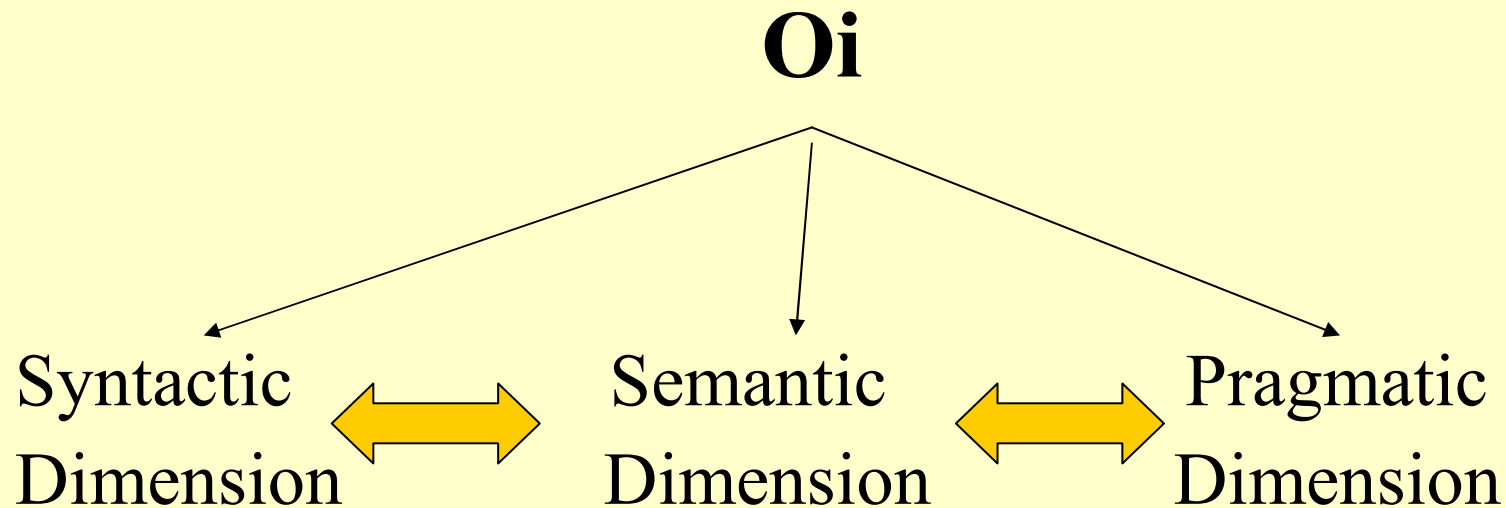
Any dimension is made up by a **cluster of properties** which are **interrelated**

3. Syntactic features of the Oi

A) Functional

1. Passivization
2. Paraphrase
3. Position
4. Obligatoriness
5. Constituents questions
6. Relativization
7. Nominalization
8. Postponement
9. Pre-nuclear position
10. Control

B) Formal

1. Categorial status

   Full NP

   Pronominalization
2. Case form

   Dative case form in

   pronouns

Functional criteria

- Some of them are not applicable (position, postponement, paraphrase) since they require the presence of Od (they establish a contrast between the two objects)

- Some of them are not fulfilled by the Oi

  (even in ditransitive structures): pre-nuclear position, nominalization or control.

- Others are fulfilled: passivization, answer to the questions about the constituents, relativization.

Formal criteria

1. Categorial status

-Full NPs:

(2) I mean ask **Nigel** you know <ICE-GB: S1a-090#208>

-Pronominalization

(3) Right, I´ll ask **her** <ICE-GB: S1a-017#046>

2. Dative case form in pronouns

(4) So, we´ll have to ask **them** cos if they´re all wearing jeans I´ll will feel like a right wally to <ICE-GB: S1a-042#148>

Two main objections

- Herriman (1995) and Huddleston & Pullum (2002) reject the idea of **S+V+Oi** because this structure does not fulfill the main criteria of indirect objecthood in English, i.e:

   1. Impossibility of paraphrase (Herriman)

   (5)*How can I ever refuse <u>to you of all people</u>?

   (6)*Margaret is trying to teach <u>to her children</u> herself

But: deny, envy, forgive, cost, charge...?

Two main objections

2. Fronting (Huddleston and Pullum 2002): only possible with Od (0 % of examples in the corpora)

(7) She teaches **the first year students (Oi) introductory logic (Od)**

(7a) **Introductory logic** she teaches

(7b) **The first year students** she teaches

So, they conclude objects in (7b) and (7c) are Od

although in (7c) it has the semantic role of recipient) (cf. % Him, she gave everything else, Huddleston and Pullum 2005)

4. Semantic characteristics

1. Semantic role: recipient

2. Lexical features: [+ animacy]

Properties of the semantic dimension

- **RECIPIENT** semantic role

100% of the examples have the semantic role of recipient although involved in different types of transfer: **physical** (*pay*), **verbal** (*tell, ask, teach*) or even **sensorial** (*show*):

(8) There are, of course, many who are disqualified for shorter of longer periods depending on their employer´s method of paying **them** <BNC-FR4#1306>

(9) When one watches Brian Way teach **a class of children**, as I have the privilege to do, one has a strong sense of coherence in theory and practice, [...] <BNC-AM6#38>

More properties of the semantic dimension

ANIMACY: **100%** were [+animate]

(10)Do you remember when you told **Mr Sainsbury or his solicitor**? <ICE-GB: 061#169>

(11)We will pay **the injured person or his or her appointed legal representative**
<BNC- HB5#1155>

5. Pragmatic implications

1. Discourse accessibility

2. Topic-worthiness

Discourse accessibility

Information packaging

Dichotomy GIVEN-NEW related to Oi-Od and interrelated to other features: topic worthiness and animacity

Prince´s model (1981) of **ASSUMED FAMILIARITY**

> We are, therefore, NOT concerned with what one individual may know or hypothesize about another individual´s belief-state EXCEPT insofar as that knowledge and those hypotheses affect the forms and understanding of LINGUISTIC productions (1981: 233)

Prince´s model (1981)

- Threefold distinction of **new, inferrable** and **evoked** entities

- The Oi is typically (contextually) evoked or situationally evoked

- In all the examples of *show*, *tell* and *ask* the profiled participant is situationally evoked

Some examples

TELL: -Ian where do you live

-I live in SouthGate

-Oh, yes you are right

-You told **me**

<ICE-GB: S1a-017#052>

SHOW: -Could you pass the diagnostic light there

-Take the mirror Professor

-I will try and show **you** if I can

<ICE-GB: S1a-088#173>

The counterexamples

ONLY two examples were brand-new entities (the rest are either evoked or inferrable)

(11) I don´t know, people I´m of them say they can´t afford to pay **the kids**, and get the food for the kids [...] <BNC-GYM#171>

(12) When he had the university of California, Santa Bárbara he had taught literary at a school in Battle Creek. He taught **the children of "Cereal City".** Everyone worked for Kelloggs, and the plant turned out,each day, enough for ten million people´s breakfasts <BNC- CLD#2013>

6. On the label "dimonotransitive"

- Name found in the ICE-GB, to describe the already mentioned structures **S+V+Oi**

> (13) When I asked **her**, she burst into tears<ICE-GB: S1A-094#110
>
> (14) I´ll tell **you** tomorrow<ICE-GB: S1A-099#396>
>
> (15) Show **me**<ICE-GB: S1A-042#119>

- Concept of transitivity in ICE-GB: **not a stable** property of verb and it´s **purely syntactic** (Mukherjee 2005:78)

On the label "dimonotranstive" (II)
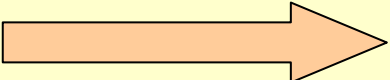
The terminology "dimonotransitive" may be **confusing**:

- because of the presence of the two opposing prefixes in the label itself: **di** vs **mono**

- it´s not coherent with the concept of transitiviy of the ICE-GB

- The label monotransitive might seem more appropiate for these structures (in the line of the parsers of ICE-GB)

7. Conclusions

- The label dimonotransitive seems to be doubtful: in our view, it´s a ditransitive structure with an elliptical Od , i.e. monotransitive uses of ditransive verbs

- So far we have not found **S+V+Oi** (in which Oi= obligatory element)

- Corpus data confirm the marginal character of the structure as well as the dependency on context (*ask, show, tell*) or on the high specificity of the verb (*pay, teach*)

Conclusions (II)

- The only criteria in which the **Oi** in **S+V+Oi** structure does not behave typically are: **fronting** and **obligatoriness** as it has the rest of prototypical features of Oi in ditransitive constructions: categorial status, case form, answer to questions about participants, passivization, animacy, semantic role and accesibility in discourse ⟶ **Non prototypical Oi**

Conclusions (III)

THE STRUCTURE S+V+Oi IS POSSIBLE
(although marginal and restricted to certain verbs)

However, does it mean that the Oi in absence of Od takes over some of the syntactic properties of the latter, i.e. capability of fronting and overtly presence in the clause?

THANKS A LOT!

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