

Bantu arguments for the decompositional analysis of dative clitics in Spanish

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Ausín and Fernández Rubiera (2017, 2019) (AFR, hereafter) argue for a decompositional analysis of dative clitics in Spanish (see Martín (2012), Martín and Boeckx (2013) for a similar proposal for dative clitics in Catalan). According to AFR, dative clitics should be lexically decomposed into an applicative morpheme (similar to the one advocated by Masullo (1992), C. Cuervo (2003), Pineda (2019)) and an agreement / determiner element (as in Uriagereka (1995)). In this paper, we present further arguments for AFR's proposal based on crosslinguistic considerations from Bantu languages, as well as certain hitherto ignored semantic restrictions on dative clitic doubling.

The main empirical argument of AFR's proposal comes from *le-for-les*: the possibility of having a non-agreeing dative clitic when there is a double DP in postverbal position, as in R.J. Cuervo's original example in (1a). According to AFR, the invariant *le* in (1a) is the spell-out of just the applicative morpheme, whereas the agreeing *les* in (1b) is the spell-out of both the applicative morpheme and the determiner.

(1) a. **Le** dice adiós **a las garzas** que pasan.
CL_{DAT.SG} say_{3SG} goodbye to the herons that pass_{3PL}
 'S/He says goodbye to the herons that fly by.'

Invariant *le* = applicative ONLY

b. **A las garzas, les** dice adiós.
to the herons CL_{DAT.PL} say_{3SG} goodbye
 'To the herons, s/he says goodbye.'

Agreeing *les* = applicative + D

AFR's proposal of splitting dative clitics into an applicative morpheme and a nominal element finds support from similar constructions in Bantu languages. As illustrated in (2), the applicative morpheme (*i*) and the agreement morpheme (*wa*), are independently realized in Swahili.

(2) m-sichana a-li-**wa**-sukum-i-a **wa-vulana** j-ongoo
 1-girl 1SA-PST-2OA-push-APP-FV 2-boy 5-millipede
 'The girl pushed a millipede towards the boys.' Swahili (Ngonyani 1996)

A further similarity between Bantu languages like Swahili, and Spanish that provides further support for AFR's analysis is related to the presence or absence of the applicative morpheme. As already observed by Vitale (1981) and illustrated in (3), verbs like 'give', which are inherently ditransitive, do not require an applicative morpheme to introduce the goal / recipient argument.

(3) ni-li-m-pa kaka yangu zawadi.
l-pst-to.him-give older brother my present
 'I gave my older brother a present.' Swahili (Vitale 1981:45)

Similarly, the only dative arguments that do not need to be doubled by the clitic in Spanish are goals involved in the expression of transfer (Strozer 1976, NGLÉ §35.4).

(4) Lola (le) dio la manzana a Pablo.
Lola (CL_{DAT}) gave the apple to Pablo
 'Lola gave the apple to Pablo.' (Strozer 1976, in Romain 2015:§2.5)

Another well-known feature of object agreement in Bantu languages is that it is subject to semantic restrictions, which varied depending on the language. This is illustrated in the Ruwund examples in (5) from Nash1992:565ff quoted in Belloro 2007:

(5) a. ku-kimb muntu.	b. ku- mu -kimb muntu.
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INF-look.for person 'to look for a (any) person.'	INF-OM-look.for person 'to look for a/the person.'
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The contrast in (5) is reminiscent of the specificity / definiteness constraint on accusative clitic doubling (AccCID) in Spanish illustrated in (6a) and (7a) (Suñer 1988, Leonetti 2008, a.o.). The literature is unanimous in assuming that no semantic constraint applies to dative clitic doubling (DatCID), as allegedly shown by the grammaticality of (6b) (DatCID with a negative quantifier) and (7b) (DatCID with a bare plural) from Suñer (1988).

(6) a. No (* lo) hizo nada . not CL _{ACC} did _{3SG} nothing 'S/He did nothing.'	b. No le da importancia a nada . not CL _{DAT} give _{3SG} importance to nothing 'S/He places value on nothing.'
(7) a. Ya (* los) compramos bombones . already CL _{ACC} bought _{1PL} chocolates 'We already bought chocolates.'	b. Les ofrecieron queso a familias de pocos medios . CL _{DAT} offered _{3PL} cheese to families of few resources 'They offered cheese to families of few resources.'

However, assuming with AFR a decompositional analysis of Spanish dative clitics opens a new angle to provide a uniform analysis of AccCID and DatCID in Spanish. Since dative clitics are assumed to be the combination of an applicative morpheme and a determiner (agreement-like) element (D), it is possible to attribute the semantic restrictions on doubling to D, and not the applicative part. If so, the alleged asymmetries between AccCID and DatCID can receive a principled explanation while maintaining a uniform analysis to clitic doubling. *Le* in (6b) would instantiate exclusively the applicative morpheme, compatible with a [-def] interpretation. The accusative clitic (i.e., D) triggers [+def], incompatible with the negative quantifier in (6a). As for (7b), many authors have rejected such examples, but more importantly, some authors have noted that DatCID with bare plurals is only possible with invariant *le* (without D) as in (8a) from Roca (1992) and (8b) from Laca (1999). A similar situation is found in Swahili, in (9), where an applied object is interpreted as specific only when there is an agreement mark.

(8)a. Luis nunca (le) da dinero a niños . Luis never LE gives money to kids 'Luis never gives kids money.'	b. Un accidente puede ocurrir le incluso a personas precavidas . an accident can happen.LE even to people cautious 'Even cautious people are likely to have an accident.'
(9) a. Juma a-li-nunul-i-a wa-toto vi-tabu Juma 1SA-PST-buy-APP-FV 2-child 8-book 'Juma bought books for children.'	b. Juma a-li- m -nunul-i-a m-toto ki-tabu h-iki Juma 1SA-PST-1OA-buy-APP-FV 1-child 7-book this-7 'Juma bought the child this book.'

In sum, a crosslinguistic analysis of Bantu and Spanish supports AFR's decompositional analysis of Spanish dative clitics and opens the door to a more uniform analysis of clitics.

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