

## English-like Applicatives in Romance and Basque

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**I. Goal:** The aim of the talk is to provide an exhaustive account of Dative/Accusative alternations in several Romance languages (especially Spanish, Catalan, Asturian and Italian), as well as in Basque. The relevant cases include verbs of communicative transfer (*telefonar* ‘phone’, *escriure* ‘write’, *contestar* ‘answer’), verbs of transfer of possession (*robar* ‘steal’, *pagar* ‘pay’), verbs of violent contact (*pegar* ‘hit’, *disparar* ‘shoot’), verbs of contact in a broad sense (*seguir* ‘follow’, *succeir* ‘succeed’), and verbs of social interaction (*servir* ‘serve’, *pregar* ‘pray’). Most of them display interesting variation from a diachronic point of view, too. They can all be grouped into a single and broader semantic class, those of verbs expressing transfer processes, by virtue of which the recipient ends up in possession or in contact of what has been transferred, being something material or immaterial.

**II. State of affairs:** Taking the example of *phone*-verbs (examples (a) from Spanish and (b) from Catalan), when expressing the recipient two options arise: conservative dialects preserve dative case-marked complement (1), whereas innovative dialects opt for an accusative case-marked complement (2) –note that this holds for full DPs as well as for clitics:

- (1) a. *Juan {llamó/telefoneó}* [<sub>DAT</sub> a su hija] → *Juan le {llama/telefonea}*  
b. *En Joan {truca/telefona}* [<sub>DAT</sub> a la seva filla] → *En Joan li {truca/telefona}*  
John phoned [<sub>DAT</sub> to his daughter] → John phoned [<sub>DAT</sub> her]
- (2) a. *Juan {llama/telefonea}* [<sub>ACC</sub> a<sub>DOM</sub> su hija] → *Juan la {llama/telefonea}*  
b. *En Joan {truca/telefona}* [<sub>ACC</sub> la seva filla] → *En Joan la {truca/telefona}*  
John phoned [<sub>ACC</sub> his daughter] → John phoned [<sub>ACC</sub> her]

In Catalan the pattern in (1)–(2) constitutes an irrefutable case of Dat/Acc variation for which no explanatory account has been proposed (only some descriptive (and partial) mentions of the phenomenon exist). However, in Spanish this has been misunderstood (there exist huge contradictions in prescriptive grammars and dictionaries), due to the existence of differential object marking (DOM) in the realm of lexical DPs and due to case confusing phenomena (*loísmo*, *laísmo*, *leísmo*) in the realm of clitics. However, that this phenomenon is not to be reduced to *loísmo/laísmo* is shown by its pervasive appearance in literary works and press and, crucially, by the existence of passive structures, which clearly indicates that these complements are something else than a standard IO with accusative-marking.

**III. Proposal:** We will argue that no structural differences can be found between dative complements (1) and accusative complements (2): both are Goals, though those in (2) are Differently Marked Goals, or, in other words, they are instances of Differential Indirect Object Marking or DIOM (following Bilous’s (2011) proposal for some verbs in French and Ukrainian). As we will show, several pieces of evidence support the view that accusative-marked complements in (2) are Goals: their semantics and theta-role; non-availability of secondary predication; *me-lui* restriction with analytic causatives (Sáez 2009, Ormazabal & Romero); the cross-linguistic behavior of the relevant verbs (Blume 1998, Troberg 2008, Bilous 2011).

**IV. Analysis:** We consider that those originally dative-taking unergatives, like *phone*-verbs, display DIOM, which consists of Acc-marking a structural IO. Then, inspired by Torrego’s (2010) and Sáez’s (2009) proposals, we will argue that verbs in (1) and (2) are hidden

transitives: indeed, they can be decomposed into a light verb + a noun: *telefonar* ‘phone’ – *fer una telefonada* ‘make a phone call’. This way, following Hale & Keyser’s (2002) account, the Cognate Theme *telefonada* ‘phone call’ conflates into the verb and gives rise to the final verb *telefonar* ‘phone’. Thus, when it comes to the expression of the Goal (the one receiving the phone call), we work with a hidden ditransitive structure (‘make [THEME a phone call] [GOAL somebody]’). So, whether the Goal appears with accusative or dative case marking, there will be a Low Applicative head relating the (Cognate) Theme and the Goal, following Pylkkänen’s (2002) account for cross-linguistic ditransitive structures.

Then, the difference in case assignment follows if we assume, on the one hand, that varieties using dative-marked complements (1) bear a current Romance Applicative head, which assigns inherent dative case to its specifier (to the Goal), as in current Romance ditr. constructions (3) (Catalan examples). On the other hand, the behaviour of dialects using accusative-marked complements (2) can be explained by positing a defective Applicative head (following Richardson’s (2007) account for some Slavic alternations) or, rather, a English-like Applicative head, which assigns inherent accusative case to its complement, as in current English ditr. constructions or double object constructions (84).

- (3) a. *El Joan (li) donà un llibre a la Maria* (4) a. *John gave Mary the book*  
 John (cl<sub>DAT</sub>) gave [ACC a book] [DAT to Mary]  
 b. *El Joan telefonà [DAT a la Maria]* b. *Joan telefonà la Maria*  
 John phoned [DAT to Mary] John phoned [ACC Mary]

Once the Theme (*the book* in (4a) or the Cognate Theme *telefonada* ‘phone call’ in (4b)) gets the inherent accusative case from the Applicative head, the Goal (*Mary* in (5a), *la Maria* in (5b)) must go up and check for structural accusative case. From there, it will be able to passivize –this is one of the structural consequences we will account for in our talk:

- (5) a. *Mary was given the book* b. *La Maria fou telefonada*  
 Mary was phoned

**V. Extensions:** The same account holds for similar patterns found with the very same verbs in other Romance varieties such as Asturian (6) or Italian Southern dialects (7)-(8), as well as in Basque (9) –again regardless of the clitic / DP status of the complement:

- (6) a. *Telefonée-y* b. *Telefonéelu, telefoneéla*  
 I phoned-[DAT him] I phoned-[ACC him], I phoned-[ACC her]  
 (Julio Viejo, p.c.)

- (7) a. *’Ngə so’ tətelefonátə* b. *La so’ tətelefonátə*  
 I phoned [DAT her] I phoned [ACC her]  
 (Andriani 2011: 50-51)

- (8) *Telefonarono lo zio*  
 They phoned [ACC the uncle]  
 (Gadda, cited by Academia della Crusca)

- (9) *Joni telefonoz deitzen diot nik* b. *Jon telefonoz deitzen dut nik*  
 I phone [DAT John] I phone [ABS John]

Likewise, we will argue that the High vs. Low Applicative head distinction is responsible for several cases of diachronic variation with the relevant verbs, e. g. Catalan *help*-verbs and *pray*-verbs used to take a dative complement, although nowadays only the most conservative dialects preserve it, while the rest use a standard transitive pattern with accusative case.

**References:** ANDRIANI 2011: *DOM, Clitic Doubling and Argument Structure in Barese*. Ms, Leiden U. BILOUS 2011: *Transitivité et marquage d’objet différentiel*. PhD Diss, U. Toronto. BLUME 1998: «A contrastive analysis of interaction verbs with dative complements», *Linguistics* 36:2, 253-280.

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