

HOW CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE IMPINGES ON CONSTRUCTIONAL BEHAVIOR. THE CASE OF *GIVE* VERBS*

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Abstract

This article aims to cast light on the constructional behavior of nine of Levin's (1993) *give* verbs, i.e. *feed*, *lease*, *lend*, *loan*, *pay*, *peddle*, *rent*, *sell*, and *trade*, in the ditransitive and dative constructions. This paper also proposes onomasiological hierarchies for these verbs on the basis of Faber and Mairal's (1999) lexematics-oriented taxonomies. My findings concur with Levin's (1993) and Faber and Mairal's (1999) hypothesis according to which the internal semantic parameters of a given verb function as predictors of that verb's syntactic representations. In a hierarchy of predicates, the hyponyms display the same complementation patterns as their genus or superordinate predicate. Nevertheless, some verbs inherit partial semantic and syntactic behavior from more than one lexical class. A verb like *trade* inherits conceptual structure both from *give* (cf.

Resumen

Este artículo se propone arrojar luz sobre el comportamiento construccional de nueve verbos de *dar* (cf. Levin 1993), es decir *alimentar*, *arrendar*, *prestar*, *dejar*, *pagar*, *vender* (*en las calles*), *alquilar*, *vender* y *cambiar* en la construcción ditransitiva y la construcción dativa. Además, este trabajo propone jerarquías onomasiológicas para estos verbos, basándose en las taxonomías lexemáticas de Faber y Mairal (1999). Mis hallazgos coinciden con la hipótesis de Levin (1993), Faber y Mairal (1999), según la cual los parámetros semánticos de un verbo funcionan como vaticinadores de las representaciones sintácticas de ese verbo. En una jerarquía de predicados, los hipónimos muestran los mismos patrones construccionales que sus predicados de orden superior. Sin embargo, algunos verbos heredan el comportamiento semántico y sintáctico de más de una sola clase verbal. El verbo *cambiar* hereda su estructura conceptual tanto del verbo *dar*

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They traded him to the Cubs) and exchange (e.g. Jason traded Thomas his laptop for a mobile phone).

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(cf. *Lo traspasaron a los Cubs*) como del verbo *intercambiar* (ej. *Jason le cambió a Thomas su portátil por un móvil*).

Palabras clave: construcción ditransitiva, construcción dativa, jerarquía onomasiológica, herencia múltiple.

1. INTRODUCTION

The ground-level aim of this paper is to study the lexical-constructional integration processes impacting on the coding and decoding of the dative alternation with nine *give* verbs extracted from Levin's (1993) lexical semantics, namely *feed*, *lease*, *lend*, *loan*, *pay*, *peddle*, *rent*, *sell*, and *trade*. In some cases, hyponyms of these verbs, which were not included in Levin's (1993) inventory of verbs, will be discussed. Levin (1993) subsumes semantically-related verbs under the same class label showing that they pattern alike at the syntactic level. The present article relies on the classification put forward by Levin (1993), which has been complemented by means of the lexematics-oriented taxonomies carried out by Faber and Mairal (1999). I have used these seminal taxonomic works because they provide exhaustive listings of verbs within the change of possession dimension. I have refined Faber and Mairal's lexical class organization by using a larger amount of data and also computerized corpora, which was not extensively available to these authors. For the present research, I have adopted a corpus-based approach by obtaining examples from the original edition of The British National Corpus (BNC henceforth) and The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA henceforth). This article was originally intended to be carried out only on data from the BNC and COCA but these corpora returned an extremely low number or no hits for the dative alternation with verbs like *spoon-feed*, *overfeed*, *peddle*, *vend*, *hawk*, *scalp*, *retail*, *undersell*, *bootleg*, etc. This determined me to turn to a bigger and richer corpus, namely Google search engine, very much in line with the methodological proposals in Renouf (2003) and Kilgarriff and Grefenstette (2003), who claim that Google is a useful resource for the retrieval of linguistic information and for all kinds of language research. In this study I have taken two major steps. The first one involves the building of onomasiological hierarchies¹ for the

¹ An onomasiological organization resembles our mental lexicon in which lexical items are grouped according to their conceptual meaning. The onomasiological perspective is usually
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aforementioned verbs on the basis of Faber and Mairal's (1999) semantically-oriented taxonomies. The second one concerns the close inspection of the complementation patterns of the verbs under scrutiny (i.e. their (non)participation in the dative and ditransitive constructions) and the conceptual motivations that lie behind them. The results of my analysis bear out both Levin's (1993) and Faber and Mairal's (1999) hypothesis according to which the internal semantic parameters of a verb serve as predictors of its syntactic representations. In order to build onomasiological hierarchies, I have factorized common features by directly observing the semantic and syntactic behavior of predicates. Factorization implies finding common definitional structures between related lexical units and then deriving higher-level definitions, which apply to a number of items in the lower domains. Each hierarchy comprises hyponyms and hyperonymic concepts which are more generic (e.g. *give*, *sell*, *feed*). The hyponyms inherit the nuclear meaning from their superordinate predicates, but at the same time have a set of distinguishing features that neatly separates them off from the rest of the lexical items found at the same level. For the elaboration of hierarchies I started by looking up the definitions of the hyperonymic concepts and by searching their immediate synonyms. To be concise in the identification of shared meaning components, I have consulted several monolingual dictionaries, such as the Longman dictionary online, the Cambridge dictionary online, the OneLook dictionary as well as dictionaries of synonyms (e.g. *Multiwordnet*, *Wordreference*, the Collins thesaurus). Any lexematic arrangement has two main components: 1) the nuclear meaning or act nucleus (i.e. the genus/definiens, written in bold) and 2) the modificants which represent a set of idiosyncratic properties (i.e. modifying adverbials: purpose, formality, specificity of the transferred entity, etc., the items between brackets) (see also Snell-Hornby 1983, cited in Boas 2008). In what follows I will represent the onomasiological hierarchy of the verb *distribute*:

- distribute** to give out something to a number of people
- deal out** to distribute [cards] in [a game] to [the players]
- dispense** to distribute in [fixed amounts]
- mete out** to distribute [by measure] (formal)
- share out** to distribute [an equal share/part of something] to [each person in a group]

As can be observed, *distribute* is the genus whereas *deal out*, *dispense*, *mete out*, and *share out* are its hyponyms or subordinate predicates, which inherit not only the conceptual structure of their genus but also its complementation patterns, i.e. participation in the dative construction and the *among/between* phrase pattern

contrasted with the semasiological approach which departs from the structure of a linguistic expression in order to investigate its meanings and functions.

(cf. [...] *each group distributed invitations to perhaps a dozen or fourteen friends to a tea* [...] COCA B13 W_non_ac_humanities_arts; *They heard how British Coal and BT had distributed surpluses among their pensioners* COCA K4W W_newsp_other_report). As for the descriptive parameters in their definitional structure, these refer to quantity, the specificity of the transferred entity or of the recipient.

The task of section 2 is to set forth the theoretical framework that the remainder of this paper's analysis will rest on. Section 3 explores the integration processes between *give* verbs and the dative and ditransitive constructions. It also displays onomasiological hierarchies for the verbs under consideration. Lastly, the findings of the present research are summarized in section 4.

2. THE DITRANSITIVE AND THE DATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Before providing the readers with a brief overview of the dative alternation, I will introduce the notion of *construction*, which has generated an impressive surge of interest within the field of Cognitive Linguistics. Schönefeld (2006) discusses the evolution of this concept and characterizes in broad strokes the various versions of *Construction Grammar* (CxG; see also González-García and Butler 2006). Goldberg (1995) first defined a construction as a form-meaning pairing whose overall meaning cannot be predicted from the sole interpretation of its component parts. The ditransitive (e.g. *John gave Susan a present*) and the dative constructions (e.g. *John gave a present to Susan*) make up the *dative alternation* or 'dative shift'. The former is a dative realized by double objects [NP/SUBJ [VP/PRED NP/OBJ1 NP/OBJ2]] whereas the latter is a dative realized by a prepositional phrase, either "to" or "for" [NP/SUBJ [VP/PRED NP/OBJ PP/OBL]]. In this paper the term construction will be adopted since in Construction Grammar syntactic alternations are treated as epiphenomenal, i.e. the side effect of variation in lexical-constructional integration (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal 2011). Goldberg (1995) claims that the ditransitive construction has the skeletal meaning X CAUSES Y TO RECEIVE Z and it shows the following properties:

- (1) It contributes transfer semantics that cannot be attributed to the lexical verb.
- (2) The goal argument must be animate (recipient rather than patient).
- (3) Two non-predicative NPs are licensed in post-verbal position.
- (4) The construction links recipient role with object function.

(5) The subject role must be filled with a volitional agent who intends transfer.

As noted by Coleman and De Clerck (2009), Goldberg is one of the scholars who treat the dative construction as a subcase of the caused-motion construction (see also Pesetsky 1995, Panther 1997, Harley 2002, and Krifka 2004). Moreover, Goldberg (1995, 2002) argues that the caused-motion construction (X CAUSES Y TO MOVE Z) is characterized by the following features:

- (1) It contributes caused-motion semantics that cannot be ascribed to the lexical verb itself.
- (2) It supplies the caused-motion semantics that cannot be attributed to the preposition.
- (3) The causer argument cannot be an instrument.

In fact, Pinker (1989) and Langacker (1991) were the first linguists to conceptualize the contrast between the ditransitive and the dative in terms of focal prominence, i.e. the first focalizes the possession relationship between a recipient and an object whilst the second emphasizes the trajectory followed by the transferred entity. In a similar vein, Panther (1997) contends that the dative construction has a (spatial) metaphorical basis, i.e. a purely spatial (directional) scenario is mapped onto a more abstract transfer scenario. Regarding the ditransitive construction, the syntactic position of the recipient iconically reflects the strong impact of the verb onto the indirect object and it contributes to the strong implicature of possession, which is cancellable in case of the dative (cf. *I handed my book to him, but he didn't take it* vs. *?I handed him my book, but he didn't take it*).

3. THE CASE OF *GIVE* VERBS

This section considers the conceptual relationships between nine of Levin's (1993) *give* verbs, viz. *feed, lease, lend, loan, pay, peddle, rent, sell, and trade*. My aim is to see to what extent shared conceptual structure can determine shared syntactic behavior. To this end, I have elaborated an onomasiological hierarchy for these verbs, which is reproduced below:

MOVE				
TRANSFER				
GIVE				
feed ‘give food to someone’	lend ‘give something temporarily’	pay ‘give someone money for goods/services’	rent ‘let someone use house/vehicle for money’	Trade ‘give goods/services in exchange for something’
<i>wine and dine</i> ‘feed dinner’	<i>loan</i> ‘lend someone something, esp. money’	<i>repay</i> ‘pay either in return or in compensation’	<i>lease</i> ‘let someone use building/car for money’	<i>sell</i> ‘give something to someone in exchange for money’
<i>breast-feed</i> ‘feed milk to baby from breast’		<i>return</i> ‘pay back’	<i>let</i> ‘rent room/building for money’	<i>peddle</i> ‘sell illegal/harmful goods’
<i>suckle</i> ‘feed milk to baby/animal from breast/teat/udder’		<i>refund</i> ‘pay back for a returned item’	<i>sublet</i> ‘rent a rented property’	<i>vend</i> ‘sell from place to place’
<i>bottle-feed</i> ‘feed milk to baby/animal from bottle’		<i>reimburse</i> ‘pay back for some expense incurred’		<i>hawk</i> ‘sell goods in the streets’
<i>force-feed</i> ‘feed by force’		<i>indemnify</i> ‘pay for loss/damage’		<i>resell</i> ‘sell again’
<i>nourish</i> ‘feed nutrients’		<i>compensate</i> ‘pay for loss/injury’		<i>scalp</i> ‘resell tickets at higher price’
<i>ply</i> ‘keep feeding large quantities of food/drink’		<i>recompense</i> ‘pay for loss/injury’		<i>undersell</i> ‘sell at price below its value’
<i>regale</i> ‘feed plenty of good things’		<i>reward</i> ‘pay for effort/services’		<i>retail</i> ‘sell goods directly to customers in small quantities’
<i>overfeed</i> ‘feed too much food’		<i>remunerate</i> ‘pay for goods/services/losses incurred’		<i>auction</i> ‘sell in public auction’
				<i>bootleg</i> ‘sell illegally’

Table 1. Conceptual dependencies among Levin’s (1993) *give* verbs.

The lexematic hierarchy in table 1 comprises verbs that range from generic (e.g. *move*, *transfer*) to more specific (e.g. *give*= transfer of possession). Nevertheless, *give* is a neutral verb which puts emphasis on the process of transfer from X to Y without lending importance to any of its complements. In contrast, other *give*-type predicates require a higher degree of granularity since they provide

details related to different semantic parameters or differentiae such as the manner of giving, time, the specificity of the transferred entity, the optionality of argument participants, the attitudinal component, etc. In table 1 *give* is the genus of the verbs *feed*, *lend*, *pay*, *rent*, and *trade*. This conceptual arrangement proposes a finer-grained taxonomy than the one in Levin (1993), by reclassifying verbs like *loan* as a hyponym of *lend*, *refund* and *repay* as hyponyms of *pay*, *lease* as a hyponym of *rent*, *sell* as a hyponym of *trade*, and *peddle* as a hyponym of *sell*. I have further inquired into the conceptual potential of the verbs *feed*, *pay*, *rent*, and *sell*. Thus, the verb *feed* has the following hyponyms: *wine and dine*, *breast-feed*, *suckle*, *bottle-feed*, *force-feed*, *nourish*, *ply*, *regale*, and *overfeed*. The verbs *repay*, *return*, *refund*, *reimburse*, *indemnify*, *compensate*, *recompense*, *reward*, *remunerate* are all hyponyms of *pay*. The verb *sell* contains nine hyponyms (e.g. *peddle*, *vend*, *hawk*, *resell*, *scalp*, *undersell*, *retail*, *auction*, and *bootleg*) whereas *rent* has only three hyponyms, viz. *lease*, *let*, and *sublet*.

I shall start by discussing the case of *feed*, which makes no exception to Levin (1993) and Faber and Mairal's (1999) semantically-induced inheritance hypothesis, i.e. as a *give* verb, *feed* participates in both the ditransitive and dative constructions. However, *feed* has a richer distributional pattern than its superordinate predicate. Unlike *give*, which cannot select an *into*-phrase because the notion of container (*into*) cannot unify with the recipient role contributed by *give* (Van der Leek 1996:326), the verb *feed* is likely to accept this preposition because of the image-schematic metaphor THE MOUTH IS A CONTAINER:

- (1) *We played a game where they fed books into Henry's mouth and Henry ended up "getting sick." Then we talked about how Henry should read books instead of eating them.*² (caused-motion construction)

When comparing the ditransitive construction *She fed the guests lasagna* with the dative version *She fed lasagna to the guests*³ linguists agree that the presence of the verb *feed*, which is usually associated with the food intake of babies and animals, makes these sentences sound impolite. Nevertheless, the ditransitive construction is more polite than the dative construction since the former indicates that the guests behave like willing Recipients.

As far as the hyponyms of the verb *feed* are concerned, we can establish a cline of change in their syntactic behavior ranging from verbs which display the dative alternation, verbs which show the NP1 V NP2 *with* NP3 pattern to verbs

² Example taken from: <http://literacylaunchpad.blogspot.com/2007/09/henry-and-reid.html> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

³ Examples taken from: http://mind.ucsd.edu/syllabi/00-01/phil_lang/readings/goldberg-01/goldberg-01.html (accessed on April 5, 2012).

which can only select a transitive construction. Thus, only two hyponyms of the verb *feed*, viz. *force-feed* and *spoon-feed* inherit the ditransitive and the dative constructions, as illustrated in (2)-(3):

- (2) a. *If I can't get a response from them soon I'll force-feed'em my old loin-cloths!* (COCA EB6 W_pop_lore)
 b. *In Australia, the honeypot ants collect nectar and force-feed it to workers of a special caste [...].* (COCA EFR W_non_ac_nat_science)
- (3) a. *His brother spoon-fed him putrid concoctions from the fridge, once shocked him with a live wire, and another time wrapped him head to toe like a mummy, so that only his nostrils peeked out.*⁴
 b. *It's only worth using MPs to have a go at the government, and then you spoon-feed it to them.* (COCA AB9 W_fict_prose)

On the other hand, verbs like *nourish*, *regale*, and *ply* preserve some other part of the constructional potential of the verb *feed*, namely the occurrence in the NP1 V NP2 *with* NP3 pattern:

- (4) *So he relaxes and enjoys a brief dance with her after she has fed him with cherries.* (COCA A12 W_non_ac_humanities_arts)
- (5) *She nourishes them with a special fluid which exudes from a nipple on the wall of the pouch in which her larva lies.* (COCA F97 W_non_ac_nat_science)
- (6) *The North men being arrived at the Grande Portage, are regaled with bread, pork, butter, liquor and tobacco [...].*⁵
- (7) *It became a joke to ply him with half-pints of beer and fantasies about each other's unfitness for battle.* (BNC H86 2722)

Due to the presence of *keep* as a semantic constituent in the definition of *ply*, this verb becomes compatible with the telicity test since it encodes an atelic state of affairs (Dik 1997: 108-111):

- (8) a. *They plied me with beer for an hour* (*in an hour).
 b. **It took them an hour to ply me with beer.*

Levin (1993:141) groups *ply* and *regale* under the heading of *equip* verbs which have a close meaning to the verbs of fulfilling (e.g. *provide*) and whose meaning specifies something about what is provided. In my opinion, the preposition *with* expresses the instrument by means of which one entertains his/her guests (cf.

⁴ Example taken from: <http://www.ihavenet.com/7-Ways-Your-Siblings-May-Have-Shaped-You.html> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

⁵ Example taken from: <http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/12/v12i04p359-377.pdf> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

They entertained me with stories/small (witty) talk/a feast/food and wine (drinks). It is common knowledge that a host/hostess has to do his/her best to make his/her guests feel like home by trying to entertain them and to offer them food and drinks. People gather in groups to satisfy their communicative needs and if they have come a long way to see their friends or relatives, the latter are expected to show their hospitality and feed the travelers. Therefore, it is no surprise that nowadays the verb *regale* is more frequently used in a socializing frame (cf. *Later, over a dram, Cam would regale me with tales of female conquests* COCA CDS W_biography).

A third syntactic possibility is exemplified by the verbs *wine and dine*, *breast-feed*, *bottle-feed*, and *suckle*, which can only appear in the transitive construction (cf. *I fed the baby*; *Rest it on your conscience if you wine and dine your lover and claim client entertainment* COCA EW5 W_commerce; *Do you mean can I breast-feed her yet?* COCA GUM W_fict_prose; *So in the end, after a week or so, it was a real relief to give up and bottle-feed him instead* COCA H07 W_non_ac_soc_science; *Once, on the dunes, she opened her dress and suckled her baby* BNC G1A 234). The reason why these verbs cannot participate in the dative alternation is straightforward: they cannot lexicalize the patient since the transferred entity is already incorporated in the form of the verb. In the case of the verbs *breast-feed* and *bottle-feed* the patient is inferred by means of the metonymy CONTAINER FOR CONTENT, i.e. the nouns *breast* and *bottle* are used instead of *milk*. Lastly, the troponym *overfeed* can only participate in the ditransitive construction, lacking the *to* variant counterpart:

- (9) *Godzilla was even spotted once but luckily we overfed him wheat until he died.*⁶

This can be accounted for by the fact that in a ditransitive construction the recipient receives a more affected interpretation than in a prepositional phrase. In this sentence the recipient is totally affected and subsequently he dies. Similarly, Oehrle (1976: 60, (58)) supports this view by providing the example *The constant chatter gave me a headache* which does not accept the dative construction (cf. **The constant chatter gave a headache to me*) given the fact that a headache necessarily affects someone. As can be noticed the more specific a verb becomes, the smaller the amount of possibilities for this verb to participate in complex constructions like the ditransitive or the dative constructions, which require the syntactic projection of the transferred entity and of the affected entity.

The verb *lend* can be defined as giving something to someone for a short time on the condition that the specific entity will be given back. If in the case of *give*, the

⁶ Example taken from: <http://forum.travian.us/showthread.php?t=38292&page=2> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

recipient is entitled to exclusive rights over the possessee/possessed, this is not the case for *lend* in which the receiver is allowed only a temporary use of the transferred entity. The domain of financial transactions adds a degree of granularity to this verb in the sense that the recipient is expected to return the amount of money given to him and with an interest. What differentiates *loan* from *lend* is that the former is only employed for physical transactions (goods, money) whilst the latter can also have a figurative meaning as in [...] *if he sometimes almost won, that lent him hope and kept him playing on* (BNC 898). This sentence is licensed by the metaphor ACTIONS ARE TRANSFERS (OF POSSESSION), whereby hope becomes an object that is transferred from a giver/lender to a receiver. Holding possession of the object maps onto the effects of the action of causing someone to be hopeful (there is also a built-in metonymy here). The mappings working within the metaphor ACTIONS ARE TRANSFERS can be observed in the figure displayed below.

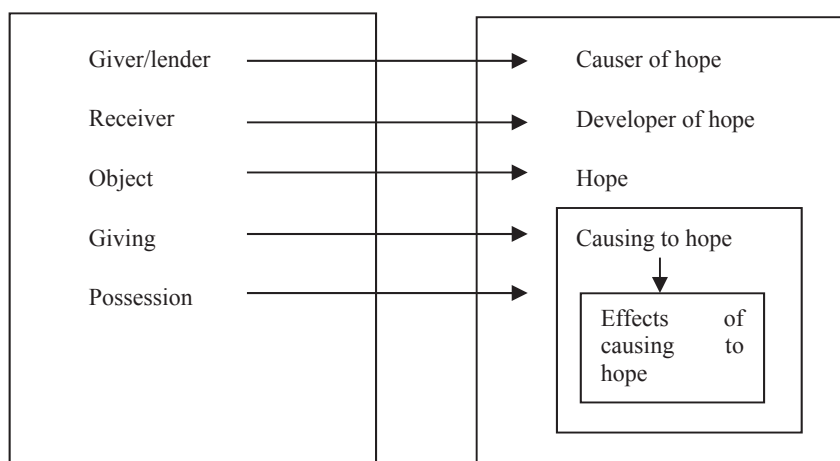


Figure 1. ACTIONS ARE TRANSFERS (OF POSSESSION) metaphor.

This metaphor is a many correspondence metaphor in which the causer of hope (an event) is regarded as a giver whereas the developer of hope is viewed as a recipient. The event causing hope stands for the effects of causing hope.

The verbs *lend* and *loan* and *lease* can be contrasted with *rent*, *hire*, *charter* and *sublease*. All of them codify alternate construals of the same generic event but from different perspectives: giver (agent) → transferred entity (patient) → recipient (goal) versus recipient (agent) ← transferred entity (patient) ← giver (source). Thus, *lend*, *loan* and *lease* illustrate an unmarked coding of a canonical act of transfer in

which the donor is agentive and the recipient is passive while *rent*, *hire*, *charter* and *sublease* constitute a marked coding profiling a different portion of the event: the recipient's dynamic involvement and the object's movement into the recipient's sphere of control, leaving aside the importance of the agent. But as has already been highlighted by Newman (1996:118), the recipient has a crucial role in the basic interpersonal act of giving (there will always be a goal when you give since *give* is an intentional verb) whereas the human source has a peripheral status in the act of taking (sometimes there is not any person from whom one takes things, cf. *I took the book from the table*). That is why the source acquires a degree of optionality (cf. *I rented the flat [from Joe]*). Every verb specifies certain entailments related to its arguments (e.g. *give* entails that its subject is acting volitionally). Of course, in an example like *I gave my wallet to the thief because he threatened to kill me if I didn't*, *give* expresses no intentionality and even if the giving event is performed by an agent, we understand that the act is caused by an external force. In fact, the thief could be considered the agent or instigator of the giving event whilst the victim is the counter-agent because he is the force against which the action is carried out.

Time and specificity of the transferred entity are the semantic parameters that separate *rent* from *lease* since the first verb is associated with the use of a room, house, car or equipment for a short period of time whereas the second one is restricted to the use of a building, vehicle, equipment or land for a long period of time. *Let* is a dialectal variant (British English) of the verb *rent* which shares the same syntactic behavior as the verbs *rent* and *lease*, namely the participation in the ditransitive and dative constructions:

- (10) a. *Densil's mum let him a room.* (COCA A6E W_biography)
- b. *He's let his house to some English people.* (COCA FB9 W_fict_prose)
- (11) a. *He rented me a projector [...].* (BNC A6C 371)
- b. *The Hutton family bought the property from Captain Isaac Mills who had rented it to Mary Elizabeth Hutton [...].* (BNC BPK 170)
- (12) a. *My father provided Maurice with a capital sum and leased him the property he now occupies at a nominal rental.* (BNC GWB 87)
- b. *In 1814, Samuel Webb leased the mill to Stephen and Edward Blackwell, who carried on the tradition of cloth making.* (BNC ANC 573)

The verb *sublet* participates in both the ditransitive and the dative constructions but it involves a more complex situation in which the landlord rents a property to a tenant and in his/her turn, the tenant rents it to someone else.

In my opinion *lease* and *rent* represent exchange frame verbs for the same event can be contemplated from both perspectives, i.e. that of the lessor/landlord and correspondingly, that of the lessee/tenant (e.g. *My uncle leased/rented the*

cottage to those tourists vs. Those tourists leased/rented the cottage from my uncle). *Rent* inherits its syntactic configuration both from *give* and *exchange* since unlike *exchange*, it can participate in the dative alternation (cf. **Helen exchanged the dress to Mary*/* *Helen exchanged Mary the dress*) and, contrary to *give*, it may take part in examples as the following: *He rented the room for \$200* versus **He gave the room for \$200*. A possible reason could be the fact that *give* denotes an altruistic act in which the recipient is not expected to give back anything whereas in the case of *rent* the recipient has the obligation to give money to the landlord for the room he uses as part of a written agreement (transaction). In *He rented the room for \$200* the event is construed as an exchange whilst in *He rented the room to Thomas* the notion of transfer is foregrounded to the detriment of the exchange frame. This verb must have some semantic property in common with verbs of exchange, which gives rise to their partially shared behavior. The association of the verb *rent* with a durative adverbial (e.g. *She rented me the room for one year*) may lead us to think that this is a case of telicity, but in fact the durative phrase refers to the period of time she rent the room and not the amount of time it took her to rent me the room. If we were to follow Rappaport and Levin (2008), we should specify that the verb *rent*, as a *give*-type verb, cannot encode caused-motion not even in the dative PP construction (e.g. *He rented the room to Tom*) since in this case the room does not move anywhere. Rather, this example should be seen as an instantiation of caused possession which can be paraphrased by a sentence like *Tom has the room*.

As has been already remarked by Baker and Ruppenhofer (2002), Levin's (1993) classification is not flawless since many verbs are cross-listed in classes which choose only one aspect of their overall meaning but they do not capture separate senses. One such example would be the verb *trade* which she classifies at the same time as a *give* verb and an *exchange* verb. This verb invokes the buying frame so it would be understood as a 'double' give verb. In a sentence like *Joe traded Tom his laptop for a mobile phone*, the preposition *for* indicates a cooperative act of reciprocation since Joe gives a laptop to Tom and in exchange Tom gives a mobile phone to Joe. At a linguistic level, the exchange is asymmetrical for Joe's act of giving a laptop to Tom is foregrounded to the detriment of Tom's reciprocal giving of a mobile phone to Joe which is backgrounded. In the ditransitive construction, the verb *trade* focuses on the result of the exchange with emphasis on the change of possession of objects. But the verb *trade* can also exploit the motional part of the commercial frame as can be seen in the example [...] *They traded him to the New York Jets [...]*⁷ in which one team can determine one of its players to move to another team. The verb *trade* inherits its

⁷ Example taken from: <http://abcnews.go.com/Sports/wireStory/robertson-slams-broncos-tebow-trade-15988754> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

conceptual structure from exchange verbs which can be regarded as ‘double’ give verbs. However, at the syntactic level we can find some differences of behavior (cf. *Susan *exchanged/traded Mary her dress for a skirt, They *exchanged/traded him to the Cubs*). Hence, *trade* is halfway between *give* and *exchange*, thus, inheriting the syntactic configuration of *give* which is enriched with a second patient role, contributed by the verb *exchange* (X gives Y to Z and Z gives W to X, where Y and W have an equal value). In an exchange frame, the recipient role is expected to give something of equal value in return. Finally, *trade* is restricted to a monetary transaction/commercial frame as shown by the unacceptability of a sentence like *They are exchanging/* trading smiles* (see also Jackendoff’s (2007:323-331) discussion of the exchange frame).

Another verb which belongs to the commercial exchange frame is *sell*, which in this article has been classified as a hyponym of *trade*. Faber and Mairal (1999:178) classify *peddle*, *vend*, and *hawk* as hyponyms of the verb *sell*. As such, they must inherit the complementation pattern of their genus, as suggested by the expressions below:

- (13) a. *Trader Joe’s recently peddled me a very attractive assortment of vitamin supplements, and in each self-contained valentine of pills were all the usual suspects reassuringly packaged together.*⁸
 b. *Vincenzo Napoli [...] was arrested after trying to peddle diamonds, guns, stolen paintings and dope to an undercover American police officer.* (BNC ABF 456)
- (14) a. *He said once the canteen had vended him a lump of hot, sticky mush.*⁹
 b. *Vending machine vends shoes to shoeless Londoners.*¹⁰
- (15) a. *Sony 6 years ago hawked me a 32” tube set telling me I could watch TV on it for 15 years.*¹¹
 b. *Raymond Martinez, who wrote songs about staring down cops in Times Square and hawked CDs to tourists, was carrying a stolen Mac-10 pistol [...].*¹²

⁸ Example taken from: <http://www.mentalfloss.com/blogs/archives/6531> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

⁹ Example taken from: <http://www.abctales.com/node/529452> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

¹⁰ Example taken from: <http://techcrunch.com/2008/04/22/vending-machine-vends-shoes-to-shoeless-londoners/> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

¹¹ Example taken from: <http://tivocommunity.com/tivo-vb/archive/index.php/t-432906.html> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

¹² Example taken from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/12/13/times-square-shooting-gun_n_390390.html (accessed on April 5, 2012).

In these examples we can notice that the verb *vend*, which is a formal variant of *sell*, does not lexically entail an animate agent (e.g. *the vending machine*) but only an animate goal (e.g. *the customer*). However, in the ditransitive example of *hawk*, the apparently non-animate agent should be understood metonymically as the ‘people working for Sony’. With respect to these verbs, Faber and Mairal (1999:178) stress that both *peddle* and *hawk* activate a location (e.g. in the street) and movement schemas because the goods are sold while moving from place to place. Likewise, the field of the transferred entity is restricted only to small and inexpensive merchandise and the verb *hawk* also highlights the semantic parameter of *sound*, since the peddler has to shout in order to sell his wares.

Just like in the case of *give* and *take*, researchers (Dixon 1979:104; Fillmore 1977:102-109) argue that *buy* and *sell* describe the same commercial transaction but from different viewpoints: that of the seller (*sell*), and that of the buyer (*buy*). The act of buying is more basic than selling and the meaning of *buy* is contained in *sell* (when you sell there is always someone who buys). *Sell* involves a volitional agent (cf. **The ice vending machine sold John ice cubs*) whereas for *buy* the source does not necessarily have to be animate (cf. *I bought a diet coke from the vending machine*). As discussed by Levin and Rappaport (2005:43), verbs of commercial transfer such as *buy*, *sell*, and I shall also add *trade* and *pay*, have a tetradic structure implying the presence of a buyer, a seller, the merchandise and the payment for *buy* and *sell*, the two traders and the two entities traded for *trade* and respectively, the payer, the payee, the payment and the entity paid for *pay*. The list may also be enlarged by the inclusion of verbs like *rent* and *lease* which require a set of four participant roles.

The syntactic behavior of the verbs *resell*, *scalp*, *undersell*, *retail*, and *bootleg* is in consonance with Levin (1993) and Faber and Mairal’s (1999) inheritance mechanisms as indicated in the examples (16)-(21):

- (16) a. *Between May 1980 and April 1982 the company purchased 90 per cent of its bulk butter requirements from the Milk Marketing Board and in turn resold the majority of this butter to a single Dutch customer. (BNC BP5 967)*
 b. *The box was pretty mangled and he resold me Nashbar panniers for 10\$ more than what I could have gotten on their site.*¹³
- (17) a. *A disgruntled fan tipped off officials after he recognized a guy selling tickets behind a box-office window as the same guy who had previously scalped a ticket to him outside the stadium.*¹⁴

¹³ Example taken from: <http://www.bikeforums.net/archive/index.php/t-240714.html> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

- b. *Funny thing- a friend of FPM's got into the Orpheum after Patti Hanson's brother scalped him a ticket.*¹⁵
- (18) a. *Mr. Lavender has persisted to cast aspersions on Council, which includes elected members and officers, by continually claiming Council undersold land to developers.*¹⁶
- b. *He undersold me the phone, so I didn't say anything and bought it.*¹⁷
- (19) a. [...] *Miles would take half the orders around the corner into Soho where at a higher price the proprietor of a dirty book shop would retail them to less artistically minded purchasers. (BNC HA1 328)*
- b. *For fear of causing the poor woman skin trauma, I retailed her some exfoliating gloves and moisturiser and she has come back to me today for a further treatment.*¹⁸
- (20) a. *The right solution is to auction off slots to the highest bidder. (COCA HGP W_commerce)*
- (21) a. *She bootlegged liquor to the Indians.*
- b. *While Mr. Crow was in Tokyo in 1915, a German diplomat bootlegged him a copy of the "Twenty-One Demands", the then still-secret document that outlined Imperial Japan's scheme for subjugating China.*¹⁹

The descriptive parameters in the definitional structure of these verbs refer to location, manner, quantity, the transferred entity and the price. *Scalp* and *bootleg* are both negatively loaded since they activate the sociocultural context of property rights, which includes those who use a property with or without having the right to do so. On the one hand, *bootleg* refers to the illegal sale of records and alcoholic liquor and, on the other hand, *scalp* makes reference to the illegal sale of tickets at a higher price than their established value. The verb *auction* seems to prefer the dative construction over the ditransitive one. This is so probably because the identity of the bidder can be unknown or a matter of indifference.

¹⁴ Example taken from: <http://nlpc.org/category/keywords/asbestos-workers-hfia> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

¹⁵ Example taken from: <http://www.keno.org/gasland/get.asp?M=38217&P=38207&T=38206> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

¹⁶ Example taken from: <http://www.whyalla.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=346&c=25689> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

¹⁷ Example taken from: <http://www.howardforums.com/showthread.php?threadid=274998> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

¹⁸ Example taken from: <http://www.salongeek.com/skin-geek/56371-ingrowing-leg-hairs.html> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

¹⁹ Example taken from: http://www.diplomatonline.com/pdf_files/Diplomat%20JAN%2008.pdf (accessed on April 5, 2012).

Another puzzling issue relates to the fact that Levin (1993) groups *reimburse* and *return* under the *contribute* class label since in my opinion, these verbs, together with *refund* and *repay*, are hyponyms of the verb *pay*. The verb *pay* foregrounds the transfer of money and just like Jackendoff (2007:330) claims, it activates the conceptual structure (frame) of exchange along with other verbs (e.g. *trade*, *buy*, *sell*, *earn*). So the verb *pay* has a richer semantic structure than the verb *give* since X gives money to Y because Y has previously given W to X. The verb *reimburse* implies a reversal of the initial transaction where someone bought an item or paid for a service (e.g. [...] *They reimbursed me all the money that I'd paid out on those repairs* [...] BNC KRL 655). *Reimburse* can be defined as 'pay back', which perfectly captures the image-schema of motion along a path (cf. [...] *the University had not paid or reimbursed the expense to the employee*²⁰) and the associated idea (through implication) of change of control of an item through a change of destination (the receiver of an item is figuratively conceived as located at the end-point of the path traversed by the object). *Refund* and *return* involve the same image-schematic structure with largely similar implications, which explains why we have the same syntactic behavior:

- (22) a. *He gave me the money/ He gave the money to me.*
 b. *The organizers reimbursed me the fee/ They reimbursed expenditures to school districts.*
 c. *The organizers refunded me all the money/ He refunded \$ 1300 to dissatisfied customers.*
 d. *They returned me the \$500/ The company has reversed and returned payments to senders.*

Finally, if we go further on to analyze some other co-troponyms of the hyponym *pay*, we remark that *indemnify*, *compensate*, *recompense*, *reward*, and *remunerate* cannot participate in the ditransitive nor the dative constructions. Instead they can be found in examples like [...] *He should be indemnified for his losses in the war* (BNC GTC 394), *In all such cases the plaintiff is entitled to damages to compensate him for the lost benefit* (BNC J6X 431), *Lawyers should be fairly and reasonably remunerated for work done under the legal aid scheme* (BNC F9B 1708), [...] *He has been rewarded for his continued custom with the best room in the house* (BNC A59 140), *The service charge recompenses the bank for the costs involved in exchanging cheques with other banks* (BNC B1W 163). The verb *indemnify* inherits partial structure from *pay* and *compensate*. The latter verb is typically used with the preposition *for* to introduce the reason (generally some kind of damage) for the payment. The same holds for the rest of the verbs where the

²⁰ Example taken from: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/finance/attachments/pdf/FBT-1-Information.pdf> (accessed on April 5, 2012).

preposition *for* expresses the various reasons why we give the money. In the case of *remunerate* and *indemnify*, it has become entrenched that what is given is always money so that is why the patient cannot be expressed. Regarding the verbs *compensate* and *reward* and I should add *recompense* too, Levin (1993:141) classifies them as *equip* verbs which reject the *to*-phrase and only accept the preposition *with* (cf. *The company compensated/recompensed/rewarded her with a good sum of money*). The difference between them lies in the motivation of the money transfer from the company to the employee: *compensate* and *recompense* suggest that the employee has suffered some kind of loss inflicted upon by certain people working within the company and the company is now trying to minimize the damage whereas *reward* has positive connotations, which convey the idea that the company is paying money to the employee for her efforts or her worthy behavior. The preposition *with* expresses the instrument by means of which the directors of the company show their gratefulness towards the employee (i.e. through transfer of money, gifts etc.). The NP1 V NP3 *with* NP2 pattern is somewhat reminiscent of Heine's (1997) *Companion or Accompaniment* event schema (*X is with Y > X has, owns Y*) and we can postulate that the high-level metaphor POSSESSION IS COMPANY is a licensing factor for these verbs to be subsumed into the aforementioned configuration.

Lastly, the verbs *feed*, *lend*, *pay*, *rent*, and *trade* differ in the grammaticality of their null instantiated object sentences²¹ such as *I fed him*/**I fed milk*, **I lent the money*/**I lent him*, *I paid him*/*I paid the money*, *I rented the room*/**I rented him*, and **I traded him*/*I traded books*. As can be observed, verbs like *trade* or *rent* obligatorily require the lexicalization of the patient since the notion of exchange and the existence of an exchange partner are contributed by the verbs themselves. In contrast, the identity of the transferred entity has to be pinned down because the transferred item belongs to a broad set of tradable or rentable objects. When analyzing the semantic relationships between verbs and constructions, Goldberg (1997) claims that the ditransitive construction can encode four types of relationships: elaboration (e.g. *Susan gave/passed John the salt*), means (e.g. *John kicked Tom the ball*), denial (e.g. *John denied Susan the candy*), and precondition (e.g. *John baked Susan a cake*). Transitive sentences like *I fed him* or *I paid him* show that the transfer meaning cannot possibly be supplied by the ditransitive construction. What the ditransitive construction does is to parametrize the

²¹ Fillmore (1986) distinguishes between *indefinite null complements* (e.g. *He was eating*) and *definite null complements* (e.g. *They found out. ?I wonder what they found out*). The former refer to cases in which the missing complement is either unknown or a matter of indifference whereas the latter implies that the missing element can be retrieved from the context.

transferred entity (e.g. *I fed him milk*), its amount (e.g. *I paid him \$100*) or the medium (e.g. *I paid him dollars*).

4. CONCLUSIONS

This article builds on both Levin (1993) and Faber and Mairal's (1999) conceptually-induced inheritance hypothesis. It is general knowledge the verbs of the same class/subclass exhibit similar syntactic behavior (i.e. they can usually be subsumed into the same set of constructions) due to the fact that they share a lot of their conceptual structure as determined by their frame-semantic and image-schematic analysis. Thus, the verb *force-feed*, which is a hyponym of *feed*, will behave syntactically in the same way as its genus since it inherits the conceptual structure of the latter. But, sometimes, verbs can transgress the boundaries of a single class by borrowing the syntactic configuration and some parts of their conceptual structure from other verb classes. This is the case of the verb *trade*, which has a mixed nature, since its syntactic configuration inherited from the verb *give* is enriched with a second patient role, supplied by the verb *exchange* (cf. *Susan traded Mary her dress for a skirt* vs. *?Susan gave Mary her dress for a skirt*). Another interesting example of this hybrid nature of verbs is the troponym *overfeed*, whose complementation pattern runs against inheritance mechanisms. Unlike its hypernym *feed* and other members of this class, the verb *overfeed* only allows the ditransitive construction, rejecting the *to* variant counterpart (e.g. **We overfed wheat to him until he died*). I think that the ditransitive is preferred over the dative construction because in the former there is more emphasis on the effect of the action on the recipient than in the latter. This research paper also contributes another dimension to the ditransitive construction, namely that of parametrization of the transferred entity, its amount or the medium.

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