

BENEFACTIVE VERBS IN DOUBLE OBJECT CONSTRUCTION (DOC) IN ENGLISH SENTENCES

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the syntactic and semantic features of the benefactive verbs in double object construction (DOC) in English sentences. A combination of various thoughts of linguists is used to serve as an eclectic theory employed in this research. This research uses the descriptive method with distributional techniques. The results of the research show the following. First, benefactive verbs assign three specific benefactive roles, namely beneficiary, recipient, and goal. Second, benefactive verbs come in two types of clauses, the double object construction (DOC) with a structure of (S + P/V + IO + DO) and the DOC with prepositions with the structure of (S + P/V + O + PREP + OP). Both constructions, in most cases, are licit, meaning each can be paraphrased into the other. The result, however, also shows that some constructions remain illicit, meaning the structure cannot be changed into the other one. Third, deeper semantic analysis shows that the verbs assigning the benefactive roles consist of two main types: 1) verbs that, in DOC, are followed by the preposition for and assign the beneficiary role. This type of verbs consists of verbs of 'make available' (MAva), verbs 'of creation' (VoCr), verbs 'of performance' (VPrf), verbs 'of preparation' (VPre), and verbs with idiomatic meanings (VIdi); and 2) verbs that, in DOC, have the preposition 'to' before its object of preposition and assign the roles of recipient and goal. This type of verbs is classified into: verbs of caused movement (VCM), verbs of caused possession (VCP), and verbs of communication (VCOM) that bear two meanings: the kind of the communication device (VDev) and the transfer of message (VToM).

Key words: ditransitive, benefactive, thematic role, beneficiary, recipient, goal

1. Introduction

This study is part of the research conducted for the dissertation entitled 'Benefactive Thematic Role'. The research is basically a semantic and syntactic study of one of the thematic roles (also called semantic roles) a noun phrase functioning as indirect object

bears, namely benefactive. The research for the dissertation uses several semantic analysis indicators for analyzing the benefactive role, such as 1) Conceptual Structure, 2) Tiers, 3) Thematic Assignment, and 4) Thematic Grid. This study alone discusses one of the semantic measures used for analyzing benefactive role, the thematic

assignment and the inherent meanings of the benefactive verbs.

1.1 Background

The fact that English is one of the international languages mostly used in global communication has posed millions of people to learning the language, both for practical and scientific reasons. One of the main issues in learning a language, be it a native language or a foreign language, is how a speaker of a particular language applies a syntactic structure to convey semantic information or, on the contrary, applies semantic relations to form a syntactic structure. In fact, the message or information conveyed in form of some syntactic structures is not always accurately and similarly comprehended by the receiver of the message as it is intended by the speaker. This is, among others, due to the unacceptability of the sentences, both syntactically and semantically. One of the reasons for such discrepancy is the lack of understanding of the grammatical and semantic rules of the language being used.

An English speaker who is not a native English speaker, for instance, may very often experience difficulty in using certain verbs used in a double object construction (DOC), i.e. a construction with SVOO structure or Subject + Verb + Object1 + Object2 (Quirk: 1985) as in the following example:

[1] *He said me hello.

S P/V O₁ O₂

The verb say as used in sentence [1] is neither grammatically nor semantically acceptable unless it is paraphrased into:

[1a] He said hello, or

[1b] He said hello to me.

On the contrary, another type of verb, give in sentence [2], requires the existence of two obligatory objects:

[2] You gave us a book.

S P/V IO DO

O₁ O₂

In sentence [2] the verb give requires two obligatory objects, namely indirect object (IO) us and direct object (DO) a book. This type of verb, commonly termed bitransitive or ditransitive, belongs to the type of three-valence verb which denies the violation to the requirement of the number of valences comprising the clause as can be seen in sentence [2a] and [2b]:

[2a] *You gave a book.

S P/V O

[2b] *You gave us.

S P/V O

Sentence [2a] and [2b] are unacceptable because they do not reflect a complete meaning, which is the most significant element in using a language, to convey a comprehensible message or information. Such a language phenomenon indicates that a syntactic structure is greatly determined by its ability to show completeness of meaning. The element mostly responsible for the completeness of the meaning of the proposition lies in the inherent meaning of the verb give, which, in this case, belongs to the motion verbs (Gropen (1989), Levin (1993), Jackendoff (1990), Van Valin and La Polla (1997). Such verb has an intrinsic meaning of a movement (a

transfer of property or a change of location from a starting point to a certain destination). Thus, this type of verb needs a receiving entity to complete the meaning.

[2c] You gave a book to/for us.
S P/V O OP
O₁ O₂

In sentence [2c] we can see that a change of clause pattern has taken place. The verb give has made it possible for the existence of object of preposition (OP) to us or for us as a substitution for the IO us through the permutation from DOC (Subject + Verb + indirect object + direct object) into DOC with preposition (Subject + Verb + object + preposition + object of preposition). Another significant feature of ditransitive verbs is that they are mostly and usually used in sentences that bear benefactive role, a thematic or semantic role that shows an argument benefitting from what another argument does. This kind of verb is specifically identified as **benefactive verbs**, which is the main focus of this research.

1.2 Research Questions

Considering the wide scope of the problems related to benefactive role, this study focuses on the following questions:

1. What are the syntactic features of the benefactive verbs in double object constructions in English sentences?
2. What are the semantic features of the benefactive verbs in double object constructions in English sentences?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Transitivity

In English, a sentence may consist of one independent clause, and one clause may consist of only a subject and a predicate (verb). Such a clause belongs to the type of intransitive. This categorization of the types of clause is based on transitivity. Transitivity indicates the number of syntactic elements, the noun phrases, required by a verb within a single clause. In other words, the transitivity of verbs, as the predicator in a proposition (clause), determines the type of clause, the syntactic function, and the thematic role of the noun phrases.

Based on the transitivity, clauses can be classified into:

1. Intransitive clause: a clause with a verb that requires only one valence, subject.
2. Transitive clause: a clause with a verb that requires more than one valence, and is categorized into:
 - a. Monotransitive clauses: clause with monotransitive verbs that require two valences: subject and object.
 - b. Ditransitive clauses: clauses with ditransitive verbs that require three valences, i.e. subject, object1, object 2.
 - c. Complex transitive clauses: clauses with complex transitive verbs that require three valences, namely subject, object, and object complement or adverbial.

This categorization of clauses, therefore, leads to a categorization of the verbs as depicted in the following diagram.

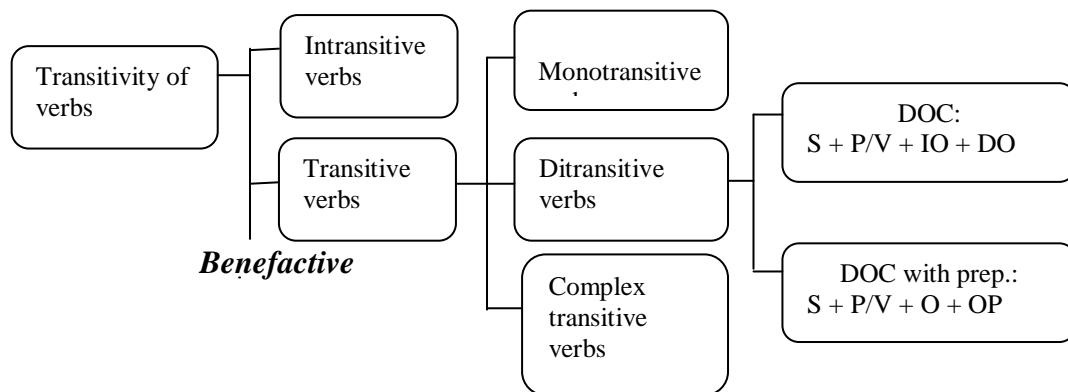


Figure 1 Classification of verb transitivity based on the theories from Jespersen (1925), Quirk (1985), Radford (1988), Van Valin (1999), and Mukherjee (2005)).

Based on the syntactic and semantic behavior of the transitivity of the benefactive verbs, the following features can be presented:

- 1) They form the syntactic structure DOC, which is SVOO (S + P/V + IO + DO).
- 2) They can be followed by implicit IO. It means that structurally, an object does not have to be explicitly appear, for semantically it is implied within the clause, like the verb say in sentence [1a] He said hello.
- 3) These verbs permit another variant of DOC, DOC with (optional) object preposition, as the result of the change of its structure, as in sentence [1b] and [2c].

2.2 Thematic Role

Thematic role is a another name for 'Cases' in Case Grammar as asserted by Fillmore (1971), 'semantic role' as asserted by Quirk (1985), or 'participant role' as asserted by Van Valin, (1999).

The term thematic role is mostly used in semantic analysis by Dowty (1979), Jackendoff (1990), Jacobs (1995), Saeed (1995), dan Mukherjee (2005). A thematic role is assigned to noun phrases that serve as participants or arguments for the predicator, the verb.

Theories on thematic role or θ -role (as borrowed from Chomsky's Theta Theory) appeared as a criticism to the Case theory that tends to be more syntactical and morphological rather than semantic, though, to some extent, the affixes show some semantic relations. English, however, is one of the languages that does not recognize cases, except for genitive 's. It does not have specific affixes that morphologically mark cases that differ one argument (NP) from another argument (Jackendoff (1990) and Mukherjee (2005)), like those mostly used in inflectional languages such as Latin, as in the following example:

[3] *Tibi librum damus.*

you book (we) give 'You gave us a book.'

Different linguists set different classifications of thematic roles, but to some extent they do have similarities. The following are thematic roles based on their classifications.

1. Agent: the animate entity, usually a human being, that deliberately and volitionally performs an action as indicated by the verb.
2. Experiencer: the entity which is aware of the action or state described by the predicate but which is not in control of the action or state.
3. Patient: the entity that undergoes the effect of some action, often undergoes some change in state.
4. Theme: the entity which is moved by an action, or whose location is described.
5. Benefactive: the entity for whose benefit the action was performed.
 - a. Beneficiary: the entity that receives the benefit, usually can be marked with preposition for when serving as object of preposition (OP) for.
 - b. Recipient: the entity that receives the argument being transferred or moved, usually can be marked with preposition to when serving as object of preposition (OP) to.
6. Instrument: the means by which an action is performed or something comes about.
7. Location: the place in which something is situated or takes place

8. Goal: the entity towards which something moves, either literally or metaphorically.

9. Source: the entity from which something moves, either literally or metaphorically.

2.2.1 Benefactive Thematic Role

As mentioned in the previous discussion, a benefactive verb is a verb that assigns a benefactive role on the argument or noun phrase functioning as an indirect object (IO) in DOC or an object of preposition (OP) in DOC with preposition like us in sentence [2] You gave us a book and [2c] You gave a book to/for us. Both constructions, according to Jackendoff (1990), bears the following conceptual structure :

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \{(\text{GO } [Y]), (\text{[X] TO } [Z])\} \\ \text{CS } \text{AFF}^+ (\text{ , } [Z]) \end{array} \right]$$

CS in the above formulation stands for Conceptual Structure, the underlying logic of the proposition (clause or sentence). X is the argument that bears the agent role and occupies the syntactic function of subject in a DOC. Y is the argument that bears the patient/theme role and occupies the syntactic function of direct object in a DOC. Z is the argument that bears the benefactive role and occupies the syntactic function of indirect object or object of preposition in a DOC.

This benefactive conceptual structure can be elaborated into [CS [GO ([Y], FROM [X] [TO] [Z])] which indicates that argument Y experiences a change of possession or situation or location as a result of the action

argument X deliberately and volitionally performs. This causes argument Z to be the recipient or the end point (goal) of the transfer of possession and change of location. Meanwhile, the second formulation $AFF^+ (, [Z])$ indicates that argument Z is affected (AFF) in a positive meaning, i.e. benefit ($^+$) thus argument Z serves as the beneficiary or, if it is negative (AFF $^-$), a malficiary. For example, sentence [2] *You gave us a book*, when analyzed using CS becomes:

$$\left[\begin{array}{c} \{(\text{GO}([\text{book}], ([\text{you}] \text{TO} \\ [\text{us}]))\} \\ \text{CS} \\ \{AFF^+ (, [\text{us}])\} \end{array} \right]$$

This shows that us is the argument that receives the benefit (AFF $^+$); thus, us bears the beneficiary role from the action the agent, you, deliberately and volitionally performs (*we had the benefit*). Us also serves as the argument that receives the movement and the transfer of possession of the book so that it bears the role of recipient (*we received the book*). Also, us is the goal, the end point or the destination of the movement of the book (*the book went to us*), both literally and metaphorically. Based on this CS, this research asserts that benefactive verbs can assign three more specific benefactive roles: beneficiary, recipient, and goal.

2.2.2 Benefactive Verbs

Semantically, Quirk (1985) classified verbs into two main groups; dynamic and static. Benefactive verbs belong to the dynamic ones, to be more

specific, action verbs and action-process verbs. These verbs, according to Dowty in Jackendoff (1990), when posing as a predicator in a DOC (with indirect object and direct object), have the following criteria:

1. Benefactive verbs assigning beneficiary role must:
 - a) syntactically facilitate the DOC to be paraphrased into DOC with preposition 'for'
(S + P/V + IO + DO \rightarrow (S + P/V + PREP. FOR + OP).
 - b) semantically, as well as belonging to the dynamic verbs indicating action-process, express one of the following meanings:
 - i. Make available (VMAva)
 - ii. Creation (MoCr)
 - iii. Performance (VPrf)
 - iv. Preparation (VPre)
2. Benefactive verbs assigning the role of recipient and goal must:
 - a) syntactically facilitate the DOC to be paraphrased into DOC with preposition 'to'
(S + P/V + IO + DO \rightarrow S + P/V + PREP. TO + OP).
 - b) semantically, as well as belonging to the dynamic type expressing action-process, also have the meaning as verbs of motion or movement (Gropen (1989):
 - i. Caused movement (VCM)
 - ii. Caused possession (VCP)
 - iii. Communication (VCom) implying either transfer of message (VToM) or communication device (VDev).

3. Discussion

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research Method and Techniques

This research uses objective and descriptive method, which is closely related to the qualitative method mostly used in language research. The use of this method is aimed at presenting the data from the point of view of the research subject or the group being observed, preventing any cultural and intellectual obscurity from intervening the collection, interpretation, and elaboration of the data (Seliger and Shohamy, 1987).

The object of the research is words, phrases, clauses and sentences that bear the characteristics of benefactives. The

data were then classified according to the similarities and differences of the syntactic and semantic features the data

revealed, and the findings were then presented based on the classification and the analysis. Finally, the data were tested according to the syntactic and semantic rules employed in the theories.

The method for analyzing the data was that of distributional method, which considers the interrelation between elements of a clause in a descriptive manner (Djajasudarma, 1993). This method is closely related to that of Saussure (1916), stating that every language element is related one to another as the whole unified.

The technique used in analyzing the data is aimed at depicting how the data were classified and categorized according to the approaches adopted (Djajasudarma, 1993), i.e.

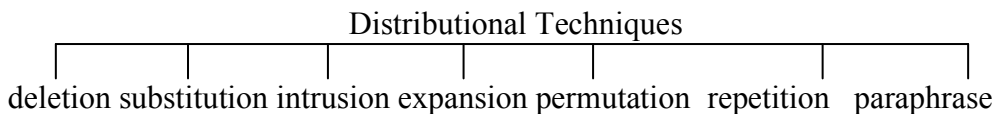


Figure 3.1 Distributional Techniques

3.1.2 Data Processing

The data processing was conducted through these steps: first, the data were collected from five novels. There were 608 data obtained, sentences with ditransitive clause pattern with the following details: 112 data taken from *The Man in The Brown Suit*, 128 data taken from *The Runaway Jury*, 248 data taken from *Scarlett*, 64 data taken from *To Kill A Mocking Bird*, and 56 data from *Gaijin*. Every datum was then analyzed using conceptual structure

(CS) in order to find out if the datum indicates benefactive features. The results shows that there are 524 data with benefactive meaning and 84 data bearing no benefactive meaning but having ditransitive clause pattern and verbs belonging to the benefactive type.

Data with benefactive features were then analyzed based on 1) the clause structure 2) the benefactive role the verbs assign, 3) the meanings of the benefactive verbs. The result shows that there are 136 data with beneficiary role, 118 data as the variant of the

beneficiary, i.e 29 data of malficiary. As many as 118 data bear the role of recipient, and 34 data bear the role of goal. The analysis result also indicates that in DOC, 203 data bear the double role as beneficiary, recipient, and goal. The next step is analyzing the inherent meaning of the benefactive verbs of the data already classified according to their thematic roles. The final stage is formulating research findings into some sets of rules.

3.3 Research Result

Syntactic analysis performed on the data shows that the transitivity of benefactive verbs instigates the clauses to emerge as DOC, both without and with prepositions. These clauses can be licit, meaning the DOC can be permuted into DOC with preposition or vice versa. This is indicated in the following figure.

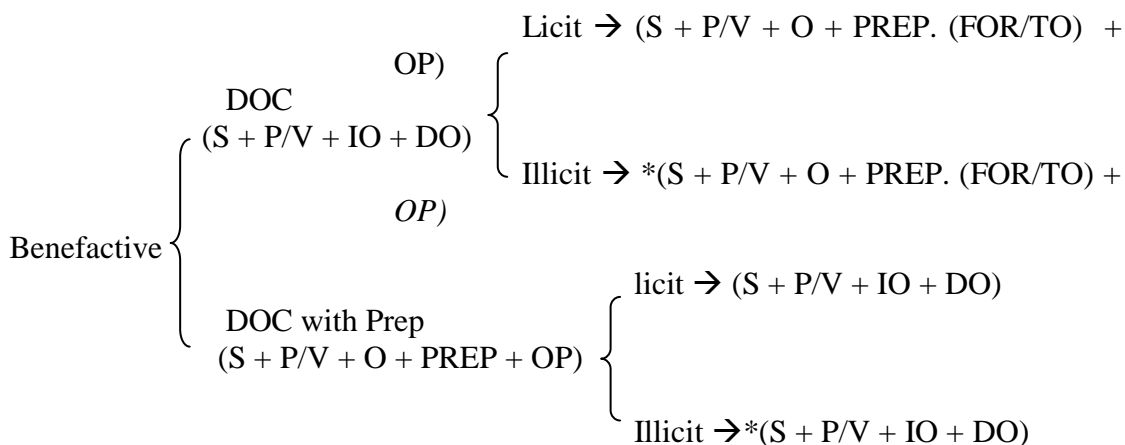


Figure 2. The syntactic scheme of the clauses bearing benefactive roles and verbs.

Further analysis was focused on the deeper semantics of the benefactive verbs in DOC. It was found out that the benefactive verbs can have meanings other than the four types of meaning of the benefactive verbs as formulated in the literature review. The research results shows the following.

3.3.1 Benefactive Verbs Assigning Beneficiary Role in DOC

This group of verbs indicates that beneficiary thematic role in DOC

can be assigned by verbs with the following meanings.

- 1) Make available (VMAva). The verbs are buy, organize, save, catch, fetch, find, get, order, and take
- 2) Creation (VoCr). The verbs are build, make, and write
- 3) Performance (VPrf). The verbs are do, give, play, show, and sing
- 4) Preparation (VPre). The verbs are fix and pour
- 5) Idiomatic (VIdi). The verbs are bet, bear, give, spare, do, deal, earn, and grant.

Subject	Predicate/Verbs	IO	DO
Agent	V MAva	Beneficiary	Patient
	V oCr		
	VPrf		
	VPre		
	VIdi		

Table 3.1 Benefactive verbs assigning Beneficiary role In DOC

As can be seen in table 3.1, the benefactive role of the argument occupying IO is constituted in DOC with a structure of subject (Agent) + predicate: benefactive verb + IO (Beneficiary) + DO (Patient). Anomaly of data was identified in form of two data that belong to a certain dialect of British English. These data indicate DO which precede IO without the existence of any preposition before the IO. Another finding is that there are some verbs that require the existence of preposition other than the benefactive ones, ‘to’ and ‘for’. An anomaly of data also occurs with the benefactive verbs of do, deal, earn, give, and grant. These data show that the subject function is occupied by inanimate entities, which indicates that there is no existence of the agent role, but still assign the thematic role of beneficiary.

3.3.2 Benefactive Verbs Assigning Beneficiary Role in DOC with Preposition ‘for’

Like the verbs in group A, these verbs assign the role beneficiary, yet syntactically show differences. The clause structure of these data is DOC with preposition ‘for’. The meanings of the verbs are as depicted as follows.

- 1) Make available (VMAva). The verbs are allow, bring, choose, fetch, find, issue, leave, obtain, order, and rent.
- 2) Creation (VoCr). The verbs are build, draw, make, open and write
- 3) Performance (VPrf). The verbs are do and open,
- 4) Preparation (VPre). The verbs are give, light, pour, and reserve
- 5) Other meanings:
 - a) Idiomatic meaning (VIdi). The verb is give,
 - b) Monotransitive verbs (VMtr). The verbs are arrange, clean, decide, describe, handle, hold, and translate.
 - c) Static verb (VBenStat): have

Subject	Predicate/Verbs	O	PREP	OP
Agent	V MAva	Beneficiary	for	Patient
	V oCr			
	VPrf			
	VPre			
	VIdi			

	<i>VMtr</i>			
	<i>VBenStat</i>			

3.2 Benefactive verbs assigning beneficiary role in DOC with preposition ‘for’

3.3.3 Benefactive Verbs Assigning Recipient Role in DOC with Preposition ‘to’

The verbs as indicated in table 3.3 cause the arguments occupying IO to have the role of recipient/goal. These verbs have the following inherent meanings:

- 1) Caused Movement (VCM). The verbs are bring, deliver, hand, return, send, slip,

- throw, toss, and transfer
- 2) Caused Possession (VCP). The verbs are alot, give, leave, lend, offer, sell, and serve
- 3) Communication (VCOM), which can be classified into two more specific meanings:
 - a) Communication Device (VDev). The verbs are cable and fax,
 - b) Transfer of Message (VToM). The verbs are address, say, suggest, teach, tell, and write.

Subject	Predicate/Verbs		O	PREP	OP
Agent	<i>VCM</i>		Patient	<i>to</i>	Rec
	<i>VCP</i>				
	<i>VCOM</i>	<i>VDev</i>			
		<i>TOM</i>			

Table 3.3 Benefactive verbs assigning recipient role in DOC with preposition ‘to’

3.3.4 Benefactive Verbs Assigning Double Benefactive Roles: Beneficiary/Recipient/Goal

The data in this group indicate that benefactive verbs in DOC can also cause IO to have benefactive double role, meaning the argument or the NP can have the three specific benefactive roles, namely beneficiary, recipient, and goal, all at the same time within the same clause. These verbs have the following meanings:

- 1) Make available (VMAva) which, at the same time indicate the meaning of motion verb of:
 - a) Caused movement (VCM). The verbs are bring, hand, send, take, throw, toss, deliver, and wire
 - b) Caused possession (VCP). The verbs are give, leave, serve, lend, pay, offer, promise, sell, feed, and grant
 - c) Communication. The verbs are give, teach, and tender;
- 2) Creation (VoCr). The verb is write.
- 3) Performance (VPrf). The verb is give.

Subject	Predicate/Verbs		IO	DO
Agent	V MAva	<i>VCM</i>		
		<i>VCP</i>		

	VCOM	Beneficiary/Recipient/Goal	Patient
V oCr			
VPrf			

Tabel 3.4 Benefactive Verbs Assigning Double Benefactive Role: Beneficiary/recipient/Goal in DOC

4. Conclusion

This study has given evidence that, because of the conceptual structure, the ditransitive or benefactive verbs in double object construction (DOC) in English sentences assign three specific benefactive roles, namely beneficiary, recipient, and goal. Benefactive verbs may appear in two types of clauses, the double object construction (DOC) with a structure of (S + P/V + IO + DO), and the DOC with prepositions with the structure of (S + P/V + O + PREP + OP). Another valuable finding is that the benefactive verbs have inherent meanings of ‘make available’ (MAva), ‘of creation’ (VoCr), ‘of performance’ (VPrf), ‘of preparation’ (VPre), and verbs with idiomatic meanings (VIdi). Anomaly of data was identified in DOC with the preposition ‘for’ in which monotransitive and static verbs were identified to have revealed benefactive meaning. Furthermore, from the point of view of the transfer or movement, benefactive verbs in DOC, when marked with preposition ‘to’, imply the meaning of caused movement (VCM), of caused possession (VCP), and of communication (VCOM). The verbs of communication consist of two specific meanings: the kind of the communication device (VDev) and the transfer of message (VToM).

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