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I love me this topic:
The Southern English
Double Object
Construction

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Abstract

On many varieties of English spoken in the United States it is possible to say something like (1) below:

(1) I sent me_i a letter to the President.

(1) exemplifies the so-called Southern Double Object Construction (Southern DOC), a structure that has received relatively little attention in the literature. This construction has been attested in the Southern United States vernacular varieties of English including Appalachian English. In this paper I provide an overview of the main characteristics of the Southern DOC. More specifically, this paper focuses on the socio-geographical characteristics and the grammatical features of the Southern DOC as well as on the similarities and differences it has with respect to other constructions found cross-linguistically. First, the analysis shows that the Southern DOC is an optional construction which has some syntactic constraints operating on it and which conveys completive meaning which highlights the involvement of the agent. Secondly, the paper reveals that there are some syntactic and semantic differences between the Southern DOC and some English constructions, such as *for*-datives, *self*-reflexives and *to*-datives. Moreover, a brief comparison is provided between the construction under study and ethical datives of Spanish. Thirdly, I present grammatical representations of both the construction under study and the All American DOC. A comparison of both constructions has allowed me to draw two main conclusions: (i) the All American one is more restrained than the Southern DOC as regards the verb types that it allows, and (ii) the Southern DOC highlights the agent's role whereas the All American DOC does not convey emphasis. The paper concludes by arguing that the Southern DOC creates some problems as far as the Binding Theory is concerned. Then, two solutions are proposed. The first suggestion is that the personal dative in the Southern DOC is not a pronoun but an anaphor, thus it does not cause any problem as regards the Binding theory. The second is that the Southern DOC may be working as an idiomatic expression and, therefore, does not cause any problem to the Binding Theory.

Key words: Southern DOC (double object construction), All American DOC, personal dative, Appalachian English, ethical dative.

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The Southern English Double Object Construction

1. Introduction

Standard double object constructions are structures which show the use of a verb with two complements, both argumental and nominal in nature. The occurrence of double object constructions has been attested in many languages of the world and they have been thoroughly studied in many languages, including English. In Standard English there are two related constructions, as (1) and (2) illustrate below:

- (1) Mary bought some flowers to Ann.
- (2) Mary bought Ann some flowers.

In (1) the verb *buy* takes an NP and a PP whereas the same verb takes two NPs in (2). Both NPs in (2) are considered argumental and this example illustrates the so-called double object construction, a construction that is standard and acceptable in all varieties of English. In some varieties of American English two different double object constructions are grammatical (Wolfram & Christian, 1976; Christian, 1991; Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006). One of them is the All American Double Object Construction (which I will call the All American DOC) illustrated in (2) above and the other one is shown in (3) and (4) below:

- (3) I_i have me_i a conspiracy theory.
- (4) John_i just sent him_i a present to George.

The construction illustrated in (3) and (4) above has been referred to in the literature as the Southern Double Object Construction (Southern DOC) - as well as the personal dative construction - and it is not substantiated in most other varieties of English, including Standard English.

In this paper, I provide a description of the Southern DOC exemplified in (3) and (4) above. This description includes an overview of the characteristics of the construction, as well as the socio-geographical distribution of its use. Next, the paper expands on a comparison between the All American DOC and the Southern DOC, presenting their

semantic and syntactic similarities and differences, and finally a reflection is provided on the relationship between the construction under study and Universal Grammar.

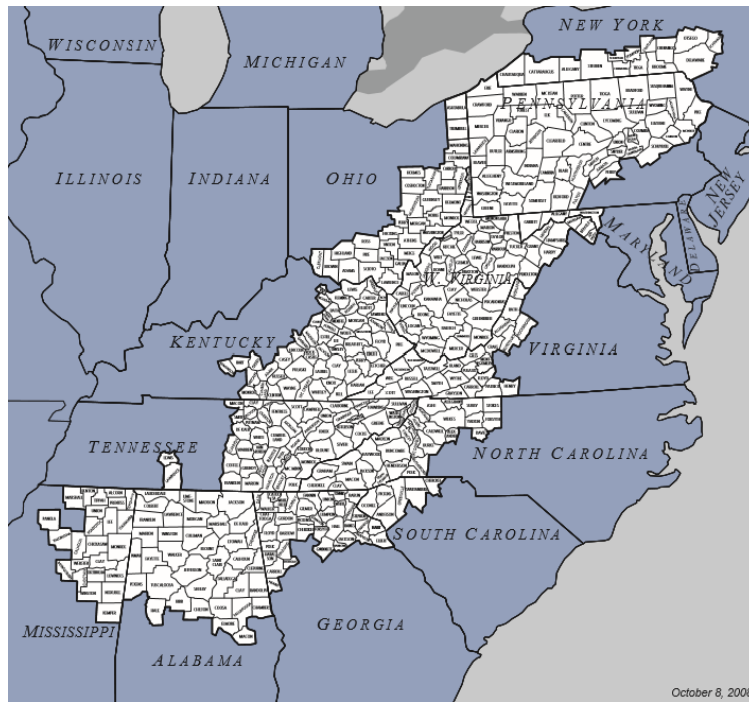
Therefore, this paper is aimed to answer the following questions: (i) What is the Southern DOC?; (ii) In what way do the Southern DOC and the All American DOC differ?; (iii) Can we find similar constructions in other languages or varieties, and to what extent are they really similar?; (iv) How does the Southern DOC fit in the Universal Grammar Theory? (v) Does the Southern DOC cause any problem to any component of the grammar as it is standardly understood?

2. Characteristics of the Southern DOC

2.1. Socio-geographical distribution and sociolinguistic characterization of the Southern DOC

The Southern DOC is very characteristic of Appalachian English but it is also produced by speakers of Southern American English at large. Therefore, in order to set the reader in context, I have decided to begin my paper with a clarification about where the Southern DOC is produced and to give a brief account on the attitudes that the producers of the Southern DOC have towards their own variety and the construction itself.

It is a fact that all American dialects of English accept the All American DOC, but the Southern DOC only occurs in some areas of the South of the United States (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006; Conroy, 2007). Most of the research done on the Southern DOC is based on Appalachian speech, an American dialect spoken in the Appalachian Mountain Region which is depicted in Map 1. This territory travels across the area from Maine to Alabama (Wolfram & Christian, 1976), crossing parts of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia (all the state), Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama. When researchers talk about Appalachian English they normally refer to the Southern part of the range. The Southern DOC construction has been attested throughout the whole area (as well as in other parts of the country), but where it is most prevalent is in the South.

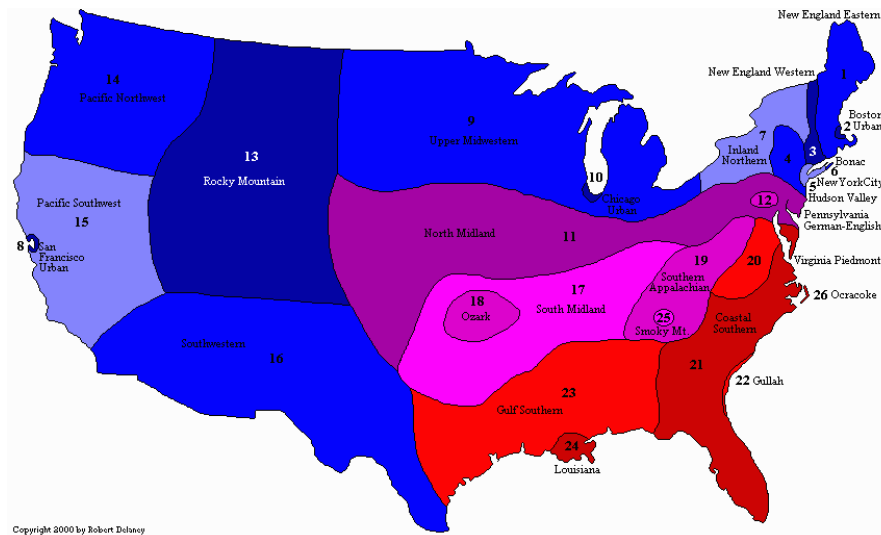


Map 1: Appalachian Mountain Region (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2016).

The Appalachian Mountains are comprised of mountains, ridges and valleys (Dykeman, 2016). This 205,000-square-mile region is a rural area with some urban centres (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2016). That is, the area where the Southern DOC is most widespread is mainly rural, but not exclusively.

The current population of the region is around 25 million people scattered throughout 420 counties in 13 states. Amongst them, 90 counties are high-poverty counties, with poverty rates more than 1.5 times the U.S. average (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2016).

Furthermore, even if it is true that the Southern DOC is a hallmark of the Appalachian Mountains' speech the construction is also a regular feature of other Southern vernacular varieties of English in the United States. Most speakers of Southern American English produce the Southern DOC. Moreover, the area where this dialect is spoken is illustrated in Map 2 in red and pink.



Map 2: Dialect Map of American English (Delaney, 2009)

Southern American English is the largest accent group in the United States and it is spoken in the South Midlands (pink area in Map 2) and in the South (red area in Map 2) of the United States of America. Thus, the dialect is spoken in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia and Delaware.

Additionally, it is interesting to indicate that within those speech communities, the Appalachian English and the Southern English community, no stigma is attached to the construction's use or its users (Christian, 1991 in Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006). More specifically, the attitude of Appalachian English speakers towards their own variety is positive even if outsiders have attached negative stereotypes to their variety (Cramer, 2012). In the 90s, Luhman (1990) stated that American people used to devaluate Appalachian variety when they compared it with standard speech due to economic characteristics and Preston (1999) showed that Appalachian speakers thought their language was inferior to the standard variety. Nowadays, as Cramer (2012; 2014) states, Appalachians feel proud of their speech even if they sometimes typify or exhibit the stereotypes attached to them by outsiders. They believe that their dialect and constructions, such as the one under examination, are beautiful and amusing and connect them to their cultural heritage and community (Cramer, 2014).

2.2. Grammatical characteristics of the Southern DOC

2.2.1. General properties of the construction

The Southern DOC is a construction in which a transitive verb is followed by two noun phrases that look like complements. The one that occurs adjacent to the verb is always pronominal and co-referential with the subject. Two examples of the construction under study are provided in (5) and (6) below:

(5) I_i got me_i some zucchinis.

(6) She_i sent her_i a letter to a good friend.

One of the grammatical characteristics of this construction is that it occurs with subjects of any person, number or gender (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006; Conroy 2007), as illustrated below:

(7) He_i got him_i two big watches.

(8) We_i got us_i two big watches.

(9) They_i got them_i two big watches.

However, there is one restriction: the third person singular neuter pronoun *it* (Christian 1991). The Southern DOC is ungrammatical with this particular pronoun, as illustrated in (10) below:

(10) *It_i got it_i two big watches.

The ungrammaticality of (10) can be explained in terms of a clash between the meaning of the construction itself and the meaning of the third person neuter pronoun. *It* is used to replace concepts, inanimate objects or animals. It can be used to refer to a determined and specific entity or an indefinite one. The fact that *it* never substitutes for a person in reality can have some effects on the grammaticality judgements provided by Appalachian English speakers in (10). Specifically, the meaning of the Southern DOC encodes completive aspect (Landa, 2001) and highlights the involvement of the agent in the event (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006). If the NP bearing the role of the agent does not refer to a human being, it cannot be the initiator of the actions denoted by verbs

such as *get*, *send* or *give*. Therefore, the pronoun in the Southern DOC, which is co-referential with the subject bearing the role of the agent, must refer to a specific human being. Accordingly, if the pronoun does not replace a person, or at least an animate entity whose volition and involvement can be emphasized upon, the Southern DOC is ungrammatical, as illustrated in example (10) above.

Besides, according to Christian (1991) and to Horn (2008) third person masculine and feminine pronouns occur less frequently than first and second person pronouns in Southern DOC instances. The reason for this fact can be linked to the meaning that third person pronouns convey. According to Siemund (2008), *he* and *she* are used to replace either particular people or indefinite ones, whereas *I* and *you* always have a specific interpretation¹. This characteristic of English third person pronouns is linked to the frequency of occurrence of the Southern DOC because the NP bearing the agent role must be a definite one, thus, the pronoun which is co-referential with it must be an exclusively definite pronoun. Therefore, it is understandable that the use of clearly definite pronouns such as first and second person pronouns is more frequent than the use of third person pronouns. In my opinion, the most widespread use of *I* and *you* in this construction is directly related to the subjectivity that accompanies its use. Specifically, if the construction is used in contexts in which the agent's involvement is brought to the fore, this is a situation which is going to occur more often than not with the first person, the person of the speaker, and then with the second person, the person of the listener. As a matter of fact, one can postulate that reference to other actors is going to be less subjective than reference to the direct participants in the communicative act.

Another restriction of the construction has to do with the pronoun appearing as the first object, which is referred to in the literature on this topic as the personal dative. This personal dative's position must always be right after the verb (Landa, 2001).

- (11) a. I_i bought me_i a chocolate.
b. * I_i bought a chocolate me_i .
c. * Me_i I_i bought a chocolate.

¹ Obviously with the exception of generic *you*, whose analysis goes beyond the scope of this paper.

The fact that the personal dative element has a fixed position and cannot be topicalized or inverted with another constituent is relevant in the discussion of the categorical status of this element, as will be shown in section 3.1. of this paper. Furthermore, there are often contexts in which the personal dative cannot occur (again, with consequences for the classification of the element). For instance, the Southern DOC never occurs in stressed or emphasized position (Horn, 2008); neither does it appear in coordinated structures (i.e. as one of the conjuncts of a coordination).

- (12) a. *I_i have me_i and John a conspiracy theory.²
b. *I_i have me_i and him a conspiracy theory.

Additionally, according to Horn (2008) the Southern DOC prefers emotively positive contexts than negative ones. Therefore, instances of Southern DOCs with positive verbs like *love* are more frequently attested than examples with *hate* (Horn, 2008).

2.2.2. A comparison with other English constructions

It is apparent that the Southern DOC is semantically and syntactically similar to other English structures such as *for*-datives, *self*-reflexives and *to*-datives. In *for*-datives, that is to say, in sentences like (13) or (14) below, there is a pronoun preceded by the preposition *for* which is the beneficiary or the receiver of the event that is co-referential with the agent of the clause:

- (13) I_i can cut the bread for myself_i.
(14) You_i should get two tickets for yourself_i.

In the case of (13), *I* is the agent of the verb *cut*, and the pronoun after the preposition *for*, which is *myself*, is the beneficiary of the action. Moreover, the agent and the beneficiary are co-referential. As illustrated at the beginning of section 2.2.1., the Southern DOC has a pronoun which is co-referential with the agent, thus we can conclude that *for*-datives and the Southern DOC have some similarities as regards co-referentiality between clause constituents.

² According to Horn (2008), the restriction in (12) is not shared by all the Southern Vernacular English speakers.

However, the Southern DOC and *for*-datives are semantically different as the examples in (15) below show:

- (15) a. I_i have just bought me_i a little present.
b. I_i have just bought a little present for myself_i.

It is a fact that the anaphor *myself* in the *self*-reflexive in (15b) bears the beneficiary role, while the co-referential pronoun in (15a) does not. In addition, the agent role is emphasized by means of the pronoun *me* in the Southern DOC in (15a) but not in the *self*-reflexive in (15b). Even so, in my opinion, the main difference between (15a) and (15b) lies in the notion of subjectivity. That is, (15a) makes explicit the speaker's contentment or satisfaction at having bought a present whereas (15b) is neutral in this respect. In a way, the subtle difference between these two sentences is similar to that between the examples (16) and (17) below:

- (16) Yo_i me_i acabo de comprar un regalo.
I me just bought a present
'I_i have just bought me_i a present'.
(17) Yo_i acabo de comprar un regalo para mí_i.
I just bought a present for me
'I have just bought a present for myself'.

The sentences in (16) and (17) are examples from Spanish. The clause in (17) is similar to the English *for*-dative and the one in (16) is very similar to the Southern DOC in that there are three NPs and one of them is a pronominal NP, *me*, which is co-referential with the subject and apparently non-argumental. However, the main difference between the Spanish example in (16) and the Southern DOC is that the reference of the pronominal NP is the beneficiary of the purchase in Spanish but not in the Southern DOC. Still, the meaning of (15a) and (16) encode completive aspect and satisfaction with having bought a present, whereas their corresponding *for*-dative example in (15b) and (17) are neutral and their meanings do not involve contentment.

The Southern DOC can also be compared to *self*-reflexives. Both *self*-reflexives and the Southern DOC appear in the same distribution sometimes (Conroy, 2007). This is shown in (18) below:

- (18) a. Karen_i bought her_i a present.
b. Karen_i bought herself_i a present.

As (18a) and (18b) show, the pronoun *her* in (18a) and the *self*-anaphor, reflexive *herself*, in (18b), appear in the same syntactic position, in parallel distribution and both are co-referential with the subject of their clause (further comparison between the Southern DOC and *self*-reflexives is provided in section 4 of this paper). However, there are some dissimilarities between *self*-reflexives and the Southern DOC, yet, the two constructions contrast in meaning. The pronominal *her* in the Southern DOC in (18a) emphasizes the role of the agent who bought a present (Sroda, 1995 as cited in Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006), whereas there is not any emphasis on the *self*-reflexive in (18b). Moreover, the subject of the Southern DOC is the agent of the event and may be the beneficiary of the transfer or not. But, the subject of the *self*-reflexive in (18b), *I*, is clearly the beneficiary of the purchase because the reflexive *herself* which co-refers with the subject in (18b) bears the role of the beneficiary for whom the present was bought.

Additionally, the Southern DOC and *to*-datives also share some similarities which are shown in (19) below:

- (19) a. She_i sent her_i a present.
b. She_i sent a present to herself_i.

In example (19b) we can notice that the agent of the action, *she*, and the goal or the beneficiary, *herself*, correspond to the same entity in reality. The pattern is repeated in the Southern DOC in (19a), thus both constructions are similar as regards co-referentiality. However, there is one important difference between these two constructions: the pronoun after the preposition *to* in the *to*-dative bears the beneficiary role, whereas in the Southern DOC the pronoun adjacent to the verb, *her* in (19a), does not bear the beneficiary role but is the lexicalization of the highlighted agent of the event, a “pragmatic intensifier under the category of the Southern DOC” (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006: 36).

Consequently, we can conclude that the three constructions are similar to the Southern DOC in some syntactic features and in the general meaning, but they are different at the same time because of semantic nuances and the various degrees of emphasis they convey.

3. Comparison between the All American DOC and the Southern DOC

In order to ascertain the differences between the All American DOC construction and the Southern one, we are going to compare some examples such as the one in (20) and (21) below:

(20) Mary bought Ann some flowers.

(21) Mary_i bought her_i some flowers to Ann.

As these examples show, there are quite a few similarities between the different constructions they illustrate, as they share the same basic properties. On the one hand, they are similar in that both constructions have two NPs after the verb and in that the three arguments bear the same theta roles: agent, theme and beneficiary³. On the other hand, they are also similar regarding the type of verb they employ. Specifically, both DOCs need a transitive verb in order to be grammatical⁴ (Teomiro, 2013; Hutchinson & Armstrong, 2014), as the examples below show:

(22) *She_i went her_i.

(23) *She has slept him.

(24) She_i has bought her_i a tennis racket (for Helen).

(25) She has sent him a present.

The verbs *go* in (22) and *sleep* in (23) are intransitive verbs that are not compatible either with the Southern DOC in (22) or with the All American DOC in (23). But, the monotransitive verb *buy* in (24) or the ditransitive verb *send* in (25) yield grammatical

³ The optional PP of the Southern DOC is the one bearing the beneficiary role. If there is no PP, only the agent and the theme roles are assigned.

⁴ According to Horn (2008) there are some examples of grammatical Southern DOCs which contain intransitive verbs such as *lay*. This seems a reminiscence of Old English because what we now call the Southern DOC was grammatical in Old English with intransitive verbs also. However, according to Hutchinson & Armstrong (2014) now “the transitivity constraint is real”.

constructions. Even so, the ungrammaticality of (22) and (23) cannot be explained just by taking into account the transitivity of the verb, as the problem goes further. The example in (22) is ungrammatical because the intransitive verb *go* does not accept a benefactive role. In the Southern DOC, as we can see in (24) the verb *buy* denotes a three-place predicate which needs an agent (*she*), a theme (*a tennis racket*) and a beneficiary (*Helen*). As Horn (2008) points out, the verb of the Southern DOC must always have the possibility to denote the beneficiary role in order to accept an optional benefactive PP, as example (24) illustrates. If the verb does not bear the beneficiary role and, in consequence, a benefactive PP cannot be admitted, the DOC is ungrammatical as we have seen in example (22). Moreover, the ungrammaticality of the All American DOC in (23) is due to the fact that the verb *sleep* is not a verb of change of possession and, thus, it is hard to envision the notion of sleeping as one in which a beneficiary is possible in English.⁵

3.1. Differences between both DOCs

As it frequently occurs in all the languages of the world, there are similar clauses that share some grammatical properties but differ in some semantic, syntactic or pragmatic issues, and so it happens in English too. Note examples in (26) below:

- (26) a. I heard you reciting a poem.
b. I heard you recite a poem.

As we can notice, the sentences in (26) are semantically and syntactically different. The example in (26a) contains a verb with the *-ing* suffix and the meaning of the whole clause is that I heard just a part of the recitation; on the other hand, (26b) contains a bare infinitive and the meaning of the clause is that the speaker heard the whole reading of the poem, from the beginning to the end.

Something similar happens between the All American DOC and the Southern DOC, as they differ slightly in meaning and syntax. So, in order to illustrate how the All

⁵ Notice, however, that examples such as (i) and (ii) below are possible in Spanish:

- (i) El niño no me duerme bien.
'My child does not sleep well'
(ii) El bebé no les ha dormido en toda la noche.
'Their baby did not sleep at all last night.'

American DOC and the Southern DOC differ I have decided to provide the grammatical representations containing information about the syntax and semantics of both constructions. Let us start with the grammatical representation of (20) presented in (27) below, which contains information about the syntax and semantics of the construction:

- (27) [Mary] [bought] [Ann] [some flowers].
a. Syntax: NP₁ V NP₂ NP₃
b. Semantics: buy <m, a, f>
c. Theta roles: <agent, beneficiary, theme>

Line (27a) specifies that the All American DOC in (27) is a single verb node which combines a verb with three NPs, a subject (NP₁) and two objects (NP₂, NP₃) (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006). Besides, line (27b) indicates what the meaning of the combination of the verb and its arguments is (from the point of view of Theta Theory) and, more specifically, that all the NPs present in example (27) are arguments of the verb. Moreover, the possible theta role assigned to each argument is specified in (27c), the first NP being the agent or the initiator of the action, NP₂ being the beneficiary or the entity intended to end up possessing the referent of the theme, and the NP₃ the theme.

Furthermore, there is no specification about the internal structure of the NPs or the external syntactic distribution of them because there are no constraints. That is to say, NP₂ and NP₃ are flexible internally and externally. Therefore, the NPs can move and differ in word order, as the examples in (28) show:

- (28) a. Mary sent Ann some flowers.
b. Mary sent some flowers to Ann.
c. Ann was sent some flowers by Mary.
d. Some flowers, Mary sent Ann.

The examples (28a) and (28b) above illustrate the Double Object Alternation, (28b) being the All American DOC and (28a) the *to* variant. The two NPs which are objects, NP₂ and NP₃, differ in word order because, as we previously mentioned, they are externally flexible. It is interesting to note that, even if the two structures have a very similar meaning, they have some semantic differences (Rappaport & Levin, 2007): the meaning of (28a) is that Mary caused Ann to have some flowers, whereas the meaning

of (28b) is that Mary caused some flowers to go to Ann (Pinker, 1989). Moreover, by applying movement operation tests to the All American DOC in (28a) such as passivization in (28c) or topicalization in (28d) it is revealed that the All American DOC is an externally flexible construction that allows movement, which in turn means that the moved elements are arguments and independent unitary constituents of the VP.⁶

Let us now consider the grammatical representation of (21) above, which can be found in (29) below:

- (29) [Mary]_i [bought] [her]_i [[some] [flowers]] [to Ann] .
 a. Syntax: [NP₁]_i V [NP₂[PRONOUN]]_i [NP₃[[DET] [N] ([PP])]]
 b. Semantics: buy < m, f > and the consequences of the involvement of the agent are highlighted
 c. Theta roles: <agent, \emptyset , theme, beneficiary>

The example in (29) is the instance of the Southern DOC and (29a) specifies that the Southern DOC is a clause which is comprised by a subject (NP₁), a verb (V), two NPs (NP₂ and NP₃) and a non-obligatory but possible PP. Moreover, this representation also illustrates that the NP₂ of the Southern DOC is constrained (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006) in the sense that the NP₂ has to be in a specific position and have a concrete syntactic structure. Last, the meaning of the whole construction is provided. (29b) notes that NP₂ expresses the emphasis on the subject's involvement in the event denoted and that all the NPs mentioned in (29a) are arguments of the verb except for NP₂ (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006) in (29c). The assumption that NP₂ is not an argument can be proved by means of movement operations like the ones shown in (30) below:

- (30) a. Mary_i sent her_i a present to Ann.
 b. *She_i was sent a present by Mary_i to Ann.
 c. *Her_i, Mary_i sent a present to Ann.

The NP₂ of the Southern DOC cannot be passivized, as we see in (30b), or topicalized as in (30c). As arguments are the only constituents which can undergo movement we can conclude that the NP₂ of the Southern DOC does not have argument status.

⁶ The claim that only unitary constituents can be moved around in related constructions is standard in all syntactic theoretical approaches.

Thus, taking into account the structure and meaning of both DOCs I claim that there are four main differences between the constructions under consideration. Two of them can be easily found just by noticing the grammatical representations shown above and are the following: (1) The Southern DOC is only grammatical if NP₂ is formed by a co-referential pronoun which is adjacent to the verb, whereas the All American DOC is ungrammatical in that way; (2) NP₃ must include a determiner in the Southern DOC but it is just optional in the All American DOC. The other two are not so obvious and deal with the meaning and the verbs of the two DOCs.

3.1.1. Semantic differences

One of the principal differences between these constructions is related to the meaning each of them conveys. On the one hand, the meaning conveyed by the All American is that the referent of NP₁ is the one who causes the reference of NP₂ to acquire the possession of the referent of NP₃ (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006; Pineda, 2012). On the other hand, the communicative purpose of the Southern DOC is to highlight the agent's role in the event or state denoted by the verb (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006). Consider the following examples:

- (31) Rose gave Sue a red dress.
- (32) Susan_i sent her_i a letter of condolence.
- (33) Susan sent a letter of condolence.

The meaning of the All American DOC in (31) is that Rose caused Sue to acquire possession of a red dress and the meaning of the Southern DOC in (32) is that Susan sent a letter of condolence with emphasis on Susan being the sender. As Teomiro (2013: 34) claims, the predicates in (32) and (33) cover the same propositional meaning, but differ in the “felicitous conditions”, (32) being neutral and (33) involving the fact that Susan sending a letter affected Susan in a positive or negative way. Along the same lines, Horn (2008) introduces the idea of the “satisfactive” role. Horn (2008) states that the action expressed in the Southern DOC satisfies the intentions or goals of the agent, consequently having a positive effect on the agent. Thus, the example in (32) implies that Susan's aim was to send a letter of condolence and when her aim was achieved,

having sent the letter had a positive effect on her (Susan), a sense of contentment because of the sending.

On a fashion similar to what we have seen in these English examples, many languages of the world have different but analogous constructions which differ in connotation just as the Southern DOC and the All American DOC do. In Spanish, there is one construction the Southern DOC has been compared to and which emphasizes the effects that the event causes on the speaker. See the following Spanish example below:

- (34) *Se me ha caído el hijo.*
'The son has fallen down (on me)'.

The sentence in (34) is an example of the Spanish ethical dative construction, which is composed by the ethical dative *me*, a verb, *ha caído* (which is in concordance with the subject) and the subject, *el hijo*. Unlike the Southern DOC's dative, the dative in Spanish is co-referential with the speaker obligatorily (Teomiro, 2013). The ethical dative of Spanish is similar to the Southern DOC because both constructions contain a dative which is most frequently used to refer to first person and because they usually contain quantified non-definite objects in the NP after the dative (Teomiro, 2013). They are also similar in that the meaning of both constructions includes emphasis. The ethical dative, apart from the description of the eventuality (lexicalized by *Se me ha caído el hijo*) highlights the effect that the event has had on the speaker (De Miguel & Fernández Lagunilla, 2000). In other words, the ethical dative emphasizes that the speaker is affected by the event. Accordingly, every eventuality depicted by a Southern DOC "seems to somehow 'affect' the individual referred to by the PD⁷" (Teomiro, 2013: 34). Consequently, we can conclude that the Southern DOC and the ethical dative of Spanish are semantically similar in that their meanings convey affectedness but differ because the Southern construction highlights the effect that the event has on the referent of the personal dative and the Spanish one emphasizes the consequences of the actions on the speaker.

⁷ Teomiro (2013) uses the acronym PD to refer to the personal dative.

3.1.2. Verb types allowed in each construction

There is another relevant difference between the two DOCs that I want to tackle in this paper: the Southern DOC is grammatical with a wider range of verbs than the All American DOC. First, only the Southern DOC can accept a verb which does not involve a change of possession whereas the All American DOC does not (Pinker, 1989; Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006; Hutchinson & Armstrong, 2014). In order to test this claim I provide different examples of All American DOCs whose verbs are stative verbs and action verbs of no transfer in order to prove that the All American DOC is not possible with this type of verbs. Consider the examples (35) to (37):

(35) *I adore you chocolate.

(36) *I have you a conspiracy theory.

(37) *Kate tasted him a cake yesterday.

(35) and (36) show that stative verbs like *adore* and *have* in the structure of the All American DOC yield two ungrammatical sentences. Similarly, in (37) the All American DOC with a verb of no transfer such as *taste* has been illustrated in order to show the importance of the involvement of transfer of possession in the mentioned construction.

Nevertheless, the Southern DOC is compatible with both verbs of change of possession and with verbs of no change of possession (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006; Hutchinson & Armstrong, 2014).

(38) I_i adore me_i some chocolates.

(39) I_i have me_i a conspiracy theory.

(40) Kate_i tasted her_i a cake yesterday.

As the examples show, the stative verb *adore*, used in example (38) and the action verbs of no transfer *have* and *taste* in (39) and (40), respectively, can yield grammatical Southern DOCs, but cannot form grammatical All American DOCs.

In addition, as reported by Webelhuth & Dannenberg (2006: 39) “the All American DOC allows metaphorical extensions of its core meaning”, in other words, the All

American DOC allows events or states that plan or intend a possession change that is not accomplished yet or a change of possession that is not a pure and physical transfer of property. Note the examples in (41) and (42):

(41) I promised her a present.

(42) Harry sang her a ballad.

The meaning of the verb *promise* appearing in (41) according to the Collins Dictionary is the following: “to cause one to expect that in the future one is likely to be or do something” (Crozier, 2008). Therefore, when the subject, in this case *I*, promises a present to someone (*her*), the agent (*I*) expects the acquisition of the theme (*a present*) by the beneficiary (*her*) in the future, but a change of possession is not accomplished in the moment that the promise is being made. Likewise, in (42) there is not a change of possession either. The verb *sing* does not imply the movement or change of *the ballad* from one possessor to the other, it just means that Harry sang a slow song and she (*her*) heard it.

In addition, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, the Southern DOC, as well as the All American DOC, is grammatical with ditransitive verbs (Conroy, 2007; Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006; Teomiro, 2013; Hutchinson & Armstrong, 2014). However, the Southern DOC is also possible with monotransitive verbs like *have* or *get* too, where the PP is not even optional. Note examples (43) to (45):

(43) I_i have me_i a conspiracy theory

(44) She_i got her_i some balloons.

(45) *She_i got her_i some balloons to Joe.

The intransitive verb *have* in (43) yields a grammatical Southern DOC and only denotes the agent and the theme roles. The same happens in (44) with the verb *get*, but in (45) we can notice that if the benefactive PP is added to a Southern DOC formed with the verb *get* the clause is ungrammatical. This may be due to the fact that with the verbs *get* and *have*, the real beneficiary of the act of having or getting is always the referent of the NP to which the agent role is assigned. Thus, if in (45) *she* bears the agent role, the referent of the pronoun is the beneficiary of the act of getting some balloons. Then, the

beneficiary role is satisfied so the nominal inside the PP, *Joe*, cannot bear that theta role because there would be a violation of the Theta Criterion (“each theta-role is assigned to one and only one argument” Chomsky, 1981) and that is why the clause in (45) is ungrammatical.

3.2. Summary of the comparison between both DOCs

This summary concludes the comparison between the All American DOC and the Southern DOC. In this section, I have revealed the similarities and differences between the two constructions under examination. On the one hand, I have shown which the similarities between them are: (i) both constructions are formed with three NPs; (ii) the two DOCs need transitive verbs in order to be grammatical; (iii) the arguments of both DOCs bear the same theta roles.

However, the constructions differ in everything else so, with a view to explaining which the differences are, I have first provided a brief grammatical representation of the two constructions under study. Then, I have mentioned the most apparent differences between them and later on, I have explained differences that are not so easily perceivable, starting with the one dealing with the meaning of both constructions. First, I have mentioned that the communicative purpose of the Southern DOC is to highlight the agent’s participation in the event, whereas the All American DOC just refers to the event without the connotation of this semantic nuance. Besides, I have also provided a brief comparison of the Spanish ethical dative with the Southern DOC concerning the connotation of affectedness towards one of the participants of the communicative act that both constructions share. Finally, I have concluded the section by showing that the All American DOC only allows ditransitive verbs which imply a transfer of possession, whereas the Southern DOC allows some monotransitive verbs and ditransitive verbs implying or not a possession change.

4. The Southern DOC and Universal Grammar

In this section, I will try to explain which problems the Southern DOC generates in relation to Universal Grammar and more specifically to Chomsky’s (1982) Theory of Government and Binding (GB Theory). In addition, I will also provide some solutions

to the apparent problem and will examine if the Southern DOC may be working as an idiomatic and indivisible “chunk”.

4.1. The Southern DOC and Principle B of the Binding theory

First, I will start by mentioning that, the personal dative appearing in the Southern DOC is bound in its governing category, and this may seemingly be a violation of Principle B of Chomsky’s Binding Theory in GB theory.

Principle B of the Binding Theory states that a pronoun must be free within its governing category. This means that a pronoun cannot be c-commanded by a co-referential element within an IP or NP containing the governor of the pronoun. Let us consider (46) below:

(46) *They_i hit them_i.

In example (46) *them* is governed by *hit*. That means that *them* must be free in the whole clause. However, *them* is bound by the subject *They* because the latter c-commands it and they both have the same reference. This sentence is ungrammatical in both Appalachian English and Standard English.

Following the same argumentation, it seems that (47) below should be ungrammatical, too:

(47) I_i ate me_i a delicious piece of cake.

However, the Southern DOC is grammatical even if the personal dative, *me* in example (47), is apparently bound, co-indexed with and c-commanded by the subject, *I*. According to Webelhuth & Dannenberg (2006:38) “Principle B incorrectly predicts these sentences to be ungrammatical”, in other words, even if Principle B foresees sentence (47) not to be grammatical, the sentence is grammatical.

Thus, taking into account the previous information, there are two competing hypotheses that can be proposed as regards the potential problems that the Southern

DOC entails for the standard Binding Theory. The first one is that Appalachian English does not follow Principle B. However, Binding Theory is aimed to identify how a pronoun or a noun and its antecedent must relate syntactically. It is a specialized, coherent theory dealing with the relationship between pronouns and anaphors and their antecedent that is universally valid, thus, all varieties of any language are supposed to follow it and Appalachian English has evidence to show that this variety behaves in accordance with Principle B (as shown in the ungrammatical (46) above).

Hence, if Appalachian English was devoid of Principle B examples (48) and (49) below taken from (Conroy, 2007) would be grammatical:

(48) * I_i hurt me_i .

(49) * We_i could see us_i in the mirror.

The pronouns *me* and *us* in these two examples are co-referential with the subject of the clause, *I* and *we* respectively. In addition, the pronouns are bound (by the subjects) in their governing categories, which are the whole clauses, so they violate the principle B of the Binding Theory and that is why they are ungrammatical. By showing these examples, the first hypothesis can be denied because we can see that Appalachian English observes the Principle B.

Secondly, with a view to finding a solution, the following potential hypothesis can be proposed: dative pronouns are not pronouns but a different type of word-forms which are morphologically identical to them (Conroy, 2007). Thus, if we assume that the dative pronoun is not a pronoun, it is not subject to Principle B, and consequently it does not cause any problem to the principle under study. Moreover, if personal datives are not pronouns we will have to explore other possibilities. For instance, can we find any evidence they are anaphors and not pronouns?

4.1.1. Personal datives as anaphors

Anaphors are closely linked to Principle A of The Binding Theory. This principle states that anaphors must be bound in their governing category containing an accessible

subject (Chomsky, 1981; Cowper, 1992, amongst many others), as shown in examples (50) and (51) below:

(50) John_i likes himself_i.

(51) *John_i considers [Ann to be fond of himself_i].

The sentence in (50) is grammatical because the anaphor *himself* is c-commanded by and co-indexed with the subject of the minimal governing category containing an accessible subject which is *John*. Nevertheless, the subject (that must c-command and co-refer with the anaphor, *himself*) in (51) is *Ann*. But, even if *Ann* c-commands *himself* these nominals cannot be co-referential. This means that the anaphor is not bound which in turn makes (51) ungrammatical.

In addition, it is interesting to mention that there are two different types of anaphors in many languages of the world such as Dutch, German or Spanish: SELF anaphors and SE (simplex expressions) anaphors (Reinhart & Reuland, 1993; Fischer, 2015). Examples of SELF anaphors are the reflexives that we find in English, anaphors such as *himself* or *myself*. Moreover, as Fischer (2015:5) claims “in most other languages which use pronominal anaphora in local anaphoric dependencies, two different types of anaphors can be found”. In these languages, SE anaphors, morphologically simple anaphors, can be used (Fischer, 2015). Note the examples of Spanish SELF and SE anaphors in examples (52) and (53).

(52) Juan_i se_i hirió a sí mismo_i
Juan_i SE_i hurted himself
‘Juan hurted himself’.

(53) Yo_i me_i comí la manzana.
I_i SE_i ate the apple
‘I ate the apple’.

As the examples above show, the Spanish anaphor *sí mismo* in (52) is a SELF anaphor that can be translated as *himself* in English. In (53) the SE anaphor *me* in Spanish is a simplex expression that co-refers with the subject of the clause and denotes a reflexive and completive meaning. This SE anaphor cannot be easily translated into English because, supposedly, this type of anaphora does not exist in English. Besides, if we

compare both anaphors, *sí mismo* and *me*, we can state that SELF anaphors are morphologically more complex than SE anaphors. Thus, if our hypothesis is that the dative pronoun is not a pronoun but an anaphor we will have to explore both options: the personal dative as a SELF anaphor and as a SE anaphor.

Firstly, as SELF anaphors are the only overt anaphors that are available in English apparently, a discussion on the comparison between personal datives and *self*-datives is provided to clarify whether the “false” pronoun in the Southern DOC is a SELF anaphor or not. Note examples in (54) and (55).

(54) Karen_i sent her_i a present.

(55) Karen_i sent herself_i a present.

By seeing that both *her* in (54) and *herself* in (55) are in parallel distribution it could be hypothesized that the pronoun *her* of the Southern DOC in (54) is simply an altered pronunciation of the pronoun *herself* in (55), as if they were interchangeable anaphors (Conroy, 2007). However, this hypothesis is not valid because there are many verb tests that do not allow both constructions and just accept one of them (Conroy, 2007; Teomiro, 2013), as can be seen in (56) and (57).

(56) a. I_i will write me_i a letter to my mother.

b. *I_i will write myself_i a letter to my mother.

(57) a. *I_i hurt me_i.

b. I_i hurt myself_i.

As (56) and (57) illustrate, some verbs such as *write* permit the Southern DOC but not the *self*-reflexive and vice versa with the verb *hurt*. So, the second NP in the Southern DOC cannot be a SELF anaphor.

Indeed, if the NP₂ of the Southern DOC is not a SELF anaphor, it must be a SE anaphor. In order to decide whether the second NP of the construction under examination is a SE anaphor or not, I think it is interesting to consider examples from languages that have both types of anaphors, so I will use examples from Spanish.

Apart from being different morphologically, SELF anaphors and SE anaphors seem to have some differences in meaning too. Note the examples in (59) and (60), adapted from (Conroy, 2007) in the fictional context in (58):

(58) Pablo Picasso enters the Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum and sees a statue of himself made of wax and next to it there is a mirror. Two years later Picasso is telling the story to a friend.

(59) Aquel día me vi a mí mismo.
'I_i saw myself_i that day'.

(60) Aquel día me vi.
'I_i saw SE_i (myself)_i that day'.

The example in (59) is an ambiguous sentence, as it has two possible readings. The first possible interpretation is that Picasso saw himself in the mirror, that is, he saw his own image reflected. Additionally, there is another possible interpretation according to which Picasso saw the statue of himself, that is, he saw a copy of his image in the statue. However, in example (60) only one interpretation is attainable, the first one we have provided here: SE anaphors must correspond identically to their antecedent (Conroy, 2007), whereas SELF anaphors do not need to. In the Southern DOC, the NP₂ and the subject of the clause are identical always, so we can conclude that the NP₂ is formed by a SE anaphor.

Immediately a new question arises. If the NP₂ of the Southern DOC is a SE anaphor but does not have argumental status, as mentioned in section 3.1., it has to be something else. We also know, for the time being, that the SE anaphor in the second NP of the Southern DOC must be explicit so it is not a null nominal. Consequently, a new hypothesis must emerge.

Let us take a very particular type of anaphor into account: floating anaphors (i.e. anaphors that can appear in different positions other than in the object position in the sentence). Would it be reasonable to claim that the SE anaphor in the construction under analysis is a floating anaphor? Consider (61) and (62):

(61) I_i myself_i said that.

(62) I_i sent me_i a present.

Taking into account the examples below we can claim that the SE anaphor in the construction under examination is a floating anaphor. Floating anaphors are never in object position, so they are not arguments of the verb, and, therefore, they do not bear any theta role. In (61), the verb *say* denotes two theta roles: the agent (borne by the subject of the clause *I*) and the theme role (carried by the nominal *that*). No theta role is assigned to the anaphor *myself* because it is not an argument of the verb. Moreover, if we compare the sentence in (61) and the Southern DOC in (62) the similarities between them can be seen. The SE anaphor *me* in (62) is not an argument of the verb *send* and it does not bear any theta role, like the floating anaphor in (61). However, the anaphors in the examples (61) and (62) differ in movement constraints. See the example below:

- (63)a. I_i myself_i said that.
- b. I_i said that myself_i.
- c. *Myself, I said that.

The floating anaphor in (61) can undergo some type of movement as (63b) illustrates, but cannot be topicalized, as (63c) shows (because it is not an argument of the verb), whereas the Southern DOC's SE anaphor must always appear in a position adjacent to the verb. So the floating anaphor of (63a) is freer than the floating anaphor of the Southern DOC with respect to movement. But even if there are some differences between them we can conclude that there is evidence to claim that the second NP of the Southern DOC is a floating anaphor because it does not have argumental status and, consequently, it does not bear any theta role. Accordingly, as the SE anaphor is not an argument of the verb, it is not an object. Therefore, if this hypothesis is true the Southern DOC is not a proper DOC because it does not have two objects.

4.1.2. The Southern DOC as an idiom

Additionally, another possibility has been proposed in order for the Southern DOC to fit in Universal Grammar Theories. According to Webelhuth & Dannenberg (2006) the Southern DOC may be an idiomatic construction. It is a fact that the construction under study and idioms share some grammatical properties or characteristics. For example, the meaning of some idioms as well as all Southern DOC is not the sum of the meaning of their lexemes and they require specific lexemes in order to be grammatical because they

are syntactically constrained (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006). Note examples in (64) and (65).

- (64) a. Ann_i always gets all her_i ducks in a row.
b. *Ann_i always gets all her_i dogs in a row.
- (65) a. I_i have me_i a conspiracy theory.
b. *I have a conspiracy theory.

The meaning of *get all ducks in a row* in (65a), is to get one's affairs in order or organized. The meaning of the whole clause is not the meaning of each constituent joined together. One would argue that the same is true in (65a), that is, the aspect and emphasis of its meaning is not predictable from the sum of the meaning conveyed by the Southern DOC's constituents. Moreover, the idiom in (64a) is only grammatical if all the specific lexemes (*get, all ducks, in a row*) are present; if we miss or change one of them the sentence is ungrammatical, as illustrated in (64b). Similarly, if we miss the essential lexemes of the Southern DOC in (65a) the clause will not be a grammatical Southern DOC, as illustrated in (65b).⁸

Moreover, even if it is not a characteristic shared by all idioms there are some which must contain bound pronouns in order to be grammatical, like the one illustrated below:

- (66) a. She_i got her_i brain fried yesterday afternoon.
b. *She_i got her_j brain fried yesterday afternoon.
c. *She got my brain fried yesterday afternoon.

The idiom *get one's brain fried* in (66) is only grammatical when the subject of the clause and the pronoun after the verb are co-referential, as (66a) shows. If they are not co-indexed, like in (66b) and (66c), they are unacceptable.

In addition, some idioms cannot be topicalized or passivized, the same restriction that we illustrated for the Southern DOC in section 3.1. in this paper. Consider the example in (67):

⁸ Obviously this is not exclusive of English. The same could be said about Spanish idioms (*tomar el pelo, perder la cabeza*) or idioms in any language, for that matter.

- (67) a. I killed two birds with one stone.
 b. *Two birds I killed with one stone.
 c. *Two birds were killed by me with one stone.

The idiom in (67a) has been topicalized in (67b) and passivized in (67c) yielding sentences which cannot keep the idiomatic reading. Some idioms are bound externally, so they cannot undergo movement operations such as the one illustrated in (67).

Likewise, some idioms also share another similarity with the Southern DOC. The Southern DO must have a determiner in its NP₂ always, and so do some idioms too. Consider (68) and (69):

- (68) a. I_i bought me_i two pens.
 b. *I_i bought me_i pens.
 (69) a. He doesn't give a damn about her children.
 b. *He doesn't give damn about her children.

If there is no determiner in the second NP of the Southern DOC, the sentence is ungrammatical, as (68b) illustrates. Similarly, if there is no determiner in the NP of some idioms such as the one in (69) the idiom is unacceptable. The idiom in (69a) must contain a determiner in the NP *a damn*. If the determiner is not present the idiom is ungrammatical, as shown in (69b).

Thus, taking all these similarities into account we find out that there is also plenty of evidence to support the hypothesis that the Southern DOC can be analysed as an idiom which has the following constraints operating on it: co-referentiality with the subject, a personal pronoun in post verbal position and a determiner in the second NP. Moreover, its meaning is more than the sum of its constituents and it is externally bound thus, it cannot undergo movement of constituents.

4.2. Summary of the analysis of the Southern DOC and Universal Grammar

To sum up, in this section I have shown two different solutions that have been proposed in the literature for the seeming problem that the pronominal NP of the Southern DOC causes to the Principle B of Binding Theory. To begin with, I have defended the first solution: the dative pronoun in the Southern DOC is not a pronoun, it is an anaphor. As there are two types of anaphors I have compared the construction

under study with both of them to clarify what type of anaphor the personal dative is, concluding that the NP₂ of the southern DOC is not a SELF anaphor but is very similar to Spanish SE anaphors. Thus, I have reached the conclusion that Appalachian English has both SELF and SE anaphors available. Additionally, I have also shown that the personal dative is a floating anaphor and, consequently, I have claimed that the construction under examination is not a proper DOC because it does not have two objects. Secondly, I have also considered the possibility that the Southern DOC works as an idiomatic expression. I have searched for idioms which contain pronouns, need a determiner in one of its NPs, cannot be topicalized or passivized and whose meaning is not just the sum of the meanings of their lexemes. By comparing them to the Southern DOC and knowing that idioms require specific lexemes to co-occur, I can now assert that it is possible that the Southern DOC is an idiom which must contain a pronoun.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, in this paper, I have investigated the Southern DOC, a construction which is a hallmark of Appalachian English, but also a regular feature of other Southern vernacular varieties of English in the United States. First, I have determined that the Southern DOC is produced in the South of the United States and more specifically in the Appalachian Mountain Region and I have mentioned that the speakers producing it do not attach any stigma to the construction and to their variety because they feel positive about their dialect now. Secondly, this paper has shown the general properties of the construction under examination which are the following: (i) it occurs with subject of any person and number except for *it*; (ii) the position of the personal dative must always be right after the verb; (iii) it never occurs in stressed position or in coordinated structures; (iv) it is favoured by emotively positive contexts rather than by negative ones. In addition I have compared the Southern DOC with other English constructions, such as *for*-datives, *self*-reflexives and *to*-datives and concluded that they are all similar as regards co-referentiality but semantically different at the same time because the Southern DOC highlights the role of the agent and the meaning of the other three constructions does not imply emphasis. Thirdly, I have expanded on the similarities and syntactic and semantic differences between the Southern DOC and the All American DOC pointing out that the two constructions are similar in that: (i) they have two NPs after the verb; (ii) the three arguments bear the same theta roles; and (iii) both DOCs

need a transitive verb in order to be grammatical. However, I have also ascertained that they are different because the All American DOC only allows ditransitive verbs involving a change of possession whereas the Southern DOC occurs with ditransitive and monotonative verbs and with verbs of transfer or verbs of no transfer. Moreover, in the interest of presenting the semantic differences between the two constructions I have also compared the construction under study with the Spanish Ethical Dative to conclude that the All American DOC and the Southern DOC are also different because the meaning of the Southern DOC involves emphasis, just as the Spanish Ethical Dative does, but the meaning of the All American one does not. Finally, I have examined the problems that the Southern DOC causes to principle B of the Binding Theory, suggesting two solutions. On the one hand, the pronoun in the construction under study can be a SE anaphor which does not have to follow Principle B but Principle A of the mentioned theory. On the other hand, the Southern DOC is not subject to Binding Theory if we consider it an idiomatic construction.

6. References

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