
Problem 3: The Dative Alternation

In Chapter 8, we mentioned the possibility of formulating a lexical rule describing the ‘dative alternation’ – that is, a class of verbs that appear in both of the valence patterns exemplified in (i) and (ii):

(i) Dale $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{gave} \\ \text{handed} \\ \text{sold} \\ \text{loaned} \\ \text{mailed} \end{array} \right\}$ Merle a book.

(ii) Dale $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{gave} \\ \text{handed} \\ \text{sold} \\ \text{loaned} \\ \text{mailed} \end{array} \right\}$ a book to Merle.

A. Is this alternation productive? Justify your answer with at least two examples.

[Hint: See the discussion of productive lexical rules at the end of Section 8.1 of Chapter 8.]

B. Formulate a lexical rule for the dative alternation.

[Hint: Consider which kind of *l*-rule (*i*-rule or *d*-rule) this should be, based on the kind of constraints you need to write. You can choose either of the valences

illustrated in (i) and (ii) as the input and the other as the output. It should not be easier one way than the other.]

- C. Show how your rule interacts with the Passive Lexical Rule to make possible the generation of both (iii) and (iv). Your answer should include ARG-ST values showing the effect of applying the rules. [*Hint: First consider which order the rules apply in, based on the types of the INPUT and OUTPUT values of each rule.*]

(iii) Merle was handed a book by Dale.

(iv) A book was handed to Merle by Dale.

- D. Explain why your rule correctly fails to license (v) (or, more precisely, fails to license (v) with the sensible meaning that the book was the thing handed to Merle).

(v) ?*A book was handed Merle by Dale.
