
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.
