

# “I love me some him”: The landscape of non-argument datives

Laurence R. Horn\*

## 1 The quarry

A familiar syntactic feature of dialectal (Southern and Appalachian) U.S. English is the optional occurrence of a nonsubcategorized “personal dative” pronominal in transitive clauses which obligatorily coindexes the subject but whose semantic contribution is ill-understood. As we shall see, this personal dative (PD) bears suggestive if not always straightforward relations to constructions in such languages as French, German, Walbiri, Hebrew, and Old English involving what have been variously termed “ethical”, “free”, “non-lexical”, or “affected” datives. Some of these datives are coreferential with the subject (e.g. *Je me prends un petit café*, lit. “I take me a little coffee”) while others are non-coreferential (e.g. *Ils lui ont tué son oiseau*, lit. “They killed him his bird”); they typically invite benefactive and malefactive (adversative) understandings respectively.

We begin, however, with the English personal dative, as described in the literature (cf. e.g. Green 1974: 190ff., Christian 1991, Sroda & Mishoe 1995, Webelhuth & Dannenberg 2006) and displayed in a range of traditional country and mountain ballads and their modern descendants [**boldface** used here to indicate coreference, not contrast/focus]:

- (1) Well, I’m a rake and a ramblin’ boy  
There’s many a city I did enjoy;  
And now I’ve married **me** a pretty little wife  
And I love her dearer than I love my life.

(“Rake and Rambling Boy”, trad.)

- (2) a. I’m gonna buy **me** a shotgun, just as long as I am tall

(Jimmie Rodgers, “T for Texas”)

---

\*Parts of this paper, in particular relating to the discussion in §2, were presented on earlier occasions (see e.g. Horn 2002). I am grateful to participants in the American Dialect Society list, including Ellen Johnson, Donald Lance, Dennis Preston, and especially Michael Montgomery, for getting me started on personal datives back in the previous century, to audiences in New Haven, Urbana, Reading, San Francisco, Evanston, Rutgers, Leysin, and Oslo for helpful suggestions, and especially to commentators at the CSSP presentation for useful pointers and caveats. Thanks are specifically due to Barbara Abbott, Kent Bach, Elitzur Bar-Asher, John Beavers, Olivier Bonami, Patricia Cabredo Hofherr, Stacey Conroy, Bridget Copley, Clare Dannenberg, Bart Geurts, Owen Greenhall, Daniel Gutzmann, Polly Jacobson, Julie Legate, Chao Li, Didier Maillat, Haben Michael, Jean-Daniel Mohier, Kelly Nedwick, Ken Safir, William Salmon, Gregory Ward, Gert Webelhuth, and Jenny Yang. The usual disclaimers apply.

- b. I'm gonna grab/catch **me** a freight train. (various songs)
- c. When I was a young girl, I had **me** a cowboy  
(John Prine, "Angel From Montgomery")
- d. I had **me** a man in summertime/He had summer-colored skin  
(Joni Mitchell, "Urge for Going")
- e. Now the Union Central's pulling out and the orchids are in bloom,  
I've only got **me** one shirt left and it smells of stale perfume.  
(Bob Dylan, "Up to Me")

The ordinary pronominals here contrast minimally with the expected reflexive in e.g. "I'm gonna sit right down and write myself a letter." (The PD counterpart *I'm gonna write me a letter* would also be possible in the relevant dialect, provided that *me* is not a Goal argument.) While first person singular "bound" pronominals predominate, second and third person cases are also possible in the backwoods:

- (3)  $\emptyset_i$  Get **you**<sub>i</sub> a copper kettle,  $\emptyset_i$  get **you**<sub>i</sub> a copper coil,  
Cover with new-made corn mash and never more you'll toil.  
You just lay there by the junipers, when the moon is bright,  
Watch them jugs a-fillin' in the pale moonlight.  
(“Copper Kettle”, traditional ballad)
- (4) Born on a mountain top in Tennessee  
The greenest state in the land of the free  
Raised in the woods so's he knew every tree  
[ **pro**<sub>i</sub> ] Kilt **him**<sub>i</sub> a b'ar when he was only three.  
(“Ballad of Davy Crockett”; cf. M. Lewis 2002)

Note the co-occurrence of the PDs in (3) and (4) with other well-known instances of Appalachian English features (cf. Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 1998)— the determiner in *them jugs*, the verb forms *lay* and *kilt*, the noun *b'ar* [= *bear*], contracted *so-[a]s*, *a*-prefixation and “g-dropping” in *a-fillin'*.

Moving from song lyrics to prose, we see that PD cites, while still restricted to (in-formal) register, range freely over person, number, and geography:

- (5) a. “I’m going to have to hire **me** a detective just to follow you around.” (1988 Sara Paretsky novel, *Blood Shot*, p. 191, set in Chicago)
- b. “I wish I could afford **me** a swimming pool and a Buick and all. I was at Diamond Head thirty-eight years, no counting the war, but I sure never got **me** a retirement deal like that.” (1992 Sara Paretsky novel, *Guardian Angel*, p. 312, set in Chicago)
- c. “It’s too bad we don’t have any of those hellebores”, I say. “**We** could drop them in the Meer and poison **us** some fish.” (Ayelet Waldman (2006), *Love and Other Impossible Pursuits*, p. 224, set in New York)
- d. “If you attend church just to go through the motions, God’d rather **you** get **you** a bottle of bourbon and a whore and go to a hotel and have **you** a good time.” (Uncle Al in Garrison Keillor’s *Lake Wobegon Summer 1956* (2001), p. 274, set in Minnesota)

- e. I keep logs of illegal huntin' here on the wildlife preserve. Poachers, hunters – **they** come by at night, tryin' to pinch '**em** some deer meat. (Ranger to detectives on "Cold Case", CBS, 28/11/04, set in Philadelphia)

The literature on PDs provides a somewhat sketchy picture of the construction and its motivations. Here is an early passage from Green (1974: 190-91):

[T]he for-dative verbs...may occur with non-reflexive, co-referential indirect object pronouns, but only in certain colloquial, rural, or substandard [!] types of speech, and for no apparent reason, only if the indirect object is internal.

Green's examples include *I baked **me** a cake*, *Bill earned **him** \$1000*, *We ought to kill **us** a male chauvinist*. She opines that "for some reason, second-person pronouns sound very strange in this construction". (But cf. the evidence in Christian (1991) and data collected by Michael Montgomery that second-person PDs are more frequent than third-person occurrences, although first-person cases are strongly favored.)

Thirty years later, in their magisterial *CGEL*, Huddleston & Pullum (2004: 1488) provide an equally incomplete account. Describing local binding domains, they note:

In some dialects, mainly US, an accusative is found in informal style as a variant of the reflexive. This usage occurs predominantly with a 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun: %*I bought me a new car*, %*Let's get us a hamburger* ...The meaning, however, is not always quite the same. While *I caught myself some fish* implies that the fish were specifically for me, %*I caught me some fish* does not. There is also a non-standard use of *me* where the standard dialect would not have an indirect object at all: <sup>!</sup>*I seen me a mermaid once*; <sup>!</sup>*I want me a house by the beach*.

Note that both Green and the *CGEL* take it for granted that PDs are in fact indirect objects; we shall claim that they are not arguments at all, but non-subcategorized pronouns, whence the co-occurrence with verbs like *need* and *see*, as well as the meaning difference signaled above, or for that matter the possible co-occurrence of a PD with a true indirect object benefactive: *I caught me some fish for my kids*, along the lines of Christian's *He was looking to buy him a house for his family*.

More recently, Webelhuth & Dannenberg (2006) [=W&D] offer a Construction Grammar-based account of the "Southern Double Object construction" (a misleading label if the second "object" is not an object). Their crucial tenet is that the PD "is idiomatically constrained to being a subject-bound personal pronoun and hence exempt from Principle B of the binding theory". But while this "exemption" is indeed at the heart of the issue, it's not clear how invoking idiomatcity per se really helps. After all, inherent reflexives and resultative fake reflexives may be described as lexical or constructional idioms and yet observe standard binding theory restrictions on locality:

- (6) a. **She** behaved **herself**/\***her**.  
b. **I** drank **myself**/\***me** into a stupor.  
c. **The dog** barked **itself**/\***it** awake.

Other restrictions cited by W&D as evidence of the idiosyncratic nature of PDs—their failure to topicalize, passivize, or alternate with a full lexical NP—carry over to nonargument datives (of both coreferential and “ethical” varieties) in Romance, German, and other languages, which makes a *sui generis* Constructional account less appealing.

As for the exemption from Principle B, we need to distinguish the behavior of the personal dative from that of a construction bearing some superficial resemblances to it, the Contrastive Focus Pronominal; as we shall see below, the latter are more plausible candidates for true exceptional status.

Additional relevant data for any treatment of PDs is provided below:

- (7) a. **He** bought **him/himself** a new pick-up.  
 b. **He** needs **him** /\***himself** just a little more sense.  
 c. What I like is goats. **I** jus’ like to look at **me** some goats.  
 [in title of Sroda & Mishoe 1995; but perhaps *look-at* reanalyzed as simple verb?]  
 d. **We** want **us** a black German police dog cause I had one once.
- (8) a. **She** fed **\*her/herself** some chitlins.  
 b. **She** gave **\*her/herself** a big raise. (vs. **She** got **her** a big raise.)
- (9) a. **He’s** gonna buy **him/\*himself** a pick-up for his son.  
 b. **He’s** gonna buy (**\*him**) his son a pick-up.  
 c. **I** need **me** a little more time for myself.
- (10) a. **She** bought **herself/?her** and Kim some ice cream.  
 b. **Kim** would love **her/him/\*Kim** some flowers.  
 c. **I** want **me/\*yours truly** some grits.

The behavioral characteristics of PDs are summarized in (11):

- (11) A catalogue of PD properties
- a. PD constructions always co-occur with a quantified (patient/theme) direct object.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. PDs can’t be separated from the verb that precedes and case-marks them.
  - c. PDs are most frequent/natural with monosyllabic “down-home” type verbs (e.g. *buy, get, build, shoot, get, catch, write, hire, cook*).
  - d. Lack any external (PP) pronominal counterpart (cf. Green 1974: 191 on **Bill** played **him** a lullaby vs. **\*Bill** played a lullaby for **him**).
  - e. PDs can occur in positions where a true indirect object is ruled out (10a) and can co-occur with (rather than substituting for) overt dative/indirect object (10a,c).
  - f. PDs are WEAK PRONOUNS (Cardinaletti & Starke 1996, 1999; Bresnan 2001); they can’t be stressed or conjoined (but for many speakers (10a) isn’t that bad).

<sup>1</sup>I ignore here the related intransitive construction illustrated in *I lay me down to sleep, Ø Sit you down, or Ø Hie thee hence*; cf. Fodor (1992; 1994: 435-36) for some discussion.

- g. PDs have no full NP counterpart (10b,c). [But see below for a pseudo-candidate]
- h. There's no consistent thematic role for PD nominals, although they sometimes resemble non-subcategorized benefactives; they can be suppressed *salva veritate*. They get Case but no  $\theta$ -role and do not represent true datives/ recipients/ goals.
- i. Most PD speakers have no absolute restriction against 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronominals but some exhibit a residual person-based asymmetry: 1<sup>st</sup> > 2<sup>nd</sup> > 3<sup>rd</sup>
- j. PD pronominals are not objects of their verbs; they are **non-arguments** coreferring with the subject.

## 2 The PD vs. the CFP: non-arguments, misbehaving arguments, and binding

Given their status as non-arguments, PDs will not be subject to the co-argument version of Condition B (Pollard & Sag 1992, Reinhart & Reuland 1993). The presence of pronominals rather than anaphors in the PD construction stems from the non-argument (and hence non-**co**-argument) status of the "object" pronoun, which motivates the availability of third person pronominals. This yields a theoretically significant distributional distinction (unmentioned in W&D and other work) between PDs and the less dialectally restricted "bound pronouns" – and bound R-expressions – that appear in contrastive focus contexts and present a well-known challenge to Principles B and C of the binding theory. Whereas PDs range over all object pronominals, regardless of person, contrastive focus cases involve true arguments that, while locally bound, must be referentially independent (Evans 1980) and are hence restricted to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronominals and proper names. The contrast can be realized as a subject (antecedent) focus, as in the cases of (12); **boldface** again marks coreference and *italics* mark focus.

- (12)
- a. He nods but I'm not sure he believes me. I'm not sure **I** believe **me**.  
(Sandra Scoppetone mystery novel *I'll Be Leaving You Always*, 1993, p. 82)
  - b. It was like an out-of-body experience. Nobody wanted to look at me. Hell, **I** wouldn't look at **me** either.  
(ex-Oakland A's pitcher Dennis Eckersley, on aftermath of giving up celebrated game-winning World Series home run to the gimpy Kirk Gibson, 15 Oct. 1988)
  - c. "New York didn't destroy me. **I** destroyed **me**. I take full responsibility."  
(Darryl Strawberry, quoted in *NYT Magazine* p. 58, 15 Apr. 2001)
  - d. "Let me toast you." She toasted me. You'll notice she didn't offer me a drink so that **I** could toast **me**. (Ed Gorman (2001), *Save the Last Dance for Me*, p. 135)
  - e. "Teams are going to be waiting. People expect us to win; **we** expect **us** to win." (Jason Sehorn of the division-winning Giants, quoted in *NYT* 10 Sep. 1998, C7)
  - f. "You told me, that's the important thing. Besides, **you** don't fancy **you** like I do." (from *Neurotica*, Sue Margolis novel, 1999, p. 272)

In the cases in (13), the object (target) is the site of contrastive focus and is stressed. Again, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> (but not 3<sup>rd</sup>) person pronouns are possible, as are names.

- (13) a. I believed in you. I always believed in you. **I** just didn't believe in **me**. (Blane to Andie, last line of *Pretty in Pink*, 1986 movie)
- b. "You're looking at me like I'm some kind of monster." I shook my head. "I'm not looking at you. **I'm** looking at **me**." (from 1994 Stephen Greenleaf mystery novel, *False Conception*, p. 268)
- c. **You** can't afford to pay **you**. How are you gonna pay me? (from *The Practice*, ABC television drama)
- d. TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF. **YOU** BELONG TO **YOU**. (ad for Philadelphia Blue Cross, cited in Ward 1983)

The last of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person object focus cases above involves covert focus; the advertisement works only if the intended audience is familiar with the 1929 verse:

Button up your overcoat,  
When the wind is free,  
Take good care of yourself,  
You belong to me.

Similarly, the narrator Dan Roman ( $\delta$ ) in his reassurance in (14) plays off an implicitly evoked open sentence of the form [x will/should worry about  $\delta$ ]

- (14) "Just go on home. **I'll** worry about **me**." (from 1989 Edward Mathis mystery novel, *The Burned Woman*)

As noted, the phenomenon of contrastive focus bound pronominals extends to contrastive focus bound names, in which case it's Principle C rather than Principle B that is under attack. The first three of the examples in (15) are from Ward (1983).

- (15) a. JR: Cliff is in the hospital because of you.  
Sue Ellen: No, **Cliff** is in the hospital because of **Cliff**. (from *Dallas* episode)
- b. "Maybe she [= Amanda] loves the boy too much."  
"**Amanda** loves **Amanda**." (from 1985 Martha Grimes novel, *The Deer Leap*)
- c. "**Baxter** looks out for **Baxter**" [referring to a local politician]  
(*Philadelphia Inquirer* editorial headline, 30 Oct. 1982)
- d. Jeff doesn't run for glory. **He** runs for **Jeff**. (Advil commercial)

The properties of the two constructions can be distinguished in a tabular fashion:

Personal datives	Contrastive focus pronominals
<i>I want me an iPod.</i> <i>He<sub>i</sub> bought him<sub>i</sub> an iPod.</i>	<i>I'm not buying YOU an iPod—</i> <i>I'm buying ME an iPod.</i>
dative non-arguments following verb immediately following verb	may be direct/ indirect objects or objects of prepositions
no person restriction but must be pronominal (except as noted below)	must be referentially independent 1st or 2nd person or proper name no 3rd p. pronoun
weak pronouns or clitics; can't be stressed or [?] conjoined	strong pronouns; may be stressed or conjoined
exclude contrast	require contrast (subject or object)
not subcategorized for; don't satisfy arg. structure requirements of verb	subcategorized for (optionally or obligatorily) by the verb
must be followed by overt theme /DO that requires [or prefers?] a determiner	can occur in simple transitive or ditransitive frames, no determiner restriction
do not affect truth-conditional content but are semantically relevant	contributes to truth-conditional content equivalently to corresponding anaphor

In (12)-(15), Principles B and C are apparently overridden, allowing the local pronominal when, as Ward (1983) formulates the condition, the normal-stressed of the two coreferential NPs is in the "given" part of a discourse-salient open proposition while the other, stressed NP is the new (focal) value for the variable in that open proposition. Elsewhere, a similar informational contrast obtains between participant and observer readings of the two nominals, as in (16a) (Lakoff 1972: 639) and (17):

- (16) a. I dreamed I was Brigitte Bardot and **I** kissed **me**.  
b. ≠ I dreamed I was Brigitte Bardot and **I** kissed **myself**.
- (17) If I Were a Man, I'd Marry **Me**. (title of 1999 novel by P. S. Wall)

The two pronominals in such cases have been described as representing different guises of the referent; cf. Castañeda (1966), Heim (1998), Safir (2001). Crucially, however, this possibility is precluded for third person cases. Someone reporting Lakoff's dream or Wall's book title is forced to switch to an anaphor, lest non-coreference result:

- (16') So Lakoff tells me he had this dream where he was Brigitte Bardot and **he** kissed **#him/#her/?himself**.
- (17') P. S. Wall vows that if she were a man, she'd marry **#her/#him/?herself**.

What we have in the 3rd person cases is not just different guises but different guys. One final example is provided by the politician's and athlete's dissociative 3rd person (Horn 2002):<sup>2</sup>

- (18) a. [Bob Dole, responding to Ted Koppel's query about whether he intended to stress the character issue against Bill Clinton in the upcoming campaign]  
"I don't think so," Dole said. "My view is that **I'm** going to talk about **Bob Dole**, and I've been doing a little of that." (ABC *Nightline* show, March 1996)

<sup>2</sup>This is an instance of the practice of ILLEISM; see Zwicky (2007) for extensive discussion.

- b. “I’m just going to do the things **Derek Harper** has done for 10 years, and hopefully that will be enough.” (*N. Y. Times* interview, 8 Jan. 1994, p. 32)
- c. “I just want to go to a place where **Howard Johnson** is going to put up some big numbers.” (Nov. 1993 radio interview after Johnson signed with a new team)

An athlete or politician may establish distance between himself (virtually never herself) and his public persona, but only by the use of his name, never a 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun. When asked to diagnose his poor play, basketball star Larry Johnson insisted, “People know what L.J. can do. I know what **L.J.** can do” (*N. Y. Times*, 22 Nov. 1996). What L.J. could not have replied—barring amnesia or multiple personality disorder—was “I know what he can do.”

### 3 I love me some snowclones: the Braxton effect

Returning to our original quarry, the personal dative, we will seek to determine the nature of the semantic contribution of the non-argument pronominal to the clause in which it occurs, given that it does not alter truth conditions. We will approach this question after re-examining the characteristics of predicates that license PDs, looking at the sociolinguistic correlates of the construction, and briefly surveying a range of correlated constructions in other languages. First, it is worth noting a relatively recent addition to the set of licensors. In the decade since Toni Braxton’s pop song “*I Love Me Some Him*” (lyrics by SoulShock & Karlin, Andrea Martin, and Gloria Stewart) with the chorus

I love **me** some him  
I’ll never love this way again  
I love **me** some you  
Another man will never do

reached the top of the charts in 1997, the title has generated a snowclone<sup>3</sup> of the form *I (Just) Love Me Some X*. Note that X here is not semantically quantified (the singer does not adore just an unspecified subpart of her beloved) but is a name, pronoun, generic, etc. that must occur with an indefinite to satisfy the constraints on the PD. Thus T.O.’s T-shirt declaration below essentially reduces to the observation “I love myself”.

- (19) The “*I love me some*” snowclone
  - a. **I LOVE ME SOME ME** — slogan popularized by American football player Terrell Owens (“T.O.”)
  - b. **I just love me** some Jude Law. — posting on salon.com
  - c. **My husband** used to **love him** some Jack Daniels. — Halle Berry’s character to Billy Bob Thornton’s, in the movie *Monster’s Ball*
  - d. **I just love me** some cats! Don’t you just LOVE cats?! ...Grace keeps to herself these days. And her crime of the month is to pee in my big house plant.

<sup>3</sup>See the wiki-entry at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snowclone> for much more on snowclones.



"**I love me** some plants. The green sets off my beauty. And the soil is just right for a little wee."

<http://www.hayllar.com/dec00/51200.html>

- e. **I love me** a big man, I purely do. (from an on-line story; note generic indefinite)
- f. **I love me** some fat bitches! More cushion for the pushin'. (The rapper Redman, in 2001 movie *How High*, gratia Kelly Nedwick)
- g. Let's make sure we've got this clear, right from the start: **I love me** some Crocodile Hunter. (Referring to the TV show and now the movie.) (Opener of story in e-column, 7/22/02, reported by Mark Mandel on ads-l)

## 4 PD as sociolinguistic shibboleth: pronouns and politics

A key turning point in the run-up to the 2004 U.S. presidential election was a campaign stop John Kerry made in Ohio in which— as the Washington Times would put it in their editorial on 23 October 2004, "When Johnny went a-huntin'" — he staged an ill-fated event to demonstrate his empathy with rural gun owners:

Mr. Kerry's Ohio hunting adventure started last Saturday, when the senator, campaign entourage in tow, went into a grocery store and asked the owner: "Can I get me a hunting license here?" Even the phraseology sounded staged. Mr. Kerry ordinarily doesn't talk this way, and his language sounded fake and patronizing— as if he was pretending to talk like someone from rural Ohio.

Kerry was then savaged in numerous gleeful right-wing blogs and columns for his inauthentic modeling of "uneducated redneckese", "hick" or "ignorant" speech, or even "dumbed-down grammar". Commentators wondered rhetorically, "Is poor grammar something that amounts to reaching out to them-there dumb, gun-loving right-wing rednecks?" While he was widely portrayed as having asked "Can I get me a huntin' license here?", the actual recording of Kerry's query (although web-filed as "Can I Get Me A Huntin License Here.mp3") clearly confirms that he used the velar nasal<sup>4</sup>. Whatever the facts of the matter, two weeks later Kerry barely lost Ohio to George W. Bush.

How can we reconcile the vitriolic reaction to Kerry's personal dative with the claim (Christian 1991: 14; W&D: 31, 34) that the use of PDs is "not stigmatized" among Southern vernacular speakers? It appears that the PD is indeed accepted non-judgmentally within the in-group of users while serving as shibboleth to impugn outsiders who employ it as prejudiced and/or lame. In this respect it parallels the evaluation of reclaimed slurs like *nigger*, *hebe*, *queer*, *fag*, *dyke*, or *bitch*.

As a parallel instance of negative evaluation of outsiders for venturing a personal dative, consider the case of the Midwestern singer-songwriter Dan Fogelberg (1951-2007), who was especially celebrated for his 1980 classic narrative "Same Old Lang Syne", a song that 25 years later prompted this screed from blogger Kate Marie at <http://whatstherumpus.blogspot.com/2005/12/more-stupid-holiday-songs.html>:

<sup>4</sup>C.f. <http://liveshot.cc/Audio/Can%20I%20Get%20Me%20A%20Huntin%20License%20Here.mp3>

Here are the lines that always bothered me:

*She said she'd married her an architect,  
Who kept her warm and safe and dry,  
She would have liked to say she loved the man,  
But she didn't like to lie.*

First of all, I understand why Fogelberg wants to throw in that extra syllable in the first line, but couldn't he have found a more elegant way of doing it? Did she really say "*I married me an architect?*" Or is Fogelberg, who seems capable of standard usage, the kind of guy who would say, "*Dag nabbit, she up 'n' married her an architect.*"

Presumably it was this very "dagnabbit" effect that helped John Kerry up 'n' lose the Ohio vote, and with it the 2004 election.

## 5 Constraints on PD, revisited

Standard accounts of personal datives claim that they must co-occur with quantified indefinite themes or direct objects (cf. e.g. W&D, fn. 7). But there is some evidence that definite objects are not always excluded, as various google hits attest:

- (20)
- a. I want me the cash.
  - b. I want me the notional MacBook nano
  - c. I want me the biggest, gaudiest, most heinously pink mostrosity of a cake there is
  - d. I want me the Blythe Black BOOTS!!! and the red ones too
  - e. i want me the 6 with tha trix and a TV in the roof [from a Lil' Bow Wow song "You Know Me"]
  - f. I want me the new CrackBerry and those super comfy looking Nike shoes.
  - g. I want's me the Transformers Battlin Robots set
  - h. I want me that job/baby/album/giant easter basket filled with toys/Bulls hat/ gravity chair/purty cowboy over there/lovely white coat she wore in that scene [in "The Devil Wears Prada"]
  - i. I need me this coffee mug/keyboard/book/sign/here album

Some of these examples involve type definites, where *that X = an X of that type*, but many do not. Even more strikingly, PDs may be followed by bare NP objects (contra W&D and earlier accounts), as when chocoholic speakers confess their addiction:

- (21)
- a. Yar, I love me chocolate syrup!
  - b. I Love's me chocolate, I Loves it!
  - c. Mmmm, I love me chocolate cake.
  - d. I love me chocolate and I love me milk.

Arguably, however, such extensions of the basic construction involve dialect mixing, as in the tendency for *y'all* to be used as a true singular when it spreads into non-Southern U.S. dialect areas.

The exclusion of non-pronominal PDs (see (10b/c) above) faces a challenge of its own in the form of metonymic *X's ass*. But as Beavers & Koontz-Garboden (2006) point out, this expression, whether or not coindexed with the subject, exhibits the distribution of pronouns (anaphors or pronominals, as the case may be), rather than that of R-expressions. Thus the occurrence of attested PDs with personal *ass*-based datives should come as no shock:

- (22) a. **GOD LOVES HIS ASS SOME KIDNEYS.** (= 'God loves kidneys')  
 b. I have a 152 tested IQ and **I love my ass** some red meat.  
 c. Movies, **i love my ass** some funny movies.  
 d. I should take this time to state how much **I LOVE my ass** some Magma!

In fact, though, the real puzzle is why are there so few examples of this kind? In fact, there are well over 1.5 million google hits for *I love my ass* (...), but virtually all with literal rather than metonymic reference. Along the same lines, we find exactly one hit each for *I need/want my ass*...—

- (23) a. **i need my ass** some ginkgo biloba  
 b. **I want my ass** some quesadillas

— and none at all for 3rd person examples of the form *S/he loves, wants, needs, got her/his ass some X*.

This (near) gap can be attributed to the evaluative tension between the PD, which (as we shall see in more detail below) implies a benefit to the subject, and the typically adversative or pejorative nature of *X's ass*. This may be too gross a characterization of *one's ass*, however. Consider, for example, the ambiguously attested phrase *get one's ass some help*. On its literal, referential reading (= 'consult a proctologist') *X's ass* retains its ordinary final major constituent stress. On its metonymic reading (= 'consult a therapist'), *X's ass* is an anaphor and consequently destressed. Examples from the internet:

- (24) a. Stop reading and get your ass some help. See a podiatrist if you have to.  
 b. Not a man alive (or dead, for that matter) would put up with your whiney ass. Hmm, that explains a lot. Maybe you should get your ass some help instead?  
 c. Get your ass some therapy or meds or both. What is wrong with your ass?

*Your ass* here marks not simply a pejorative attitude, but rather the speaker's impatience toward the addressee/subject. But if the addressee gets the help the speaker recommends, a positive affect is achieved, whence the appropriateness of the PD.

As further support for the role played by positive affect, compare the minimal pairs in (25) and (26), in which the personal dative is awkward or unacceptable for most speakers in the absence of intention.

- (25) a. **He** shot **him** two squirrels.  
 b. **#He** (got drunk and) shot **him** two coonhounds (by mistake).

- (26) a. **She** caught **her** a catfish.  
 b. **#She** caught **her** a cold/case of the clap.

Predictably, the versions in (26b) are fine in the unlikely event that the cold or case of the clap was contracted intentionally. Affect-linked asymmetries in the licensing of PDs are reflected in the data in (27), collecting entries googled on 1 April 2007.

- (27) a. **I love me some X**: 636,000 vs. **I hate me some X**: 516 (*Dr. Phil, Yankees, exams, emo*)  
 [**I just love me some X** (see §3 above) : 867 vs. **I just hate me some X**: 0]  
 b. **She loves her some X**: 630 (*grapefruit, sparkly dance boys, Ozzy, chocolate, jesus, Halloween*) vs. **She hates her some**: 5 (*J. Lo, Mao, Patriots*)  
 c. **I want me some X**: 34,900 (*fonts, Krispy Kremes, candy, monitors,...*)  
 d. **I saw me some X**: 488,000 (relating to entertainment, fun, goal attained, etc.)  
 e. **I found me some X**: 346,000 (*inspiration, happiness, friends*) vs. **I lost me some**: 8370 (many of the form **I lost me some weight**)

The examples with apparent negative affect are often more positive than it may initially appear; many of the *I lost me some X* examples occur in the frame *I lost me some weight*, where the loss the result of intentional action. When *see* licenses PDs, it typically alludes to the result of a conscious effort of looking; along the same lines, consider the 2007 Toby Keith song lyric “*I’m gonna get my drink on/I’m gonna hear me a sad song*” (gratia Will Salmon), in which the sad song is not encountered accidentally but deliberately sought out. In other cases, a PD with negative affect is facilitated by local syntagmatic priming, often in a contrastive context. Thus a blog evaluating the movie *Serendipity*, which featured John Cusack as protagonist and fate and destiny as plot elements, includes the verdict in (28):

- (28) **I love me** some John Cusack. **I hate me** some Fate and Destiny.

Another factor favoring the appearance of PDs is the spontaneous, occasion-specific nature of the utterance, typically signifying the satisfaction of a current intention, need, or desire. In (29)—the response of Miss South Carolina (the geographically challenged contestant in the 2007 Miss Universe pageant) to the query “What’s the first thing you’ll do when you get home?”—the PD expressing the speaker’s current dining plans disappears in the reportive follow-up.

- (29) [I’m gonna] eat **me** some hamburgers. I haven’t eaten hamburgers in three years.

While many PDs (with *get*, *buy*, etc.) directly involve possession, others—in particular with *need* or *want*—look forward to a future possession marking the completion or satisfaction of a current modal or propositional attitude, as in (30), from Michael Montgomery’s extensive database.

- (30) **He** needs **him** just a little more sense.

Both *need* and *want* are typically analyzed as embedding possession—to need/want is to need/want to have<sup>5</sup>—and *have* is a canonical PD predicate.

<sup>5</sup>Evidence for this analysis includes the distribution of time adverbials modifying the interval of possession: *I need/want your printer until tomorrow afternoon (for a week,...)*.

Other attested examples are more recalcitrant, extending the construction to contexts in which the "personal" dative is impersonal (although still benefactive in a sense) or affective but not obviously benefactive, even in an extended sense:

- (31) a. **That house** needs **it** a new roof. (Sroda & Mishoe 1995)  
 b. **He** rode **him** around with a head in his trunk for a week. (Montgomery)

## 6 PDs and conventional implicature

Narrowing down the contexts in which PDs appear (or appear naturally; it's hard to determine any absolute exclusions, especially as the construction spreads beyond its original home turf) helps determine the meaning they contribute. But what is the status of that meaning? If PDs are not subcategorized by the verb, and *a fortiori* not (indirect) objects (the "Southern Double Object" label of W&D notwithstanding), what are they? If personal datives do not constitute arguments of the predicate, what is their semantic contribution, if any, to the sentences in which they appear?

The view I shall defend here is that PDs contribute a CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURE (Grice [1967] 1989), or more strictly a neo-Fregean implicature as described in Horn (2007), of subject affect. By definition, such an implicature does not alter the truth conditions of the relevant sentence but does impose an appropriateness constraint on its felicitous assertion, in this case that the speaker assumes that the action expressed has or would have a positive effect on the subject, typically satisfying the subject's perceived intention or goals.

With Barker (2003) and Williamson (2003, to appear)— and contra Bach (1999) and Potts (2005)— I take the standard Frege-Gricean treatment of conventional implicature, as exemplified by *but*, *even*, honorifics, pejoratives, and a range of other phenomena, to be eminently sustainable. Strictly speaking, we are dealing here with a semantic, not pragmatic, phenomenon:

The conventional implicature possessed by a sentence S is not part of its force, but is a part of S's semantic content— rule-based content capable of falling within the scope of logical operators. Nevertheless, S's implicature makes no contribution to S's truth-conditions. (Barker 2003: 3)

As opposed to non-restrictive relatives and related constructions that constitute secondary assertions (Horn 2007: 51-52), conventional implicatures are thus part of encoded but not truth-conditional content. They can be embedded (as implicatures, not as "said" content) and can affect judgments of assertability and validity. (Cf. Kaplan 2004 for an independent elaboration of the notion of "validity-plus.")

One property that PDs share with (other) conventional implicatures is what Potts (2007) calls INEFFABILITY: the content of conventional implicatures is notoriously elusive, *insaisissable*. Consider inter alia:

- (32) a. the implicature of effort or difficulty associated with *manage*  
 b. the source of the positive or negative assessment in the implicatures associated respectively with *deprive* and *spare* (Wilson 1975)  
 c. the nature of the contrast implicated by *but* (Bach 1999, Vallée 2008)

- d. the characterization of the scalar conventional implicature associated with *even* (relative or absolute? unlikelihood or noteworthiness?)
- e. the nature of the expressive attitude embodied in racial and ethnic slurs and other epithets (Williamson 2003, to appear; Potts 2007)
- f. the precise notion of uniqueness or individuability constituting (according to Horn 2007) the conventional implicature of definite descriptions
- g. the appropriateness implicatures for *tu* vs. *vous* or other **T** vs. **V** 2<sup>nd</sup> person sg. pronouns within a given context in a particular sociolinguistic community of practice (**T** can be affectionate, presumptuous, comradely, or condescending; **V** can be polite, aloof, diplomatic, or hostile; cf. Brown & Gilman 1960, Mühlhäusler & Harré 1990, Greenhall 2007)

Thus the fact that it is difficult to pin down precisely what it is that PDs contribute to the semantics of the sentences in which they occur, as eloquently demonstrated by the literature on the construction, is an indirect argument for situating that meaning—however it is to be represented— as a conventional implicature. It is plausible that the edges of truth-conditional meaning should be discrete, while inconsistency in the mental representation of non-truth-conditionally relevant content is less pernicious. If you know generally that my use of *vous* rather than *tu* signals something in the range of formal respect, distancing, and/or lack of intimacy, my precise motives can be left underdetermined, but if you don't know whether I'm using a 2<sup>nd</sup> person or 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun, the indeterminacy would be more serious. Similarly, you will want to know whether I bought the car for myself or for my son, and hence to whom an indirect object pronoun refers, but whether or not you can figure out precisely why "*I bought me a car for my son*" rather than simply buying it for my son, no difference in argument structure or truth conditions will emerge.

Another feature of the PD that speaks to its conventional implicature status is its resistance to negation. We saw in (27) above that PDs generally prefer emotively positive contexts that reflect the fulfillment of the subject's intentions or goals. More generally, we noted the contrast between *love* (whether or not resulting from the snowclone) and *hate*. Now, as it happens, there are over 23,000 raw google hits for "*I don't love me some X*", but these tend overwhelmingly to involve either syntagmatic priming (recall (28)) or the canceling effect of double negation:

- (33)
- a. Okay, I don't love me some Adam Sandler, the way I love me some Cadbury Eggs and the way I love me some latex kitchen gloves. But his new movie, *Punch-Drunk Love*...
  - b. I love me some M. Night, but I don't love me some Village. This is a huge misstep for the once burgeoning director. The Village is a lame ass duck. ...
  - c. Which is not to say I don't love me some Wham!
  - d. I don't presume to be Chris Sims, but damned if I don't love me some Christmas - the trees, the presents, the music, and the tv specials. ...
  - e. At what point do fanatics say to themselves, 'Okay, I know killing is supposed to be all wrong and shit, but dammit if I don't love me some God!?' ...
  - f. Run DMC or something (not that I don't love me some Run DMC, cuz I do

- g. But that doesn't mean I don't love me some cinnamon twists to dip into my non-organic coffee, or to eat in bed, or the car, or, you know, wherever. ...
- h. Just because I'm not watching Elf repeatedly does not mean I don't love me some Christmas.

Indeed, the vast majority of negated *love me some* cites are of the form "(It's) *not/It isn't that I don't love me some X*", or "*Don't think that I don't love me some Y*", or "*I can't say I don't love me some Z*".

When we move to other PD predicates, the results are similar. Some empirical contrasts, courtesy once again of Google, with samples of the outliers:

(34)	"I have me some":	1,460,000
	"I have me a":	782
	"I don't have me a":	14
	"I don't have me any":	1 <sup>a</sup>
	"I lack me a/any":	0
	"I want me some (X)":	27,300
	"I don't want me any (X)":	1 <sup>b</sup>
	"I like me some":	28,900
	"I like me a":	924
	"I don't like me a":	5 <sup>c</sup>
	"I don't like me any":	1 <sup>d</sup>
	"I dislike me some/any/a":	3 <sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*I wants me some medicine but I don't have me any cash.*

<sup>b</sup>*I don't want me any of those sissy pants girly men that believe you can get good, or better, information out of people with tactics other than threats*

<sup>c</sup>3 in scope of double negation, e.g. *I'm not going to lie and tell you that I don't like me a slice of cake once in a while*

<sup>d</sup>*I don't like me any wasps*

<sup>e</sup>*I dislike me some FGM as well as the next gal. I must be honest, as much as I dislike me some Parasite Hilton, Wow, I dislike me some Nascar, but it actually sounds fun to watch in Japaneese!*

As is well known, some standard examples of conventional implicature are largely impermeable to negation, and cancelability is one of Grice's earmarks of the relation. If you tell me *She's poor but happy* and I am willing to agree that she possesses both properties but reject your conveyed expectation that poverty and honest generally contrast, it's not clear how I can convey this, especially with a simple negative (*#She's not poor but happy*). Classic examples of conventional implicature cancellation involve more arcane devices:

- (35) a. Whaddaya mean EVEN George can do it? (D. Lewis 1979: 339)
- b. "Her name is Caroline. She's an Italian girl but she's pretty."  
          "What do you mean, *but* she's pretty, Ma?...Why not '*and* she's pretty?'"  
          (Stephen McCauley (1987), *The Object of My Affection*, p. 209)

Some conventional implicata can be attacked with metalinguistic or echoic negation, while others (e.g. the assumptions conveyed by the use of epithets or T/V pronouns) consistently scope out of negation. Once again, the behavior of the PD con-

struction as effectively positive polarity items resisting the scope of negation is consistent with their treatment in terms of Fregean/Gricean conventional implicature, a non-truth-conditional contribution to content.

## 7 Around the world with non-argument datives

One problem with the Construction Grammar perspective on PDs advocated in W&D is that this rules out drawing any systematic relationship between the non-standard English construction and analogous (if distinct) non-subcategorized datives in other languages. This landscape includes specimens that have been variously termed the ethic(al) dative, the free (or nonvalence) dative, the nonlexical dative, the dative of interest, and the *dativus (in)commodi*; the languages concerned include French and its Romance cousins (Leclère 1975, Barnes 1980, 1985, Authier & Reed 1992, Herschensohn 1992), German (Abraham 1973, Wegener 1989, Maling 2001, Cook 2006, Hole 2006, Gutzmann 2007), Old and Middle English (Sweet 1900, Keenan 2003), Hebrew—both Ancient (Gesenius 1910, Muraoka 1978) and Modern (Berman 1982, Borer & Grodzinsky 1986), and Walpiri (Simpson 1991, Legate 2001). Overviews ranging across many languages and language families are offered by Lamiroy & Delbecque (1998) and Hole (2006). While space prevents a full travelogue, some relevant high points of the journey will be touched on briefly here.

We begin with French, in which a coreferential construction bearing apparent connections with the PD occurs in informal or colloquial usage, typically (but not exclusively) with 1<sup>st</sup> person subjects and common monosyllabic verb forms:

- (36) a. Je me bois un bon café chaud.  
'I drink (me) a good hot coffee.'
- b. J'ouvre le frigo, je me bois un verre de vin rouge, je me détend dans mon canapé...  
'I open the fridge, I drink (me) a glass of red wine, I relax on my couch...'
- c. Je me lis tantôt la Bible et le Coran, du Porno et du mystère.  
'I read (me) sometimes the Bible and the Koran, porno and mysteries.'
- d. Je me fais un voyage. [6210 hits; virtually none for non-1<sup>st</sup> person voyagers]  
'I make (me) a trip.'
- e. Manger pour elle devient secondaire ou alors elle se prend un repas devant le pc  
'Eating becomes secondary to her or else she has (her) a meal in front of her p.c.'

Note that when a 3<sup>rd</sup> person example is attested, as in (36e), the reflexive clitic is mandatory; \**Elle<sub>i</sub> lui<sub>i</sub> prend un repas...* is impossible.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The appearance of non-argument reflexive clitics in such cases can be taken as evidence for different OT-style rankings of the relevant soft constraints, where the preference for reflexive marking of locally coreferential nominals clashes with the preference for restricting non-logophoric reflexives to coarguments. (See Burzio 1991 and Levinson 1991 for two very different treatments of anaphora in terms of soft constraints.) We cannot pursue this issue here, but it is worth noting that English PDs may themselves exceptionally take the form of reflexives rather than pronominals, as in the 2008 Mariah Carey song lyric "The whole entire world can tell/That you love yourself some me" [gratia Ben Zimmer].



In Ancient Hebrew, the "Lamedh" *le*-marked dative in Biblical Hebrew occurs in collocations glossed as 'Get thee away', 'Turn thee aside', or 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, we are cut off' (Ez. 37:11, lit. 'we are cut us off the parts'): Gesenius 1910: §119, Muraoka 1978. In fact, as Elitzur Bar-Asher informs me (p.c.), translators are typically advised to leave the Lamedh dative untranslated, but Gesenius (1910: 381) describes it as a *dativus commodi* or *incommodi*, i.e. dative of benefit/harm,

used— especially in the colloquial language and in later style— in the form of a pronoun with [*le-*] as an apparently pleonastic *dativus ethicus*, with many verbs, in order to give emphasis to the significance of the occurrence in question for a particular subject. In this construction the person of the pronoun must always agree with that of the verbal form.

The construction described by Gesenius is an intransitive cousin of the PD; note the reference to its "apparently pleonastic" character. We find something similar closer to home. Sweet (1900: §1106) describes the "pleonastic dative" of Old English in analogous terms (**boldface** added again here and below for coreference and underlining to highlight passages of particular relevance):

In OE a personal pronoun in the dative is often added reflexively to a pronoun in the nominative but without materially affecting the meaning, as in *hē ondrēd **him** þone mann* 'he was afraid of the man', literally 'feared for himself', *hīe gewiton **him*** 'they departed'.

Over a century later, Keenan (2003: §1.2) updates the terminology but independently provides a similar, if more detailed, account of the same range of data:

[F]rom Late OE through ME we also find many non-theta (pleonastic) occurrences of pronouns. They do not satisfy either a semantic role requirement or a syntactic requirement of the verb. In OE they are usually dative, sometimes accusative, never genitive or nominative. They are always bound to the local subject, agreeing with it in person, number and gender and serve semantically to heighten the involvement of its referent: e.g. the subject acted intentionally or was involved in the action in some way other than the role it has in virtue of being the subject argument. At times they suggest a telic interpretation.

Keenan's examples include the sentences in (37), from sources written in c. 880 and 1052 respectively.

- (37) a. forðæm **hi** **him** ondrædað ða frecenese ðe hi ne gesioð  
 because they them fear the danger that they not see
- b. ac **he** ne wandode na **him** metes to tylienne... & nam **him** on  
 but he not hesitated at all him provisions to provide... and took him in  
 orfe & on mannum & .... gewende **him** þa east werd to his feder  
 cattle and in men and ... went him then eastward to his father  
 & gewendon heom þa begen east weard ...  
 and went them then both eastward ...

Like those in ancient Hebrew, the Old/Middle English “pleonastic” datives indexed a heightened subject-involvement but occurred in transitive as well as intransitive clauses. Intransitives allowed a similar extended use of the reflexive, notes Bourciez (1930: §118c), in late Latin “*dans l’usage populaire, pour indiquer d’une façon plus intensive la part que le sujet prend à l’action; beaucoup de verbes se sont ainsi construits, notamment des verbes de mouvement.*”

Traveling to yet another continent, we find pronominal non-argument datives in Warlpiri as described by Simpson (1991: 382):

- (38) a. ka-**nyanu** kuyu **nyanungu-ku** pi-nyi. Liwirringki-rli-ji.  
 PRES-REFL meat it-DAT hit-NONPAST Lizard sp.-ERG-EUPH  
 ‘...it kills itself animals, that Lizard.’
- b. Palkarni-**rlipa-nyanu** yalumpuju **ngalipa-ku**-jala  
 scarce-1PL.SUBJ-REFL that.near we.PL.INCL.-DAT-CLEAR  
 marda-rni.  
 hold-NONPAST  
 ‘We’ll keep these scarce things just for ourselves.’

Commenting on the same construction, Legate (2001) notes its similarity to English *I’m gonna bake me a cake*, i.e. the PD.

In addition to the non-argument dative pronominals (and reflexives) surveyed above, we might also touch on the range of “ethical” datives. These too index the involvement of a participant (albeit a non-subject participant) not subcategorized by the predicate. Typically (although not always), these datives serve to mark adversative or maleficiary rather than beneficiary affect, as in *Foutez-moi le camp*, “go away”. One language with a robust “free dative” or “ethic(al) dative” is German. Discussing the examples in (39),

- (39) a. Helf **mir** mal deinem Vater in der Küche.  
 help me-DAT a-minute your-SG father in the kitchen  
 ‘Go help your father in the kitchen for a minute for me.’
- b. Der David hat **mir** der Claudia schon zuviel Geschenke  
 the David has me-DAT the Claudia-DAT already too-many gifts-ACC  
 gegeben.  
 given  
 ‘I think [lit., ‘To me’] David has already given Claudia too many presents.’

Maling (2001: 432) comments:

This extra dative...is interpreted as a beneficiary or person adversely affected by the event...I assume that this dative is not subcategorized for by the verb. As an adjunct rather than an argument, it is not a grammatical object, and thence not a counterexample to the descriptive generalization that German allows at most one dative object per clause.

Although not co-indexing the subject in the manner of PDs, these datives on Maling’s account (1986, 2001) are non-subcategorized, adjuncts rather than arguments, and non-objects, and her invocation of adverse affect is the negative counterpart of

our characterization of the semantic contribution of PDs. Indeed, Gutzmann (2007) has recently analyzed the *dativus ethicus* in (39a) or "*Schreib mir schön deine Hausarbeit!*" (lit. 'Write me nicely your homework') as a conventional implicature expressing "that the speaker has some personal interest in the hearer's execution of the action requested".

Similar "affected dative" constructions are found in Hebrew and Romance (including French and Spanish), with either non-coreference or coreference, but in the latter case generally requiring a reflexive pronoun (in the third person, where the distinction is marked) as we saw in (36e); in particular, Leclère (1976), Barnes (1980, 1992), and Herschensohn (1992) offer useful studies on a range of phenomena involving non-lexical, non-subcategorized datives in French. In French, German, Serbian/Croatian, Modern Hebrew, and other languages, the non-coreferential cases are often taken to extend to possessive datives. Thus we obtain paradigms of cases like (40) (culled from above sources; glosses mine); note that lexical dative NPs are ruled out in these environments, as seen in (40d).

- (40) a. Paul **se** tape un pastis.  
'Paul knocks (him) down an anisette.' ["Reflexive dative", marking the subject's interest in the process]
- b. Au mont St. Michel, la mer te monte à une de ces vitesses!  
'At Mont St. Michel, the sea rises (on you) at an incredible speed.' ["Ethical dative", marking affected non-core participant]
- c. Il **te** lui a donné une de ces gifles.  
He gives her a slap (on you).'
- d. Jean **lui** a attrapé deux rhumes. (\*Jean a attrapé deux rhumes à sa mère.)  
'Jean caught her/\*his mother two colds.'
- e. Les mains **lui** tremblent.  
'His hands are shaking.' ["Possessive dative"]

Lamiroy & Delbecque (1998: 63) gather this family of constructions together under the same umbrella:

[T]he possessive and the ethical dative are different manifestations of one and the same basic phenomenon, viz. that of introducing entities into the sentence structure which, from a syntactic point of view, are not lexically predicted by the verb and which semantically correspond to entities that are not actively involved in the process but nonetheless affected by it, in one way or another.

All of the datives in the structures of (40) are animate and "affected" by the action of the clause without being related to the valency of verb. But (following Barker & Dowty 1992), possessives are arguments— viz., nominal arguments of the possessee— while ethical datives are full non-arguments, whence some of the differences cited in the literature, e.g. the fact that passives are fine with lexical datives in French, somewhat unnatural with possessive datives, and totally out with "ethical" datives (Lamiroy & Delbecque 1998: 64 [100a-c]; glosses theirs):

- (41) a. Ce livre lui a été donné par son grand-père.  
 ‘This book was given to him by his grandfather.’
- b. ??La figure lui a été cassée par la police.  
 ‘His face was broken [i.e. he was stabbed] by the police.’
- c. \*Une de ces gifles te lui a été donnée.  
 ‘He got one of those smacks (to your detriment).’

## 8 Concluding remarks

Our whirlwind tour of some of the world’s memorable non-argument dative cites has barely scratched the surface of the complex range of phenomena involved, but they do indicate that the personal dative of non-standard varieties of American English is not an isolated “idiom” but is in fact one representative of a widely class of non-argument affectees.<sup>7</sup> Such affectees are typically marked as datives in languages with a more sophisticated panoply of case options than modern English retains, whence the partial misnomer of “personal dative” for what is not formally a dative at all. In English, which lacks a weak clitic reflexive like Dutch *zich* or French *se* (cf. Reuland 2001), the non-argument status of the locally co-indexed element suffices to allow, or for most speakers in the relevant dialect require, its representation as an ordinary pronominal, in apparent (but, I argue, not real) violation of Principle B.<sup>8</sup> Semantically, the PD contributes a conventional implicature of typically benefactive subject affect, relating to the satisfaction of the actual or perceived intention, goal, or preference of the subject. As noted, the appearance of pronominals rather than anaphors to mark this relation reflects the non-argument and hence non-co-argument status of the so-called object pronoun. Unlike the contrastive focus pronominals (§2 above) which are co-arguments and thus constitute true motivated exceptions to (or overrides of) Principles B and C, no binding effects or strong person asymmetry obtains with PDs because there’s no argument to be bound.

---

<sup>7</sup>Mention should be made of related constructions in which non-subject affectees appear as obliques (as in the English adversative *My dog died on me*) or as subjects (as in the adversative passives found in many languages); cf. Hole (2006) for a comprehensive study of “extra arguments”.

<sup>8</sup>Conroy (2007) offers an alternative analysis on which PDs despite their pronominal form, are indeed anaphors, bound variables assigned case but no theta role, akin to SE anaphors on the theory of Reuland (2001).

## References

- Abraham, Werner, 1973. The ethic dative in German. In Kiefer, Ferenc and Nicolas Ruwet (eds.), *Generative Grammar in Europe*, pp. 1–19. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.
- Authier, J.-Marc and Lisa A. Reed, 1992. On the syntactic status of French affected datives. *The Linguistic Review*, 9:295–311.
- Bach, Kent, 1999. The myth of conventional implicature. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 22:327–366.
- Barker, Chris and David Dowty, 1992. Non-verbal thematic proto-roles. In *Proceedings of NELS 23*, pp. 49–62.
- Barker, Stephen, 2003. Truth and conversational implicature. *Mind*, 112:1–33.
- Barnes, Betsy, 1980. The notion of *dative* in linguistic theory and the grammar of French. *Linguisticae Investigationes*, 4:245–292.
- , 1985. A functional explanation of French nonlexical datives. *Studies in Language*, 9:159–195.
- Beavers, John and Andrew Koontz-Garboden, 2006. A universal pronoun in English? *Linguistic Inquiry*, 37:503–513.
- Berman, Ruth, 1982. Dative marking of the affectee role: Data from modern Hebrew. *Annual Review*, 6:25–59.
- Borer, Hagit and Yosef Grodzinsky, 1986. Syntactic cliticisation and lexical cliticisation: The case of Hebrew dative clitics. In Borer, Hagit (ed.), *The Syntax of Pronominal Clitics*, vol. 19 of *Syntax and Semantics*, pp. 175–217. Academic Press.
- Bourciez, Édouard, 1930. *Éléments de linguistique romane*. Paris: Klincksieck, 3rd edn.
- Bresnan, Joan, 2001. The emergence of the unmarked pronoun. In Legendre, Géraldine et al. (eds.), *Optimality-theoretic Syntax*, pp. 113–142. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Brown, Roger and Albert Gilman, 1960. Pronouns of power and solidarity. In Sebeok, T. (ed.), *Style in Language*, pp. 253–277. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Burzio, Luigi, 1991. The morphological basis of anaphora. *Journal of Linguistics*, 27:81–105.
- Cardinaletti, Anna and Michal Starke, 1996. Deficient pronouns: A view from Germanic. In Thrainsson, H. (ed.), *Studies in Comparative Germanic Syntax II*, pp. 21–65. Amsterdam: Kluwer.
- , 1999. The typology of structural deficiency. In Riemsdijk, Henk van (ed.), *Clitics in the languages of Europe*, pp. 145–233. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Castañeda, Hector-Neri, 1966. *He*: A study in the logic of self-consciousness. *Ratio*, 8:130–157.

- Christian, Donna, 1991. The personal dative in Appalachian English. In Trudgill, P. and J.K. Chambers (eds.), *Dialects of English*, pp. 11–19. London: Longman.
- Conroy, Anastasia, 2007. The personal dative in Appalachian English as a reflexive pronoun. *University of Maryland Working Papers in Linguistics*, 16:63–88.
- Cook, Philippa, 2006. The datives that aren't born equal. In Hole, Daniel, André Meinunger, and Werner Abraham (eds.), *Datives and Other Cases*, pp. 141–184. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Evans, Gareth, 1980. Pronouns. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 11:337–362.
- Fodor, Janet Dean, 1992. Designated triggers versus the Subset Principle. unpublished ms, CUNY Graduate Center.
- , 1994. How to obey the subset principle: Binding and locality. In Lust, B, G. Hermon, and J. Kornfilt (eds.), *Syntactic Theory and First Language Acquisition: Cross-Linguistic Perspectives*, vol. 2, pp. 429–251. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gesenius, Wilhelm, 1910. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. (edited by E. Kautsch, revised by A.E. Cowley). Oxford University Press, 2nd English edn.
- Green, Georgia, 1974. *Semantics and Syntactic Irregularity*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Greenhall, Owen, 2007. Pronouns and conventional implicature. Paper presented at Fifth Barcelona Workshop on Issues in the Theory of Reference, [http://www.ub.es7grc\\_logos/bw/papers.htm](http://www.ub.es7grc_logos/bw/papers.htm).
- Grice, H.P., 1967. Logic and conversation: The William James lectures. In (*reprinted in Studies in the way of words*). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gutzmann, Daniel, 2007. Eine Implikatur konventioneller Art: Der Dativus Ethicus. *Linguistische Berichte*, 211:277–308.
- Heim, Irene, 1998. Anaphora and semantic interpretation: A reinterpretation of Reinhart's approach. *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics*, 25:205–246.
- Herschensohn, Julia, 1992. On the economy of Romance nonlexical datives. In Hirschbühler, P. and K. Koerner (eds.), *Romance Languages and Modern Linguistic Theory*, pp. 123–134. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Hole, Daniel, 2006. Extra argumentality — affectedness, landmarks, and voice. *Linguistics*, 44:383–424.
- Horn, Laurence, 2002. 1 ≠ 3: Indexicality, reference and the asymmetries of binding. Paper presented at the Linguistic Society of America, San Francisco.
- , 2007. Toward a Fregean pragmatics: Voraussetzung, Nebengedanke, Andeutung. In Kecskes, I. and L. Horn (eds.), *Explorations in Pragmatics: Linguistic, Cognitive, and Intercultural Aspects*, pp. 29–69. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

- Huddleston, Rodney and Geoffrey K. Pullum, 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaplan, David, 2004. The meaning of *ouch* and *oops*: Explorations in the theory of *Meaning as use*. unpublished ms, UCLA.
- Keenan, Edward L., 2003. A historical explanation of some binding theoretical facts in English. In Moore, John and M. Polinsky (eds.), *The Nature of Explanation in Linguistic Theory*, pp. 152–189. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.
- Lakoff, George, 1972. Natural logic. In Davidson, David and G. Harman (eds.), *Semantics of Natural Language*, pp. 545–665. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.
- Lamiroy, Béatrice and Nicole Delbecq, 1998. The possessive dative in Romance and Germanic. In Van Langendonck, W. and W. Van Belle (eds.), *The Dative*, vol. 2: Theoretical and Contrastive Studies, pp. 29–74. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Leclère, Christian, 1976. Datifs syntaxiques et datif éthique. In Chevalier, J.-C. and Maurice Gross (eds.), *Méthodes en grammaire française*, pp. 73–96. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Legate, Julie, 2001. A high applicative, a low applicative and an "applicative". Paper presented at MIT Appl Fest, MIT.
- Levinson, Stephen, 1991. Pragmatic reduction of the binding conditions revisited. *Journal of Linguistics*, 27:107–161.
- Lewis, David, 1979. Scorekeeping in a language game. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 8:339–359.
- Lewis, Michael, 2002. "Killed him a b'ar when he was only three": The cognitive and affective semantics of the 'autoflexive' benefactive pronoun in contemporary English. Poster presented as CLS 38.
- Maling, Joan, 1986. Clause-bounded reflexives in modern Icelandic. In Hellan, Lars and Kirsti Koch Christensen (eds.), *Topics in Scandinavian Syntax*, pp. 53–63. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- , 2001. Dative: The heterogeneity of the mapping among morphological case, grammatical functions, and thematic roles. *Lingua*, 111:419–464.
- Mühlhäusler, Peter and Rom Harré, 1990. *Pronouns and People: The Linguistic Construction of Social and Personal Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Muraoka, T., 1978. On the so-called *dativus ethicus* in Hebrew. *Journal of Theological Studies*, 29:495–498.
- Pollard, Carl and Ivan Sag, 1992. Anaphors in English and the scope of Binding Theory. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 23:261–303.

- Potts, Christopher, 2005. *The Logic of Conventional Implicatures*. Oxford University Press.
- , 2007. The expressive dimension. *Theoretical Linguistics*, 33:165–197.
- Reinhart, Tanya and Eric Reuland, 1993. Reflexivity. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 24:657–720.
- Reuland, Eric, 2001. Reflexivity. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 32:123–140.
- Safir, Kenneth, 2004. *The Syntax of Anaphora*. Oxford University Press.
- Simpson, Jane, 1991. *Warlpiri Morpho-Syntax: A Lexicalist Approach*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Sroda, Mary and Margaret Mishoe, 1995. "I jus like to look at me some goats": Dialectal pronominals in Southern English. Handout for paper presented at NWA 24 conference.
- Sweet, Henry, 1900. *A New English Grammar, Logical and Historical. Part 1*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Vallée, Richard, 2008. Conventional implicature revisited. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 40:407–430.
- Ward, Gregory, 1983. On non-reflexive pronouns in reflexive environments. *Penn Review of Linguistics*, 7:12–19.
- Webelhuth, Gert and Clare Dannenberg, 2006. Southern American personal Datives: The theoretical significance of syntactic variation. *American Speech*, 81:31–55.
- Wegener, Heide, 1989. Eine modalpartikel besonderer art: Der dativus ethicus. In Weydt, H. (ed.), *Spechen mit Partikeln*, pp. 56–73. de Gruyter.
- Williamson, Timothy, 2003. Understanding and inference. *Proc. Arist. Soc. Supp.*, 77:249–293.
- , to appear. Reference, inference and the semantics of pejoratives. In Almog, J. and P. Leonardi (eds.), *Festschrift for David Kaplan*. Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, Deirdre, 1975. *Presuppositions and Non-Truth-Conditional Semantics*. London: Academic Press.
- Wolfram, Walt and Natalie Schilling-Estes, 1998. *American English: Dialects and Variation*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Zwicky, Arnold, 2007. Illeism and its relatives. Language Log posting 29 July 2007, <http://itre.cis-upenn.edu/~myl/language-log/archives/004762.html>.

Laurence R. Horn  
 Yale University  
 laurence.horn@yale.edu