DATIVES IN JAPANESE*

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1. Introduction

Since Barss and Lasnik, (1986), the mismatch between the linear order of constituents and their positions in the hierarchical structure has been widely discussed. In this paper, we argue that the dative puzzles of domain and projection return when we cross languages and look at Japanese. Specifically, we argue the following points:

(1) a. Japanese datives appear to systematically map, in properties, to English double object constructions (DOCs) and not to prepositional datives (Zushi 1992, Miyagawa and Tsujioka 2005).

b. We argue (following Zushi 1992) that the “standard” order of arguments in Japanese datives is a derived one.

c. We propose this follows from “weak ni’s” - the fact that in Japanese, ni is never a case probe; rather the ni-phrase is a concordial element.

d. We argue that this effect is general, observed with many cases of ni-phrases, including those appearing in locatives & possessives.

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2. The Puzzle of Japanese Datives

Japanese datives allow both DAT-ACC and ACC-DAT order of arguments in the VP (2a,b), of which the DAT-ACC order (2a) is widely assumed as ‘defaut’ (Hoji 1985, among others).

(2) a. Hanako-ga **[Taroo-ni Masao-o syookaisi-ta.**
   Hanako-NOM Taroo-DAT Masao-ACC introduced
   ‘Hanako introduced Masao to Taroo’

   b. Hanako-ga **Masao-o Taroo-ni syookaisi-ta.**
   Hanako-NOM Masao-ACC Taroo-DAT introduced
   ‘Hanako introduced Masao to Taroo’

Domain tests in (3) indicate that DAT asymmetrically c-commands ACC in DAT-ACC order.

(3) a. Hanako-ga **[karera]-ni [otagai-no sensei]-o syookaisi-ta.**
   Hanako-NOM they-DAT each.other’s teacher-ACC introduced
   Lit. ‘Hanako introduced to [them] [each other’s teacher].’

   b. *Hanako-ga **[otagai-no sensei]-ni [karera]-o syookaisi-ta.**
   Hanako-NOM each.other’s teacher-DAT them-ACC introduced
   Lit. ‘*Hanako introduced to [each other’s teacher] [them].’

Given (3), and the default status of DAT-ACC, it seems natural to conclude that the goal ccommands the theme in the underlying structure of Japanese ditransitives. However this assumption raises a number of interesting puzzles.

2.1 Japanese Datives and English Datives

Japanese datives resemble English PP datives in so far as both contain an adpositional element (to/-ni). Assimilating them in structure yields the picture in (4):

(4) a. English PP Dative
    b. Japanese

Diagram: (4)
But (4b) is problematic on at least two accounts. First, it mispredicts basic word order for Japanese. We expect ACC-DAT whereas the unmarked order appears to be DAT-ACC (2a,b). Secondly, it mispredicts domain relations. In (4b) the theme (karera-o) asymmetrically c-commands goal (otagai-no sensei-ni), but the domain tests in (3) show the goal to asymmetrically c-command the theme. Thus assimilating the ni-phrase to English dative PPs yields undesirable results.

As an alternative, consider a comparison between Japanese datives and English double object constructions, where the ni-phrase corresponds to what in English is an accusative Case position. This equivalence was first proposed (to our knowledge) by Zushi (1992):

(5)  

The advantages of the former, derivational view are straightforward. First, it correctly predicts the word order; the -ni phrase precedes the accusative o-marked nominal. Secondly, it correctly predicts the domain data in (3); the goal (karera-ni) asymmetrically c-commands the theme (otagai-no sensei-o).

Beyond the word order and domain facts there is further evidence for the assimilation of Japanese datives to English DOCs. According to Lebeaux (reported in Larson 1988), whereas English PP datives allow either the direct object or the indirect object to take wide scope, double object constructions exhibit scope “freezing”, as illustrated by the contrast between (6a) and (6)/ (7). The scopes of the objects freely permute in (6a) but not in (6b). And when we insert same/different, which require an element taking scope over them, the result is deviant (7):

(6)  

a. John gave more than three presents to every student. \((\text{MT3} > \forall, \forall > \text{MT3})\)

b. John sent some letters to every respondent. \((\exists > \forall, \forall > \exists)\)

(7)  

a. John gave some student every present. \((\exists > \forall, *\forall > \exists)\)

b. ?*John sent the same student/a different student each message. \((\text{S/D} > \forall, *\forall > \text{S/D})\)

Scope freezing thus appears to be a signature of the double object construction.

Turning to Japanese, datives do seem to exhibit the scope freezing effects (as first noted by Miyagawa and Tsujioka 2004).
(8)  a. Taroo-ga dareka-ni dono nimotu-mo okut-ta.
    Taro-NOM someone-DAT which package-all send-Past
    ‘Taro sent someone every package.’  (∃ > ∀, *∀ > ∃)

   b. Yamada-sensei-ga san-nin-izyoo-no gakusei-ni
      Yamada-professor-NOM three-CL-more-GEN student-Dat
      ni-hon-izyoo-no ronbun-o okut-ta.
      two-CL-more-GEN paper-ACC send-Past
      ‘Professor Yamada sent three or more students two or more papers.’
      (3oM>2oM, *2oM>3oM)

Taking this result together with the word order and domain facts, we might concluded that although Japanese datives resemble English prepositional datives, they are more properly regarded as disguised versions of the double object construction – disguised by the presence of -ni.

2.2 What About PP Datives?

Suppose Japanese sentences like (2) are in fact equivalent English DOCs. Let’s ask a follow-up question: what about “true” adpositional dative constructions in Japanese? Given Harley’s (1995, 2003) observation that languages possessing the equivalents of DOCs invariably possess the equivalents of PP datives as well, they should exist. Furthermore, they should show the properties rehearsed earlier in (4) and (6): unmarked ACC-DAT order, with the dative in the domain of the accusative, and lack of scope freezing.

2.2.1 Two-goal Datives (Miyagawa and Tsujioka 2004)

Miyagawa and Tsujioka (2004) (henceforth M&T) suggest that “two-goal” examples like (9) exhibit the “missing” dative element. Specifically, M&T claim that the directional, second goal (Tokyo-ni) behaves like an English PP dative in showing free scope permutation vis-à-vis the theme (nimotu-o) (10):

(9)  Taroo-ga Hanako-ni Tokyo-ni nimotu-o okut-ta.
    Taro-NOM Hanako-DAT Tokyo-DAT package-ACC send-Past
    ‘Taro sent Hanako a package to Tokyo’

(10) Taroo-ga Hanako-ni dokoka-no-basyo-ni subete-no-nimotu-o okutta.
    Taro-Nom Hanako-Dat some-Gen-place-to all-Gen-package-Acc send-Past
    ‘Taro sent Hanako every package to some place.’  (∃ > ∀, *∀ > ∃)
    (Miyagawa and Tsujioka 2004:15)

This conclusion is hasty, however. As noted by Harada & Larson (2006), appropriate test examples require quantifiers resisting specific readings (which are often confused with wide scope), and those employed by M&T are not of this kind. When appropriate quantifiers are
supplied, the scope properties of the second goal in a “two-goal dative” turn out to be identical to those of the first goal: both are frozen with respect to the theme object.

    Yamada-professor-NOM three-CL-more-GEN student-DAT office-DAT
    [ni-hon-izyoo-no ronbun-o] okut-ta.
    two-CL-more-GEN paper-ACC send-Past
    ‘Professor Yamada sent three or more students two or more papers to the office.’
    *Q-Acc > Q-Dat

b. Yamada-sensei-ga Hanako-ni [ni-kasyo-izyoo-no atesaki-ni]
    Yamada-professor-NOM Hanako-DAT two-CL-more-GEN address-DAT
    [yon-hon-izyoo-no ronbun-o] okut-ta.
    four-CL-more-GEN paper-ACC send-Past
    ‘Professor Yamada sent Hanako four or more papers to two or more addresses.’
    *Q-Acc > Q-to

In fact then, the second goal in a two-goal dative resembles the first goal with respect to scope.

This result intersects a further interesting point about examples like (9). As noted earlier, the true equivalent of a dative PP should merge lower than the accusative-marked theme, and hence follow it in linear order. But in fact in (9) the directional ni-phrase precedes the theme and behaves as if it c-commands the latter. Indeed, in their own tree for (9), M&T actually project the second ni-phrase higher than the theme (12), contrary to expectations:

(12)

Thus, far from exhibiting a case of a “low” PP dative, examples like (9) seem to show something quite different: that even ni-phrases we might expect to parallel PP datives on thematic grounds - ones with directional meaning - nonetheless behave like ni-phrases associated with double object constructions,
2.2.2 Unaccusatives (Zushi 1992)

Interestingly, although dative *ni*-phrases of all sorts behave as if they occupied a higher site than the theme, there is evidence for an underlying lower position. Zushi (1992) observes that ditransitive verbs like *water*- ‘pass’ in (13a) have unaccusative theme-goal counterparts, as shown in (13b) (cf. also Baker 1996 and Matsuoka 2003). Consider now the contrasts in (14), noted in Zushi (1992):

\[(13)\]
\[
a. \text{John-ga Mary-ni hon-o watasi-ta} \quad \text{(transitive)}
\]
\[
\quad \text{John-NOM Mary-DAT book-ACC pass-PST}
\]
\[
\quad \text{‘John passed a/the book to Mary’}
\]
\[
b. \text{Hon-ga Mary-ni watat-ta} \quad \text{(unacc.)}
\]
\[
\quad \text{book-NOM Mary-DAT pass-PST}
\]
\[
\quad \text{‘A/the book passed to Mary’}
\]

\[(14)\]
\[
a. *[zibun,-o hihanisita hito]-ga John,-o tazune-ta (transitive)
\]
\[
\quad \text{self-ACC criticized man-NOM John-ACC visit-PST}
\]
\[
\quad \text{‘The man that criticized self visited John’}
\]
\[
b. *[pro zibun,-o hihanisita kiji]-ga John,-o nayam-ase-ta (ϕ-verb)
\]
\[
\quad \text{self-ACC criticized article-NOM John-ACC worry-CAUSE-PST}
\]
\[
\quad \text{‘The article that criticized self worried John’}
\]
\[
c. ?*[pro zibun,-o hihanisita kiji]-ga John,-ni watat-ta (unacc.)
\]
\[
\quad \text{self-ACC criticized article-NOM John-DAT pass-PST}
\]
\[
\quad \text{‘The article that criticized self passed to John’}
\]

(14a) shows that an accusative object cannot normally bind into a nominative subject. This possibility exists with psych verb like (14b), whose subjects are analyzed as raising from a point below the object in underlying structure (Belletti and Rizzi 1996). (14c) with the intransitive version of the verb ‘to pass’ in Japanese, patterns like (14a) suggesting that the subject in a *wataru* unaccusative sentence is situated in a position higher than that of the *ni*-phrase. However, the verb being unaccusative, the subject in a *wataru* unaccusative sentence in (14c) originates from the position of the accusative theme in the *wataru* ditransitive construction. This argues that the theme in *wataru* constructions occupies a position higher than the goal. This in turn suggests that the goal originates in a position lower than the theme in Japanese PP datives.

2.2.3 Information & Specificity (Kaiser & Nakanishi 2001)

An additional piece of evidence for the initial low position of Japanese datives comes from interpretive properties of the construction. Based on pragmatic considerations, Kaiser & Nakanishi (2001) have noticed the following characteristics of the DOC: Whereas the ACC-DAT order is unrestricted in that either argument can be specific/non-specific or represent old or new information, the DAT-ACC order is constrained. Specifically the DAT argument must be specific or represent old information. Kaiser and Nakanishi’s test paradigms are represented schematically in (15), where DO refers to the direct object and IO refers to the indirect object.
There is asymmetry in the interpretation of the elided nominal in the examples in (16), which instantiate the schemata in (15) with an elided IO. In (16a), with the DO-IO order of internal arguments, the elided IO in the second clause has many interpretive options, whereas the elided IO in (16b) has a much narrower range of interpretations. Native speakers strongly prefer to interpret $\emptyset_{\text{IO}}$ in (16b) as referring to the same student referred to in the first sentence. With (16a) the individual may be the same or different.

Compare now examples with the DO as the target of ellipsis (17)-(18).

(17) a. **IO-DO:** While I have heard [that S1 IO DO V], it seems [that S2 $\emptyset_{\text{DO}}$ DO V].

b. **DO-IO:** While I have heard [that S1 DO IO V], it seems [that S2 $\emptyset_{\text{IO}}$ DO V].

(18) a. **IO-DO**

Taro-ga Hanako-ni [gengogaku-no hon]-o miseta to kiita
Taro-NOM Hanako-DAT [linguistics-GEN book]-ACC showed COMP heard
kedo Jiroo-mo Hanako-ni $\emptyset_{\text{DO}}$ miseta-rasiiyo.
while Jiro-too Hanako-DAT showed-seem

‘While (I) have heard that Taro showed to Hanako a book on linguistics, it seems that Jiro showed to Hanako (a book on linguistics), too.’
b. **DO-IO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taro</th>
<th>[gengogaku-nohon]-o Hanako-ni miseta to kiita</th>
<th>Taro-NOM [linguistics-GEN book]-ACC Hanako-DAT showed COMP heard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kedo Jiro-mo</td>
<td>∅ Hanako-ni miseta-rasiyo.</td>
<td>while Jiro-too Hanako-DAT showed-seem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘While (I) have heard that Taro showed a book on linguistics to Hanako, it seems that Jiro showed (a book on linguistics) to Hanako, too.’

Between the two examples in (18) no clear contrast is found counterpart to what we found with (16). The DO is pragmatically unrestricted. These tests thus show that the DO-IO (i.e., ACC-DAT) order is the informationally less restricted, and pragmatically more neutral order. Kaiser & Nakanishi 2001 suggest a parallelism between this result and that found with object shift in the Germanic languages. Specifically, the pragmatics of the IO-DO (i.e., DAT-ACC) order suggests movement in so far as we are seeing the same specificity and old-information effects as those induced by scrambling and object shift.

### 3. –Ni as “Concordial Case”

#### 3.1 An Outline of the Proposal

We saw above that the Japanese dative-accusative argument array uniformly parallels the English DOC in so far as *ni*-phrases behave as if they are higher than the theme is surface form. At the same time we found evidence from unaccusatives and informational structure that the original position of the *ni*-phrase is actually lower than the theme, and hence that the high position is a derived one. In Larson and Harada (2008) we show this pattern is not confined to *ni*-phrases appearing in dative constructions but extends to those occurring in transitive and intransitive locatives and possessives as well. All occur structurally higher than expected on thematic grounds, and all behave informationally as if this position were a derived one (19):

(19)  

| a. … DP-*ni* … DP-*o* … DP-*n* (datives, transitive locatives) |
| b. … DP-*ni* … DP-*ga* … DP-*ni* (intransitive locatives, possessives) |

Looking at this pattern, the distribution of *ni*-phrases can be stated descriptively as follows.

(20) A *ni*-phrase must c-command a structurally Case-marked argument.

Stated as such, (20) is a mere descriptive generalization. However, the resemblance to certain phenomena in the nominal domain suggests that it can in fact be rooted in a deeper principle of grammar. Consider Icelandic nominal inflection, in which the adjectival elements exhibit concord with the noun (here *kennigár* ‘theories’) inflecting for Case and φ-features:
In discussions of nominal inflection patterns in traditional grammar, nouns are viewed as inflecting for Case and φ-features and adjectival elements (including articles and determiners) are described as agreeing, or exhibiting concord, with them. This amounts to assume a distinction between the occurrence of inflection on N and other elements: The lowest inflecting element is identified as the “true” bearer of inflection, whereas the elements c-commanding it (D and AP) are merely concordial.

Case can then be seen as “passing through” the intermediate, concordial elements on its way to the target NP, which occupies the lowermost position in the domain (22b).

We wish to propose that the distinction routinely drawn in the nominal domain between true and concordial case can be found in the verbal domain as well. Specifically, we propose that ni-phrases occur above a structurally case-marked argument because they are basically concordial elements - not bearing Case themselves, but rather receiving Case by agreement from a higher probe. We summarize this in the following theses:

(23) \( \text{Ni is neither a case-marker, nor a case-probe.} \)

\( \text{Ni-phrases obtain case by agreement from a structural case probe (v,T).} \)

### 3.2 The Analysis

#### 3.2.1 Technical Assumptions – Pesesky & Torrego (2004)

In implementing the proposal, we employ some technical concepts from Pesetsky & Torrego (2004). Specifically, we assume that features come in four varieties, according to whether they are interpretable/uninterpretable or valued/unvalued (24).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>interpretable</th>
<th>uninterpretable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>valued</td>
<td>iFval</td>
<td>uFval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unvalued</td>
<td>iF</td>
<td>uF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We further adopt Pesetsky & Torrego’s (2004) basic view of agreement as “feature sharing,” wherein two occurrences of a feature may undergo agreement, producing two instances of what formally becomes a single feature ((25) = (5) from Pesetsky a& Torrego 2004).

(25) Agree (Feature sharing version)
   (i) An unvalued feature F (a probe) on a head H at syntactic location \( \alpha \) (F\( \alpha \)) scans its c-command domain for another instance of F (a goal) at location \( \beta \) (F\( \beta \)) with which to agree.
   (ii) Replace F\( \alpha \) with F\( \beta \), so that the same feature is present in both locations.

Based on HPSG conventions, Pesetsky & Torrego adopt (26) as the notation for features, where features are written with square brackets and those that have undergone agreement and written with a shared index in the brackets.


Under basic assumptions in the Minimalist Program, only features that are both interpretable and valued are legible to the interfaces. Within the current framework features like (27a-d) will thus be legible. In (27a), the single occurrence of F is both interpretable and valued. In (27b-d) distinct instances of F are interpretable and valued, but F itself counts as interpretable and valued, since its distinct occurrences have undergone agreement and have thus become instances of a single feature.

(27) a. iFval     c. iF[n] … uF[n] … uFval[n]

By contrast, none of the features in (28) is interface-legible. In (28a,b) F is valued, but not interpretable. In (28c,d) F is interpretable, but not valued. (28e) contains only unvalued and uninterpretable occurrences of F, since the latter have not undergone agreement:

(28) a. uFval     d. iF[n] … uF[n]
    b. uF[n] … uFval[n]   e. iF[ ] … uFval[ ]
    c. iF

3.2.2 Concord in DP and VP

The notion that features can have unintepretable, unvalued occurrences is particularly useful in dealing with concord phenomena. As we observed earlier with Icelandic nominal inflection, it is a recurrent intuition in traditional grammar that although adjectives and nouns both bear case features, their status is not the same: in the former, the features are “real”, but in the latter present merely as agreement. Suppose X is v and DP is a direct object nominal. By standard assumptions, v bears an interpretable, unvalued case feature. Given the assumptions adopted here, N bears an uninterpretable, valued occurrence of case, where the value is accusative (acc) in this instance. Suppose the intervening elements are taken to bear uninterpretable, unvalued occurrences of the
case feature (29a). Agreement between the higher, unvalued features and the lower valued feature, then produces a single feature with multiple instances that is both interpretable and valued (29b) – a legitimate interface object:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(29)} & \quad \text{a.} & \text{b.} \\
\text{vP} & \quad \text{DP} & \quad \text{DP} \\
\text{iC[]} & \quad \text{D} & \quad \text{D} \\
\text{uC[]} & \quad \text{AP} & \quad \text{AP} \\
\text{uC}\[\text{3}\] & \quad \text{NP} & \quad \text{NP} \\
\text{unvalued Case} & \quad \text{valued Case} & \quad \text{Agreement}
\end{align*}
\]

3.2.3 Slavonic Possessive Adjectives

This picture of nominal inflection allows for some interesting elaborations. In so-called Ezafes languages, adjectives (and other items) seem to be able to behave like nouns in bearing (oblique) valued case-features (Larson 2007). It is also apparently possible for nominal elements to behave adjectivally: to be inserted with unvalued case features and to obtain case by agreement. An apparent example of this is Slavonic possessive adjective formation, as discussed in a series of studies by Corbett. As (30) shows upper Sorbian expresses possession in nominals either with a postnominal genitive (30a) or what is called a possessive adjective, derived from a noun (30b):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(30)} & \quad \text{Upper Sorbian Possession (Corbett 1987)} \\
\text{a. An adnominal genitive} & \quad \text{b. With the “adjektivalizing” suffix –ow:} \\
\text{knih-a Jan-a} & \quad \text{Jan-ow-a knih-a} \\
\text{book Jan-GENSG} & \quad \text{Jan-POSS-NOMSGFEM book-NOMSGFEM}
\end{align*}
\]

The adjectival nature of \textit{Janow} in (30b) can be seen in the two respects: (i) it exhibits the same agreement forms as normal attributive adjectives, and (ii) it precedes the head, like attributives, but unlike the adnominal genitive. Suffixation by \textit{–ow}, does not as literally turns \textit{Jan} into an adjective; rather, it makes it adjective-like in lifting the normal requirement of valuation for case and agreement. In other words, \textit{−ow} (\textit{in/yn} for feminine Ns) behaves as a “concordializing” suffix taking an expression typically valued for case (and φ-features) and creating a phrase that must obtain such values by agreement. That is, \textit{Janow} enters the numeration with \textit{uC[ ]} and \textit{uφ[ ]} and must therefore be situated in the same position as adjectives in order that its case and φ-features be valued.
3.2.4 -Ni as a “Concordializing” Suffix

We propose that Japanese –ni is not a case-marker, but rather a concordializing suffix, equivalent in the vP/VP system to Slavonic –ow in the nominal system. Descriptively speaking, -ni attaches to a nominal and creates a phrase that obtains its case value by agreement (31).

\[(31)\]

In (31) the ni-phrases are presented as base-generated above the accusative object. But observe that a legitimate interface object will also result if the –ni phrase initially merges below the accusative-marked object, and then raises to the edge of VP (32a). What will not yield a legitimate result is for the –ni phrase to merge below the accusative-marked object and remain there (32b). Since DP-o is valued for case, it will not probe the –ni phrase beneath it, nor will the interpretable unvalued feature on v probe beyond DP-o. Search will terminate, and DP-ni’s case feature will be unvalued.

\[(32)\]

The same reasoning applies with –ni phrases and subject marking. Hence by these means we derive the constraint in (20) that a ni-phrase must c-command a structurally case-marked argument. Essentially, this analysis can be applied to the other constructions involving ni-marked phrases such as locatives and possessives; see Larson and Harada (2008).

3.3 DAT-ACC Order?

As a final point we saw earlier that although the SUBJ IO DO V order is unmarked in Japanese, the SUBJ IO DO V order is also available (33a,b):
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(33)  
a. John-ga piza-o Mary-ni ageta  
b. John-ga Mary-ni piza-o ageta

From the discussion above, it should be clear that (33a) cannot simply reflect the base merge order we propose, since the case feature of DP-ni cannot be valued in its low initial position. Once again, we believe the key to this lies in the informational status of (33a).

In cases like (33a) Japanese speakers perceive the object piza-o as bearing focus, similar to what English speakers perceive in “Heavy NP Shift” examples like (34a). Larson (1989,1990) reanalyses HNPS constructions as instances of “Light predicate Raising,” in which a thematically transitive V’ reanalyzes as V and raises around the direct object (34b), stranding it in lowest position. The effect of stranding is focus on the non-moving object.

(34)  
b. 

Assume now that this process were available in Japanese as well. The transitive V’ reanalyzes as V and raises string-vacuously rightward. Assume again that the stranded direct object is interpreted as focused, just as in English (35b):

(35)  
a. John-ga piza-o Mary-ni ageta
b. 

Notice now that although raising has not altered the linear order of piza-o and Mary-ni, it has changed their structural relations; specifically, the latter is no longer c-commands the former. This entails that piza-o no longer intervenes between v and Mary-ni. v can probe on both its left
and its right. It can agree with DP-\textit{ni}, and it can agree with, and be valued as ACC by the o-marked object, which will yield a legitimate interface object.

4. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we developed an account for the properties of Japanese ditransitives sentences based on the affixal nature of “dative P” –\textit{ni} is not a case probe, but rather a concordializing element. Since –\textit{ni} as concordializing element does not have the ability to license Case on nominals it attaches to, the goal DP associated with –\textit{ni} should always move above the theme DP in constructions involving two internal arguments to avoid Case violations. The proposal of the paper constitutes evidence for a uniform view to ditransitive sentences, i.e., the theme c-commands the goal in the structure across languages.

References