

The Semantic Roles of the Indirect Object from a Corpus-Based Approach: A Case Study

Carmen Aguilera Carnerero¹

Abstract

At the heart of the ditransitive construction, the verb *give* lies as the prototypical ditransitive verb as it has been pointed out by authors such as Newman (1993, 1996, 2005) or Goldberg (1995).

Usually the verb *give* is semantically described as the physical act of passing an entity (direct object) from one participant (subject) to another one (indirect object), the latter being portrayed as the final physical target of the action and, therefore, as the recipient of the object of the transfer.

However, apart from this central meaning, other different senses of *give* which range from perception (give someone a surprise), to oral communication (give someone a talk) have been suggested by many authors (Stein 1991, Allan 1991, Butler 2002, Guilquin 2005). These different meanings evince different sort of receptions by the indirect object and, consequently, different semantic roles can be assigned to this constituent, a fact which has been surprisingly overlooked by the majority of authors.

Several corpus studies (e.g. Römer 2005, Schäpers 2005) on different grammatical points have shown the discordance between english contained in grammar books and the english produced by native speakers (or real english). The present paper takes a closer look at the examples of the verb *give* included in the ICE-GB to carry out a study of the semantic roles of the indirect object as produced by native speakers with the ultimate implication of a new configuration of the semantic roles of this predicator element.

References

- Allan, K. (1991, 1998) "Delexical verbs and degrees of desemantization". *Word* 49:1: 1–17.
- Fillmore, Ch. (1968) "The case for case" en *Universals in Linguistic Theory*. Bach E. and R. Harms (eds). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp. 1–88.
- Guilquin, G. (2005) Guilquin, G. (2005) "What You Think Ain't What You Get: Highly polysemous verbs in grammar and mind". Paper presented at the conference From Gram to Mind (Université de Bordeaux).
- Goldberg, G. (1992) "The inherent semantics of argument structure. The case of English ditransitive construction". *Cognitive Linguistics* 3 (1), 37–74.
- Goldberg, A. (1995) *Constructions: A Constructional Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Newman, J. (1996) *Give: A Cognitive Linguistic Study*. Berlín: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Newman, J. (2005) Newman, J. (2005) "Three- place predicates: a cognitive-linguistic perspective". *Language Sciences* 27:145–63.

¹ e-mail: caracar@ugr.es

- Stein, G. and R. Quirk (1991) "On having a look in a corpus" en *English Corpus Linguistics: Studies in Honour of Ian Svartvik*. Eds. K. Aijmer and B. Altenberg. London and New York: Longman, 197–203.
- Stein, G. (1991) "The phrasal verb 'to have a look' in modern English". *International review of applied linguistics*, 19,1: 1–29.