Lectal variation in constructional semantics: 'benefactive' ditransitives in Dutch

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Theme section 'Cognitive Sociolinguistics'
Cf. semasiological papers in this theme section: semantic structure of lexical items is subject to lectal variation
e.g. Glynn et al.'s data about *annoy* in British vs. American English

If, as CxGr has it, abstract argument structure constructions such as \([\text{Sbj} \ [V \ \text{Obj}_1 \ \text{Obj}_2]]\) are not fundamentally different from lexically substantive constructions such as *annoy*, then we expect lectal variation in *their* semantics as well
Indeed, some recent findings to that effect:

- Wulff et al. (2007) on the into-causative in British vs. American English
- Mukherjee & Hoffmann (2006) on the wider possibilities of the ditransitive in Indian English
- ...

The present study focuses on the use of the "benefactive" ditransitive in different regional varieties of Dutch
"Benefactive" ditransitives?

- Many languages have a ditransitive construction which can encode *benefactive* as well as prototypical *reception* events

- E.g. Polish (ex's from Dąbrowska 1997):
  
  - *Dał jej obraz.*
    - he gave her:DAT picture:ACC
    - 'He gave her a picture'
  
  - *Ala uszyła mi sukienkę.*
    - Ala sewed me:DAT dress:ACC
    - 'Ala sewed a dress for me'
  
  - *Magda kupiła Wojtkowi książkę.*
    - 'Magda bought a book for Wojtek'
  
  - *Krystyna otworzyła Oli drzwi.*
    - Krystyna:NOM opened Ola:DAT door:ACC
    - 'Krystyna opened the door for Ola'
English ditransitive is more restricted:

- Ala sewed me a dress, Magda bought Wojtek a book
- Krystyna opened Ola the door.
- Krystyna watered Ola the plants.

Beneficiary must be involved as the projected recipient of the theme ("recipient-beneficiary" in Kittilä's 2005 terms)

Goldberg (1995) associates verbs of creation (*bake, make, ...*) and verbs of obtaining (*buy, get, ...*) with the ditransitive subsense 'Agent intends to cause Recipient to receive Patient'
However:

- Fellbaum (2005) cites Internet ex's such as: 
  You're a good boy, Joe. Now get busy and wash me some dishes.

- Allerton's (1978) preliminary survey among British university students: wide agreement on cases such as: 
  *Could you taste me this wine?*, but informants are divided on e.g. *Could you open me the door?* and *Could you do me some marking?*

- Webelhuth & Dannenberg (2006), Christian (1991), etc. on the ditransitive in Southern American English: *We've gone and elected us Ike President*, etc.

⇒ The above semantic constraint on the benefactive ditransitive is subject to individual and regional variation
The Dutch ditransitive

- *De man heeft de vrouw een boek gegeven.*
  the man has the woman a book given
  'The man has given the woman a book'

- In many ways similar to the Engl. Ditransitive:
  - subject + two unmarked NP objects
  - central sense 'Agent causes Rec to receive Theme'
  - ...

Ditransitive could be used to encode all kinds of benefactive events in earlier language phases:

*Daer cochte Joseph sinen here den vijften scoof vander vrucht* (Maerlant, 13th C)
'There Joseph bought his lord the fifth part of the harvest'

*… dat hy hem de deur opende, en in een kamer voerde* (Heinsius, 1695)
'… that he opened him the door, and led him to a room'

*[Ik] zal de deur aanwijzen, waarvoor zij mij de sleutel maken moet.* (J.F. Oltmans, 1838)
'I'll point to the door, for which she has to make me a key'

Colleman (2002): in quite frequent use until well into the 19th C, in both Netherl. and Belgian Dutch
Recent grammatical literature: in modern standard (Netherlandic) Dutch, benefactive ditransitives only occur with a handful of verbs of food preparation/provision:

- *iemand een drankje inschenken* 'to pour sb a drink'
- *iemand een bord groenten opscheppen* 'to dish sb up a plate of vegetables'
- *iemand een maaltijd bereiden* 'to prepare sb a meal'

Cf. Verhagen (2002): Dutch has no productive benefactive construction

* Jan maakte haar een boterham.
  'John made her a sandwich'
Reported regional variation

- ANS (1997): examples below are typical of southern Dutch, i.e. varieties spoken in Belgium + southern provinces of The Netherlands
  - De hoogleraar kocht zijn vrouw een gouden armband.
    'The professor bought his wife a gold bracelet'
  - Mijn vrouw heeft me een trui gebreid.
    'My wife knitted me a sweater'

This study looks into the variation between the two national varieties: standard Netherlandic Dutch and "standard" Belgian Dutch.

- 6 frequent verbs of creation and obtainment:
  - *kopen* 'buy', *halen* 'get, fetch', *bestellen* 'order'
  - *bouwen* 'build', *bakken* 'bake', *tekenen* 'draw'

- 3 corpora:
  - newspaper component of the CONDIV-corpus: 4.8 mln words NL Dutch + 12.7 mln words B Dutch
  - Usenet component of the CONDIV-corpus: 7.7 mln words NL Dutch + 5 mln words B Dutch
  - Corpus of spoken Dutch: 5.7 mln words NL Dutch + 3.3 mln B Dutch
Corpus-based study: design (2)

- Extracted all occurrences where a form of one of the six test verbs is combined with one of a set of 22 personal, reflexive and reciprocal pronouns (me, mij, je, jou, zich, etc.), within a span of five words.
- Manually filtered out the results of these queries.
- This procedure does not guarantee the retrieval of all benefactive ditransitives, but the results should give a good indication of the distribution of the construction over the selected corpora.
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<th>Netherlandic subcorpora</th>
<th>Belgian subcorpora</th>
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In each of the three corpora, *kopen* 'buy' is significantly more often used with ditransitive syntax in the Belgian than in Netherlandic subcorpus.

The attested ditransitive frequencies of the other verbs are too low to allow statistical analysis, but virtually all ditransitives occur in the Belgian subcorpora.

The single occurrence of ditransitive *halen* 'get' in the Netherlandic component of the CGN is from an informal conversation between southern speakers.
Summary:

- *inschenken* 'pour', *opscheppen* 'dish up', *bereiden* 'prepare': regularly used ditransitively in both Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch.
- *kopen* 'buy': sporadically used ditransitively in Netherlandic Dutch, to a significantly larger extent in Belgian Dutch.
- *halen* 'get, fetch', *bestellen* 'order', *bakken* 'bake', *tekenen* 'draw', *bouwen* 'build', etc.: sporadically used ditransitively in Belgian Dutch only.
Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch draw the line at different places.

Compare to English:
- I poured him a drink, I bought him a book, I baked him a cake are equally acceptable in all varieties: satisfy the "intended possession" constraint.
- Observed intralinguistic variation concerns cases such as I opened him the door, I washed him the dishes, etc.

In Dutch, there must be additional semantic constraints on the benefactive ditransitive.
Two subevents

- Cf. Goldberg's (1995) semantic extension: 'Agent causes Rec to receive Pat' > 'Agent intends to cause Rec to receive Pat'
- Alternative semantic paraphrase, adapted from Geeraerts (1998): 'Agent carries out a preparatory action (involving Pat), with a view to a subsequent transfer of Pat to Rec'
- Two subevents: preparatory action + actual transfer
Different varieties of Dutch seem to form a cline with regard to the *degree of contiguity* between the preparatory action and the transfer.

In the most restrictive lects, both subevents need almost coincide for the ditransitive to be possible:

Possibilities are restricted to cases such as *iemand een drankje inschenken* 'to pour sb a drink' and *iemand een tweede portie opscheppen* 'to dish sb up a second helping':

- preparatory action and transfer are virtually indistinguishable
- can just as well be construed as GIVE events
Cf. *inschenken* and *opscheppen* can also be used in other constructions reserved for verbs of giving:

- Indirect passive with *krijgen*:
  
  *Wie melk uit een gekleurde fles kreeg ingeschenken, zou raar opkijken.* (Reformatorisch Dagblad, 15/1/2000) 
  lit. 'Someone who gets poured milk from a coloured bottle, would be much surprised'

  *Niet iedereen [...] zal erop staan dat hij zijn zabaglione ook daadwerkelijk uit een peperdure massief koperen zabaglionepan krijgt opgeschept.* (De Volkskrant 2001) 
  lit. 'Not everybody will insist to get their zabaglione dished up from an expensive solid copper zabaglione pan'
Prepositional dative with *aan* rather than *voor* (cf. Colleman 2007):

De barman [...] neemt het besluit om een 12,5 jaar oude whisky in te schenken aan de bargast.
'The bartender decides to pour a glass of 12,5 year old whiskey "to" the customer'


... en weer een ander was bereid de hele dag koffie en thee in te schenken aan de vele bezoekers.
'... and another [volunteer] was willing to pour coffee and tea "to" the many visitors all day'

<www.passie.net/actueel.php?id=8>
A contiguity constraint (4)

- The more tolerant lects allow a looser bond between the preparatory action and the transfer:
  e.g. *Ik bakte hem een cake voor zijn verjaardag*
  'I baked him a cake for his birthday'
  'baking' phase must be completed before start of 'giving' phase

- In local eastern varieties, there need not even be a transfer subevent involved (cf. German)
  e.g. Cornips (1994): *Hij vertaalde me dit in het Engels*
  'He translated this into English for me'
A contiguity constraint (5)

- *kopen* 'buy' is a typical in-between case
- Cf. Den Hertog (1903) on difference between:
  - (a) *Ik kocht mijn dochtertje een pop.*
    'I bought my daughter a doll'
  - (b) *Ik kocht een pop voor mijn dochtertje.*
    'I bought a doll for my daughter'

(a)-clause suggests that the daughter is *present*

⇒ For the ditransitive to be possible in the more restricted lects, it matters whether the state-of-affairs can be construed as a single event
Ditransitives with *bereiden* 'prepare' violate the contiguity constraint and yet occur in both Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch.

However:

- many of *bereiden*'s ditransitive examples are of the type *iemand een warme ontvangst bereiden* 'give sb a warm welcome': may be separately stored
- ditransitive *bereiden* belongs to a quite formal register: e.g. not a single instance in CONDIV_Usenet
A complicating factor (2)

*Regional* variation is complemented by *register* variation:

- The contiguity constraint may go a long way towards explaining the distribution in *everyday language*

- But even in Netherlandic Dutch, the benefactive ditransitive is still used with some degree of productivity in formal or archaic language

- Cf. wider possibilities in earlier phases of the language!
A complicating factor (3)

e.g. some web examples with ditransitive *bouwen* from religious or esoteric texts:

- *Hoeveel duidelijker is dan nu dit, dat wij Hem niet een tempel moeten bouwen, maar zelf een tempel moeten zijn.* <www.theologienet.nl>
  'Then how much more obvious is this: that we should not build Him a temple, but rather be a temple ourselves'

- *Alles is dus eenvoudig, de mens bouwt zich een eigen hemel om in het eeuwige leven gelukkig te kunnen zijn.*
  'So everything is simple: man builds himself a heaven of his own, so that he can be happy in the life eternal'.
  <www.geestkunde.net/uittreksels/jr-blikhiernamaals2.html>
A complicating factor (4)

Compare to everyday (Belgian) ex's such as:

- *Ik wil mij een studioke bouwen en was zo eens aan het denken zijn er bepaalde online shops waar je studio materiaal kan kopen?*

  'I'd like to build myself a little sound studio and was like thinking: are there online-shops where you can buy studio equipment?'

  <forum.belgiumdigital.com/showthread.php?t=24>

- *Bouw me een pretpark, papa!*

  'Build me an amusement park, daddy!'

  *(Het Nieuwsblad, 31/10/05)*

⇒ Benefactive ditransitives still occur more freely in specialized, formal text genres
Everyday standard Netherlandic Dutch: benefactive ditransitive is heavily constrained (cf. contiguity constraint)

But the possibilities were wider in earlier phases of the language, and they are wider still:
- in Belgian Dutch
- in formal or archaic language

Peripheral use of a construction disappearing from the language, but at various speeds in various varieties
Thank you!

Comments, suggestions:

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