

**I'm going to do me a talk on Personal Datives...**  
**...but not really**  
**Stacey Conroy, Syntax Lunch Talk**  
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*Ladies and gentlemen: the data you are about to hear is true. The only problem is the lack of a native speaker. In the meantime, the data from books is taken as true until proven otherwise.*

**1. Outline**

- ? A little bit of data...
- ? A mystery...
- ? Previous Analyses
- ? More Data
- ? Possible Analysis

**2. A little bit of data...**

The personal dative (PD) in Appalachian English (AE) and Southern American English (SAE) is a pronoun that is coreferential in a local domain, as in (1).

1. She<sub>i</sub> went to the store to get her<sub>i</sub> a pair of shoes

Furthermore, the PD is available in all persons and numbers, as shown in (2).

2. a. I<sub>i</sub> got me<sub>i</sub> some candy (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006)  
b. We<sub>i</sub> got us some<sub>i</sub> candy  
c. You<sub>i</sub> got you<sub>i</sub> some candy  
d. He<sub>i</sub> got him<sub>i</sub> some candy  
e. They<sub>i</sub> got them<sub>i</sub> some candy

Interestingly, the PD appears in the same distribution as reflexives for many verbs (3) – (4). (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006)

3. a. She<sub>i</sub> went into the store to get her<sub>i</sub> a pair of shoes  
b. She<sub>i</sub> went into the store to get herself<sub>i</sub> a pair of shoes
4. a. And then you<sub>i</sub>'d get you<sub>i</sub> a bowl of ice water  
b. And then you<sub>i</sub>'d get you<sub>i</sub> a bowl of ice water

**3. A mystery...**

One mystery is that the PD appears to be a Principle B violation, because it appears to be bound in a local configuration (Fodor, 1992) (5)

5. a. She<sub>i</sub> got her<sub>i</sub> a pair of shoes

- b. \* She<sub>i</sub> got her<sub>i</sub> a pair of shoes (Standard English)

A second task is to explain the distribution of these pronouns, particularly to determine if they pattern exactly like reflexives, as is suggested by (3) and (4).

#### 4. Previous Analyses

Webelhuth and Dannenberg (2006) claim that the PD can not be described by a generative grammar approach, analyze the PD in terms of a construction based grammar.

Key features:

- a. Pronominal Coreference

As shown in (2), pronoun is coreferential with a local antecedent

- b. Meaning differences

In General American English (GAE), the Double Object construction (6) requires transfer of possession to the indirect object

6. Mary gave Sue flowers

In (6), the flowers are transferred to *Sue*. However, this requirement is not the case in the PD. In (7), there is no transfer of possession required.

7. I love me some beans

- c. NP must occur right-adjacent to the verb

It appears that the double object in GAE and the PD contain an indirect object right-adjacent to the verb, as in (8).

8. a. Mary gave Sue some flowers  
b. Mary<sub>i</sub> got her<sub>i</sub> some flowers

It appears that the double object in GAE and the PD contain an indirect object right-adjacent to the verb, as in (8). However, the PD is not available under passivisation (9b), which is available with the DOC, as in (9a).

9. a. Sue was given some flowers by Mary  
b. \*She<sub>i</sub> was given some flowers by Mary<sub>i</sub>

Therefore, there appears to be a right-adjacency requirement on the PD.

d. NP must be coreferential with subject

The PD must be coreferential, as shown in (10).

10. a. \*Mary<sub>i</sub> would love her<sub>k</sub> some flowers  
b. Mary<sub>i</sub> would love her<sub>i</sub> some flowers

e. Object must contain a determiner

The direct object in a PD construction must contain a determiner, as shown in (11).

11. \* Mary<sub>i</sub> would love her<sub>i</sub> flowers

Webelhuth and Dannenberg (2006) claim that the PD is an idiom based on the following observations: restricted set of lexemes, non-compositional meaning, and restricted syntactic distribution. Therefore, the PD can be captured under a constructivist account, with no apparent generalization concerning its distribution.

## 5. More Data

*Open questions:*

- ? *How does the PD pattern with respect to reflexives?*
- ? *What is the distribution with respect to different verbs?*
- ? *What does the PD contribute to meaning?*

### Bound variable

The pronoun in the PD appears to be a bound variable, as shown in (12), which can mean that I also purchased myself a pair of shoes.

11. Nell<sub>i</sub> bought her<sub>i</sub> a pair of shoes, and I did too

### Meaning Differences, an elaboration

The PD has a slightly different reading from the reflexive, when viewed with respect to the examples in (13) (Fodor, 1992)

12. a. I whittled me a stick  
b. I whittled myself a stick

As stated before, the (12b), as a DOC, implies transfer of possession. This is not required in (12a), which is seen in better detail in the pair in (13).

13. a. I whittled me a stick, and gave it to my sister

b. #I whittled myself a stick, and gave it to my sister

#### Distribution with Verbs

The reflexive and the PD do not occur in the exact same distribution, even though it appears to be so in the examples in (14), repeated from (3).

14. a. She<sub>i</sub> went into the store to get her<sub>i</sub> a pair of shoes  
b. She<sub>i</sub> went into the store to get herself<sub>i</sub> a pair of shoes

However, this can not occur with all verbs, as shown in (15).

15. a. She<sub>i</sub> loves her<sub>i</sub> some beans  
b. \*She<sub>i</sub> loves herself<sub>i</sub> some beans

Therefore, it appears that the distribution of PDs cannot be tied directly to the reflexive.

### **5. Possible Analysis**

I propose that PDs are reflexive-pronouns that do not require a theta role, similar to the analysis put forth by Reuland (2001) for simplex reflexives. I also propose that in Appalachian English, all verbs are capable of ditransitive case assignment, regardless of number of theta roles.

*First, I will take a rough look of how a reflexive, theta role analysis roughly describes the facts presented, then we will turn to some more specific details of Reuland's analysis, and the analogy to simplex reflexives.*

#### Bound variable

The claim that the PD is a type of reflexive predicts the finding that the bound variable reading is available. Furthermore, this describes the observations concerning coreference.

#### Principle B Exemption

If the PD is an anaphor, this explains its exemption to Principle B.

#### Meaning Differences

In (16), we repeat the data point concerning meaning differences.

16. a. I whittled me a stick, and gave it to my sister  
b. #I whittled myself a stick, and gave it to my sister

The verb *whittle* in the ditransitive case assigns both an indirect and direct object role (ignoring the subject). In (16b), this results in the indirect object being the recipient of the stick, which is why it is infelicitous to give the stick to someone else.

However, *whittle* may also be a transitive verb (in terms of theta role assignment), as in (17).

17. I whittled a stick

In (17), the recipient is unspecified. This is the same interpretation in (16a), with an unspecified recipient. This suggests that the PD is not getting a theta role. This is particularly clear in the example in (18).

18. I only need to sell me a dozen more toothbrushes (Wolfram & Christian, 1976)

In (18), it is clear from context that the speaker is not intended to be the recipient of the sale of the toothbrushes.

Furthermore, the PD cannot occur in positions in which a theta role must be assigned, as in (19).

19. \* She<sub>i</sub> loves her<sub>i</sub>

This clearly describes the difference in distribution between the PD and reflexives. Reflexives in GAE require a theta role.

### Right Adjacency

The difference between AE and GAE is a misalignment between numbers of cases and theta roles assigned. So, in (20), the PD can receive case, but not a theta role.

20. Sandy got her some lemonade

A passive (21a) is possible because the object receives a theta role, and then moves, and is not dependent in any way. However, if the PD behaves as a reflexive, then we expect (21b) to be out, just as (21c).

21. a. Mary was gotten some lemonade by Sue  
b. \*She<sub>i</sub> was gotten some lemonade by Mary<sub>i</sub>  
c. \*herself was gotten some lemonade by Mary

Therefore, right-adjacency derives from the reflexivity of the PD.

### **Interim Summary**

- ? Evidence of bound variable interpretations suggests the PD is a genuine type of pronoun, and not a fixed expression
- ? Analyzing the PD as a type of reflexive eliminates Principle B violation mystery

? Generalization of distribution with verbs suggests the PD does not require a theta role, describing how the reflexive and PD differ

## 6. Reuland and SE anaphors

The Weibelhuth and Dannenberg analysis treats the PD as a non-productive construction. We have shown that the PD has some more interesting linguistic properties (bound variable, lack of theta role), but we would like to tie this construction into other cross-linguistic phenomenon.

Additionally, we have seen that the PD behaves like a reflexive, but isn't the same as the reflexive in GAE. What does this make the PD?

Other languages have multiple types of reflexives. Reinhart and Reuland (1993) report SELF-anaphors (22b) and SE anaphors, which are items that appear like pronouns, but are locally bound, as in (22a).

23. a. Oscar wast zich  
Oscar washes zich  
b. Oscar wast zichzelf  
Oscar washes himself

Reuland (2001) analyzes SE anaphors as anaphors that do not require a theta role.

*Reuland's theory in short: SE anaphors are deficient in number features, which permits them to form a chain with their antecedent. Because there is only one theta role per chain, SE anaphors do not receive an independent theta role. Furthermore first and second person number features are considered deficient, and may also form a chain.*

Can we provide any additional evidence a) that this analysis is on the right track and b) that the personal dative melds with these data?

First, we see that it appears that binding of pronouns in GAE is less restricted in first person, as shown in (23a).

23. a. I like me  
b. \*She<sub>i</sub> likes her<sub>i</sub>

(23a) is generally accepted by most GAE speakers, even though (23b) is not.

This suggests that, even in GAE, local binding for the first person is permissible.



Now that we know that Reuland's predictions concerning number in GAE hold, what is the evidence that the PD is deficient in number? That is, if the PD are locally bound pronouns, like SE anaphors, then we expect them to be underspecified for number.

Recall the PD is available for all person and number (24), repeated from (2).

24. a. I<sub>i</sub> got me<sub>i</sub> some candy (Webelhuth & Dannenberg, 2006)  
b. We<sub>i</sub> got us some<sub>i</sub> candy  
c. You<sub>i</sub> got you<sub>i</sub> some candy  
d. He<sub>i</sub> got him<sub>i</sub> some candy  
e. They<sub>i</sub> got them<sub>i</sub> some candy

(24d) and (24e) differ in number. However, these may be different simply in the orthography. If these are both pronounced 'em, then we have some evidence for the lack of a numerical distinction in the PD.

## 7. Conclusions

- ? The Personal Dative in AE is consistent with Reuland's analysis for SE anaphors, suggesting the PD is part of a more generalized option in grammar
- ? This argues against construction-based theories of the construction
- ? It appears that the PD does not require a theta role, explaining its distribution with respect to verbs, and also its differences in distribution from the reflexive
- ? Analyzing the PD as a type of reflexive solves the mystery concerning the locally bound-ness

## 8. Mysteries and More...

### Is the PD unaccusative?

So far, we haven't discussed the contribution of the PD. It seems like the PD makes the verb behave as an unaccusative, as (25) conveys *a pair of shoes was purchased for me, and I happened to be the purchaser.*

25. I bought me a pair of shoes

### Why is there a determiner requirement of the direct object?

Is this a requirement of the benefactive verbs? Something about the proposed case structure in AE?