

Ethical datives in European Portuguese: A use-conditional analysis
Patrícia Amaral (Indiana University)

Ethical datives (also known as “*dativus ethicus*”, “personal datives”, “affected datives”) are well-studied across languages, both from syntactic and semantic perspectives (Borer & Grodzinsky 1986, Lamiroy & Delbecque 1998, Maling 2001, Horn 2008, Gutzmann 2007, a.o.). In European Portuguese (EP), ethical datives have been studied mostly from a syntactic approach arguing against an applicative head account (Miguel et al. 2011). However, their semantic and pragmatic properties have remained mostly unexplored. This paper fills this gap by proposing an analysis of ethical datives in EP (see [1]) as use-conditional items (UCIs, in the sense of Gutzmann 2013). Specifically, it is proposed that EP ethical datives are expletive functional UCIs: a sentence containing an ethical dative conveys (i) at the truth-conditional level, the content of the sentence obtained by removing the dative pronoun, and (ii) at the use-conditional level, affect (typically by the speaker, but not necessarily) toward the truth conditional meaning of the sentence, following the schema in (2), where the numerator of the fraction stands for the compositional properties of the use-conditional content and the denominator for the truth-conditional content.

Importantly, unlike possessive datives (see Santos 2017), ethical datives do not contribute to the truth-conditional meaning of a sentence. While in sentences like (3) and (4), the content of the possessive dative clitic is part of the truth-conditional meaning of the sentence, as it affects the identification of the referent (i.e., the speaker’s back in [3], someone’s husband in [4]), ethical datives only contribute use-conditional (or expressive) meaning, not feeding the composition of the propositional content of the sentence. In addition, ethical datives should also be distinguished from other uses of the dative that unlike the former, are argumental, as in (5), where the clitic *lhe* expresses the theme of the psychological predicate, and there is possible substitution by a PP headed by *de* (as in 5’). Ethical datives are non-argumental and do not allow such a substitution.

Building on constructed examples and examples from the corpora CETEMPÚBLICO and CORDIAL-SIN, this paper also shows that EP ethical datives are not restricted to first person singular, they may have a referent that is not co-referential with the subject of the sentence, and they occur in utterances corresponding to different types of speech acts. In addition, they may express either positive or negative affect of the person denoted by the pronoun, as expected of expressive content. What is common to all the examples is the emotional involvement of that person. Finally, this paper discusses how other elements in the sentence (e.g. demonstrative determiners, adverbs, focus particles, diminutives, see examples [6] and [7]) may align with the use-conditional meaning of the ethical datives within the expressive setting of a context (in the sense of Potts 2007).

This paper contributes to our knowledge of ethical datives in EP and more broadly to our understanding of the semantic and pragmatic properties of non-argumental datives across languages. It also provides insight into varieties of use-conditional items and their relation to pronominal systems.

Examples (with dative clitics in boldface):

(1) Limpa-**me** já esse quarto!

‘Clean your room at once (as I want that)!’

(2) $S[\dots\varepsilon(\alpha)\dots] = \frac{\varepsilon(\alpha)}{S[\dots\alpha\dots]}$

(from Gutzmann 2013: 63)

(3) Doem-**me** as costas.

‘My back hurts.’

(4) Morreu-**lhe** o marido.

‘Her/his husband passed away.’

(5) Ela tinha-**lhe** medo.

(5’) Ela tinha medo do irmão.

‘She was afraid of him/of her brother.’

(6) Tem-**me** lá cuidado com a tua vidinha!

‘Make sure you take care of your life (as I care about that)!’

(7) Ultimamente, tem demasiados problemas políticos e, se calhar, ainda **me** monta uma guerra contra o Iraque durante os Jogos de Barcelona. (Cetempúblico, *ext77171-nd-92b-3*)

‘Lately [he] has too many political problems, and [he] may even start a war against Iraq during the Barcelona Games (I care about possibly getting to that point)’

References

- Borer, H. and Grodzinsky, Y. (1986). Syntactic Cliticization and Lexical Cliticization: The Case of Hebrew Dative Clitics. In Borer, H., editor, *Syntax and Semantics 19: The Syntax of Pronominal Clitics*, pages 175–217. Academic, Orlando/London.
- Gutzmann, D. (2007). Eine Implikatur konventioneller Art: der Dativus Ethicus. *Linguistische Berichte*, 211:277–308.
- Gutzmann, D. (2013). Expressives and beyond. an introduction to varieties of use-conditional meaning. In Gutzmann, D. and Gärtner, H.-M., editors, *Beyond Expressives. Explorations in Use-Conditional Meaning*, pages 1–58. Brill, Leiden.
- Horn, L. R. (2008). I love me some him. the landscape of non-argument datives. In Bonami, O. and Cabredo-Hofherr, P., editors, *Empirical Issues in Syntax and Semantics 7*, page 169–192. CNRS, Paris.
- Lamiroy, B. and Delbecq, N. (1998). The possessive dative in Romance and Germanic. In Van Langendonck, W. and Van Belle, W., editors, *The Dative, vol. 2: Theoretical and Contrastive Studies*, pages 29–74. John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia.
- Maling, J. (2001). Dative: The heterogeneity of the mapping among morphological case, grammatical functions, and thematic roles. *Lingua*, 111:419–464.
- Miguel, M., Gonçalves, A., and Duarte, I. (2011). Dativos não argumentais em português. In Costa, A., Barbosa, P., and Falé, I., editors, *Textos seleccionados, XXVI Encontro da Associação Portuguesa de Linguística*, pages 388–400. APL, Lisboa.
- Mira Mateus, M. H., Brito, A. M., Duarte, I., and Faria, I. H. (2003). *Gramática da Língua Portuguesa*. Caminho, Lisboa.
- Potts, C. (2007). The expressive dimension. *Theoretical Linguistics*, 33(2), 165–198.
- Santos, D. (2017). Os possessivos estão-me a complicar o ensino : um estudo do dativo possessivo em português baseado em corpos. *Linguística: Revista De Estudos Linguísticos Da Universidade Do Porto*, 10, 107–130.