

Patrick Brandt

Cipient Predication

Unifying Double Object, Dative Experiencer
and Existential/Presentational Constructions

The principal claim of this dissertation is that there is a unique structural core shared by Double Object, Dative Experiencer and Existential/Presentational constructions. This core is argued to take the form of a Cipient Predication structure, 'cipient' covering traditional notions like (affected) source/goal, recipient, indirect object or dative experiencer. Central questions arising in defining Cipient Predication are: How are cipients thematically licensed, and what is the role of *there* in argument-structural terms? What is the structural locus of cipients/*there*? What is the role and nature of dative case? How can the possessive interpretation, the blocking and definiteness effects associated with the above-mentioned constructions be explained?

Cipients are presented as external arguments and logical subjects (location individuals) of predicates derived from a propositional meaning embedded in the VP, the predicate formed by a lower tense head 'little t' that is overtly realized as *there*. Little t is argued to encode a distinction at the reference time level, structural dative hinging on a tense property like structural nominative. The cipient relates as a whole to a part to a VP-internal location argument that together with the theme furnishes the propositional meaning ('possession'). As logical subjects, cipients anchor the predicate to the utterance context, forcing its interpretation in extralinguistic terms ('blocking effects'). It is proposed that lacking structurally encoded subjects, Existential/Presentational constructions are not saturated expressions in syntax, precluding the interpretation of certain quantifiers (*most/every*, vide 'definiteness effects').

Cipient Predication, couched in terms of the Minimalist Program (in particular, Chomsky 1999) and a semantics relying on tense and the ontological distinction of locations as well as scalar and part-whole structure, should be of interest to scholars working on datives, argument structure, and the syntax/semantics/pragmatics interface more generally.

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