

Reanalyzing the typology of null
instantiation (NI) patterns:
The case of verbs of giving in
English and Spanish

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Null Instantiation

‘The omission in overt syntax of conceptually core arguments of a predicate (Fillmore 1986)’

Who was eating \emptyset ingestible in here?

He’s reading \emptyset text right now.

I won \emptyset competition !

I understand \emptyset proposition.

Citizens are calling \emptyset on their leaders for independence.

Frame implicational approach to licensing and interpretation of omitted arguments (Ruppenhofer & Michaelis 2011, following Fillmore 1986 and Goldberg 1995, 2005)

Lexically licensed argument omission

- “The **lexically** (*not constructionally*) **licensed** and **optional** (*not mandatory*) omission of an argument that is not accompanied by a change in linking to grammatical functions for the overt arguments (Ruppenhofer 2004:376).”

Constructional Licensing

Passive: *The ball was kicked Øby the athlete.*

Imperative subjects: *Øyou Look!*

Gerunds: *He enjoys painting Øpictures and riding
Øhorses.*

Genre-based omission, 'Labelese' or 'diary style'
(Ruppenhofer & Michaelis 2010)

Use with caution.

Shampoo, rinse, and repeat.

Went to the mall today. Splurged.

Proposal

- We must always keep in mind that it only qualifies as argument omission if the omission (and instantiation) ***are optional***, i.e. not mandatory omission or mandatory instantiation.
- ***All*** argument omission is ***constructionally licensed*** in one form or another
- ***All*** argument omission (its licensing or interpretation of omitted elements) is determined by the unification of some construction with some lexical frame. It is not a product of just the lexical frame, or just the construction.

Types of NI

Definite Null Instantiation (DNI) (Fillmore 1986): the omitted element refers to a contextually recoverable referent; its identity cannot be denied. Also known as **anaphoric** null instantiation, and ‘deep anaphora (Hankamer and Sag 1976)’

I won! (the competition you must be aware of to understand my statement)

I understand (what you are saying/proposing/suggesting).

Types of NI

Indefinite Null Instantiation (INI) (Fillmore 1986): the referent is expected to be markedly indefinite and unrecoverable from context. Also known as **existential** null instantiation.

He's reading (something or other, I don't know what).

He's eating (something or other, I don't know what).

Types of NI

Constructional Null Instantiation (CNI)

(Ruppenhofer et al. 2010, Goldberg 2005):
constructionally-licensed null instantiation,
such as the agent role in a *by*-phrase in
passives.

Types of NI

Generic Null Instantiation (GNI) (Lyngfelt 2012): used in generic contexts, such as habitual expressions and warnings.

In the case of an emergency, evacuate $\emptyset_{\text{source}}$ immediately.

I always bake \emptyset_{goods} on Sundays.

Types of NI

Free Null Instantiation (FNI) (Fried and Östman 2004, Lyngfelt 2012): licensed in cases where definite, indefinite and generic interpretations are possible; and is not subject per se to the contextual or interpretational requirements of DNI or INI. Unspecified for interpretation.

(= some of the same as cited for CNI)

Types of NI: Summary

1. Definite Null Instantiation (DNI)
2. Indefinite Null Instantiation (INI)
3. Constructional Null Instantiation (CNI)
4. Generic Null Instantiation (GNI)
5. Free Null Instantiation (FNI)

Tests for Interpretation Type

He contributed / gave / donated Ø_{theme} Ø_{recipient}.

Questioning test:

He donated to the Red Cross.

#What did he donate?

Theme = INI

He donated \$50.

Whom did he donate to?

Recipient = DNI

“I wonder” test:

I know he donated but...

#I wonder what he donated.

Theme = INI

I wonder whom he donated to.

Recipient = DNI

(!! “what” ≠ “how much”...

“what” = Theme role, “how much” = Value/Amount role)

Giving: Interpretation Types

He contributed / gave / donated \emptyset_{theme} $\emptyset_{\text{recipient}}$.

NI Theme = existential, INI (undeniable, unquestionable, context-independent)

NI Recipient = anaphoric, DNI (deniable, questionable, context-dependent)

Constructions and Frames

What construction?

Caused Motion

X causes Y to move to Z

He donated / gave / contributed \$50 to the charity.

**He donated / gave / contributed the charity \$50.*

What frame?

Donation frame

**I gave to my friend.*

**I gave \$50 (to my friend).*

Core FEs: Donor, Donee, Donated thing.

Inferences: donated thing is beneficial to / significantly impacts donee,
donated thing is a resource, donor is losing that resource, donee is
gaining it, donor is doing a good thing, donated thing has value.

Verbs of Giving: English

He contributed / gave / donated \$50 to the
charity.

He contributed / gave / donated \$50 $\emptyset_{\text{Recipient}}$.

He contributed / gave / donated \emptyset_{Theme} to the
charity.

He contributed / gave / donated \emptyset_{Theme} $\emptyset_{\text{Recipient}}$.

Verbs of Giving: Spanish

Donar dinero a África con solo unos clicks.

Donar dinero $\emptyset_{\text{Recipient}}$ con solo unos clicks.

Donar \emptyset_{Theme} a África con solo unos clicks.

Donar \emptyset_{Theme} $\emptyset_{\text{Recipient}}$ con solo unos clicks.

<http://www.taringa.net/posts/solidaridad/12241911/Donar-dinero-a-Africa-con-solo-unos-Clicks.html>

Verbs of Giving: Spanish

Contribuir:

Se vio forzada a contribuir 64 pesos a la causa.

Se vio forzada a contribuir \emptyset_{Theme} a la causa.

Se vio forzada a contribuir 64 pesos $\emptyset_{\text{Recipient}}$.

Se vio forzada a contribuir \emptyset_{Theme} $\emptyset_{\text{Recipient}}$.

Veinte Años entre los Mexicanos. Relato de una labor misionera (Melinda Rankin)

Dar:

(La Cruz Roja vino por aquí pidiendo donativos.)

Di 50 pesos a la caridad.

Di 50 pesos $\emptyset_{\text{Recipient}}$.

Di \emptyset_{Theme} a la caridad.

(Diste?) – Sí, di \emptyset_{Theme} $\emptyset_{\text{Recipient}}$.

Interim Summary

In the relative context where NI happens (cause motion construction + Donation frame):

- English ***contribute, give, donate*** are compatible
- Spanish ***contribuir, dar, donar*** are compatible

Construction + Conceptual frame => NI pattern

- Counter to Uniformity of Interpretation Hypothesis (Ruppenhofer and Michaelis, to appear)
- Counter to Implicit Theme Construction (Goldberg 2005)

Scene Encoding Hypothesis

Constructions which correspond to basic sentence types encode as their central senses event types that are basic to human experience (Goldberg 1995:39).

Unification:

	<i>He gave \$50 to the charity.</i>		
Semantics	<Agent	Theme	Goal>
Image schema	< Causer	Entity	Goal_of_motion>
Frame	<Donor	Donated_thing	Donee>
Syntax	<Subj	DO	Obl>

Image schema / Frame cascade

Image schema lattices for caused motion in Embodied Construction Grammar (based on Dodge 2010)

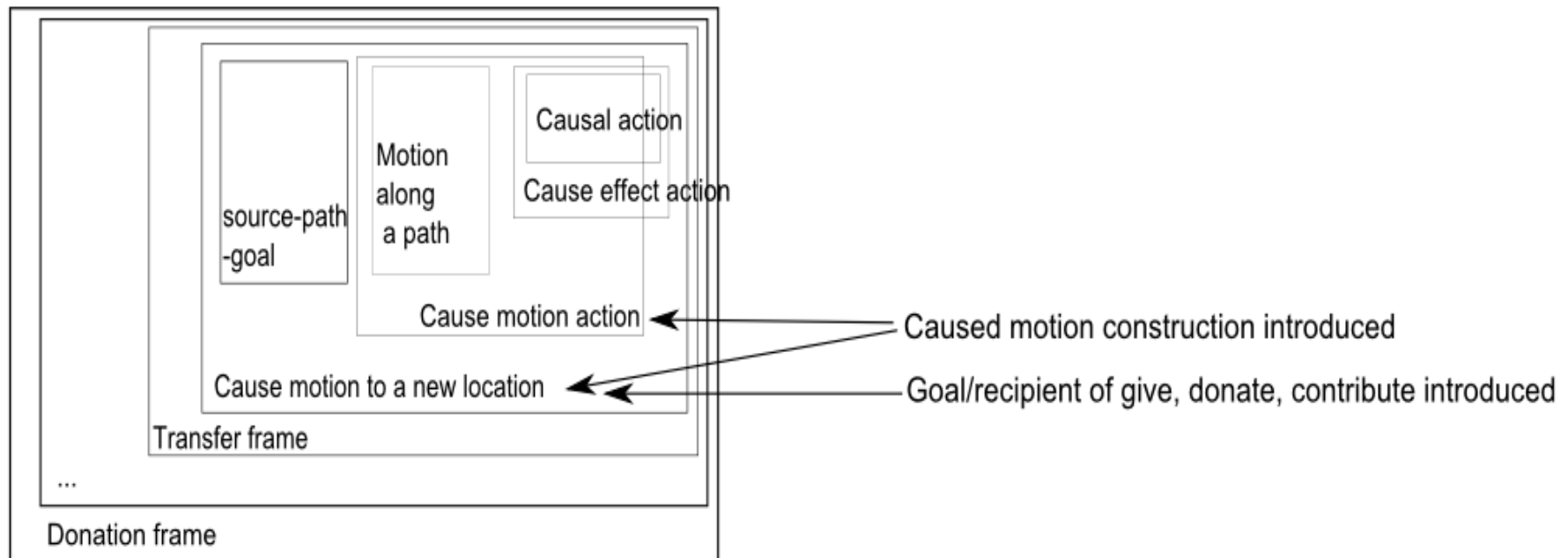


Image schema / Frame cascade

Image schema lattices for caused motion in Embodied Construction Grammar (based on Dodge 2010)

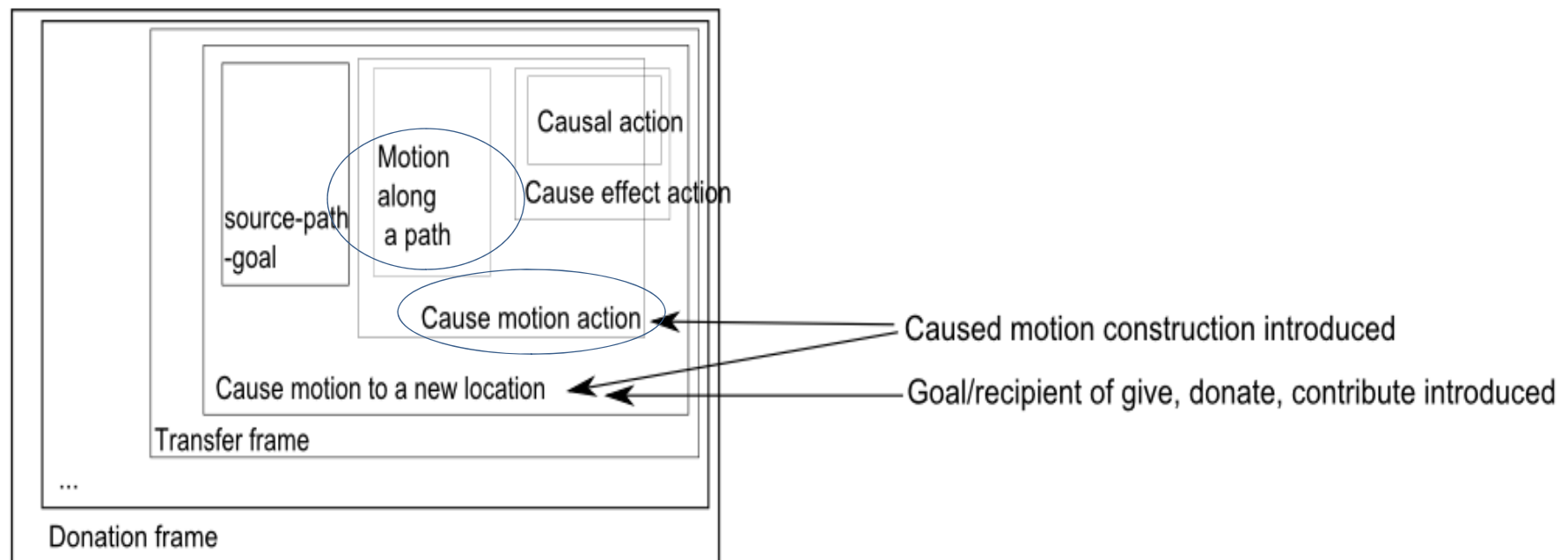
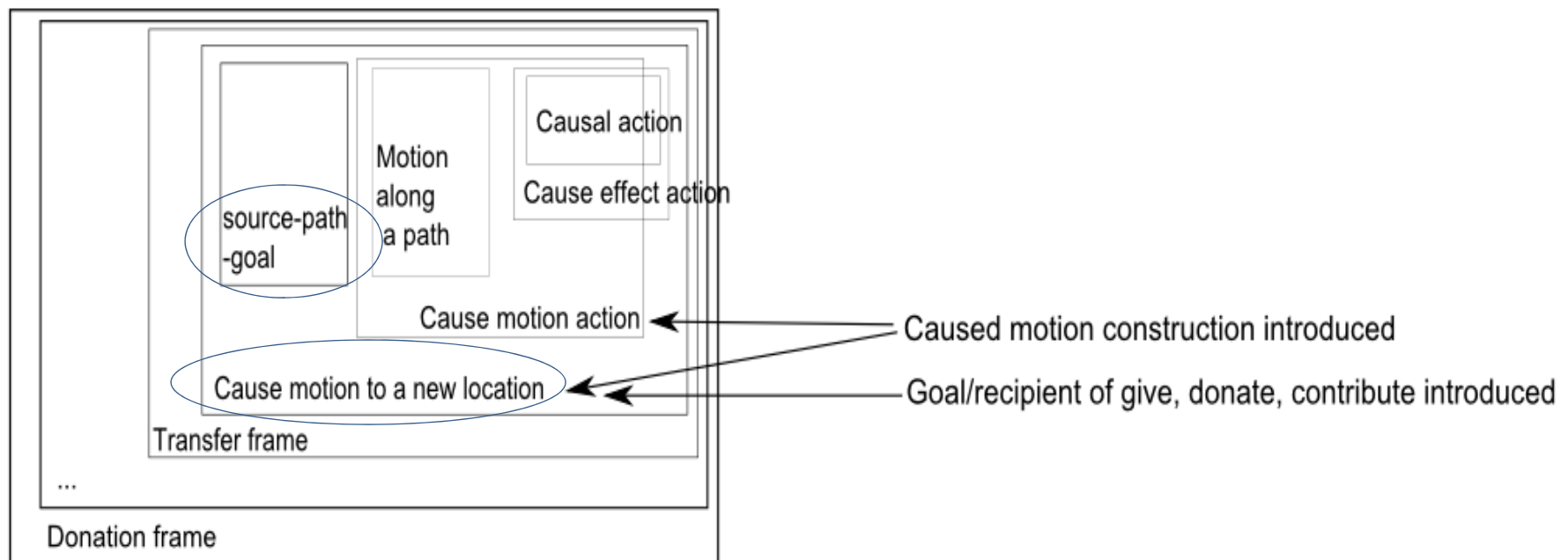
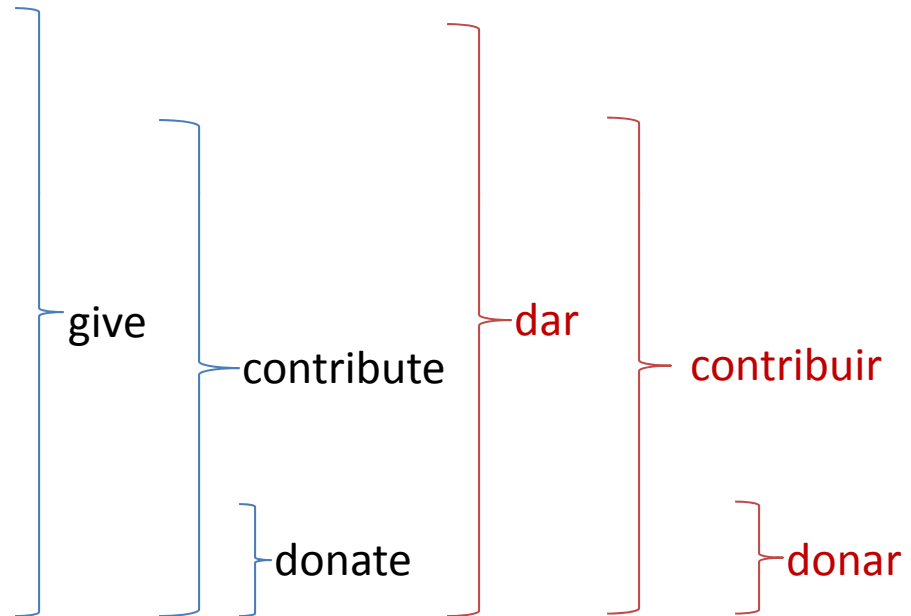
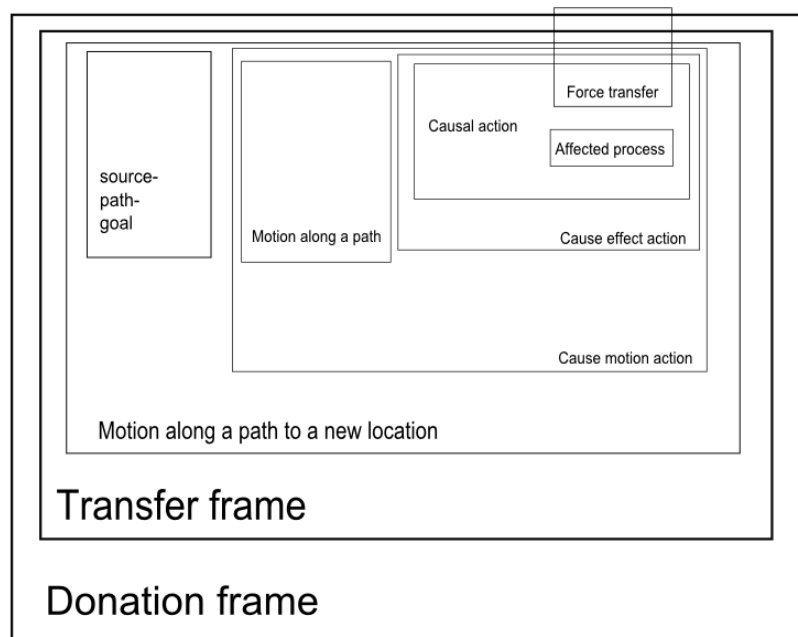


Image schema lattice

Image schema lattices for caused motion in Embodied Construction Grammar (based on Dodge 2010)



Spanish and English Verbs



Discussion

- When the construction and the semantic frame meet, the NI licensing results as a consequence of this unification
- The NI interpretation ***type*** (INI or DNI) is set as part of this unification-based NI licensing
- NI licensing or interpretation are not a result of lexical, frame, or constructional factors alone

Conclusions

- NI is not a lexical property
- NI is not a constructional property
- NI is not a frame property
- NI is a phenomenon in overt syntax owed to a combination of frame and constructional properties after unification
- When studying NI, consider both of these dimensions for a particular occurrence
- NI interpretation types (DNI, INI, GNI, CNI, FNI) come down to two: **DNI~INI continuum and CNI applicable to all.**

THANK YOU!

References

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