



## Dative Microvariation in African Varieties of Portuguese

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In this paper we compare dative ditransitive structures in nativized and nativizing urban varieties of Portuguese spoken in Angola, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe, using a corpus-based approach. It is shown that the expression of the Recipient exhibits considerable variation within and across these varieties, as well as at intraspeaker level. Despite the use of non-canonical patterns, namely prepositional structures with *em* and *para* and double object constructions, the canonical European Portuguese pattern with Case marker *a* is predominant in our data. Moreover, the pronominalized counterparts of these different realizations show much less variation and strong convergence toward dative clitic *lhe(s)*. To account for the data, we propose a Larsonian VP-shell in which Recipients as extended DPs occur internally to a K(ase) projection whose functional head can be spelled out as *a*, *em* or *para*. Recipients in double object constructions, on the other hand, are treated as plain DPs which may pronominalize as dative clitics or, less commonly, as strong pronouns. Overall, our hypothesis weakens the role of language contact, which has often been assumed as a critical factor in the literature, but still allows for (individual) grammars that show evidence of being substrate-induced.

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## 1. Introduction

Over the last decades, an increasing body of work has been dealing with African Varieties of Portuguese (AVPs), in particular those spoken in Angola, Mozambique and, more recently, São Tomé and Príncipe. These three AVPs are historically in contact with different languages and language typologies, namely western and southeastern Bantu languages in the former two countries, and a creole language in the latter.

In the spirit of Kayne's (1996, 2000, pp. 5–6) idea that, by examining “pairs (and larger sets) of ever more closely related languages (...) one can hope to reach a point such that the number of observable differences is so small that one can virtually see one property covarying with another”, the aim of this paper is to present a case study in syntactic microvariation using AVPs as a testing ground for formal hypotheses and to better understand how language acquisition, language contact, and language change interact with respect to parameter setting.

In other words, within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995) and considering factors in language design (Chomsky, 2005), we aim to discuss how Factor I, Genetic endowment – the Universal Grammar (UG) – and Factor II, Experience, in which we include sociocultural factors impacting on general cognitive abilities, interact in individual language development and give rise to inter and intra-speaker variation. In particular, we will develop a microparametric study of ditransitive dative structures, which have been at the core of the research on AVPs. Our point of departure is the extensive research on the expression of Recipients through double object constructions (DOCs) attested in both Mozambican and Santomean Portuguese (MOP and STP) and by means of a ditransitive prepositional construction (DPC) introduced by the locative preposition *em* ‘in, on’ in Angolan Portuguese (AP) (e.g., Brito, 2009; Cabral, 2005; Chavagne, 2005; P. Gonçalves, 1991, 2002, 2004, 2010; R. Gonçalves, 2016, 2017, 2020). Since it is traditionally assumed that European Portuguese (EP), the official standard in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, exhibits DPCs introduced by a functional preposition *a* ‘to’, there is a tendency to assign these alternative structures in AVPs to the impact of language contact, given structural similarities with their main contact languages. However, it will be shown that this factor is unable to account for the full range of variation found in contemporary, urban AVPs. It will therefore be argued that these varieties, as natural languages resulting from a historical and ongoing shift from L2 to L1, are driven and constrained by Universal Grammar (UG), with a special role for language contact, which, however, is not exclusive and therefore not as far-reaching as has been claimed in the literature (e.g., Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008).

The paper is structured in the following way. Section 2 briefly addresses dative structures in EP and the role of ambiguous input in L2 acquisition, drawing attention to the two types of DPCs exhibited in EP: on the one hand, a surface DPC, whose head is a functional preposition

(*a*-DP structures), used to express Recipients, and on the other hand a true DPC whose head is a directional (and homophonous) preposition *a* ‘to’, which alternates with *para* ‘to, toward’ (PP structures), in the expression of Goals. In addition, it is shown that Beneficiaries in EP can also be introduced by *a* ‘to’ and cliticize on the verb or else by *para* ‘toward’, which requires its object to pronominalize as a strong pronoun. We argue that the patterning of Goals and Beneficiaries in EP functions as trigger for the processes of variation and change that occur in AVPs.

Section 3 provides a corpus-based description of the dative structures that occur in the three abovementioned AVPs. The discussion focuses on the behavior of full and pronominal NPs in dative structures, and on individual and collective variation within each AVP. Quantitative data show that the dominant structure in AVPs is a DPC introduced by the functional preposition *a*, as in EP, which varies with alternative prepositional strategies (*em*, *para*) and DOCs. Despite the attested variation with full NPs, it will be shown that dative clitics constitute the overarching pronominal pattern, at the detriment of strong pronominal forms.

In section 4, we will discuss dative structures in their primary contact languages Changana, Kimbundu, and Forro (Santome), focusing particularly on word order, object marking, and passives. While Changana exhibits two structures to express Recipients, a DOC, and a DPC introduced by *ka*, dependent on an applied (or pseudo-applied) verb being involved, Kimbundu’s canonical pattern is a DPC introduced by locative marker *ku*. Forro exclusively exhibits DOCs to express Recipients.

Our analysis of the data will be presented in section 5, where we argue that the role of (historical) language contact, ambiguous input from EP, and general principles of language change weighs into the microparametric variation observed in the AVPs. It will further be argued that the syntactic variation observed in AVPs can be reduced to two structures, which may or may not occur in each variety, depending on the attested inter and intra-speaker variation. The dominant structure, which converges with EP, is that of Recipients as extended DPs, projected in Spec, VP, internally to a K(ase)P projection (Fukui & Speas, 1986); the head of the KP can be spelled out as *a* (MOP, STP, AP), *para* (AP, STP) or *em* (AP), which exhibit properties of functional prepositions that assign Case to the DP. In DOCs, on the other hand, Recipients are plain DPs which may pronominalize as dative clitics or as strong pronouns. In the latter case, we argue that KP is not projected. Section 6 summarizes the findings of this study.

## 2. Dative structures in European Portuguese

### 2.1. Surface DPCs

Romance dative structures with the thematic role of Recipient are traditionally identified as DPCs, since the Recipient is introduced by the functional, Case-assigning preposition *a* ‘to’ (e.g., Baker, 1988; Kayne, 1984; Vergnaud, 1974). However, the earlier work on datives has become

somewhat overshadowed by proposals that analyze ditransitive constructions in Romance languages, including EP, as DOCs and applicative constructions (e.g., Spanish: Cuervo, 2003, 2010, 2020; Pineda, 2016, 2020; Portuguese: Torres Morais, 2006, 2012; Torres Morais & Lima Salles, 2010; Torres Morais & Berlinck, 2018, based on the applicative analysis (Pylkkänen, 2002, 2008) and on the idea that transfer-of-possession meaning is restricted to DOCs (e.g., Harley, 2002; Harley & Miyagawa, 2017).

The applicative analysis is drawn from Pylkkänen’s proposal of low applicative heads, and considers that datives in ditransitive structures bear no thematic relation with the verb, the transfer of possession relation being established directly between the Recipient and the Theme. Elsewhere, we have argued against the original applicative analysis of dative structures in EP, both on empirical and theoretical grounds. In particular, we considered that it originated from misinterpretations of both Bantu and Romance data (Duarte, Gonçalves & Hagemeyer, 2017). First, and differently from Romance, applicative extensions in Bantu are a morphological valency-increasing operation, which, when applied to transitive verbs, generally yield a DOC in which the primary object does not necessarily bear the semantic role of Recipient (cf. Larson, 2014). Second, and crucially, Romance languages exhibit true lexical ditransitive verbs, which subcategorize two internal arguments, a property that is actually also found in many Bantu languages, even though with a limited number of verbs. The search for universal properties of the computational system  $C_{HL}$  should not obscure these differences between Romance and Bantu grammars. Therefore, we assume that it is theoretically inadequate and empirically unmotivated to project an applicative head to derive arguments of the verb in Romance on the basis of the properties of applicatives in Bantu.<sup>1</sup>

In EP, preposition *a* has traditionally been analyzed as a dative Case marker (Brito, 2009; Duarte, 1987; Magro, 2019; P. Gonçalves, 1991; R. Gonçalves, 2016; Torres Morais, 2006), which contrasts with the homophonous preposition *a* introducing the transitory Goals of motion verbs and alternates with *para*, which is typically used for permanent Goals. Evidence for the distinction between the functional preposition *a* and the homophonous directional preposition firstly comes from the fact that only the argument introduced by the former can be replaced by the dative clitic *lhe(s)* (see (1–2)), whereas the latter can only be replaced by the adverbial *lá* (cf. (3)).

- (1) (a) *A Maria deu um livro ao João.*  
       ‘Mary gave a book to John.’  
       (b) *A Maria deu-lhe um livro.*  
       ‘Mary gave him a book.’

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<sup>1</sup> See below section 5.2., for arguments against an expletive applicative head as well.

- (2) (a) *A Maria enviou um livro ao João.*  
 ‘Mary sent a book to John.’  
 (b) *A Maria enviou-lhe um livro.*  
 ‘Mary sent him a book.’
- (3) (a) *A Maria enviou um mensageiro {a/para} Lisboa.*  
 ‘Mary sent a messenger to Lisbon.’  
 (b) *A Maria enviou-o {lá/para lá}.*  
 ‘Mary sent him there.’

The functional status of preposition *a* which occurs in ditransitive structures with the thematic role of Recipient finds additional support in its behaviour in coordination structures. As first noticed by Vergnaud (1974, p. 247) for French, functional *a* in EP does not license coordinated NPs, contrasting with the directional preposition *a*, as shown in (4–5).<sup>2</sup>

- (4) (a) *O João deu uma prenda a [este neto e \*(a) esta neta].*  
 the John gave a gift to this grandson and (to) this granddaughter  
 ‘John gave a gift to this grandson and this granddaughter.’  
 (b) *O João enviou um postal a [um amigo e \*(a) uma prima].*  
 the John sent a postcard to a friend and (to.) a cousin  
 ‘John sent a postcard to a friend and to a cousin.’
- (5) (a) *O João foi de férias a [Paris e (a) Nova Iorque].*  
 the John went of holidays to Paris and (to) New York  
 ‘John went on holidays to Paris and New York.’  
 (b) *O João enviou um mensageiro a [Lisboa e (a) Coimbra].*  
 the John sent a messenger to Lisbon and (to) Coimbra  
 ‘John sent a messenger to Lisbon and Coimbra.’

Finally, functional preposition *a* can occur in clitic doubling structures in EP, which, contrary to Spanish and Romanian, is only possible with pronouns and universal bare quantifiers

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<sup>2</sup> Coordination of NPs is only available with bare nouns (Brito, 2008) or when the preposition is not contracted with the determiner (R. Gonçalves, 2016).

- (i) *Fui a exposições e (a) concertos a semana inteira.*  
 ‘I went to exhibitions and (to) concerts the whole week.’  
 (ii) *Fui ao cinema e \*(a) o teatro na semana passada.*  
 ‘I went to the movies and (to) the theater last week.’

*todo(a,s)*, ‘all’, and *ambos(as)*, ‘both’. This construction, labelled ‘pleonastic object’ by traditional grammarians, carries a contrastive focus interpretation.<sup>3</sup>

- (6) (a) *Dei-lhes o quadro {a/\*para} eles*  
 I.gave-them the painting to them  
 ‘I gave THEM the painting (not anybody else).’
- (b) \**Dei-lhes o quadro à Maria e ao João.*  
 I.gave-them the painting to.the Mary and to.the John

In section 5.2 it will be argued that the facts from Portuguese varieties can be accommodated under a modified Larsonian VP-shell (Larson, 1988, 2014) within a view of argument structure which results from the lexical properties of the verbs and the prepositions they combine with (Rappaport-Hovav & Levin, 2008). In particular, ditransitive structures which involve *give*-type verbs (core dative verbs in Rappaport-Hovav and Levin’s (2008) classification) and Recipients in EP will be analyzed as surface DPCs, identifying them as *a*-DP / K(ase)P structures. The head of the KP is a functional preposition which assigns Case to the DP (or a dative clitic); the Recipient is the complement of K. This analysis will also be extended to the dominant pattern found in AVPs, which is analogous to EP.

## 2.2. Ambiguous input

Based on Rappaport-Hovav and Levin’s (2008) distinction between *give*-type verbs, referred to as core dative verbs, and *throw* and *send*-type verbs, labeled as non-core dative verbs, R. Gonçalves (2016) proposes that the argument structure of ditransitive verbs in EP is ambiguous, showing that core dative verbs, such as *dar* ‘give’, *emprestar* ‘lend’, *oferecer* ‘offer’ or *mostrar* ‘show’, which only have a caused possession meaning, exclusively select Recipients introduced by the functional preposition *a* (cf. (1) and (4, a)). On the other hand, non-core dative verbs, such as *enviar* ‘send’, *atirar* ‘throw’, *levar* ‘bring, take’ or *trazer* ‘bring, take’, which have both a caused possession and a caused motion meaning, can select [+ ANIM] Recipients introduced by the functional preposition *a* (cf. (2) and (4.b)), as well as ‘true’ Goals introduced by the homophonous directional preposition *a* (cf. (3) and (5.b)), which is also selected by the directional motion verb *ir* ‘go’ (cf. (5.a)), and varies with *para*.

According to Rappaport-Hovav and Levin (2008), a test involving *wh*-questions shows that *give*-type verbs, unlike *throw/send*-type verbs, lack a Goal argument. Only the argument selected by non-core dative verbs can be questioned by both *quem* ‘whom’ and *onde* ‘where’ and subcategorize [± ANIM] arguments, as illustrated in examples (8–9) below (e.g., Brito, 2010; R.

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<sup>3</sup> Clitic doubling of accusative clitics is also possible.

- (i) *Vi-o {a/\*para} ele.*  
 saw-him to him  
 ‘I saw HIM (not somebody else).’

Gonçalves, 2016). With core dative verbs, the motion reading is unavailable, as illustrated by the ungrammaticality of (7b).

- (7) (a) *A quem é que deste a bola? Ao meu irmão.*  
 ‘To whom did you give the ball? To my brother.’  
 (b) \**Aonde é que deste a bola? À escola.*  
 ‘Where did you give the ball to? To the school.’
- (8) (a) *A quem é que enviaste a carta? Ao meu irmão.*  
 ‘To whom did you send the letter? To my brother.’  
 (b) *Aonde é que enviaste a empregada? Ao mercado.*  
 ‘Where did you send the maid to? To the market.’
- (9) (a) *A quem é que atiraste a bola? Atirei-a ao meu irmão.*  
 ‘To whom did you throw the ball? To my brother.’  
 (b) *Aonde é que atiraste a bola? À parede.*  
 ‘Where did you throw the ball to? To the wall.’

Furthermore, *a* can alternate with *para* with non-core dative verbs, irrespective of the direct object being [ $\pm$ ANIM].

- (10) (a) *Para onde é que enviaste o rapaz? Para a cidade.*  
 ‘Where did you send the boy to? To the city.’  
 (b) *Para onde é que enviaste/atiraste a carta? Para {Lisboa/o caixote de lixo}.*  
 ‘Where did you send/throw the letter to? To Lisbon/the trash can.’

In addition to the ambiguity in the argument structure of dative verbs, plain Beneficiaries (Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997)<sup>4</sup> in EP can be introduced by both *a* and *para* and cliticize through dative *lhe(s)* or strong pronouns introduced by the preposition *para* (cf. (11)) (e.g., Brito, 2009).

- (11) (a) *A Maria preparou uma festa **ao filho** / preparou-**lhe** uma festa.*  
 ‘Mary prepared a party for her son / prepared him a party.’  
 (b) *A Maria preparou uma festa **para o filho** / **para ele**.*  
 ‘Mary prepared a party for her son / for him.’

Furthermore, contrary to what happens with Recipients, with plain Beneficiaries, the internal direct argument is typically an affected Theme, as with verbs like *preparar*, ‘prepare’, *assar/cozer* ‘bake’, *compôr*, ‘compose’, *construir*, ‘build’, *desenhar*, ‘draw’, *fazer*, ‘make’, etc.

From the perspective of an L2 acquirer/learner, the ambiguity caused by constructions involving non-core dative verbs and Beneficiaries may therefore be taken as evidence that datives in general can be introduced by *a* ‘to’ or *para* ‘toward’, leading to inter and intra-speaker variation.

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<sup>4</sup> Using the distinction between different types of Beneficiaries, plain Beneficiaries refer to cases in which the Beneficiary benefits from the action performed by the Agent.



In the next section, we will describe and discuss the properties of dative structures in each of the three AVPs, with a strong emphasis on variation.

### 3. Dative structures in African Varieties of Portuguese

#### 3.1. Background and methodology

Portuguese in Africa has been historically acquired as an L2, with a consistent tendency toward nativization in Angola, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe, in particular since the independence of these countries in 1975. Portuguese is by far the most spoken language in São Tomé and Príncipe (98,4%), whereas the predominant creole, Forro, is nowadays only spoken by 36,2% of the population (INE, 2012); in Angola, 71,15% of the population indicates that Portuguese is the most spoken language at home, whereas a major Bantu language such as Kimbundu is spoken at home by only 7,82% (INE, 2014); in Mozambique, Portuguese is spoken by almost half of the population, which includes 16,6% of L1 speakers (INE, 2017). Although the censuses do not provide the full picture, the numbers of Portuguese speakers are considerably higher in the urban areas. Particularly in the case of Luanda and São Tomé, Portuguese is generally L1 and/or the primary language, with considerable and increasing monolingualism in this language, especially among the younger generations, which make up a substantial part of the total population.

This case study is based on comparable spoken urban corpora of MOP, AP, and STP that were prepared within the project *Possession and Location: microvariation in African varieties of Portuguese* (PALMA). The corpora were collected between 2008 and 2020 and were as much as possible balanced according to level of education, age, and gender, both corpus-internally and across the three corpora (for further details, cf. Hagemeyer et al., 2022). The interviews that integrate the corpora are predominantly semi-structured. The speakers are either monolinguals in Portuguese or bilinguals, but, for the large majority, Portuguese is their L1 or primary language, especially in the case of AP and STP. **Table 1** provides an overview of the corpora.

	interview	hours of recording	tokens	year of recording
<b>Angola</b>	58	34	393,745	2012–2013, 2019
<b>Mozambique</b>	70	42	380,958	2010, 2020
<b>São Tomé and Príncipe</b>	77	32	322,999	2008, 2011–2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>1,097,702</b>	

**Table 1:** Profile of the PALMA corpora.



For comparative purposes, a total of 15 different core dative verbs were selected for analysis, based on the following requirements: occurrence in the three corpora and selection of a Recipient. **Table 2** presents the list of verbs under analysis, organized by subclass of core dative verb, following Levin’s (1993) classification.

Core dative verbs	
act of giving	<i>dar</i> ‘to give’; <i>emprestar</i> ‘to lend’; <i>entregar</i> ‘to hand’; <i>passar</i> ‘to pass’
verbs of transfer of a message	<i>apresentar</i> ‘to present’; <i>comunicar</i> ‘to communicate’; <i>contar</i> ‘to tell’; <i>dizer</i> ‘to say’; <i>ensinar</i> ‘to teach’; <i>explicar</i> ‘to explain’; <i>falar</i> ‘to speak’; <i>mostrar</i> ‘to show’; <i>pedir</i> ‘to ask’; <i>perguntar</i> ‘to ask’; <i>transmitir</i> ‘to transmit’

**Table 2:** Core datives occurring in ditransitive constructions in AVPs.

Dative structures found in lexicalizations, idiomatic expressions, and complex predicates of the type <light verb + deverbal noun> were excluded from the extracted data set.

## 3.2. Ditransitive structures in spoken urban corpora

### 3.2.1. Mozambican Portuguese

In extensive work on MOP carried out by P. Gonçalves (1991, 2002, 2004, 2010), it is argued that the occurrence of DOCs and dative passives are the result of a combination of ambiguous input of EP and language contact with L1 Bantu languages. In particular, she argues that “analyzed from the perspective of B[antu] L[anguage] parameter settings, the European Portuguese data could suggest that I[ndirect] O[bject] arguments can be realized as a simple nominal – the dative clitic *lhe* – and that the [...] presence of the preposition is not indispensable to the grammaticality of these sentences” (P. Gonçalves, 2002, p. 336). The spoken corpus collected and analyzed by P. Gonçalves in 1986/1987 to support this hypothesis consisted of 40 interviews, corresponding to 14 hours of recordings and approx. 140,000 transcribed words. She found 10 DOCs, 14 DPCs headed by preposition *a*, as well as 8 occurrences of dative passives (P. Gonçalves, 1991, p. 83). The percentage of DOCs and DPCs in this corpus is therefore roughly 40% and 60% respectively.

Our corpus of urban spoken MOP confirms the presence of these structures. **Table 3** illustrates the frequencies of DOC and DPCs in MOP with full NPs.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Note that the corpus also exhibits the occurrence of a DPC introduced by preposition *em* with the verb *pedir* ‘to ask’. Since it only occurs once with a full NP and once with pronominal NPs, these two cases were excluded from the quantification. The informants who produced these structures belong to a group which also exhibits DPCs introduced by both *a* and *para*, as well as dative clitics, which means that it is not an exclusive structure in their individual grammar (see **Table 12** and subsequent discussion).

	Full NP	
	nr.	%
<b>DOC</b>	42	29,6%
<b>DPCa</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>60,6%</b>
<b>DPCpara</b>	14	9,9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3:** Frequencies of ditransitive structures in MOP with full NPs.

As the quantitative data underscore, Recipients introduced by *a* represent the dominant pattern with full NPs (cf. (12)).

- (12) (a) *O Ministério da Educação, na altura, dava bolsa aos estudantes.*  
 ‘The Ministry of Education, back then, gave scholarships to the students.’  
 (b) *...contava isso ao papá.*  
 ‘...told that to her daddy’

(MOP urban spoken corpus)

The use of the preposition *para* to introduce Recipients is also attested, but only on a limited scale.

- (13) (a) *... ela conseguiu com muito suor dar uma base para todos os filhos.*  
 ‘...with great effort, she managed to give a solid foundation to all her children.’  
 (b) *O avô ensinou changana para o pai.*  
 ‘Grandpa taught Changana to dad.’

(MOP urban spoken corpus)

In addition to DPCs, DOCs make up 29,6% of the ditransitive constructions with full NPs in the MOP corpus.

- (14) (a) *...tenho ido à pregação (...) ensinar os outros a Bíblia.*  
 ‘...I have been going to the preaching (...) to teach the others the Bible.’  
 (b) *... dar os meus filhos aquilo que eu não tive.*  
 ‘...to give my children what I didn’t have.’

(MOP urban spoken corpus)

However, approximately half of the occurrences of DOCs involve a null Theme argument (20/42), as shown in (15).

- (15) (a) *Um belo dia pego o pneu, vou emprestar [-] um amigo meu.*  
 ‘One day I will take the tire and loan (it) to a friend of mine.’
- (b) *...vou levar as coisa que tem aqui, dividir, entregar [-] cada um.*  
 ‘I will take the things that are here, split them up, and hand them to each one.’  
 (MOP urban spoken *corpus*)

The corpus further exhibits 15 dative passives, which were produced by 5 out of 64 informants. Although 2 out of these 5 speakers did not produce DOCs in our corpus, we are assuming that the use of dative passives is contingent upon grammars that license DOCs. Strikingly, 10 out of 15 dative passives in our spoken corpus were produced by the same informant, who, as expected, also produced DOCs.

- (16) (a) *Nós fomos ditos que guerra acabou.*  
 ‘We were told that the war was over.’
- (b) *... mas eu fui oferecida ali grinalda e ramo para poder me casar.*  
 ‘...but there I was offered wreath and bouquet so I could get married.’  
 (MOP urban spoken *corpus*)

Altogether, while DOCs and dative passives still occur in MOP, they appear to have become less common and more restricted than they were in the corpus collected by P. Gonçalves more than thirty years ago. This can be related to increased exposure and access to (European) Portuguese, driven primarily by schooling and the language’s role as a lingua franca, which has boosted the acquisition and nativization process and hereby the overall proficiency in Portuguese.

In addition to full-fledged NPs, **Table 4** shows the distribution of pronominalized Recipients according to structure.

	Pronominal NP	
	nr.	%
<b>dative clitic</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>87,5%</b>
<b>a + strong pronoun</b>	34	9,0%
<b>para + strong pronoun</b>	13	3,5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4:** Frequencies of ditransitive structures in MOP with pronominalized Recipients.

The table shows that the use of a dative clitic is largely preferred over structures with a strong pronoun (87,5% vs. 12,5%) (cf. (17)).

- (17) (a) ... *mas eu já **lhe disse** que ele é que vai ter que se converter.*  
 ‘...but I have already told him that he will have to convert himself.’  
 (b) *O estado tem que **me dar** uma percentagem, nem que seja ínfima.*  
 ‘The state has to give me a percentage, no matter how small.’  
 (MOP urban spoken *corpus*)

In fact, only 47 out of 376 occurrences of pronominal NPs involve a strong pronoun, with a clear preference for preposition *a*; there are only few occurrences of preposition *para* with a strong pronoun (cf. (18.a-b)). Moreover, the data also show that DOCs in MOP are restricted to full NPs, since we did not find instances of strong pronouns that were not introduced by a preposition (\*V PRON DO).

- (18) (a) *Eu **conto** histórias **a eles** e eles contam a mim.*  
 ‘I tell stories to them and they tell stories to me.’  
 (b) *Tinham prometido que iam dar novos sítios **para elas**.*  
 ‘They had promised they would give new spots to them.’  
 (MOP urban spoken *corpus*)

We will now address the role of individual variation exhibited by MOP, in order to assess to what extent the structures presented above co-occur in the grammar of individual speakers and groups of speakers. An informant-based analysis of the data shows that only 64 out of 70 informants exhibit ditransitive structures with the analyzed verbs; moreover, it also reveals that is possible to distinguish between three groups of informants. The results are presented in **Table 5**.

		Group I	Group II	Group III
Full NPs	DOC			√
	DPC $a$	√	√	√
	DPC $para$		√	√
Pronominal NPs	Dative clitic	√	√	√
	$a$ + strong pronoun		√	√
	$para$ + strong pronoun		√	√
Number of Informants		30	15	19
		64		

**Table 5:** Distribution of ditransitive structures in MOP among groups of informants.

The following distribution of patterns can be observed in **Table 5**: a) structures with DPCs exclusively introduced by *a* and/or involving dative clitics occur in a Group of 30 informants (Group I); b) DPCs introduced by both *a* and *para* co-occur with dative clitics in the production

of 15 informants (Group II), although the full spectrum of variation is not observed in all informants; c) DOC and DPCs introduced by both *a* and *para*, as well as dative clitics, co-occur in the grammar of 19 informants (Group III).

Cutting across these generalizations, all the speakers in Group II exhibit a ditransitive structure with a dative clitic, even when they also produce DPCs introduced by *para*, with both full and pronominal NPs; moreover, in most of the cases the dative clitic co-occurs in the grammar of the speaker with preposition *a* + strong pronoun (9 out of 15 informants). With respect to Group III, there are informants that do not exhibit DPCs introduced by preposition *a* with full NPs, as well as informants that produce DPCs introduced by preposition *para* with full NPs or a DPC with prepositions *a/para* + strong pronoun. The common pattern among the 19 speakers in Group III, however, is that they all exhibit DOCs and or/dative passives with full NPs and dative clitics.

In sum, the data above show that MOP exhibits considerable variation in the expression of indirect objects. DPCs with *a* and especially dative clitics constitute the predominant sentence patterns, following the grammar of EP. While DOCs are attested, they generally compete with DPCs at the level of individual speakers. All in all, the data suggest that the expression of dative objects in urban MOP is increasingly transitioning toward the patterns found in EP, since DPC *a* is or has become the predominant input.

### 3.2.2 Angolan Portuguese

Most descriptions of spoken AP focus on the urban variety spoken in Luanda and briefly mention the generalized use of preposition *em* ‘in’, especially with verbs of movement, but also to select Recipients. This grammatical change is generally assigned to language contact with Kimbundu<sup>6</sup> (e.g., Adriano, 2014; Chavagne, 2005; Miguel, 2003; Mingas, 2000). **Table 6** illustrates the frequencies of the different dative strategies with full NPs in the corpus data.

	Full NP	
	nr.	%
DOC	6	6,6%
DPC $a$	53	58,2%
DPC $em$	27	29,7%
DPC $para$	5	5,5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6:** Frequencies of ditransitive structures in AP with full NPs.

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<sup>6</sup> Also known as Mbundu (H21) in the literature.

It follows from the table that DPCs introduced by *a* are the dominant structure (58,2%) to express datives with full NPs in AP (cf. (19)).

- (19) (a) ... **dar** *nossa metade do salário* **ao colega**.  
 ‘...give half of our salary to a colleague.’  
 (b) ...*essa é a minha mensagem que eu passo a todas as minhas amigas*.  
 ‘...that is the message I pass on to all my girlfriends.’  
 (AP urban spoken corpus)

However, this structure is in variation with DPCs introduced by *em* (29,7%), and less commonly with DPCs introduced by *para* (5,5%) (cf. (20–21)).

- (20) (a) *Vai dar também os cinquenta mil naquela pessoa*.  
 ‘He will also give fifty thousand to that person.’  
 (b) *Conforme eu já disse agora no doutor*.  
 ‘As I just told you.’  
 (21) (a) ...*o governo não vai dar emprego para todos de uma só vez*.  
 ‘...the government won’t give a job to everybody at once.’  
 (b) ...*ensinar a minha língua nacional para as criança*.  
 ‘...teach my national language to the children.’  
 (AP urban spoken corpus)

Finally, the AP spoken urban corpus exhibits a couple of structures without a preposition introducing the Recipient (6,6%).

- (22) (a) *Qualquer um deve aprender a língua materna, para amanhã também ensinar o seu filho*.  
 ‘Anyone should learn his mother tongue, so they can teach their children tomorrow.’  
 (b) ...*qualquer confidência que estavam entregue, eles iam comunicar os brancos*.  
 ‘...any confidential information that was provided to them, they would communicate to the white people.’  
 (AP urban spoken corpus)

However, these structures typically involve null direct objects (cf. (22)). Differently from MOP, however, dative passives are not attested in the analyzed corpus.

Ditransitive structures with pronominal NPs are presented in **Table 7** below, highlighting the role of the dative clitics, which represent an almost exclusive pattern in this variety (95,4%) (cf. (23)).

- (23) (a) ... *não consigo dar-lhe essa informação*.  
 ‘...I can’t give you that information.’

- (b) ...*eu posso dizer-lhe que faltou-me concluir, mas tenho a certeza que vou terminar.*  
 ‘...I can tell you that I still have to finish [my studies], but I’m sure I will.’

(AP urban spoken corpus)

	Pronominal NP	
	nr.	%
<b>dative clitic</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>95,4%</b>
<b>a + strong pronoun</b>	2	1,0%
<b>para + strong pronoun</b>	7	3,6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7:** Frequencies of ditransitive structures in AP with pronominal NPs.

Datives only occasionally occur as a strong pronoun, introduced by preposition *para* (3,6%) (cf. (24.a-b)) or *a* (1,0%) (cf. (24.c)).

- (24) (a) ... *é um exemplo que eu posso dar para ele.*

‘...it’s an example I can give him.’

- (b) ... *não transmitimos a eles a língua materna.*

‘...we don’t pass on the mother tongue to them.’

(AP urban spoken corpus)

We will now turn to the role of speaker variation in AP. First, 54 out of 58 informants exhibit ditransitive structures with the analyzed verbs. An analysis of the data by informant leads to the conclusion that it is possible to distinguish between three groups of informants, with the realization of a DPC introduced by *em*, the second most used sentence pattern, being the differentiating factor in Group III. Table 8 lays out these findings.

		Group I	Group II	Group III
<b>Full NPs</b>	<b>DOC</b>		√	√
	<b>DPCa</b>	√	√	√
	<b>DPCpara</b>		√	√
	<b>DPCem</b>			√

(Contd.)



		Group I	Group II	Group III
Pronominal NPs	Dative clitic	√	√	√
	<i>a</i> + strong pronoun		√	√
	<i>para</i> + strong pronoun		√	√
Number of Informants		27	10	17
		54		

**Table 8:** Distribution of ditransitive structures in AP among groups of informants.

As illustrated in the table above, informants from Group I all exhibit exclusively DPCs introduced by *a* and/or the dative clitic. On the other hand, informants from Group II did not produce DPCs introduced by *em*, but produce the other available sentence patterns. The use of the dative clitic is a regular property among these speakers. Finally, informants from Group III all exhibit DPCs introduced by *em* and dative clitics, with the exception of two informants, who exhibit DPCs introduced by both *a* and *para* (one speaker) and a DPC introduced exclusively by *em* (one speaker). As mentioned previously, DOCs are a marginal sentence pattern in AP: not only do they occur typically with null Theme objects, but also the speakers using DOCs (two in Group II and three in Group III) use DPCs introduced by *a* and/or *em*, and, without exception, dative clitics.

In sum, despite the range of observed variation among AP speakers, the data show a clear preference for a grammar that favors the occurrence of DPCs, in particular *DPCa* and *DPCem*, contrasting with the two other varieties where the main variation is between *DPCa* and DOC. Moreover, the data show that there is limited variation in the use of the preposition that introduces datives in AP: Recipients are mainly introduced by the preposition *a* ‘to’ and dative clitics are preferred over strong pronominal forms, even as the pronominal counterpart of DPCs introduced by *em* and *para*. The conclusion is therefore that prepositions *em* and *para* in the AP structures at stake are only superficially distinct but exhibit the same functional nature as *a* in EP.

### 3.2.3 Santomean Portuguese

Ditransitive structures in STP are extensively discussed in R. Gonçalves (2016, 2017, 2020), who argues that this AVP exhibits two structures to express Recipients, namely DPCs, introduced by prepositions *a* or *para*, and DOCs (cf. (24–25)). Table 9 illustrates the frequencies of DOCs and DPCs in STP, with full NPs.

Table 9 shows balanced variation between two main sentence patterns in the case of full NPs, namely DPCs introduced by preposition *a* (25) and DOCs (26).

	Full NP	
	nr.	%
<b>DOC</b>	51	46,4
<b>DPC<sub>a</sub></b>	51	46,4
<b>DPC<sub>para</sub></b>	8	7,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 9:** Frequencies of ditransitive structures in STP with full NPs.

- (25) (a) ... *para darmos bolsa de estudo a alguns alunos.*  
 ‘...to give scholarships to some students.’  
 (b) *eu posso entregar o carro a um indivíduo para trabalhar.*  
 ‘...I can deliver the car to somebody for work.’
- (26) (a) *Entrega senhor uma cerveja.*  
 ‘Give the man a beer.’  
 (b) *Tenho orgulho de ensinar meus filho a língua materna.*  
 ‘I’m proud to teach my children the mother tongue.’

(STP urban spoken corpus)

The occurrence of DPCs introduced by *para*, on the other hand, is limited (7,3%) (27).

- (27) (a) *De vez em quando há histórias que nós contamos para criança.*  
 ‘Sometimes there are stories we tell the children.’  
 (b) *há poucos falantes (...), porque [-] devia ser passado para jovem.*  
 ‘there are few speakers, because it should have been passed on to the young people.’

(STP urban spoken corpus)

These results are in line with R. Gonçalves (2016), whose study of ditransitive constructions was, in fact, based on a slightly smaller version of the corpus used for this paper. Her work, however, showed more extensive variation with DPCs introduced by *para*. This difference can be assigned to the smaller set of verbs that are being analyzed here, but it also suggests that the use of preposition *para* (or different sentence patterns in general) can be related to certain classes and subclasses of verbs occurring in ditransitive constructions, and possibly as well to the frequency of use of verbs.<sup>7</sup>

Let us now turn to **Table 10**, which presents the absolute numbers and corresponding percentages of ditransitive structures with pronominalized NPs in STP.

<sup>7</sup> Two of the verbs occurring in DPCs introduced by *para* in R. Gonçalves (2016) were not used in this study, namely the verb of creation *criar* ‘create’ and *vender* ‘sell’. Note also that, according to R. Gonçalves (2016), DPCs introduced by *para* are more prone to occur with noncore dative verbs, due to the ambiguity in their argument structure (see section 2).

	Pronominal NP	
	nr.	%
<b>dative clitic</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>87,0</b>
<b>strong pronoun</b>	18	11,1
<b><i>para</i> + strong pronoun</b>	3	1,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10:** Frequencies of ditransitive structures in STP with pronominal NPs.

As we have seen for MOP and AP, the STP data also show a strong preference for the dative clitic (87,0%) (cf. (28)).

(28) (a) *Eu pedi-lhe que me levasse para o mercado.*

‘I asked him to take me to the market.’

(b) *... pode contar-lhe essa história.*

‘...you can tell him that story.’

However, differently from the other two varieties under analysis, STP displays an alternative pronominalization pattern with strong pronouns that are not headed by a preposition, which function as the pronominalized counterpart of DOCs (29).

(29) (a) *Ele tem que esforçar para dar ele estudo.*

‘He needs to make an effort to give him an education.’

(b) *... dar ele papa ou sumo de laranja.*

‘to give him porridge or orange juice.’

(STP urban spoken corpus)

The occurrence of preposition *para* + strong pronoun is highly restricted (1,9%).

(30) (a) *...a minha avó contava para mim.*

‘...my grandmother used to tell me.’

(b) *...dou o máximo para eles, dou-lhes carinho.*

‘I give my all to them, I give them affection.’

(STP urban spoken corpus)

Following R. Gonçalves (2016), four groups of informants can be distinguished with respect to variation between the abovementioned structures. Note that only 65 out of 77 informants exhibit ditransitive structures with the analyzed verbs. Table 11 shows the availability of ditransitive structures in STP in four groups of informants.

		Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV
<b>Full NPs</b>	<b>DOC</b>			√	√
	<b>DPC<sub>a</sub></b>	√	√	√	
	<b>DPC<sub>para</sub></b>		√	√	
<b>Pronominal NPs</b>	<b>Dative clitic</b>	√	√	√	
	<b>strong pronoun</b>			√	√
	<b><i>para</i> + strong pronoun</b>		√	√	
<b>Number of Informants</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>
		<b>64</b>			

**Table 11:** Distribution of ditransitive structures in STP according to groups of informants.

As shown in the table above, productions of Group I, which correspond to almost half of the informants (30/64 or 46,8%), are characterized by the exclusive use of DPCs introduced by preposition *a* and/or dative clitics. Informants from Group II, which constitute a very small group (6/64 or 9,3%), exhibit DPCs introduced by both *a* and *para*, with full and pronominal NPs, although five out of six also exhibit dative clitics in their productions, including those who produce DPCs introduced by *para*. This leads us to conclude that also in this variety clitics are the morphological counterpart of DPCs introduced by *para*.

On the other hand, informants from Group III, which form the second larger group, exhibit both DOCs and DPCs introduced by *a* (and *para*) with both full and/or pronominal NPs. It is worth noting that 20 out of 22 informants exhibit dative clitics in their productions, including those who exhibit a DOC with full and/or pronominal NPs, highlighting the individual variation between the two structures. The other 2 informants, who didn't produce dative clitics but exhibit DOCs, also produce DPCs introduced by *a*, which indicates further individual variation. Only 3 out of 22 informants exhibit a DPC introduced by *para*; however, this structure co-occurs in the individual grammar of the informants with a DPC introduced by *a* and/or a dative clitic. As a result, the analyzed data emphasizes the co-occurrence of DOCs and DPCs in the grammar of a group of STP informants (22/64 or 34,4%).

Finally, Group IV is a small group of speakers (6/64 or 9,3%) which exclusively exhibit DOCs with full and/or pronominal NPs. This contrasts with AP and MOP, where we did not identify a group of informants with an exclusive structure different from the DPC introduced by preposition *a* or a dative clitic (Group I).

## 4. Ditransitive structures in contact languages

In order to assess the role of language contact, this section discusses how dative structures pattern in the main contact languages of the three AVPs, Changana, Kimbundu, and Forro.

### 4.1. Changana (Mozambique)

As in many Bantu languages (Hyman & Duranti, 1982), Recipients in Changana (S53) can occur with a small group of non-derived ditransitive verbs, i.e., verbs that select two internal arguments. With these verbs, Recipients occur typically adjacent to the verb (cf. (31.a)), can occupy the subject position of passive sentences (cf. (31.b)), and can be anaphorically recovered by an object marker (cf. (31.c)).

- (31) (a) *Mamani a-nyik-ile n'wana pawa.*  
 1mum 1SM-give-PST 1child bread  
 'Mum gave the child some bread.'

(Chimbutane, 2002, p. 108)

- (b) *N'wana a-nyik-iw-ile pawa.*  
 1child 1SM-give-PASS-PST 5bread  
 'The child was given some bread.'

(Chimbutane, 2002, p. 118)

- (c) *Mamani a-mu-nyik-ile pawa.*  
 1mum 1SM-1OM-give-PST 5bread  
 'Mum gave him / her some bread.'

(Chimbutane, 2002, p. 117)

With these non-derived core dative verbs, the DOC construction in (31.a) above does not alternate with a DPC (introduced by *ka* in this language) (cf. (32)).

- (32) \**Mamani a-nyik-ile pawa ka n'wana.*  
 1mum 1SM-give-PST 5bread to 1child  
 Int. 'The mother gave some bread to the child.'

(F. Chimbutane, p.c.)

In addition to non-derived ditransitives, Changana also exhibits core dative verb roots, such as *nyikel* 'hand(to)', which result from a diachronic process of lexicalization of a verb root (*nyik-*) and the applicative extension *-el*.<sup>8</sup> Differently from non-derived roots, these forms are able to license DOCs and DPCs introduced by preposition *ka* (cf. (33)).

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<sup>8</sup> The fully lexicalized status of the verb root and *-el* follows from the fact that this new root is able to occur with an applicative extension (for example to introduce a Beneficiary) and from the restriction that applicative extensions are not recursive in Changana. Note further that in Changana, as in many Bantu languages, monotransitive verbs can generally be ditransitized by adding an applicative extension, as illustrated in the following example, where applicative *-el* licenses the Goal argument *mfumu*:

- (33) (a) *N'wana a-nyikel-ile kokwani papila*  
 1child 1SM-hand-PST 1grandpa/1grandma 5letter  
 'The child handed his grandpa/grandma the letter.'
- (b) *N'wana a-nyikel-ile papila ka kokwani.*  
 1child 1SM-hand-PST 5letter to 1grandpa/1grandma  
 'The child handed the letter to his grandpa/grandma.'

(F. Chimbutane, p.c)

Moreover, the Recipient may occur as a pronoun incorporated into the verb, with the same form of an object marker (cf. (34.a)), or as the object of prepositional *ka* (cf. (34.b)).

- (34) (a) *N'wana a-mu-nyikel-ile papila.*  
 1child 1SM-1OM-hand-PST 5letter  
 'The child handed him/her the letter.'
- (b) *N'wana a-nyikel-ile papila ka yena.*  
 1child 1SM-hand-PST 5letter to 3SG  
 'The child handed the letter to him/her.'

(F. Chimbutane, p.c.)

Finally, in both cases the Recipient can occupy the subject position in passive sentences.

- (35) (a) *Kokwani a-nyikel-iw-ile papila.*  
 1grandpa/1grandma 1SM-hand-PAS-PST 5letter  
 'Grandpa/grandma was handed a letter.'
- (b) *Ka kokwani ku-nyikel-iw-ile papila.*  
 to 1grandpa/1grandma 17SM-hand-PAS-PST 5letter  
 'To grandpa/grandma's place was handed/delivered a letter.'

(F. Chimbutane, p.c.)

With respect to examples such as (35.b), Chimbutane (2002, p. 131) states that "the passivized constituent in this case is no longer a goal but rather a locative. That is, [*ka kokwani*] is not analyzed as the "intended recipient" of the letter but rather a "location" to which such a letter has been sent."

In sum, Changana exhibits two structures to express Recipients with core dative verbs, a DOC and a DPC. The former is the exclusive structure with non-derived verbs, such as *nyik* 'to give' and *komba* 'to show', which are inherently semantic and syntactic ditransitives, whereas the latter is additionally available with verb roots which exhibit a lexicalized applicative extension, such as *nyikel* 'hand to'.

- 
- (i) *Va-rimi va-tsal-el-ile m-fumu papila.*  
 1-farmer 1SM-write-AP-PST 3-government 5letter  
 'The farmers wrote a letter to the government.' (Chimbutane, 2002, p. 244)

Bantu applicatives typically also license other thematic roles, such as Beneficiaries, Locatives, and Reason.

## 4.2. Kimbundu (Angola)

Predicates with a transfer of possession feature in Kimbundu require locative marker *ku* to introduce the Recipient. This marker, which diachronically derives from noun class marker 17, behaves like a free morpheme in the contexts under analysis (cf. Diarra, 1990; Hagemeijer et al., 2019). Kimbundu also exhibits differential object marking based on animacy, since only Recipients are introduced by a locative marker and connective/genitive morpheme *-a*, as shown in (36.a). Similarly to Changana, pronominalized Recipients in Kimbundu occur as class-based prefixes attached to the verb root (cf. (36.b)).

- (36) (a) *Nga-bana ma-divulu ku-a a-thu.*  
 1SG.PST-give 6-book LOC-CONN 2-person  
 ‘I gave the books to the people.’
- (b) *Nga-a-bana ma-divulu.*  
 1SG.PST-2OM-give 6-book  
 ‘I gave them the books.’

(A. Miguel, p.c.)

Kimbundu lacks overt passive morphology (e.g., Chatelain 1888–89; Givón, 1994), but allows for impersonal structures with the interpretation of functional passives.<sup>9</sup>

- (37) *Ku-a a-thu a-a-bana divulu.*  
 LOC-CONN 2-person 3PL-2OM-give 5book  
 ‘The people were given the book.’

(A. Miguel, p.c.)

DOCs are not allowed in Kimbundu, irrespective of the relative word order between objects.

- (38) *\*Nga-bana (a-thu) ma-divulu (a-thu)*  
 1SG.PST-give 2-person 6-books (2-person)

In sum, ditransitive verbs in Kimbundu expressing Recipients only occur in the form of DPCs.

## 4.3. Forro

DOCs are a property of most Atlantic creole languages (e.g., Adone, 2004; Michaelis & Haspelmath, 2003; Bruyn, Muysken & Verrips, 1999), and are also the dominant structure to express [ $\pm$  ANIM] Recipients in Forro, the Portuguese-related creole historically in contact with STP (cf. (39)).

- (39) *Ê tlega sun alê tlê-tlêxi kwa se.*  
 3SG hand Mr. king RED-three thing DEM  
 ‘S/he handed all these three things to the king.’

(Forro, *Corpus CLUL*<sup>10</sup>)

<sup>9</sup> Similar patterns have, for instance, been described for the Bantu language Mbuun (Bostoen & Mundeke, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hagemeijer et al. (2014).



Recipients cliticize to the verb (cf. Hagemeyer, 2007).

- (40) Mosu se tleg'e dôsu livlu.  
 boy DEM hand.3SG two book  
 'The boy handed him/her two books.'

(Forro, *Corpus CLUL*)

Dative passives (indeed, syntactic passives in general) are not attested in Forro. To sum up, Forro does not exhibit dative alternation between DOC and DPC to express Recipients with core dative verbs.

In the next section, we will summarize the structures exhibited in the AVPs and their contact languages to assess the role of contact language with respect to the observed patterns.

## 5. Towards an analysis

### 5.1. The interplay between language contact and EP input

Studies on post-colonial varieties tend to emphasize the grammatical properties shared between the nativized/nativizing varieties and the contact languages. In sections 3 and 4 above, we presented and discussed the dative structures with core dative verbs observed in each of the urban African varieties considered here, as well as their primary contact languages, and the degree of regularity in the productions of the informants at individual and group level. **Table 12** summarizes the data.

		MOP	Changana	AP	Kimbundu	STP	Forro
Full NPs	DPC	√	√	√	√	√	X
	DOC	√	√	(√)	X	√	√
	dative passive	√	√	X	X	X	X
Pronominal NPs	dative clitic	√	X	√	X	√	√
	object marker	X	√	X	√	X	X
	prep. + strong pron.	√	√	√	X	√	X

**Table 12:** Dative structures with core dative verbs in AVPs and contact languages.

From a merely comparative perspective of the broad sentence patterns available, the table shows that DPCs and dative clitics are observed across the three varieties at stake. Moreover, MOP and STP have in common that Recipients are commonly expressed through DOCs and DPCs, whereas AP shows a clear preference for DPCs. STP and AP, on their turn, can be set apart from MOP due to the absence of dative passives.

At first sight, a rough comparison of the information contained in the table suggests that language contact is a determining factor in the expression of Recipients in these AVPs, since (i) both Changana and MOP exhibit two dative sentence patterns and dative passives, (ii) both STP and Forro exhibit DOCs, but no dative passives, and (iii) AP and Kimbundu only exhibit

DPCs and lack dative passives. That the role of language contact cannot be simply downplayed also follows from the numbers regarding the predominant alternative patterns to standard DPCa: DOCs with full NPs in MOP and STP represent respectively 29,6% and 46,4% of the occurrences; DPCs introduced by *em* in AP correspond to 29,7% of the contexts. As shown in section 4, DOCs in the former two varieties are clearly based on the predominant pattern in the contact languages (Changana and Forro), whereas the DPC with locative preposition *em* in AP is arguably based on a similar syntactic pattern with KB locative marker *ku*. All in all, when crossing the different patterns available in the AVPs with the patterns in the main contact languages, structural convergence can therefore be observed to some extent.

The weak phonetic status and the lack of semantic transparency of preposition *a* as input for L2 acquisition, combined with the observed EP ambiguous input in the expression of [+ANIM] Goals with non-core dative verbs and Beneficiaries (*a/para*), arguably function as additional factors in the process of restructuring toward the contact languages.

The contact hypothesis has been extensively explored by P. Gonçalves (1991, 2002, 2004, 2010) with respect to MOP. She proposes that MOP speakers start out with the parameter settings of their L1 Bantu languages while acquiring Portuguese, and that ambiguous input leads to the retention of features that are non-convergent with EP. Analyzed from the perspective of Bantu languages parameters, P. Gonçalves further argues that the occurrence of the dative clitic may suggest to the learners/acquirers that preposition *a* is not required for Case assignment. Therefore, she claims that this preposition is absent from the initial acquisition stages and introduced in more advanced stages of acquisition, where it becomes part of the underlying Bantu Case-marking system. With respect to Recipients in MOP (Beneficiaries in P. Gonçalves' terminology), it is therefore claimed that DOCs are cases of incorporation of preposition *a* (à la Baker, 1988). Moreover, she argues that, since Bantu nouns with the semantic feature [+human] occupy the most prominent syntactic positions (e.g., Hyman & Duranti, 1982), in final stages of acquisition, MOP speakers reanalyze the preposition *a* as what we would nowadays call a differential object marker, introducing nouns with the semantic feature [+human]. As a result, she claims, in MOP grammar, direct objects are introduced by *a* or realized as *lhe(s)* in intermediate and final stages of acquisition.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Although an in-depth discussion of this analysis goes beyond the scope of this paper, we carried out a brief comparison with the spoken corpus in P. Gonçalves (1991), who identified 48 monotransitive verbs which exhibit either a NP or a pronoun introduced by *a* (respectively 19 and 12 occurrences) or a dative clitic (58 cases). In our own data set, these patterns only occur with 21 of these 48 verbs, which included 8 cases of *a*+NP, 30 cases of *a*+pronoun, and 24 dative clitics. Examples are: *fui informar isso ao meu cunhado, à minha irmã* 'I went to inform my brother-in-law, my sister'; *o que tenho a dizer à minha família, eu amo a eles* 'what I have to say to my family is that I love them'; *você não há de lhe ver mais na vida* 'you will never see him again'. Given the smaller size of P. Gonçalves' (1991) corpus compared to ours (140,000 words vs. 380,000 tokens), and even though both corpora display different characteristics, this preliminary comparison suggests that particularly *a* NP is declining.

In fact, in the past, few Mozambicans had access to or spoke Portuguese (24,4% of L1 + L2 Portuguese speakers in 1980, of which only 1,2% were L1 speakers), which renders the substrate hypothesis plausible, irrespective of the theoretical details of the treatment of Bantu languages and, by extension, of MOP. However, the numbers of L1 and L2 speakers, especially in urban environments, have been on the rise, with increasing bilingualism and proficiency in Portuguese over the last decades. The numbers are even more compelling in the case of urban AP and STP (cf. section 3.1), where widespread L1 transmission takes place. This means that the substrate hypothesis increasingly lacks explanatory power to account for the contemporary urban AVPs in question. The role of the substrate still lingers on, but is primarily the role of intensive, historical language contact.

Abstracting away from contact, our quantitative analysis of the data in section 3 shows that the dominant structure in the three AVPs is the standard DPC introduced by the functional preposition *a*. Although DOCs and other prepositional sentence patterns are also employed (DPC*em/para*), the dative clitic is systematically used in the three AVPs. On the one hand, the dative clitic is convergent both with the contact languages and EP, as all of them resort to clitic pronouns or affixes. On the other hand, its generalization, even among those informants who use DOCs and/or DPCs introduced by *para* or *em*, lends support to the hypothesis that *em* and *para* are being reinterpreted as functional prepositions, similarly to *a*. In other words, a significant number of speakers exhibit a grammar that is largely convergent with EP concerning the expression of Recipients.

But competition between grammars is also part of the equation. Indeed, Lightfoot's (2006, p. 164) claim that "there are coexisting grammars within [these] speech communities and even within the brains of some individuals, who have multiple competencies" can be entirely applied to the AVPs. Individual speakers may exhibit different sentence patterns to express Recipients and different groups can be established based on the patterns used. It is, however, hard to find speakers whose grammar solely reflects the substrate patterns. The small group of STP speakers that exclusively exhibits DOCs (6/64) would be a case in point.

To sum up, the dominant use of the DPC introduced by preposition *a* shows that acquisition of the AVPs privileges the standard, EP pattern. On the one hand, this is underscored by individual variation, which shows a predominance of groups whose production is restricted to DPCs (and dative clitics), even though some speakers exhibit variation between different prepositions, especially in AP, where DPC*em* is the main competitor of the canonical pattern. On the other hand, speakers who produce patterns that are distinct from EP generally also exhibit variation with DPC*a*. Thus, in a scenario of language transmission and acquisition, the balance appears to be tipped to favor input of the EP pattern. Moreover, the effect of schooling, which we did not discuss here, cannot, of course, be ignored with respect to variation and change. Exposure to the EP standard through education could be the basis of further stabilization of DPC*a*.

In the next section, we will try to formalize the variation observed in the expression of Recipients in AVPs by using syntactic and lexical microparameters.

## 5.2. An account of variation through microvariation theory

In the sections above, we have argued the syntactic variation observed in AVPs can be mostly reduced to two structures, a DPC and a DOC, which may or may not occur in each variety, depending on inter and intra-speaker variation. The dominant structure in the three AVPs, which converges with EP, is that of Recipients as extended DPs, since they are introduced by a functional, Case-assigning preposition. As we have shown, the co-occurrence of the dative clitic not only with DPCs introduced by *a*, but also with other prepositions, clearly points to the reanalysis of *em* and *para* as functional prepositions in the structures at stake. In other words, similarly to the morphologically syncretic form *a* in EP, which corresponds to a Case marker and to a full preposition introducing Goals, *em* and *para* have evolved to syncretic prepositional heads, corresponding both to Case markers and to full prepositions introducing Locatives and Goals. On the other hand, in DOCs, which correspond to the substrate-induced hypothesis of P. Gonçalves (1991, 2002, 2004, 2010) for MOP, and which were also shown to be widely available in STP, Recipients are plain DPs, which may pronominalize as strong pronouns in a limited number of cases (11,1%).

Within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995, and subsequent work), the locus of parametric variation, which concerns the way a speaker's knowledge of language can differ from another's, is assumed to be restricted to functional elements in the lexicon, since syntax is arguably uniform across languages and not subject to variation. The proposal that variation occurs in the lexicon, firstly presented by Borer (1984) and later adapted and integrated by Chomsky in the Minimalist Program, was coined by Baker (2008) as "The Borer-Chomsky Conjecture" (cf. 41)).

### (41) The Borer-Chomsky Conjecture

All parameters of variation are attributable to differences in the features of particular items (e.g., the functional heads) in the lexicon. (Baker, 2008, p. 354)

As a result, as stated by Baker (2008, p. 355), "the standard microparametric view is that the primitive, scientifically significant differences among languages are always relatively small scale differences", which would be observable even among close related dialects (or varieties). This is exactly what we observed in the AVPs' DPC structures described in previous sections, which act as a powerful testing ground for formal hypotheses.

In order to derive the ditransitive structures exhibited in EP and AVPs, we will not adopt an applicative analysis, as several crosslinguistic arguments have convincingly shown that neither a low nor a high applicative analysis for Romance is empirically motivated (e.g., Boneh & Nash, 2012; Duarte, Gonçalves & Hagemeijer, 2017; Larson, 2010, 2014; Miguel, Gonçalves & Duarte, 2011; R. Gonçalves, Duarte & Hagemeijer, 2016).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This is the case both of the low applicative analysis argued for by Pylkkänen's (2002, 2008) and of the high applicative one Holmberg, Sheehan and van der Wal (2019) propose for ditransitive structures in Romance.

Indeed, “applicative constructions are a means some languages have for structuring clauses which allow the coding of a thematically peripheral argument or adjunct as a core-object argument. Such constructions are signaled by overt verbal morphology” (Peterson, 2007, p. 1); however, Portuguese and Romance languages in general lack dedicated applicative morphology. Besides, whereas most ditransitive structures in Bantu involve monotransitive verbs which need an applicative extension to license the Recipient argument, ditransitive structures with *give*-type verbs in Portuguese and, in general, in Romance involve semantically ditransitive verbs (Brito, 2008, 2009, 2014; R. Gonçalves, 2016). Additionally, contrary to what happens in Bantu, the word order IO-DO has no bearing on grammatical relations, instead it expresses differences in information structure (for Portuguese: Cépeda & Cyrino, 2020; R. Gonçalves, 2016; R. Gonçalves, Duarte & Hagemeyer, 2016; for Spanish: Beavers & Nishida, 2010; Pineda, 2016).

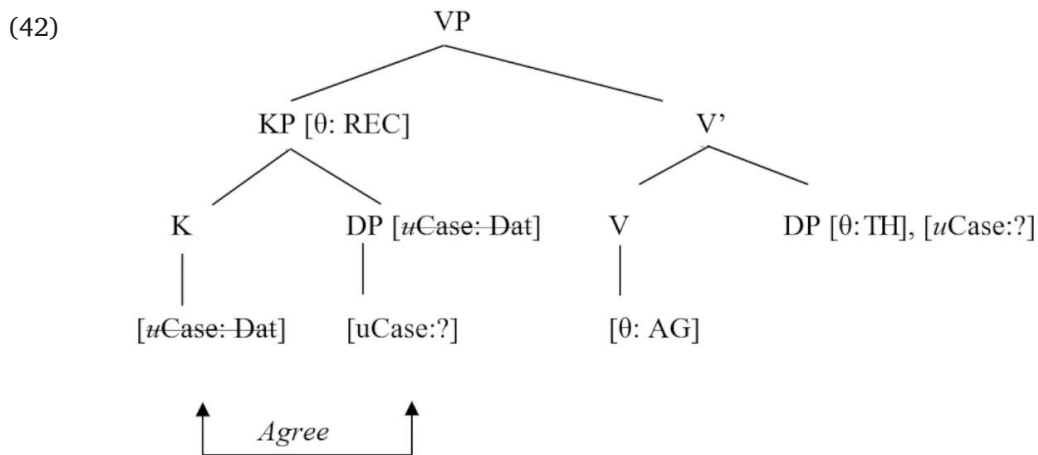
Arguments like these have been adduced by some authors to propose a distinction between thematic applicative heads (Bantu-type applicatives) and expletive (or raising) applicatives, present in the structure exclusively to Case-license some argument of the verb (e.g., Georgala, 2011; Georgala, Paul & Whitman, 2008) – in the case at stake, the dative argument. Recent accounts of ditransitive structures with core-dative verbs in Romanian make use of this second type of applicative head whilst sustaining that both the Theme and the Recipient are  $\theta$ -marked by the verb (Cornilescu, 2020; Cornilescu, Dinu & Tigau, 2017).

The analysis we present here shares with the abovementioned accounts of Romanian dative structures the empirically motivated idea that Romance languages (and their varieties) exhibit true ditransitive verbs, the transfer of the Theme to the possession of the Recipient being a result of verb semantics. However, it departs from them in assuming an alternative source for Case-licensing of the dative argument: the functional preposition *a* ‘to’, which we consider a Case marker, following a long tradition of analyses of Portuguese dative ditransitive structures. This assumption allows us to dispense with the consideration of an expletive applicative node, postulated exclusively for Case-licensing reasons.

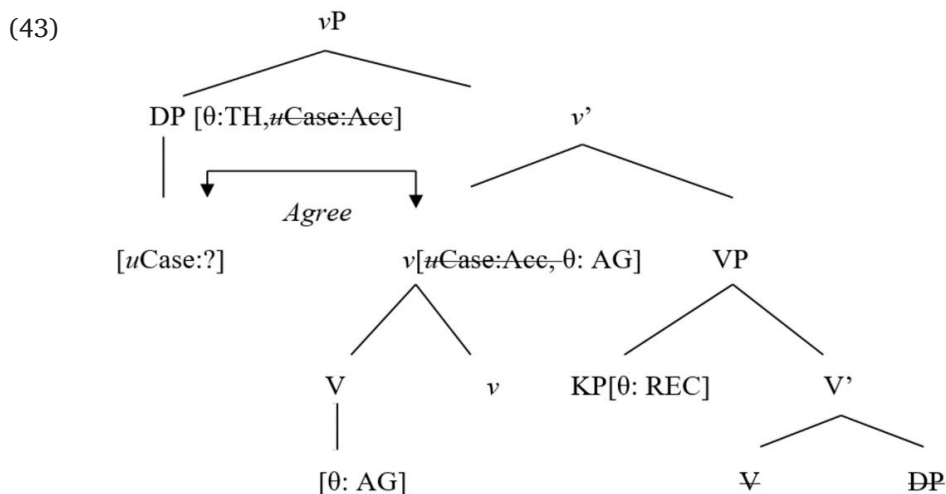
We will therefore preserve Larson’s (2014) view of little *v* as a semantically empty head with EPP and Case features. Also in the spirit of his 2014 account of dative structures, we will put the burden of the extended V projection derivation on both Case and  $\theta$ -Theory. Indeed, by considering *vP* an extended projection of V, its structure depends on the selection properties of V. Differently from Larson, however, we will maintain the  $\theta$ -Criterion, thus rejecting the idea that  $\theta$ -roles are formal features in need of valuation during the derivation, against Hornstein (1999).

In our account of EP dative structures, the Theme argument is merged in the complement position of the ditransitive verb (see Aoun & Li, 1989; Brito, 2014, 2015, a.o.). Regarding the Recipient argument, the preposition *a* ‘to’ is a Case marker devoid of any descriptive content, as referred in section 2. Thus, if prepositional Case markers are instances of a K(ase) head (Fukui & Speas, 1986) in these structures, EP, AVPs and other Romance languages will merge a K

functional head with the following feature: [*uCase*: Dat].<sup>13</sup> The Recipient DP is merged as the complement of K, with (among others) the feature [*uCase*:?], and the KP projection is merged in Spec, VP. The derivation up to VP of a sentence like *A Maria deu um livro ao João* ‘Maria gave a book to João’, will therefore have the representation in (42):



At the stage of the derivation shown in (42), the Theme argument of the ditransitive V is not Case-licensed. Thus, *v*, the locus of accusative Case, probes the Theme DP for Case valuation. The crossing of the Theme DP over the Recipient KP shown in (43) does not cause any violation, assuming, on the one hand, that the movement takes place inside the same phase (the *v*P phase) and, on the other hand, that the Recipient KP does not intervene because it is no longer an active goal (see Pineda (2016) and references therein).



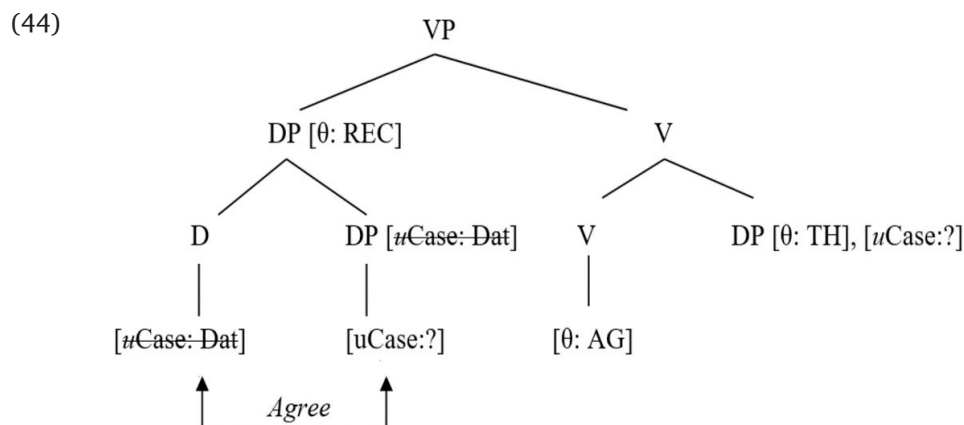
<sup>13</sup> Considering *a* ‘to’ and instance of K has consequences which are distinct from the assumption that it is a DOM; for instance, the DOM *a* in Spanish DOs is sensitive to the animacy of the DP, but has no bearing on Case or on syntactic processes like passivization. This is not the case for dative *a* in Portuguese or French.

The structure of the VP presented in (42), reminiscent of the one proposed by Brito's (2014, 2015) for the V-IO-OD word order in EP, is in line with the current mainstream (applicative) analysis in merging the Recipient DP in a position that c-commands the direct object, without the cost of the projection of an extra applicative head being required to derive core dative structures. The Theme-Recipient word order obtained through the derivation (43) is the unmarked one. As pointed out by several authors, the non-canonical order Recipient-Theme is derived for defocusing or processing related reasons (Beavers & Nishida, 2010; Pineda 2016; R. Gonçalves, 2016; R. Gonçalves, Duarte & Hagemeyer, 2016; Duarte, Gonçalves & Hagemeyer, 2017).

As often argued in the literature, Romance *a*-DP *give*-type structures exhibit symmetric c-command with respect to binding and scope (e.g., Giorgi & Longobardi, 1991; Harley, 2002; Pineda, 2016, 2020). Our analysis accounts for the absence of asymmetry effects, assuming that the whole KP is what counts for c-command. In fact, the symmetric relation arises precisely from the co-occurrence of two separate instances of asymmetric c-command: before and after the DO moves up to Spec, *vp*, for Case reasons.

Finally, the AVPs' data with prepositions *para* and *em* showing clitic counterparts instead of PPs with strong pronouns suggest that such prepositions evolved to syncretic heads, corresponding both to Case markers and to full-fledged Locative and Goal prepositions. Therefore, in ditransitive structures, the head of the KP can be spelled out as *a* (MOP, STP, AP), *para* (AP, STP) or *em* (AP) rendering the microvariation exhibited in AVPs an effect of how externalization operates (Chomsky 2010).

With respect to dative clitic structures, which were shown to be dominant in AVPs, EP does not allow clitic doubling of the type found in Spanish or Romanian, as referred above in section 2.1., hence dative clitics are not expletives. We will therefore adopt the D-hypothesis (see Corver & Delfitto, 1993; Torrego, 1988; Uriagereka, 1995, a.o.), and merge the clitic in Spec, VP, with the relevant feature: [*uCase*: Dat], a formal translation of the idea that clitics bear inherent Case.<sup>14</sup> D selects for its *pro* complement, with the relevant feature [*uCase*: ?], and Case-licenses it, through *Agree*.



<sup>14</sup> Discussing constituency and  $\varphi$ -features differences of (syntactic) clitics related to person, gender, and specificity is beyond the scope of this paper.



The difference between the *a* DP structure and the dative clitic structure thus reduces to the difference between the label of the argument merged in Spec, VP – KP in the former, DP in the latter – and to movement of the clitic D head for independent reasons related to its structural,  $\phi$ -feature (or other type of) deficiency.

At this point, we have presented and discussed ditransitive structures in AVPs which are convergent (despite the spell out differences) with EP, and we have argued that the differences between the latter and the former reduce to the phonological form of the K head.

However, according to data showed in section 3, some speakers of MOP and of STP, which are historically in contact with languages with DOCs, display competition between a grammar converging toward EP and a grammar showing more convergence with the properties of the contact languages.

It was shown that in Forro, the creole language in contact with STP, DOCs are the only sentence pattern available for dative structures. However, only the small group of STP speakers in Group IV (6/64, cf. **Table 12**) consistently uses a sentence pattern convergent with the one found in Forro. This also encompasses the absence of dative passives. Like Forro, Changana, the contact language of MOP, is a language which exhibits Case syncretism, i.e no morphological difference between accusative and dative is found.

Along the lines of Kayne (1984), it has been suggested that in languages with Case syncretism, the functional head responsible for Case valuation can check more than one Case (for different technical implementations of this idea see, for instance, Baker, 1988; Hiraiwa, 2001; Manzini & Franco, 2016). At the same time, Changana is an asymmetrical language in the sense of Bresnan and Moshi (1990), as shown in Chimbutane (2002), which means that two objects can be Case-licensed by [+V] functional heads in the  $\nu$ P phase, although only the one higher in the Thematic Hierarchy may surface as the primary object and raise further to subject position in passive sentences.

In the light of (42) above, the derivation of structures with a true ditransitive verb would therefore start with a VP-shell where the two internal arguments are merged as DPs, with the Recipient in Spec, VP. V Case-licenses and  $\theta$ -marks the Theme argument. Next, the complex V- $\nu$  raises to the upper  $\nu$  head, where it probes the closest DP for Case-licensing, that is, the Recipient DP (MLC, *Attract Closest*), as shown in (45), a simplified representation of the maximal  $\nu$ P of a sequence like *ensinar os outros a Bíblia* ‘teach the others the Bible’.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Adopting Baker’s (1988) incorporation analysis of ditransitive constructions with underived ditransitive verbs would involve the presence of an Applicative null head above VP, selected for by  $\nu$ . We remain agnostic with respect to the best structure to adopt in this case.

Van der Wal (2020) suggests that in asymmetrical Bantu languages Case-licensing of monotransitive verbs, which require thematic applicative heads to increase their valency, proceeds as follows: in the structure [ $\nu$ P ... $\nu$  [AppIP REC [AppI [VP V TH]]]], the Appl head Case-licenses the Theme argument and the  $\nu$  head Case-licenses the Recipient.

(45) ... [<sub>VP</sub> DP<sub>REC</sub> V-*v* [<sub>VP</sub> DP<sub>REC</sub> [<sub>V'</sub> V DP<sub>TH</sub>]]]

In this position, the Recipient argument becomes accessible to further A-movement, rendering the occurrence of dative passives possible. If we are on the right track by claiming that DOCs are the result of language contact in L2 settings of the acquisition of Portuguese, the availability or absence of dative passives in Changana/MOP and Forro/STP, respectively, confirms this hypothesis.

In sum, the dominant DPC sentence pattern AVPs share with EP to express core dative structures corresponds to the same syntactic structure, showing microvariation. However, the substrate-induced DOCs displayed in MOP and STP diverge in a more significant way both from AP and from EP; what is at stake here is what Biberauer and Roberts (2015) would consider a mesoparameter related to structural Case licensing by extended [V] heads.

## 6. Final Remarks

In this case-study of dative microvariation in AVPs based on data from spoken urban corpora, we have concluded that DPCs introduced by *a* and dative clitics (*lhe(s)*) are the dominant structures to express Recipients in MOP, AP and STP, with both full and with pronominal NPs, therefore showing convergence with EP. It was also shown that in MOP and STP these structures co-occur with DOCs and with *DPCem* in AP. Our analysis by informant also leads to the conclusion that, while it is possible to distinguish different groups of informants within each variety according to the way they express Recipients, the sentence pattern shared by the three AVPs is the exclusive use of DPC introduced by *a* and/or a dative clitic for the majority of the informants.

Following the idea that syntactic variation is reducible to variation in the lexicon, we have argued that the observed DPC patterns within and across AVPs are mainly reducible to the way syntactic structure is spelled out. Therefore, we claimed that DPCs in EP and in the AVPs in question exhibit the same syntactic structure, namely in what concerns the position and label of the Recipient argument, which we analyzed as a KP. So, the prepositions *a*, *para*, and *em* are treated as different morphophonological instances of a K head, which further implies that ‘DPC’ is merely a descriptive, surface term. On the other hand, in particular with respect to the grammar of the speakers that produce DOCs, we propose an analysis that appeals to the notion of Case syncretism and a tighter connection to the grammars of the contact languages. However, it was shown that more often than not these speakers also exhibit patterns that are compatible with the KP-hypothesis, which is ultimately evidence for competing grammars.

As mentioned before, AVPs are an interesting testing ground for hypotheses on language acquisition and language change. Considering the data that were described in the past, we expected to find stronger evidence in support of a substrate-based hypothesis in our own data. However, we believe that the increasing and often fast-paced shift to Portuguese in the

past decades, especially in urban settings and among younger generations, where the effect of schooling is more tangible, lead to increased exposure to and convergence with grammars closer to the EP standard and the gradual withdrawal of the substrate effect. Positive attitudes toward Portuguese, a language that has always had full support from the local elites since the independences, as well as the diminished role of the so-called ‘national languages’, has further paved the way to consolidate this tendency.

Finally, data from AVPs provide us with the opportunity to observe the ongoing process of nativization in multilingual societies where the language of the ancient colonizing powers was adopted as the language of schooling, media and administration in general, and increasingly fulfills the role of lingua franca in both the formal and the informal sphere. The variation at individual and group level inherent to this process is a window into how younger urban generations nativize and shape new language varieties in a relatively short time span.

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## Competing interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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