

The Dative Alternation in New Zealand and American English

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá jevem zvaným dativní alternace, přesněji řečeno rozdíly v užívání dativní alternace rodilými mluvčími americké a novozélandské angličtiny. Cílem je porovnat dativní alternaci v těchto dvou různých dialektech a zodpovědět výzkumné otázky stanovené na začátku. Ty mají za cíl zjistit, jak se mluvčí liší v užívání dvou hlavních typů dativních alternací, dativních konstrukcí s předložkou a konstrukcí s dvojitým předmětem. Dále se práce zaměřuje na to, jakou roli hraje životnost při volbě mezi konstrukcí s dvojitým objektem a konstrukcemi s předložkou. V práci bude testovaná hypotéza; mluvčí novozélandské angličtiny budou spíše ovlivněni životností u výběru mezi dvěma analyzovanými typy konstrukcí. Na závěr výzkum stanoví, zda mají tyto dva typy konstrukcí stejný nebo odlišný význam. Výzkum je prováděn formou analýzy dat z korpusu ‚Corpus of Global Web-Based English.‘ Výzkum ukazuje, že mezi volbou u konstrukcí u mluvčích obou dialektů není výrazný rozdíl, a že životnost ovlivňuje oba dialekty. Analýza také ukazuje, že dvojitý objekt a konstrukce s předložkou mají stejný význam.

Klíčová slova: dativní alternace, americká angličtina, novozélandská angličtina, životnost

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis deals with the phenomenon called the dative alternation, more precisely with the differences in the usage of the dative alternation by native users of American and New Zealand English. The aim is to compare the dative alternation in the two dialects and answer the research questions set in the beginning. The research questions aim to find out how the users of the mentioned dialects differ in the usage of the two main types of dative alternation – to-dative constructions and double object constructions. Next, the focus is on the role that animacy has in the choice between double object and prepositional constructions. I argue that New Zealand English speakers are more sensitive to the role of animacy than American English speakers. Lastly, the research discusses whether these two types have the same or different meanings. The research is done as an analysis of the data from the Corpus of Global Web-Based English. It reveals that there is not a notable difference between the two dialects and that animacy influences both dialects. The analysis shows that double object and prepositional constructions have the same meaning.

Keywords: dative alternation, American English, New Zealand English, animacy

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

The dative alternation is a term that describes the behaviour of some verbs, more specifically, if they are used in double object construction or prepositional construction.

This thesis describes how the dative alternation works and explains terms that help describe the research process and some other issues discussed in the theoretical part. Even though the dative alternation is widely discussed and researched, some areas are not as well understood as others. That is the reason why the main focus of this thesis is the dative alternation compared between two different dialects, the American English dialect and the New Zealand English dialect.

The specific aim of this thesis is to compare the amount of usage of double object constructions or prepositional constructions in the two chosen dialects and to research if this choice is influenced by the animacy of the recipient. The additional research focus is exploring the meaning of these two construction types because some studies argue that they have different meanings, which would radically change the definition of the dative alternation, which is believed to mean that the semantics are the same in both construction types.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical part and an analysis. In the theoretical part, research questions with a hypothesis, the terms crucial to understanding the whole discussed topic, and the term dative alternation with different approaches to this phenomenon are explained. In the analysis part, the methodology fundamental to the research and then the research itself, together with the findings, are described.

The chosen research method is an analysis of the Corpus of Web-Based English. For the research were chosen three research questions, “Which of the two types of constructions used in the dative alternation are used more in American and New Zealand English?” and “Does the role of animacy influence the choice between prepositional and double object constructions in the dative alternation?” and “Do double object and prepositional constructions convey the same meaning?” In connection with the second research question, a hypothesis was formed: “New Zealand English speakers are more sensitive to the role of animacy than American English speakers.”

Differences between different dialects in the dative alternation are somewhat researched, but the approaches among the studies differ, and the results can vary according to the way of the specific research, which is why this topic is interesting and still relevant.

I. THEORY

1 THE RESEARCH

In this chapter, the aim of this research, together with the hypothesis and research questions, are described.

1.1 The aim

This thesis is focused on the differences between New Zealand and American English dialects, specifically in the use of the dative alternation. It is an interesting topic because even though the dative alternation is widely discussed and compared in different languages, many variables can differ in each research according to its focus and way of analysing the data.

In this research, sentences and constructions from a corpus are analysed, which is a specific way of analysing linguistic data and, therefore, have specific problems and advantages that influence the research and make it distinct from other similar studies conducted on this topic.

The theoretical part of the thesis and the research are supported by examples that more explain the discussed topic. These examples align with the examples in the sources mentioned throughout the thesis, but if not said otherwise, the examples are not taken from any literature or sources.

1.2 Research questions and hypothesis

Research questions and the hypothesis were established from the theoretical part of the research in this thesis. These exact questions were chosen based on what was studied before and what is possible to find out from an analysis of a corpus.

Research question 1: Which of the two types of constructions used in the dative alternation are used more in American and New Zealand English?

Research question 2: Does the role of animacy influence the choice between prepositional and double object constructions in the dative alternation?

Research question 3: Do double object and prepositional constructions convey the same meaning?

Hypothesis: New Zealand English speakers are more sensitive to the role of animacy than American English speakers.

2 THE BACKGROUND

In this chapter, terms connected to the dative alternation are described to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon. The focus is on the terms directly related to the dative alternation that help better interpret how the dative alternation works in natural language.

2.1 Direct and indirect objects

Yáñez-Bouza and Denison (2015, 248) described the use of direct and indirect objects as well as prepositional objects. According to them, the most recognised variant is similar to these examples:

- (1) a. *David gave the doctor ID.*
b. *David gave ID to the doctor.*

In (1a) indirect object – *the doctor* is before the direct object – *ID*, and in (1b) direct object – *ID* is before the prepositional object – *the doctor* (Yáñez-Bouza and Denison 2015, 248).

- (2) a. *Sally gave a book to her friend.*
b. *Sally gave her friend a book.*

Kegeyama (2009, 295) argued that as shown in example (2), the indirect object from (2a) – *her friend* is promoted to a direct object in (2b), and the original direct object is demoted.

2.2 Thematic roles

When analysing sentences, it is important to name the positions in the sentence so they can be referred to. That is particularly useful when analysing the dative alternation constructions because the contents of the sentences will change their word order. Looking back at example (2), the contents of the sentences can be analysed and described with the terms that are used throughout this thesis (Ziegler and Snedeker 2018, 2-3).

In example (2a), the book was transferred from Sally to her friend, the subject *Sally* is doing the transfer so that makes her an agent, the first object *a book* is the theme, and *her friend* is the recipient (Ziegler and Snedeker 2018, 3).

If example (2b) had been analysed, the thematic roles would have been the same as in example (2a) even though the word order is different (Ziegler and Snedeker 2018, 3).

2.3 Ditransitive verbs

Ditransitive verbs need three arguments to express meaning: agent, theme, and recipient. The meaning is usually a ‘possessive transfer,’ for example, with the verbs *give* or *lend* (3a) where the transfer is concrete, or the transfer can be abstract, like with the verbs *offer* or *promise* (3b). Ditransitive verbs can also express ‘cognitive transfer,’ where the verbs behave the same as those with ‘possessive transfer.’ An example could be the verbs *show* or *teach* (3c) (Haspelmath 2015, 19).

- (3) a. *Charlie gave Sally a box.*
b. *I offered him a chocolate.*
c. *She showed me a picture.*

Ditransitive verbs in several languages show variation in the form of alternations or splits. The dative alternation is the most common example of ditransitive alternations; here the two arguments – recipient and theme – are variables as shown in the example (4). The recipient is *Sally*, and the theme is *a box* (Haspelmath 2015, 19).

- (4) a. *Charlie gave Sally a box.*
b. *Charlie gave a box to Sally.*

2.4 Animacy

Animacy is the classification of things in different ways. One of them can be a classification of something, either as living or non-living. This classification is based on the biological view (Trompenaars et al. 2021, 1-2). According to this, in the biological sense, all living things are considered animate and all other inanimate, which means that humans and animals are animate as opposed to inanimate rocks or houses. Another way to classify something as animate or inanimate is according to a linguistic definition. Linguistically speaking, animate things have the ability to act and set events in motion. Therefore, looking at people in comparison with, for example, worms, it is evident that both are living things and, therefore, according to biological view, would both be animate, but looking at this issue linguistically, humans are able to have feelings, instigate events and act according to their will but worms are not (Kittilä, Västi and Ylikoski 2011, 9-10).

However, examples where biological and linguistic views correspond can be found; humans are treated as animate by biological and linguistic systems, and a chair is inanimate

by both of these systems. The main difference between these views is that they recognise different degrees of animacy in linguistics but just one in biology. Humans have the ‘highest animacy’ and then are ‘higher animals,’ such as horses or dogs. Other animals categorised as ‘lower’ are treated as inanimate, that can be, for example, worms or flies (Kittilä, Västi and Ylikoski 2011, 10).

In order to recognise linguistic animacy, the way in which nouns are referred to is also important. One of the ways how to say something is animate is based on whether the referent acts as an agent in a sentence or not. Inanimate things are usually not agents because they cannot instigate events (Kittilä, Västi and Ylikoski 2011, 10-11).

Regarding reference, it should be mentioned that pronouns can also help show the animacy of the nouns they refer to. As well as on the pronouns, animacy depends also on gender, which system corresponds with the animacy hierarchy. Animate entities are referred to as *she* or *he*, and inanimate entities that are viewed as things are referred to as *it*. This system follows the different degrees of animacy. When talking about a human, pronouns such as *she* or *he* are used, but these pronouns can also be used while talking about ‘higher animals,’ usually because of our connection with them. Inanimates are referred to as *it*, but in certain situations, while using, for example, personification, they can also be referred to as *she* or *he*, for example, *She is a beauty!* said about a boat. In these and other similar cases, it depends on the choice of the speaker or the context (Gardelle 2023, 394-395).

3 THE TERM DATIVE ALTERNATION

The dative alternation is the way in which a verb is used, either using noun phrases in V-NP-NP construction or with a prepositional phrase, in V-NP-PP construction. The verb must be equally acceptable for both types of constructions to be considered a verb that engages in the dative alternation (Janset, McGillivray and Rundell 2018, 185).

The verb has to be able to express an argument in two different patterns: prepositional dative constructions (5a) and double object constructions (5b) (Jang and Lee 2019, 114-115).

- (5) a. *I gave a pillow to Lucy.*
b. *I gave Lucy a pillow.*

When speakers want to express that someone will obtain something from somebody, they must use two objects to make a meaningful sentence. For example, *Susan gave* would be the start of the sentence, and now it is necessary to add what she gave to whom for the sentence to function. The speaker has two options for how to form the sentence, either using a prepositional phrase or the speaker can use a construction with two noun phrases (Bresnan et al. 2005, 2-3).

- (6) a. *Susan gave toys to the children.*
b. *Susan gave the children toys.*

The question that Bresnan, Cueni, Nikitina and Baayen (2005) tackle in their research is how and why the speaker will choose which of these constructions. For this thesis, however, it is crucial that in this definition of the dative alternation, both constructions have the same meaning and can be used interchangeably.

3.1 Dative alternation vs dative shift

At first glance, the dative alternation and the dative shift can be considered the same, but the differences are visible when the constructions are analysed more closely. They both express two possible ways of expression of particular verbs (Kordoni 2004, 158-159).

The dative alternation means that the two ways of expression have different meanings. This is viewed as a ‘two-meaning approach,’ and it suggests that prepositional and double object constructions in the dative alternation are different in syntax as well as in semantics. This is more closely discussed later in the thesis in Chapter 4 (Kordoni 2004, 158-159).

The term dative shift suggests that the verbs in both constructions have the same meaning, and if the speaker uses one or the other, it does not influence the semantics. This approach is also discussed in connection with the term dative alternation, which will also be discussed in Chapter 4 (Kordoni 2004, 158-159).

This thesis follows the belief that the definition of the dative alternation is that it is a variation, which means that both prepositional and double object constructions that the verbs can use have the same semantic meaning.

3.2 Double object and prepositional constructions

Bresnan and Nikitina (2008, 161-162) proposed that double object and prepositional constructions have the same meaning, and speakers can use them interchangeably. They also took into account other approaches that suggest different meanings in these constructions, which are discussed later on in the thesis.

They argued that the same meaning is connected with denial and repetition in examples where the speaker either repeats (7) the same sentence in a different construction or negates (8) it in the other construction that was not used (Bresnan and Nikitina 2008, 161-162).

(7) a. *Why didn't you give him the book?*

b. *I did give the book to him.*

(8) a. *I can carry her the dinner myself.*

b. *Are you carrying the dinner to her?*

4 APPROACHES TO THE DATIVE ALTERNATION

Some approaches claim that both variants of the dative alternation have the same meaning, therefore, semantically, it does not matter which of the variants the speaker will use. Others suggest that both variants have a different but similar meaning (Hovav and Levin 2008, 129-132).

The difference is not just between the syntax of the two patterns but also between their semantic meaning. Prepositional dative constructions express ‘caused motion,’ and double object constructions express ‘caused possession’ (Jang and Lee 2019, 129-130).

4.1 Differences in double object constructions and prepositional constructions

Jang and Lee’s (2019, 285-286) study is focused on the relationship between double object constructions and prepositional constructions and the two meanings they can have – ‘caused possession’ and ‘caused motion.’ According to them, ‘caused possession’ can be expressed by double object constructions, and ‘caused motion’ is argued to be expressed by ‘to-dative’ constructions.

However, ‘caused possession’ can be expressed by double object constructions as well as by prepositional ones, as shown in the example (9) below (Levin 2008, 285).

- (9) a. *Emma gave me the book.*
b. *Emma gave the book to me.*

As mentioned before, Levin (2008, 286) claims that double object constructions and prepositional constructions can have different semantic meanings. One of the theories suggests that the meaning is either ‘caused motion’ or ‘possession,’ but other theories should also be mentioned.

In *On Shell Structure*, Larson (2014, 37-38) argues that double object constructions more strongly imply that the activity was actually done by the recipients or experiencers, as is visible in example (10b) below.

- (10) a. *I taught skiing to those clients.*
b. *I taught those clients skiing.*

This means that example (10b) suggests more strongly that those clients actually learned how to ski than the clients in (10a) (Larson 2014, 37-38).

The use of ‘to-dative’ construction can also change the meaning of the sentence, as demonstrated in example (11) (Larson 2014, 37-38).

- (11) a. *I bought this toy for our baby.*
b. *I bought our baby this toy.*

The example (11b) suggests that the baby was already born. Therefore, the baby got a toy, but the example (11a) implies that future parents bought a toy for their future baby (Larson 2014, 37-38).

4.2 Verb division

The theories working with ‘caused possession’ and ‘caused motion’ are closely related to the division of verbs in English according to the event they describe. According to Levin (2008, 286), verbs in English can be divided into three types, and they form two groups: ‘give-type’ verbs, and then ‘send-type’ verbs, and ‘throw-type’ verbs together.

It is important to note that this theory does not work with all verbs in English, and it also follows the claim that ‘caused possession’ can be expressed by double object constructions as well as by prepositional constructions (Levin 2008, 286-288).

4.2.1 Give-type verbs

‘Give-type’ verbs express ‘caused possession’ in both types of constructions. They express either that something becomes someone’s so they can have it indefinitely, or something becomes someone’s temporarily, for example, with verbs *lend* or *rent*.

Other examples of verbs in this category are *sell*, *hand*, or *loan* (Levin 2008, 288).

- (12) a. *I will loan you the money.*
b. *I will loan the money to you.*

4.2.2 Throw-type verbs and Send-type verbs

Both ‘throw-type’ verbs and ‘send-type’ verbs express in prepositional constructions ‘caused motion’ as well as ‘caused possession,’ and in double object constructions, they express only ‘caused possession.’

Examples of ‘throw-type’ verbs are *kick*, *shoot*, or *toss*, and examples of ‘send-type’ verbs are *mail* or *ship* (Levin 2008, 289). For demonstration of the verbs see examples (13) and (14).

(13) a. *I threw the ball to you.*

b. *I threw you the ball.*

(14) a. *I sent a letter to you.*

b. *I sent you a letter.*

5 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NEW ZEALAND AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

When colonists came from England to America, they brought the English language. But this language that started in America the same way it was functioning in England changed for multiple reasons. Firstly, the colonists did not have regular contact with the people from England and their way of speaking, secondly, the colonists needed to come up with new names for plants, animals, and other things that they did not know before existed, and finally, the standard of English in England was the English spoken mainly by aristocrats but the colonists were mostly peasants, so their English was the starting point in America. The forming of American English was also widely influenced by European languages that came from other colonists (Kazakova, Okisheva and Shevtsiva 2020, 101-102).

The English language was also brought to New Zealand by British colonists, but that was not until the 19th century. The colonists took over the whole island of nowadays New Zealand in every way possible, which also meant the promotion of the English language. Here, the language was influenced by several dialects from England, for example, by immigrants from Scotland or Ireland. After World War II, the language was further influenced by American English because of their growing relationship (Kazakova, Okisheva and Shevtsiva 2020, 101-102).

5.1 Concrete differences

In their study, Bresnan and Ford (2010, 172) found that “in New Zealand English, the overall probability of use of prepositional datives with the verb *give* has been significantly increasing from the early 1900s.”

New Zealand English speakers were also found to be more sensitive to animacy than American English speakers, which is a hypothesis from the study done by Bresnan and Hay (2008, 246) tested in this thesis.

Szmrecsanyi et al. (2017, 16) in their study found that “...in NZE, communication uses of *give* disfavour the prepositional dative compared to transfer verbs, but in AmE communication tokens actually marginally favour the prepositional dative, compared to transfer tokens.”

6 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This chapter discusses studies and research that were conducted in the past and are connected to the research in this thesis. Some of these studies are already mentioned throughout the thesis, but they are discussed in much more detail here.

The titles of the following sections are in each case the same as the title of the article the section is about, all these articles are cited in the text below the titles.

6.1 Spoken syntax in a comparative perspective: The dative and genitive alternation in varieties of English

Szmrecsanyi et al. (2017, 1-27) conducted a comparative study about genitive and dative varieties of English, more specifically American English, British English, Canadian English, and New Zealand English. Their focus was on the variability of genitive and dative grammar in these different dialects. In the part of the research focusing on the dative variability or the dative alternation, the data in American English were taken from the Switchboard corpus of American English. This corpus contains telephone conversations from the 1990s. New Zealand English data were extracted from the Origins of New Zealand English corpora, which contains data from early New Zealand speakers.

In the research, only the verb *give*, either in prepositional constructions or double object constructions, was analysed. While comparing data in American English and New Zealand English, they found out that in New Zealand English speakers use less the verb *give* in prepositional construction compared to transfer verbs, but speakers of American English favour prepositional constructions with the verb *give* compared to transfer verbs (Szmrecsanyi et al. 2017, 1-27).

6.2 Gradient grammar: An effect of animacy on the syntax of *give* in New Zealand and American English

Bresnan and Hay (2007, 245-259) follow up on the research of Bresnan et al. (2005), where they introduced a model that can accurately predict the choices and preferences of speakers in grammatical variants, which can be, for example, the dative alternation. In their study, Bresnan and Hay (2007, 245-259) focused on the grammar of phrases with the verb *give* in New Zealand and American English dialects and how the grammar changed over time.

The data for this research were taken from the Origins of New Zealand English corpora, from which they analysed 2842 tokens of *give* while 1127 of these tokens were in the dative alternation constructions. American English data were extracted from the Switchboard

Corpus, specifically 1263 tokens that were put together with 404 tokens from the Treebank Wall-Street Journal. The study was focused on syntactic complexity, pronominality, discourse accessibility, and animacy of the recipient and theme (Bresnan and Hay 2007, 245-259).

The coding system for animacy had 7 categories – human, animal, organisation, concrete inanimate, non-concrete inanimate, place, and time. The study showed that different dialects of English have differences in the effect of animacy. New Zealand English dialect and American English dialect were shown to have differences in the degree of influence of animacy on the usage of the dative alternation, New Zealand English speakers are more influenced by the role of animacy than the speakers of American English. The study also found that over time, the dative alternation in New Zealand English changed (Bresnan and Hay 2007, 245-259).

6.3 Double object constructions disguised as prepositional datives

Bruening (2010, 287-305) conducted a study to disprove theories like Bresnan and Nikitina's (2008) that argue that double object constructions and prepositional constructions can be considered similar and can be used interchangeably because their meaning is essentially the same.

Bruening (2010, 287-305) argues different approach to the double object and prepositional constructions and their usage. He considers these constructions to be distinct, however, he also admits that prepositional construction can take the place of double object construction without changing the meaning. He calls the change that double object constructions undergo an 'R-dative shift.' However, he also suggests that these double object constructions are still double object constructions, they just underwent the R-dative shift.

His focus is besides the normal dative alternation examples of idiomatic phrases, for example, *give someone a headache*. He shows that shifting these kinds of constructions into prepositional constructions is, for many fluent speakers, ungrammatical (Bruening 2010, 287-305).

6.4 PPs without disguises: Reply to Bruening

Ormazabal and Romero (2012, 455-474) wrote a reply to Bruening's research which was mentioned in the previous chapter. They concluded that his research was unnecessarily complicated and not informative enough about the main issue.

In their research, they focused more on idioms and whether they can be shifted into prepositional constructions. They provide examples where idioms are used in prepositional constructions grammatically and they argue that this issue can be explained much more simply than using the ‘R-dative shift’ theory. They suggest that double object constructions and prepositional constructions can be derived from the same source. They also claim that these constructions are not semantically different (Ormazabal and Romero 2012, 455-474).

6.5 Double object constructions and prepositional dative constructions are distinct: A reply to Ormazabal and Romero

Bruening (2014, 123-150) marks Ormazabal and Romero’s response as “unsuccessful” and he claims that they did not provide evidence or a better new way to find some. He argues that the ‘R-dative shift’ is crucial in showing that double object and prepositional constructions have different semantics and are simply different.

In his study, he again explains that the examples of idioms in prepositional constructions are, in fact, double object constructions that just have the first object on the right rather than the left (Bruening 2014, 123-150).

6.6 Dative verbs: A crosslinguistic perspective

Levin (2008, 285-312) adds to the studies a claim that the reason prepositional and double object constructions are different is that one expresses ‘caused possession’ and one expresses ‘caused motion’ as was explained in previous chapters.

She named it the ‘uniform multiple approach,’ and she explained that double object constructions express the meaning with ‘caused possession,’ and prepositional constructions express ‘caused motion’ (Levin 2008, 285-312). She also compares the approach from the paper of Hovav and Levin (2008, 129-132), which claimed that individual verbs can be associated with only one of the meanings and, therefore, follow just one of the patterns. The verb *give* was argued to follow only the ‘caused possession’ pattern, while verbs, like *throw* and *send*, follow both ‘caused possession’ and ‘caused motion’ patterns. Hovav and Levin (2008, 129-132) also said that prepositional constructions could express both ‘caused possession’ and ‘motion,’ but double object constructions can express just ‘caused possession.’

In Levin’s (2008, 285-312) study, she focused on crosslinguistic variation with dative verbs in three languages – English, Hebrew, and Russian. The article has two main topics –

firstly, the types of events these verbs are associated with and secondly, how these events are expressed in sentences.

The main point is that English uses the verbs *give*, *throw*, and *send* in the same sentence structures, but Russian and Hebrew have specific grammatical structures for specific verbs. The verbs *throw* and *send* can be used with different events than the verb *give*. This means that even though some patterns are the same across languages, specific grammar rules can differ, which is the case of the dative alternation with the verbs *give*, *throw*, and *send* and also verbs that are similar and can be associated with these types (Levin 2008, 285-312).

The study concludes that the verb *give* and other ‘give-type’ verbs are associated with ‘caused possession’ type event and verbs *throw*, *send*, and verbs similar to them are associated with ‘caused motion’ as well as ‘caused possession’ type event. This was found in English as well as in Hebrew and Russian, but the way these events are expressed in sentences differs in Hebrew and Russian from English (Levin 2008, 285-312).

II. ANALYSIS

7 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this thesis is to compare the usage of the dative alternation in American and New Zealand English dialects. In order to really see the difference, it is necessary to analyse the natural use of both dialects to see how the speakers choose between prepositional and double object constructions.

The original research method was to transcribe the natural use of both dialects from YouTube videos, but in the case of searching for the natural use of syntactic features, it can be hard to find enough constructions. That is why the research is done using data from the Corpus of Global Web-Based English.

7.1 Corpus of Global Web-Based English

This Corpus was collected because of the need to create a larger corpus containing different dialects of English that have developed worldwide. It contains 1.9 billion words from 20 different countries speaking in different English dialects. About 60% of the data comes from informal blogs, and the rest are other web-based materials, magazines, company websites, or newspapers (Davies and Fuchs 2015, 2-3).

The corpus is available for free to anyone, but it has some limitations, such as the number of searches per day. It can be used for research that needs lexical, morphological, syntactic, or semantic data (Davies and Fuchs 2015, 2).

The greatest advantage of this corpus is its ability to compare the frequency of use of phrases or words in different English dialects. It is visible how the construction is common in several types of World Englishes, for example, American, Canadian, or English spoken in New Zealand. So, it is possible to see and compare the frequency of usage of words or phrases in different dialects (Davies and Fuchs 2015, 2).

For this research, it was crucial to see the differences in American and New Zealand English dialects. In the corpus can be found 386, 809, 355 words from the American English dialect and 81, 390, 476 words from the New Zealand English dialect (Davies and Fuchs 2015, 6).

7.2 Corpus methodology

Working with a corpus is a very specific research technique, and when doing research with syntactic phenomena, it becomes even more complicated. In this thesis, it was necessary to search for more broad structures because, in the used corpus, it is not possible to look up

whole noun phrases or even the dative alternation itself. However, the big advantage of this specific corpus is the opportunity to look for specific parts of speech.

But the problem is that it was only possible to look up strings of what people were saying, therefore, the data, although relevant, are incomplete.

Another issue is that for this research was crucial the comparison of two different parts of corpus in two different dialects. As mentioned above, the American English dialect corpus contains 386, 809, 355 words, and the New Zealand corpus 81, 390, 476 words (Davies and Fuchs 2015, 6), so the difference in the number of constructions that can be found in these dialects is quite big. This difference is visible in the research, and it explains why there is such a big variability between the numbers of analysed constructions.

Because of this issue it was necessary to add numbers that account for the difference in the size of the parts of the corpus. The two parts of the corpus are samples, and the numbers of the found constructions differ because of the different sample sizes in both dialects. The numbers of found constructions in the two dialects were therefore divided by the size of each corpus or the sample, which would be 386, 809, 355 for American English corpus and 81, 390, 476 for New Zealand English. But this way, the final adjusted numbers would be really small, and the comparison would be difficult, that is why the division was done only with the millions, for the American English corpus by 387 and for the New Zealand corpus by 81. Then the comparison of the adjusted numbers can really show differences between the dialects.

The last issue that influenced the research, as well as the result, is the lack of data. Speakers usually do not use that many constructions that show specific syntactic features like the dative alternation, so even though it was an advantage that the corpus consists of natural language from blogs and similar media in this sense it was more of a disadvantage, and the corpus did not provide that much data which means that the research is not that objective.

7.3 Process of data selection

For analysing the usage of the dative alternation in both dialects were selected verbs from different types that were discussed in the theoretical part. The goal was to select verbs from each type, meaning give-type verbs, throw-type verbs, and send-type verbs so that the research would cover different types of verbs. However, the research is limited based on the corpus, so there were selected verbs with the highest search results possible rather than keeping the focus just on different types.

While searching in the corpus, the goal was to find the most used constructions in American and New Zealand English dialects. Therefore, a broad search was initiated with the format “give N N”. This way, the search results in the corpus would be *give* with any two nouns that are most commonly used with it. An ideal situation would be searching the verbs together with noun phrases, but the corpus does not offer to search for noun phrases or prepositional phrases that are used in the prepositional constructions. The advantage of this corpus, however, is that it shows the searched phrases in a context. From the results were selected sentences that had double object constructions in both dialects.

Because the aim of this research is to compare the usage of double object constructions and prepositional constructions in both dialects, the double object constructions that were found were changed into prepositional ones, and then they were searched in this form.

This process was repeated with the most common prepositional constructions used with the verb *give*, in this case, was in the search bar put the construction “give N to”. Then the results were again changed to the other construction type, which here was the double object construction.

This process was repeated similarly with all chosen verbs and in both dialects to have a fair comparison of the usage of all types of verbs in both dialects. In the cases with low-rate search results with the chosen verbs the process was adjusted for the most data output possible.

7.3.1 Verbs selected

As mentioned before, the research is done with three types of verbs: give-type verbs, throw-type verbs, and send-type verbs.

From give-type verbs were for the analysis selected verbs *give* and *lend*. From throw-type and send-type verbs, the verb *send*.

7.4 Quantitative research

This thesis is going to answer the research question: Which of the two types of construction used in the dative alternation are used more in American and New Zealand English? Therefore, the quantitative research is focused on counting the instances of usage of both double object constructions and prepositional constructions in both dialects and then comparing the results.

7.5 Qualitative research

In qualitative research, the hypothesis that “New Zealand English speakers are more sensitive to the role of animacy than American English speakers” is tested. This hypothesis was formed based on the article written by Joan Bresnan and Jennifer Hay (2007). They follow up on Bresnan’s research with a statistical model that can predict syntax connected with the usage of give-type verbs. In their study, they compare the grammar of phrases with *give* in American and New Zealand English. They analysed the role of animacy connected with the recipient and the theme. Their research has shown that “non-animate recipients are more likely to be used in the double object construction in the NZ than in US spoken data.” (Bresnan and Hay 2007, 252)

In this thesis, the role of animacy connected only with the recipient is analysed due to the lack of data.

Lastly, the third research question is tackled: “Do double object and prepositional constructions convey the same meaning?” The answer to this question can be subjective but there will be provided examples from the analysed corpus with equivalents in different constructions to demonstrate one of the views that can be supported.

8 FINDINGS

This chapter discusses findings from all research, answers all the research questions, and focuses on evidence supporting or disproving the hypothesis. The analysis is supported by tables and examples of the findings from the Corpus of Web-Based English.

8.1 Which of the two types of constructions used in the dative alternation are used more in American and New Zealand English?

8.1.1 Research connected with the first research question

The first selected group of verbs were give-type verbs, more specifically verbs *give* and *lend*.

With the verb *give*, the most common phrases in double object constructions with equivalent in prepositional constructions were *give God thanks*, *give God glory*, and *give people money*.

Table 1: Most common phrases with the verb *give*

	<i>give God thanks/give thanks to God</i>	<i>give people money/give money to people</i>	<i>give God glory/give glory to God</i>
Double object constructions US	13	10	2
Prepositional constructions US	41	19	23
Double object constructions NZ	3	1	1
Prepositional constructions NZ	19	1	1

Table 1 shows the analysed constructions in both dialects divided into double object and prepositional constructions. Each column shows the construction in both versions and the rows then divide them into prepositional or double object ones.

Table 2: Total numbers of the constructions with the verb *give*

	US	NZ	Total amount
Double object constructions	25	5	30
Prepositional constructions	83	21	104

The total amount of constructions is 134, 30 are double object constructions, and 104 are prepositional constructions, as shown in Table 2. In American English, 108 constructions were found, of which 23.15% are double object constructions, and 76.85% are prepositional

constructions. In New Zealand English 26 constructions were found, of which 19.23% are double object constructions, and 81.77% are prepositional constructions.

From the first group of constructions can be formed a conclusion that in this case in both dialects are more used prepositional constructions and the difference between the dialects in the usage of both constructions is not big.

Tables 3 and 4 show adjusted numbers for the different sample sizes as explained in the Corpus methodology Section. Because of the different sample sizes or the different sizes of the parts of the corpus, the numbers had to be adjusted by dividing the initial numbers by the sizes of the parts of the corpus.

Comparing the initial results with the adjusted numbers that account for the sizes of the parts of the corpus, it is visible that in the first part of the research, the results are quite similar. Prepositional constructions were used more in both dialects. In the American English dialect are, the adjusted numbers of double object constructions 0.065, and of prepositional constructions 0.214 compared with the initial numbers, which were 25 and 83 constructions. And in New Zealand English, the adjusted numbers are 0.062 of double object constructions and 0.259 of prepositional constructions compared with the initial numbers which were 5 and 21. So even with the adjusted numbers, there is almost no difference between the two dialects.

Table 3: The most common phrases with the verb *give* adjusted

	<i>give God thanks/give thanks to God</i>	<i>give people money/give money to people</i>	<i>give God glory/give glory to God</i>
Double object constructions US	0.034	0.026	0.00516
Prepositional constructions US	0.106	0.049	0.059
Double object constructions NZ	0.037	0.012	0.012
Prepositional constructions NZ	0.235	0.012	0.012

Table 4: Total numbers of the constructions with the verb *give* adjusted

	US	NZ	Total amount
Double object constructions	0.065	0.062	0.127
Prepositional constructions	0.214	0.259	0.473

The most common phrases in prepositional constructions with equivalents in double object constructions were also *give God thanks* and *give God glory*, that is why it was searched for

give – N – to – P, which means that the indirect object is a pronoun instead of a noun. The phrases selected are *give thanks to him* and *give thanks to you*.

Table 5: Prepositional constructions with equivalents with the verb *give*

	<i>give thanks to him/give him thanks</i>	<i>give thanks to you/give you thanks</i>
Prepositional constructions US	14	9
Double object constructions US	13	13
Prepositional constructions NZ	1	2
Double object constructions NZ	1	8

Table 5 shows the specific numbers of the constructions in both dialects, and the total numbers of the double object and prepositional constructions in both dialects are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Total numbers of the constructions with equivalents with the verb *give*

	US	NZ	Total amount
Double object constructions	26	9	35
Prepositional constructions	23	3	26

The total amount of constructions from the second search is 61, and out of those, 35 are double object constructions, and 26 are prepositional constructions. In American English 49 constructions were found of which 53.06% are double object constructions and 46.94% are prepositional constructions. In New Zealand English, 12 constructions were found, of which 75% are double object constructions and 25% are prepositional constructions.

In the second search, it can be concluded that double object constructions are used more, but in American English, the difference between the use of double object constructions and prepositional constructions is practically negligible, and in New Zealand English is the difference quite notable.

Comparing these initial results with the adjusted numbers that account for the sizes of the parts of the corpus, the results are again quite similar. The most were used in both dialects double object constructions. The adjusted numbers are shown in Tables 7 and 8. And in American English dialect, the adjusted numbers of double object constructions are 0.067 and

of prepositional constructions 0.059 compared with the initial numbers which were 26 and 23 constructions. And in New Zealand English the adjusted numbers are 0.111 of double object constructions and 0.037 of prepositional constructions compared with the initial numbers which were 9 and 3.

After comparing them with the previous numbers, the results are similar again. In both dialects are more used double object constructions; in American English, both types of constructions have similar numbers, and in New Zealand English is, the difference between the types of constructions three times bigger, same as shown in Table 6.

Table 7: Prepositional constructions with equivalents with the verb *give* adjusted

	<i>give thanks to him/give him thanks</i>	<i>give thanks to you/give you thanks</i>
Prepositional constructions US	0.036	0.023
Double object constructions US	0.034	0.034
Prepositional constructions NZ	0.012	0.024
Double object constructions NZ	0.012	0.099

Table 8: The total numbers of the constructions with equivalents with the verb *give* adjusted

	US	NZ	Total amount
Double object constructions	0.067	0.111	0.178
Prepositional constructions	0.059	0.037	0.096

The second verb selected from give-type verbs is the verb *lend*. The most commonly used phrases with the verb *lend* in double object constructions were *lend you money*, *lend them money* and *lend us money*. These phrases were search results from the search of *lend – P – N*.

Table 9: Double object constructions with the verb *lend*

	<i>lend you money</i>	<i>lend them money</i>	<i>lend us money</i>
Double object constructions US	25	14	13
Double object constructions NZ	4	1	2

Table 9 shows the search results with specific numbers, and Table 10 shows prepositional constructions that were searched for the comparison in the form *lend – N – to – N*. Then, in Table 11 are displayed the final numbers of double object constructions and prepositional constructions in both dialects.

Table 10: Prepositional constructions with the verb *lend*

	<i>lend money to people</i>	<i>lend money to friends</i>
Prepositional constructions US	11	1
Prepositional constructions NZ	1	1

Table 11: Total numbers of the constructions with the verb *lend*

	US	NZ	Total amount
Double object constructions	52	7	59
Prepositional constructions	12	2	14

The total number of constructions is 73 of which 59 are double object constructions and 14 are prepositional constructions. In American English 64 constructions were found, of which 81.25% are double object constructions and 18.75% are prepositional constructions. In New Zealand English 9 constructions were found, of which 77.78% are double object constructions, and 22.22% are prepositional constructions.

After analysing the third group of constructions, it is visible that double object constructions are much more used in both dialects than prepositional constructions, and there is almost no difference between the two dialects in the usage of the constructions.

Tables 12 – 14 show the adjusted numbers accounting for the size of the parts of the corpus. In the American English dialect, the adjusted numbers of double object constructions are 0.134, and for prepositional constructions, 0.032 compared with the initial numbers, which were 52 and 12 constructions. And in New Zealand English the adjusted numbers are 0.086 of double object constructions and 0.025 of prepositional constructions compared with the initial numbers, which were 7 and 2. After a comparison with the initial numbers, the conclusion would be again the same as with the initial numbers. In both dialects are more used double object constructions, and differences between the two dialects are subtle.

Table 12: Double object constructions with the verb *lend* adjusted

	<i>lend you money</i>	<i>lend them money</i>	<i>lend us money</i>
Double object constructions US	0.065	0.036	0.034
Double object constructions NZ	0.049	0.012	0.025

Table 13: The total numbers of the constructions with the verb *lend* adjusted

	<i>lend money to people</i>	<i>lend money to friends</i>
Prepositional constructions US	0.028	0.0026
Prepositional constructions NZ	0.012	0.012

Table 14: Total numbers of the constructions with the verb *lend* adjusted

	US	NZ	Total amount
Double object constructions	0.134	0.086	0.22
Prepositional constructions	0.032	0.025	0.057

The selected verb from throw-type and send-type verbs was only the verb *send* because of low search results with the other verbs. The analysed prepositional construction was the construction *send money to* used with different recipients. And most common equivalents in double object constructions were *send them money*, *send them emails* and *send them messages*.

Table 15: Prepositional constructions with the verb *send*

	<i>send money to...</i>
Prepositional constructions US	65
Prepositional constructions NZ	12

Table 15 shows the specific numbers of the prepositional constructions in both dialects, and the numbers of double object constructions in both dialects are shown in Table 16. Table 17 then shows the total numbers of both prepositional and double object constructions in both languages.

Table 16: Double object constructions with the verb *send*

	<i>send them money</i>	<i>send them emails</i>	<i>send them messages</i>
Double object constructions US	28	4	6
Double object constructions NZ	2	3	2

Table 17: Total numbers of the constructions with the verb *send*

	US	NZ	Total amount
Double object constructions	38	7	45
Prepositional constructions	65	12	77

The total number of constructions is 122, 45 are double object constructions, and 77 are prepositional constructions. In American English 103 constructions were found, of which 36.89% are double object constructions and 63.11% are prepositional constructions. In New Zealand English 19 constructions were found, of which 36.84% are double object constructions, and 63.16% are prepositional constructions.

With the verb *send* are most used prepositional constructions in both dialects. Both dialects also have practically the same percentage of double object and prepositional constructions, therefore, there was not found a difference between the use of double object and prepositional constructions with the verb *send* in American and New Zealand English.

Tables 18 – 20 show the adjusted numbers accounting for the size of the parts of the corpus. In American English dialect the adjusted numbers of double object constructions are 0.098 and of prepositional constructions 0.168 compared with the initial numbers which were 38 and 65 constructions. And in New Zealand English the adjusted numbers are 0.086 of double object constructions and 0.148 of prepositional constructions compared with the initial numbers which were 7 and 12. In the last group of constructions were more used prepositional constructions which did not change after adjusting the numbers accounting for the size of the parts of the corpus, and differences between the dialects were here again really small.

Table 18: The prepositional constructions with the verb *send* adjusted

	<i>send money to...</i>
Prepositional constructions US	0.168
Prepositional constructions NZ	0.148

Table 19: The double object constructions with the verb *send* adjusted

	<i>send them money</i>	<i>send them emails</i>	<i>send them messages</i>
Double object constructions US	0.072	0.01	0.016
Double object constructions NZ	0.025	0.037	0.024

Table 20: The total numbers of the constructions with the verb *send* adjusted

	US	NZ	Total amount
Double object constructions	0.098	0.086	0.184
Prepositional constructions	0.168	0.148	0.316

8.1.2 Answering the first research question

The first research question was “Which of the two types of constructions used in the dative alternation are used more in American and New Zealand English?” The question’s main focus was to find out the difference between the usage of the dative alternation in the dialects of American and New Zealand English. But based on the analysis of the chosen verbs there is not a big difference between the two dialects and if the speakers use double object or prepositional constructions.

Some differences were only found with the verb *give* when looked up first in prepositional constructions. However, even here, a congruence was found in which construction is used more – in both dialects, double object construction – in New Zealand English were the differences between the two types notable, while in American English, it was almost the same number. In New Zealand English were double object constructions used in 75% of cases and prepositional constructions in 25% of cases.

With all other verbs, was found almost no difference between the two dialects. With the verb *give* searched first in double object constructions were used more prepositional constructions in both dialects, slightly more in New Zealand English. With the verb *lend*

were more used double object constructions also with just a little difference between the dialects.

Even after adjusting the number to account for the different sample sizes or the different sizes of the American English corpus and New Zealand English corpus, the results remained the same in every search that was part of the research. Tables 21 and 22 below are summary tables of all analysed constructions in this research with the initial as well as adjusted numbers.

In the analysis of construction types, it was determined that the prepositional construction was used a little more, out of 390 analysed constructions 221 were prepositional and 169 double object which is 56.67% of prepositional constructions and 43.33% of double object constructions, therefore the difference is not that big. In American English dialect out of 324 constructions 141 were double object which is 43.52% and 183 were prepositional constructions which is 56.48%. And in New Zealand English dialect out of 66 constructions 28 were double object which is 42.42% and 38 were prepositional constructions which is 57.58%.

Table 21: The total numbers of all analysed constructions

	Total amount	US	NZ
Double object constructions	169	141	28
Prepositional constructions	221	183	38

Table 22: The total number of all analysed constructions adjusted

	Total amount	US	NZ
Double object constructions	0.709	0.364	0.345
Prepositional constructions	0.942	0.473	0.469

In conclusion, there was not found a notable difference between the dialects of American and New Zealand English in the use of double object and prepositional constructions, and there was found a slight difference between the overall choice between prepositional and double object constructions in favour of prepositional constructions.

8.2 Does the role of animacy influence the choice between prepositional and double object constructions in the dative alternation?

8.2.1 Research connected with the second research question

The animacy was analysed with the verb *send* due to a lack of data with the other verbs, which were used only with animate recipients, for example, *people*, *God*, or *friends*.

In total, 103 constructions were found in the American English dialect in the dative alternation and 19 constructions were found in New Zealand English. These both are prepositional and double object constructions, but in both dialects animate recipients are found just in prepositional constructions.

The first analysed string is *send money to* which was found in the American English dialect in the dative alternation in 65 cases. 41 of them were used with the animate recipients (15a), which means that 24 were used with the non-animate recipients (15b); examples of both are below.

All examples in this chapter are from the Corpus of Web-Based English by Mark Davies (2013).

- (15) a. *I will send money to your opponent.*
b. *Send money to your homeland.*

In the New Zealand dialect, 12 constructions were found, of which 10 were used with animate recipients (16a) and 2 with non-animate recipients (16b).

- (16) a. *We will definitely send money to your friend.*
b. *Why send money to overseas firms.*

The other analysed constructions were *send them money*, *send them emails*, and *send them messages*. These constructions were found in the dative alternation 38 times in the American English dialect, and 7 constructions were found in the New Zealand English dialect. Examples of these constructions are below, first in the American English dialect (17) and then in the New Zealand dialect (18).

- (17) a. *Have us send them money to rebuild their country.*
b. *We send them emails to confirm.*
c. *Converse with them or send them messages.*
- (18) a. *Someone asks you to send them money.*
b. *Customer have more positive opinion about companies that send them emails.*
c. *One way is to constantly send them messages.*

In both dialects double object constructions were used only with animate recipients partly because the verb *send* in double object constructions was hard to find in this particular corpus. The comparison of animacy in New Zealand and American English can be, therefore, made only with prepositional constructions. In New Zealand English was 83.33% of prepositional constructions used with animate recipients, and 16.67% with inanimate recipients. In American English constructions were used in 63.1% with animate recipients and 36.92% with inanimate.

8.2.2 Answering the second research question

The second research question was “Does the role of animacy influence the choice between prepositional and double object constructions in the dative alternation?” Based on the research done from this particular corpus is the answer yes. Prepositional constructions were used both with animate and inanimate recipients, but double object constructions were found only with animate recipients, which suggests that animacy does have at least some influence on whether the construction is prepositional or double object.

A hypothesis was formed connected to this research question: “New Zealand English speakers are more sensitive to the role of animacy than American English speakers.” This hypothesis was not supported by this research. Also, the claim from the study by Bresnan and Hay (2007) that originated this hypothesis, “non-animate recipients are more likely to be used in the double object construction in New Zealand English than in American English,” was not supported by the evidence found in this particular research. Inanimate recipients were used only with prepositional constructions in the sentences analysed in this thesis.

A difference was, however, found between the animacy in the two dialects, both dialects used more animate recipients. But in the New Zealand English dialect, animate recipients were used around 20% more than in the American English dialect.

8.3 Do double object and prepositional constructions convey the same meaning?

8.3.1 Research connected with the third research question

In the last research, example sentences from the corpus were selected, and then they were compared with their equivalents either in double object or prepositional constructions. The sentences were selected from both dialects.

It is important to note that even though there can be conducted many experiments trying to argue both that double object and prepositional constructions have the same or different meanings, the final decision is subject to interpretation based on how the reader perceives the sentences. But in this research sentences are shown and explained in context to demonstrate their meaning as accurately as possible. The following examples (19) – (27) are from the Corpus of Web-Based English by Mark Davies (2013) excluding the equivalent sentences that were created for the comparison; (20b), (21b), (22b), (23b), (24b), (25b), (26b), (27b).

- (19) a. *We give God thanks for that.*
b. *We give thanks to God for that.*

In the first example (19), the meaning of double object construction as well as prepositional construction is the same. In both sentences the speaker expresses gratitude to God for something that they are thankful for. This construction was found both in American English and New Zealand English dialects.

- (20) a. *I give God thanks acknowledging that it comes from Him.*
b. *I give thanks to God acknowledging that it comes from Him.*

The next example (20) was found in the American English dialect. The meaning of the first sentence is also expressing gratitude to God, and the speaker recognizes that God gave them something to be grateful for; the second sentence has the same meaning. In both cases, God receives thanks for something that He gave.

- (21) a. *We give God thanks for the losses as well as the wins.*
b. *We give thanks to God for the losses as well as the wins.*

The example (21) was found in New Zealand English dialect. Both sentences have again the same meaning. God again receives gratitude from something that He gives to the speakers in both sentences.

- (22) a. *We give thanks to God for our beautiful Anna.*
b. *We give God thanks for our beautiful Anna.*

This example (22) was found in American English dialect. The meaning in the first as well as the second sentence is the same. In both sentences, the speaker again expresses gratitude to God, in this case, for their family member – Anna, in their birthday speech.

- (23) a. *We give thanks to God for our life and the courage we are given to live it.*
b. *We give God thanks for our life and the courage we are given to live it.*

The next example (23) was found in New Zealand English dialect. Both sentences have the same meaning – expressing gratitude to God for us being able to live our lives thanks to Him.

- (24) a. *Seems to me that it can be easily scammed. I will lend you money at 13% to buy the property and you make 10% profit from renter who now is paying a higher cost – 13% + 10%.*
b. *Seems to me that it can be easily scammed. I will lend money to you at 13% to buy the property and you make 10% profit from renter who now is paying a higher cost – 13% + 10%.*

Example (24) was found in the American English dialect. Both sentences express the meaning that the speaker will give money to the recipient and, therefore, the recipient will obtain money from the speaker or agent. It does not matter if the speaker says *I will lend you money* or *I will lend money to you* in both cases, the recipient obtains money, and the agent gives it to him, expecting him to give it back after some period of time.

One thing that could be mentioned as the difference between these sentences is the emphasis. In the second example sentence the emphasis is on the fact that the recipient would not get the money bigger than in the first example sentence.

- (25) a. *A big Part of the problem is they won't lend you money unless you can prove your making' excess income.*
b. *A big Part of the problem is they won't lend money to you unless you can prove your making' excess income.*

The example (25) is similar to the example (25) and was found in New Zealand English dialect. The meaning of both sentences is that the recipient will not obtain money unless they prove making excess income.

- (26) a. *Obama wants to send money to the people who hate us.*
b. *Obama wants to send the people who hate us money.*

This example (26) was found in American English dialect. In both cases meaning is expressed that Obama has a desire to give money to some hateful people.

It could be argued similarly as in the example (25) that the emphasis in the first example sentence is bigger than in the second example sentence. In the first example, the sentence highlights the fact that the Agent wants the people who hate us to have the money.

- (27) a. *Can I send money to a Digicel Post Paid Subscriber?*
b. *Can I send a Digicel Post Paid Subscriber money?*

The last example was found in the New Zealand English dialect. And again, in both sentences the same meaning is expressed – the desire to give money to a Digicel post paid subscriber.

In conclusion, no evidence was found that all of the pairs of sentences, containing either double object or prepositional constructions have different meaning. However, as was mentioned before, this matter can be very subjective, so different evidence might mean different results. Another issue connected to this research could be discussed is the selection of the sentences. In this research, random sentences were selected from the Corpus of Web-Based English, so with another selection of sentences, the result might also be different.

8.3.2 Answering the third research question

The last research question was “Do double object and prepositional constructions convey the same meaning?” The result of this research is that double object and prepositional

constructions do convey the same meaning. Any evidence was not found to support the claim that the sentences would show different meanings than their equivalents either in a double object or prepositional construction.

The only visible difference that was found was emphasis in two examples which was bigger in the sentence with the prepositional construction, but it still did not change the meaning of the sentence.

CONCLUSION

The main focus of this thesis was the dative alternation, most specifically, how it differs between American English and New Zealand English dialects.

The research was an analysis of the Corpus of Web-Based English which was conducted to answer the research questions. The first research question was “Which of the two types of constructions used in the dative alternation are used more in American and New Zealand English?” Researching this question, the study did not find any notable difference between the usage of the two types of constructions or between the amount of use of double object and prepositional constructions. Results in both American English and New Zealand English were similar except for one exception, which was with the verb *give* in New Zealand English, where double object constructions were used in 75% of cases and prepositional constructions in 25% of cases. In contrast, in the American English dialect, 53.06% were double object constructions, and 46.94% were prepositional constructions.

In the first research, it was crucial to account for the different sizes of the two parts of the used corpus (New Zealand and American English); therefore, adjusted numbers were calculated to compare the numbers of found constructions. However, the results with the adjusted numbers were the same as with the initial found numbers of the constructions.

The second research question was “Does the role of animacy influence the choice between prepositional and double object constructions in the dative alternation?” and the answer resulting from the study is ‘yes’. Double object constructions were found to be used only with animate recipients, while prepositional constructions were used with both inanimate and animate recipients, which suggests at least some influence of animacy of the construction type. Connected with this question was formed a hypothesis “New Zealand English speakers are more sensitive to the role of animacy than American English speakers.” This hypothesis was not supported by this research because it was formed based on a claim by Bresnan and Hay (2007) that the bigger sensitivity means that “non-animate recipients are more likely to be used in the double object construction in the New Zealand English than in American English” and this research showed that in this case inanimate recipients were used only with prepositional constructions.

The third research question was “Do double object and prepositional constructions convey the same meaning?” The study showed that double object and prepositional constructions do convey the same meaning because no evidence was found to support the

claim that the sentences would show different meanings than their equivalents either in a double object or prepositional construction.

Problems with this research could be found either concerning the research itself or the methodology. The first problem is connected to the analysis done with a corpus. One of the issues are definitely the different sizes of the parts of the corpus of the two analysed dialects. Another thing is the fact that it was only possible to search for strings in the corpus and analyse those. But the most problematic issue with this specific research is the lack of data. Speakers tend not to use as many specific syntactic constructions like the dative alternation in their speech so to find enough constructions in different types and dialects was quite challenging even though the sample sizes were in millions and that could really influence the results.

However, even though the research has some issues, it has still shown interesting results and comparisons that were not done in the same way before. The thesis also shows previous research and studies that are compared between themselves and provides an overview of the term dative alternation supported with research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AmE	American English
N	Noun
NP	Noun phrase
NZ	New Zealand English
NZE	New Zealand English
P	Pronoun
PP	Prepositional phrase
US	American English
V	Verb

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