

<https://helda.helsinki.fi>

---

## Recipient prominence vs. beneficiary prominence

Kittilä, Seppo

2005-08-01

---

Kittilä , S 2005 , ' Recipient prominence vs. beneficiary prominence ' , Linguistic Typology ,  
pöy vol. 9 , no. 2 , pp. 269 297 . <https://doi.org/10.1515/lity.2005.9.2.269>

---

<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/251209>

<https://doi.org/10.1515/lity.2005.9.2.269>

---

other

publishedVersion

---

*Downloaded from Helda, University of Helsinki institutional repository.*

*This is an electronic reprint of the original article.*

*This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.*

*Please cite the original version.*

# Recipient-prominence vs. beneficiary-prominence

SEPPO KITILÄ

## *Abstract*

*Surveying the encoding of the semantic roles of recipient, beneficiary, and recipient-beneficiary from a crosslinguistic perspective, the paper has two goals. First, by focusing on the encoding of the dual role of recipient-beneficiary, it tries to show that languages vary in the marking of this role: they either encode it the same way as they encode recipients or beneficiaries; in the case of recipient and beneficiary this variation is excluded. Second, current definitions of the label BENEFACTIVE will be scrutinized, since this notion is split in a number of languages and the terminology proposed here is empirically more appropriate in some cases.*

*Keywords:* beneficiary, dative, ditransitive, ‘give’, grammatical relations, grammaticalization, indirect object, recipient

## **1. Introduction**

As has often been noted,<sup>1</sup> recipients and beneficiaries (or benefactives) have a number of properties in common. The most salient of these properties is that recipients and beneficiaries usually benefit from the events they are parts of. Furthermore, “the beneficiary prototypically exerts potential possessive control over the benefactum” (Lehmann et al. 2000a: 93; see also Lichtenberk 2002: 440). This is also the case with prototypical recipients who, as the result of an event, become possessors of a thing that enters their domain of possession (or sphere of control). Despite the shared features, differences are easy to find too. For example, the notion of benefaction is far more prominent with beneficiaries

---

1. See, e.g., Goldberg (1995: 147–151); Shibatani (1996); Tuggy (1996: 428); Song (1998a); Newman (1996: 217–223, 1998: 17–18, 1999: 132–133); Lehmann et al. (2000a: 93–100, 2000b: 68–87); Leino (2001: 73); Lichtenberk (2002: 439–442).

(or RECIPIENT-BENEFICIARIES and BENEFICIARIES in the terminology employed here) than with recipients, in addition to which the nature of benefaction is different.

It is typical of works concerned with the encoding of beneficiaries that the notion is contrasted to the recipient. In this sense the notion of BENEFACTIVE comprises any (animate) role of a three-participant event apart from recipients. It also refers to overt encoding. The label is usually taken for granted and not defined in any detail, but its use is compatible with the simple definition proposed here (see, e.g., Song 1998b and Lichtenberk 2002: 440); or different instances of the notion are not explicitly distinguished from each other (see, e.g., Sebba 1987: 177 who uses the labels BENEFACTIVE and “BENEFACTIVE”, with the latter, in quotes, corresponding rather closely to the definition of beneficiary in the present paper). The label is used in this sense throughout this paper. It should also be noted that the label BENEFACTIVE is here only used in reference to the works of others, since the terminology of the present paper is different. The recipient, then, covers the recipient of canonical three-participant events like ‘give’ and ‘send’. The examples in (1) illustrate the heterogeneity associated with the notion of benefactive.

- (1) Hokkien Chinese (Sino-Tibetan)
- a. *chiat pîn-kó hō goá*  
cut apple give me  
‘Cut an apple for me.’
  - b. *papa thàn lúì hō goá*  
dad earns money give me  
‘Dad earns money for me.’
  - c. *chhiù koa hō goá*  
sing song give me  
‘Sing a song for me.’
  - d. *gām pîn-kó hō goá*  
hold apple give me  
‘Hold the apple for me.’
  - e. *John khì Wellington hō goá*  
John go Wellington give me  
‘John went to Wellington for me.’ (Newman 1996: 220)

In Hokkien, all entities that somehow benefit from events bear the same coding even though the nature of benefaction differs.<sup>2</sup> For example, (1a) involves an entity that receives a thing as a result of an event in addition to benefiting from the event, while reception is lacking in (1d) and (1e). (1a) thus exemplifies a

---

2. For an even more de-semanticized grammaticalization see Song (1998a).

more recipient-like entity, while (1d) and (1e) merely involve a beneficiary, since the nature of the profiled event excludes reception.

Due to the heterogeneity of the label *BENEFACTIVE*, as illustrated in (1), the notion is divided into two in the present article. The two distinct semantic roles encoded in the same way in Hokkien will be labelled *RECIPIENT-BENEFICIARY* (Rb for short) and (pure) *BENEFICIARY*. Example (1a) represents an Rb, while (1d) and (1e) exemplify a beneficiary as the roles are to be understood here. In brief, the distinction is based on whether the entity referred to receives a concrete entity transferred to its sphere of control as a result of the event it partakes in or whether it merely benefits from it. (Section 2 will have for more elaborate definitions.) I have opted for using the seemingly complicated label *RECIPIENT-BENEFICIARY* in order to prevent confusion with the traditional use of benefactive, which in most cases also includes pure beneficiaries. The role of recipient is understood in the traditional sense, i.e., as the animate non-agent or non-theme role of three-participant events like ‘give’ or ‘send’. A division similar to the one proposed here (yet not as explicit) is found in Newman (1996: 220, 1999: 131): “[...] where we find the *GIVE* morpheme extended to a ‘true’ benefactive, where the beneficiary does not need to be a *RECIPIENT* of anything passed”. Also, de Stadler (1996: 287) states that some events of the beneficiary schema are rather similar to events of the recipient subschema in Afrikaans.

The goal of this article is twofold. First, I wish to examine which of the two notions, reception or benefaction, determines the encoding of recipient-beneficiaries. This is based on whether Rbs are encoded as Recipients or as Beneficiaries. The first type of languages will be called *RECIPIENT-PROMINENT* and the latter *BENEFICIARY-PROMINENT*. In doing this I hope to show that the label *BENEFACTIVE* as traditionally used does not always do justice to actual linguistic data, since the notion is formally split in many languages. I do not wish to say that the label should be abandoned altogether, but I rather hope to show that the label formally covers different kinds of “benefactive areas” in the languages of the world, and thus a unified label in the form typically proposed is not appropriate. In some languages Rbs are coded as Recipients, while in others their encoding corresponds to Beneficiaries. In the former case the “benefactive area” is smaller than in the latter case.

Since the notions of semantic role and argument are central to the discussion, a terminological note is in order. The label *SEMANTIC ROLE* is employed in a traditional sense. For instance, the semantic role of recipient is represented by cases like ‘the dentist gave the book *TO THE TEACHER*’. *SEMANTIC* here means merely non-linguistic, and the distinction between semantic and cognitive roles is immaterial for present purposes: *SEMANTIC ROLE* (or, for short, *ROLE*) covers both. The term *ARGUMENT*, on the other hand, refers to the encoding of semantic roles and is used in a purely syntactic sense. Moreover, it is used in reference to any formal manifestation of roles. To make the distinction of semantics and

overt form explicit in the following sections, the labels with initials capitals, like Recipient and Beneficiary refer to arguments, while the lack of initial capitals indicates semantic roles. As regards recipient-beneficiary, RB is used in reference to an argument, whereas Rb denotes the corresponding semantic role. It should also be noted that in Section 3 the denotation RB is always used in reference to form regardless of whether the language exhibits a distinct RB argument or not. Moreover, roles are ENCODED, while arguments are MARKED.

The present paper is a typological study insofar as it presents a formal typology. However, the study does not present any statistical data on the distribution and the frequency of the types distinguished. The primary reason for this is the low number of languages for which I have reliable data. I have consulted some 350 reference grammars for the study, but I could find reliable information only in perhaps 10 per cent of these. In addition, I have used informants for some languages. The major problem in data collection was that sometimes I was not able to definitely state which of the roles we are dealing with. For example, it is rather difficult to decide whether an argument refers to a recipient-beneficiary or a beneficiary in clauses like *The dentist baked a cake for me*, which are ambiguous in many languages (including English). Pragmatics and contextually inferred information is very important here (Section 3.7), and it is not always possible to discuss this in a reference grammar due to limitations of space. I have therefore tried to use clear cases whenever possible. This also constitutes a major reason for a more fine-grained distinction of benefactive. Taking into consideration only the encoding of Rbs may result in misinterpreting the data. Furthermore, even though ‘give’ clearly is the best example of an event with a recipient (see, e.g., Tuggy 1998: 35), the verb is formally rather anomalous in a number of languages (see Kittilä forthcoming a). The role of recipient can be defined without problems in light of the event ‘give’, but there are more problems related to defining the Recipient argument. If we take ‘give’ as the starting point in every language under study, some languages may be analyzed incorrectly due to an overgeneralization of Recipient encoding (Recipient is encoded differently from ‘give’ in the majority of cases, see, e.g., (9a)). In these cases, I have opted for using another verb when defining the Recipient. Last, I will only deal with the Rb or beneficiary readings of the relevant cases. Other possible uses associated with the marking concerned (like experiencers or indirect causation related to Beneficiary encoding) will be ignored.

## 2. Defining the roles

Before proceeding, it is in order to define the roles at issue. The most relevant single features on which the division of the roles is based are reception and benefaction. This is not to say that this is the only way to define these roles. A finer-grained distinction between different instances of beneficiary might be

possible, and perhaps even necessary in other contexts, but this is not relevant to the present study. The distinction made is not arbitrary, though, since it is backed up by data, as Section 3 will show. The following presentation is based on clear cases and illustrates the roles as idealizations. Moreover, the focus of the present section lies on the semantic basis of the roles, even though some examples of their encoding will be given as well.

The semantic roles of recipient, beneficiary, and recipient-beneficiary can be defined on the basis of the notions of reception and benefaction.<sup>3</sup> Reception refers to the fact that as a result of an event a (concrete) entity enters a recipient's sphere of control or domain of possession, as in 'the teacher gave/sent me a book' or 'the ticket won me a thousand Euro'. Whether the reception results from an actual transfer from an agent to a recipient is irrelevant, which means that the latter case is considered as well. Benefaction, on the other hand, implies that the occurrence of an event is beneficial to an entity other than the agent itself. Benefaction can be understood in (at least) two different ways. These are here called *SUBSTITUTIVE* and *CONCRETE BENEFACTION*, with the former more important for present purposes. Substitutive benefaction refers to benefaction in events like 'the teacher parked the car for me/on my behalf' and 'the dentist went downtown for me/on my behalf', in which benefaction consists in not having to carry out the profiled event oneself. This means that someone is substituting for the beneficiary as the agent of the profiled event (cf. the "true benefactive" of Newman 1996: 220). Whether the result of the event is regarded as beneficial is less relevant here. The other major type of benefaction is illustrated by cases in which the beneficiary benefits from an event in that s/he can make some use of its result, but, in contrast to reception, without receiving anything concrete. Examples include the likes of 'the professor built a house for me' (NOT 'the professor built me a house') or 'the teacher lied for me'. One of the readings of the former is that an agent has built a house for him/herself, and also for being able to accommodate another person occasionally. The agent itself is the true recipient here (i.e., the house enters his/her domain of possession), and the beneficiary benefits from the event in question in having accommodation when s/he needs it. In the latter case (i.e., 'the teacher lied for me'), the event may have the result that the beneficiary avoids a punishment, since someone else is lying for him/her. A substitutive reading is less probable (yet not completely impossible) in both of these cases. With concrete benefaction the relation to reception is evident, since the beneficiary gains direct benefit from the events, e.g., by being able to use the result for his/her purposes.

---

3. See also de Stadler (1996: 275–287) for discussion of recipient and beneficiary subschemas in Afrikaans.

Table 1. *The roles of recipient, beneficiary, and recipient-beneficiary defined schematically*

	Reception	Substitutive benefaction	Concrete benefaction
recipient	+	–	0
beneficiary	–	+	0
recipient-beneficiary	+	+	0

On the basis of the notions of reception and benefaction the three roles can be illustrated as in Table 1. A plus naturally implies that the role has the feature, while a minus indicates the lack of it; a zero means that the feature is irrelevant.

The characteristic feature of the role of recipient is reception. This does not exclude concrete benefaction, but it is not a mandatory part of the recipient. Recipients (as a semantic role) are thus animate entities that receive something concrete transferred to their sphere of control or domain of possession. The recipient archetype is illustrated by the recipient of the event ‘give’ (with the proviso that formally ‘give’ may be a very atypical trivalent verb). The irrelevance of benefaction is also manifest in the fact that reception can also be detrimental, as in ‘the dentist gave me this piece of junk’ or ‘the dentist sent me a packet with anthrax’, which are usually not considered beneficial events. Moreover, Beneficiary marking is deemed ungrammatical with genuine recipients in languages like Mupun (2) and Finnish (3).

- (2) Mupun (Chadic, Afroasiatic)
- a. *n-sin siwol n-wur mbə makaranta*  
 1SG-give money PREP(to)-3M PREP school  
 ‘I gave him money (for the school).’
- b. *\*n-sin brəŋ-nə mbə audu*  
 1SG-give horse-DEF PREP (for) Audu  
 (For: ‘I gave the horse to Audu.’) (Frajzyngier 1993: 227)
- (3) Finnish (Finno-Ugric, Uralic)
- a. *opettaja anto-i poja-lle kirja-n*  
 teacher.NOM give-3SG.PAST boy-ALL book-ACC  
 ‘The teacher gave the boy a/the book.’
- b. *opettaja juoks-i poja-n vuoksi*  
 teacher.NOM run-3SG.PAST boy-GEN for  
 ‘The teacher ran for the sake of/instead of the boy.’
- c. *\*opettaja anto-i kirja-n poja-n vuoksi*  
 teacher.NOM give-3SG.PAST book-ACC boy-GEN for  
 (For: ‘The teacher gave the boy a/the book.’)

As shown in Table 1, beneficiaries have substitutive benefaction as their only positive feature value. The notion of reception is completely lacking here, which makes the bearers of this role pure beneficiaries. The semantic and also linguistic differences from recipients are very evident as seen in (4).

- (4) Finnish (Finno-Ugric, Uralic)
- a. *puutarhuri anto-i poja-lle kirja-n*  
 gardener.NOM give-3SG.PAST boy-ALL book-ACC  
 ‘The gardener gave a/the book to the boy.’
- b. \**hän lö-i mies-tä minu-lle*  
 3SG.NOM hit.PAST-3SG man-PART 1SG-ALL  
 (‘S/he hit the man for (lit. to) me.’)
- c. *hän lö-i mies-tä minu-n vuokse-ni /*  
 3SG.NOM hit.PAST-3SG man-PART 1SG-GEN for-1SG.POSS /  
*puolesta-ni*  
 for-1SG.POSS  
 ‘S/he hit the man for me/as a favor to me, instead of me.’

In Finnish, ‘give’ governs a Recipient in the allative case. The use of allative is possible only if the denoted event involves a recipient, as in (4a). The complete lack of reception and the very prominent nature of benefaction (which follow from the nature of the event) in (4b) render the clause ungrammatical. Instead, Beneficiary marking, as in (4c), has to be employed. The role of this argument is pure beneficiary.

Recipient-beneficiary represents a combination of recipient and beneficiary, and it thus comprises both reception and (substitutive) benefaction (see Table 1). Neither of the two notions alone suffices to capture the real nature of Rbs. Canonical instances of Rbs are illustrated by cases like ‘the dentist baked me a cake’ or ‘the professor built me a house’. The use of recipient is in order here, since similarly to typical recipients a thing enters the Rb’s sphere of control or domain of possession (or the Rb is at least an intended recipient, see Jackendoff 1990: 184 and Goldberg 1995: 32). On the other hand, in contrast to recipients of events like ‘give’, substitutive benefaction is a crucial part of Rbs. For example, the benefaction in events like ‘the professor baked me a cake’ means that the event is carried out on behalf of the Rb.<sup>4</sup> This distinguishes Rbs from recipients, and it is also the most important feature in common for Rbs and beneficiaries. A substitutive reading is not available for a canonical recipient. This can be explained by whether the events in question are regarded as a unified whole or as consisting of two (or more) subparts. Events like ‘give’

4. See also Goldberg (1995: 36–37), who states that the actual transfer scene may be lacking with Rbs, which makes the notion of substitutive benefaction even more prominent.



and ‘send’ are considered single events that obligatorily involve a recipient. Rbs (and beneficiaries), on the other hand, constitute optional parts of events, which also has the consequence that events with Rbs or beneficiaries can be regarded as involving two subevents. In more concrete terms, this means that the event ‘the dentist baked me a cake’ comprises a baking scene followed by a transfer scene, and the event can be rephrased as ‘the dentist baked a cake and the dentist gave the cake to me’. The first event has to be completed before the second can take place. As the rephrasing of the event ‘the dentist baked me a cake’ makes clear, the Rb partakes only in the second part of the event. The (substitutive) benefaction refers to the fact that the Rb is not involved in the first phase, i.e., it does not need to partake in the event that creates the thing to be transferred to its sphere of control. The nature of benefaction of Rbs is thus very much the same as with beneficiaries, in which the benefaction also consists mainly in that the beneficiary does not need to be involved in an event him/herself. On the other hand, the event ‘give’ cannot be divided into subparts in the same way, which excludes substitutive readings.

To summarize, the three roles discussed here display differences, but also share common features. The roles of recipient and beneficiary are distinguished based on the notion of reception vs. the lack of it. Reception does not exclude concrete benefaction, but in favorable contexts recipients can be regarded as beneficiaries, since they can use the transferred thing for their purposes. However, substitutive benefaction is lacking for recipients, which is the most relevant type of benefaction with regard to the purposes of the present paper. Rbs, in turn, exhibit features of both of the two other roles. They are similar to recipients in that they receive a thing transferred to their sphere of control (which is excluded in the case of beneficiaries), while they are similar to beneficiaries in that both involve substitutive benefaction.

### **3. Typologizing languages: Tripartite, recipient-prominent, beneficiary-prominent, neutral, fluid**

#### *3.1. Preliminaries*

In this section languages will be examined with regard to how they formally encode the roles of recipient, recipient-beneficiary, and beneficiary as defined in Section 2. The typology is based on whether Rbs are coded like Recipients or like Beneficiaries (which are formally distinct in most languages). I will speak of recipient-prominent and beneficiary-prominent coding accordingly. It needs to be noted that recipient-prominent vs. beneficiary-prominent languages are meant as purely formal categories. This means that semantically both reception and benefaction are parts of Rbs irrespective of which of them is emphasized formally. Pure instances of each type are illustrated first, after which I proceed to illustrate optional marking of the relevant differences.

Table 2. Schematic representation of the language types examined

Tripartite languages:	[Rec] ≠ [RB] ≠ [Ben]
Recipient-prominent languages:	[Rec = RB] ≠ [Ben]
Beneficiary-prominent languages:	[Rec] ≠ [RB = Ben]
Neutral languages:	[Rec = RB = Ben]

There are four pure types schematically illustrated in Table 2. The logically possible fifth type in which the marking of Recipient and Beneficiary coincides and differs from RB ([Rec = Ben] ≠ [RB]) is unsurprisingly not attested in any of the languages I have data for. In the following subsections the four types are illustrated in the order in which they appear in Table 2. The typology is concerned only with the linguistic identity or differences in the encoding of the three roles, without regard to whether the identical or different coding uses cases, adpositions, or whatever, or whether the roles are encoded as direct/indirect or primary/secondary objects. In a similar vein, it is not relevant to the following discussion whether the Recipient bears a monofunctional coding as Recipient or is rather marked as a general locative phrase. The typology will, however, show that Recipients are always more core-like arguments than RBs and Beneficiaries if a language displays variation in this regard as some do (the variation is not obligatory). This is not unexpected, since, as discussed in Section 2, only recipients are integral parts of certain events while the presence of Rbs and beneficiaries is always optional. If possible, more than one strategy is usually illustrated when different language types are discussed, merely to illustrate the differences in the formal encoding of the roles.

It should also be noted that the form of the Recipient is, whenever possible and plausible, decided on the basis of the verb ‘give’. The event ‘give’ constitutes semantically the best starting point when discussing the role of recipient, since, as noted above, the event ‘give’ mandatorily involves a recipient, which also makes it possible to label the argument encoding the role of recipient as the canonical Recipient of any language. However, ‘give’ constitutes a rather anomalous verb formally. ‘Give’ deviates from all other trivalent verbs in some languages including Maltese (see, e.g., Borg & Comrie 1984) and Southeastern Tepehuan (see (9) and also Kittilä forthcoming a), in which features like verb morphology or case marking distinguish between ‘give’ and other verbs of similar valency. Thus, employing the verb ‘give’ as the canonical trivalent verb potentially poses problems for the analysis below, although these problems are not very severe. First, I have used another trivalent verb as the basis of classification in cases in which ‘give’ accords the Recipient a deviant marking. Second, the differences of ‘give’ and other verbs of similar valency only rarely cause real problems, since the differences between the arguments are ev-

ident anyway. Thus, either recipient-prominence or beneficiary-prominence is maintained.

### 3.2. Tripartite languages ( $[Rec] \neq [RB] \neq [Ben]$ )

Languages in which all three roles receive formally distinct encoding provide evidence that the three semantic roles are distinct. (In a similar vein, the semantic roles of agent, theme, and recipient can be distinguished, since they are encoded in different ways in a number of languages.) This type, however, seems to be rather rare crosslinguistically, and the only genuine realizations of it I have come across are in Germanic languages, namely English (5) and Icelandic (6; courtesy of Jóhanna Barðdal). The roles are given explicitly for English for the sake of convenience, and because the roles are largely defined on the basis of these kinds of canonical cases.

- (5) English (Germanic, Indo-European)
- |    |                                       |                         |
|----|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | <i>s/he gave the book to me</i>       | [recipient]             |
| b. | <i>s/he gave me the book</i>          | [recipient]             |
| c. | <i>s/he baked a cake for me</i>       | [recipient-beneficiary] |
| d. | <i>s/he baked me a cake</i>           | [recipient-beneficiary] |
| e. | <i>s/he went to the market for me</i> | [beneficiary]           |
| f. | <i>*s/he went me to the market</i>    | [beneficiary]           |
- (6) Icelandic (Germanic, Indo-European)
- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| a. | <i>maðurinn gaf konu/konunni bók</i>                         |  |
|    | man.NOM gave woman/woman.DAT book                            |  |
|    | ‘The man gave the woman a book.’                             |  |
| b. | <i>*maðurinn gar bók til konunnar/hennar</i>                 |  |
|    | man.NOM gave book to woman/her                               |  |
|    | (For: ‘The man gave a book to the woman.’)                   |  |
| c. | <i>*hann bakaði mér köku</i>                                 |  |
|    | he.NOM bake.PAST me cake.ACC                                 |  |
|    | (For: ‘He baked me a cake.’)                                 |  |
| d. | <i>hann bakaði köku handa mér</i>                            |  |
|    | he.NOM bake.PAST cake.ACC for me                             |  |
|    | ‘He baked me a cake.’  |  |
| e. | <i>hann bakaði köku fyrir mig</i>                            |  |
|    | he.NOM bake.PAST cake.ACC for me                             |  |
|    | ‘He baked me a cake/he baked a cake for me (instead of me).’ |  |
| f. | <i>hann lagði bílnum fyrir mig</i>                           |  |
|    | he.NOM park.PAST car.ACC for me                              |  |
|    | ‘He parked the car for me.’                                  |  |
| g. | <i>*hann lagði mér bílnum</i>                                |  |
| h. | <i>*hann lagði bílnum handa mér</i>                          |  |

Examples (5a–b) illustrate the two forms of Recipient in English. The marking is (optionally) different from RBs, since the preposition in the antidative (as (a) and (c) are termed by Dryer (1986: 822)) is different (*to* vs. *for*). Both Recipients and RBs allow dative shift, which distinguishes them from Beneficiaries, as illustrated in (5f) (see also Givón 1984: 155). Thus, in English, the relevant traits of the arguments are as follows: Recipients are marked with *to* in antidative and they allow dative shift, RBs are marked with *for* in antidative, and they also allow dative shift, while Beneficiaries are preceded by *for* without the possibility of dative shift. In Icelandic, the distinction is the same, but its linguistic manifestation is different. The Recipient archetype cannot be an adpositionally marked indirect object, as (6a–b) show. RBs and Beneficiaries take prepositions, but different ones: RBs take *handa*, while Beneficiaries take *fyrir*. Constructions with two direct object-like arguments are not possible in these cases, as the ungrammaticality of (6c) and (6g) shows. The distinction between the three arguments is especially clear in Icelandic, which uses distinct mechanisms for each argument. In English, on the other hand, the marking of RB is a genuine combination of Recipient and Beneficiary properties. The possibility of dative shift makes RBs similar to Recipients, while the use of the preposition *for* stresses their relation to Beneficiaries. English thus nicely illustrates the dual nature of the Rb formally.

As noted above, the tripartite type appears to be very rare crosslinguistically. This is perhaps best explained by economy. Since Rbs involve features of both recipient and beneficiary, languages have the option of encoding the role identically to either Recipients or Beneficiaries. Moreover, the three roles can usually be distinguished on the basis of verb or clause semantics (or pragmatics), which makes a distinct RB argument rather redundant. This means, for example, that verbs denoting inherently three-participant events like ‘give’ and ‘send’ involve a recipient, while verbs like ‘bake’ and ‘build’ which denote the creation of a thing are most natural with an Rb reading, while verbs that cannot denote a transfer like ‘park’ or ‘walk’ only allow a beneficiary reading. (There are also cases in which this generalization does not hold.) The rare occurrence of the tripartite language type does, however, not demolish the proposed typology, since crosslinguistically the role of Rb can be shown to be real, insofar as languages vary with regard to whether they encode this role like a Recipient or like a Beneficiary. This kind of variation is absent in the case of recipients and beneficiaries.

### 3.3. Recipient-prominent languages ([Rec, RB] ≠ [Ben])

As noted above, due to the dual nature of Rbs they can be encoded as either Recipients or Beneficiaries. This section examines languages that have a distinct marking for Recipients and Beneficiaries, and in which the marking of RBs is identical to Recipients. The type is illustrated in (7)–(9).

- (7) Finnish (Finno-Ugric, Uralic)
- a. *kuningas anto-i poja-lle kirja-n*  
king.NOM give.PAST-3SG boy-ALL book-ACC  
'The king gave a/the book to the boy.'
  - b. *hammaslääkäri leipo-i puoliso-lle-en kaku-n*  
dentist.NOM bake-3SG.PAST spouse-ALL-3.POSS cake-ACC  
'The dentist baked his/her spouse a cake.'
  - c. *hän lö-i mies-tä minu-n vuokse-ni /*  
3SG.NOM hit.PAST-3SG man-PART 1SG-GEN for-1SG.POSS /  
*takia-ni*  
for-1SG.POSS  
'S/he hit the man for me/as a favor to me/on my behalf.'
- (8) Yoruba (Niger-Congo)
- a. *ó fi owó náà fún mi*  
he put money the give me  
'He gave me the money.'
  - b. *rà á fún mi*  
buy it give me  
'Buy it for me.'
  - c. *bá mi lọ s' òjà*  
*bá* me go to market  
'Go for me to the market.' (Sebba 1987: 176–177, cited from Rowlands 1969: 83–84)
- (9) Southeastern Tepehuan (Uto-Aztecan)
- a. *añ dyo gui-m maqui-a' ji ja'p sap tída*  
1SG PE CLR-2SG give-FUT EMP thus REU told  
'"I will give it to you", he told me.'
  - b. *jaró ba-m-bii-dya-c gu-m sa'ua?*  
who TWD-2SG-pass-APPL-PI ART-2SG blanket  
'Who brought you your blanket?'
  - c. *ma'n-ap jiñ-som-dya-' gu cutun*  
one-2SG 1SG-sew-APPL-FUT ART shirt  
'Please sew a shirt for me.'
  - d. *chiñi-a'-ap gu-m xix cu-m timiñ-xi-dya-'*  
ask-FUT-2SG ART-2SG sibling SO-2SG lower-BEN-APPL-FUT  
*gu-m sa'ua na gu' tē'cov dá*  
ART-2SG blanket SUB but high sit  
'Ask your (older) sibling to get your blanket down for you because it's up high.' (Willett 1991: 76–77, 182–183)

In Finnish, the case marking of RBs coincides with Recipients (both occur in the allative), while the marking of Beneficiary is adpositional. There are no

options available for the marking, and the use of allative is completely ungrammatical for Beneficiary (see (4b)). In Yoruba, the verb used in the serial verb construction distinguishes the arguments. The verb *fún* ‘give’ is used for Recipients and RBs, while the verb used for Beneficiaries is *ba*.<sup>5</sup> Southeastern Tepehuan differs from the other languages in that the difference between the roles is encoded via verb affixes. The affix *-dya-* is employed for Recipients and RBs, while the benefactive affix *-xi-* is additionally employed for Beneficiaries. Example (9a) is given here in order to illustrate the marginally tripartite nature of Tepehuan, along with the potential problems related to ‘give’. ‘Give’ lacks *-dya-*, which distinguishes it from both typical Recipients and RBs. However, ‘give’ is the only verb in the language that allows this, which makes it questionable to classify Tepehuan as genuinely tripartite. Taking the encoding of the majority of inherently three-participant events as the starting point is more appropriate, and in this view Tepehuan is clearly a recipient-prominent language.

Examples in (7)–(9) illustrate languages that have mostly been ignored in discussions of benefactives. They also seriously call into question the justification of the label *BENEFACTIVE* as it is typically used in the literature. As noted in the introduction, the notion usually covers both RBs and beneficiaries, and also the corresponding (in many cases) identical arguments. However, in these languages, the notion is formally split, and the use of a unified label is not justified. The proposed label *RECIPIENT-PROMINENCE* better captures the nature of these languages. Reception determines the marking whenever it is present, while Beneficiary marking is possible only if the notion of reception and thus the role of recipient is lacking altogether. Whether events inherently involve three participants or not appears to be irrelevant, but the marking is determined by either reception (Recipients and RB’s) or benefaction (Beneficiaries).

#### 3.4. Beneficiary-prominent languages ([Rec] ≠ [RB, Ben])

Since RBs involve both recipient-like and beneficiary-like traits, we can predict that there will also be languages that have grammaticalized the notion of benefaction as the decisive factor in the encoding of this role. Formally, this means that the marking of Recipient is distinct from RBs and Beneficiaries, which are marked identically. Some examples are given in (10)–(13).

- (10) Tamil (Dravidian)  
 a. *raman biravy-ukku pant-ai kuṭu-tt-aan*  
     PN       PN-DAT       ball-ACC   give-PRT-3SG.M  
     ‘Raman has given Biravy a ball.’ (Lehmann et al. 2000a: 93)

---

5. Not discussed in any more detail by Sebba (1987). See also Kouwenberg (1994: 394–395) for Berbice Dutch Creole for a similar case.

- b. *avan en-ukk-aaka oru ttopi-yai vangi-n-aan*  
 3SG.M 1SG-DAT-BEN a hat-ACC buy-PRT-3SG.M  
 ‘He has bought a hat for me.’ (Lehmann et al. 2000a: 76)
- c. *rani pi[[ai-akk-aaka muṭi-yai vari-viṭṭaa]*  
 PN child-DAT-BEN hair-ACC comb-COMPL-3SG.F  
 ‘Rani has combed the child’s hair (for him/her).’ (Lehmann et al. 2000a: 70)
- (11) Iranian Azari (Turkic, Altaic)
- a. *mān kitab-ı uşag-ya ver-di-m*  
 1SG book-ACC child-DAT give-PAST-1SG  
 ‘I gave the book to the child.’
- b. *mān kitab-ı uşag-için al-di-m*  
 1SG book-ACC child-BEN buy-PAST-1SG  
 ‘I bought the book for the child.’
- c. *ali mān-için üz-dü*  
 PN.NOM 1SG-BEN swim-3SG.PAST  
 ‘Ali swam for me.’ (Dehghani 2000: 146, 150, 159)
- (12) Maori (Polynesian, Austronesian)
- a. *kei te whakamaarama ia i ngaa koorero pakitara*  
 T/A explain 3SG PREP the.PL talk fiction  
*ki ngaa tamariki*  
 PREP the.PL children  
 ‘She is explaining the stories to the children.’
- b. *kua mahi-a e pani he kapu tii maa raatou*  
 T/A make-PASS by PN a cup tea PREP 3PL  
 ‘Pani has made them a cup of tea.’
- c. *i hoatu ahau i te maaripi ki tana hoa*  
 T/A give 1SG DO the knife PREP SG.GEN.SG friend  
*maa hone*  
 PREP John  
 ‘I gave the knife to John’s friend for John.’ (Bauer et al. 1993: 272)
- (13) Sochiapan Chinantec (Otomanguean)
- a. *ka<sup>L</sup>-he<sup>L</sup> cú<sup>M</sup> kãu<sup>M</sup> si<sup>M</sup> ʔi<sup>H</sup>kõ<sup>M</sup> hã<sup>HL</sup>*  
 PAST-offer.TI.3 3 one.IN book to 1SG  
 ‘S/he offered a book to me.’
- b. *hmu<sup>L</sup> cú<sup>M</sup> hmãi<sup>H</sup> (ʔi<sup>L</sup>) ka<sup>L</sup>-ti mĩ<sup>H</sup>θiũ<sup>H</sup>*  
 make.TI.FUT.3 3 fiesta (COMP) PAST-regard mother.3  
 ‘They will make a fiesta/party for their mother.’
- c. *ka<sup>L</sup>-hũ<sup>L</sup> cú<sup>M</sup> (ʔi<sup>L</sup>) ka<sup>L</sup>-ta<sup>H</sup> hno ʔ<sup>H</sup>*  
 PAST-die.IA.3 3 (COMP) PAST-regard.IA.3 we.PL  
 ‘He died for us.’ (Foris 2000: 287–288)

In Tamil and Iranian Azari, the distinction between Recipients vs. RBs and Beneficiaries is reflected in case marking. In Tamil, Recipients bear dative marking, while RBs and Beneficiaries are marked with both dative and benefactive. If Beneficiaries were marked with *-aaka* only, Tamil would be similar to English, where RBs also combine the features of Recipients and Beneficiaries. However, this is not the case, as (10c) shows, and Tamil represents a typical beneficiary-prominent language in which Recipient is formally distinguished from RB and Beneficiary. In Iranian Azari, the difference is between dative and benefactive marking. Dative marks Recipients, as in (11a), while the affix *-č̄in* encodes both RBs and Beneficiaries, as in (11b, c). Maori works very much like Tamil and Azari, but with the difference that it lacks morphological case marking, and the arguments are distinguished by prepositions. Recipients are preceded by *ki*, while *maa* precedes RBs and Beneficiaries. The formal differences between the arguments are more drastic in Sochiapan Chinantec. Recipients are marked with the preposition *ɲi<sup>H</sup>kō<sup>M</sup>*, as in (13a), while RBs and Beneficiaries appear as parts of complement clauses. This also manifests the semantic differences between the roles under study here, since Recipients are closer to the clause core than RBs and Beneficiaries. This is closely related to the difference between single events (13a) and events comprising distinct sub-parts (13b, c), since the latter are encoded using bi-clausal constructions (see Section 2). Despite these evident formal differences the same coding principle is at work here.

Languages like Tamil and Maori (see (10)–(13)) are the exact opposite of those illustrated in Section 3.3 also in another important respect. As noted above, languages like Finnish and Yoruba constitute the best starting point for arguing against the traditional label *BENEFACTIVE* as a single category: the notion is split in (7)–(9). In contrast, for languages examined in this section this use of the label is very appropriate. RBs and Beneficiaries are explicitly distinguished from Recipients and marked identically to each other, which is in line with the traditional use of the label *BENEFACTIVE*. The role of beneficiary determines the marking of arguments whenever it is present, not only when the role of recipient is lacking, as was the case in Section 3.3. Thus, as opposed to (7)–(9), only if the role of beneficiary is lacking altogether does the role of recipient determine the marking, as in the (a)-examples above.

The formal differences in the encoding of the roles in (10)–(13) may also be said to be based on whether or not the roles are integral parts of events. Recipients constitute integral parts of events like ‘give’ and ‘send’, while RBs and beneficiaries are always optional parts of events. Hence, another way of analyzing the languages in (10)–(13) is to regard them as languages in which the encoding of the roles is based on the inherence of their presence rather than the notion of benefaction. This would, however, imply that reception cannot condition the marking in cases like ‘the teacher threw the ball to me’, since



the recipient is not an integral part of these events, and should thus be marked as a Beneficiary in case the encoding would be determined by inherence only. Beneficiary prominence is strongest if a language uses Recipient marking also in these cases, since in this case the marking is sensitive to the roles of recipient and beneficiary, not to whether these roles are integral parts of events or not. Be this as it may, the languages examined in this section best illustrate a unified benefactive notion, and if all the languages in the world would work on the same principle there would be no reason for modifying the label BENEFACTIVE in any way.

### 3.5. *Neutral languages ([Rec, RB, Ben])*

Languages in which Recipient, RB, and Beneficiary are identical can be called “neutral”. Three different realizations of this type are illustrated in (14)–(16).

- (14) Warlpiri (Pama-Nyungan, Australian)
- a. *karnta-ngku ka-rla kurdu-ku miyi yi-nyi...*  
woman-ERG PRES-3DAT baby-DAT food give-NONPAST  
‘The woman is giving food to the baby [...].’
  - b. *nyampu ka-rna-la kurlada wurduju-ma-ni*  
this PRES-1SG-3DAT spear good-CAUS-NONPAST  
‘I am making this spear for him.’
  - c. *karnta ka-rla kurdu-ku parnka-mi*  
woman PRES-3DAT child-DAT run-NONPAST  
‘The woman is running for the sake of the child.’ (Simpson 1991: 206, 380–381)
- (15) Lolovoli dialect of North-East Ambae (Oceanic, Austronesian)
- a. *mo bete lawe na tangaloi haro*  
REAL give DAT ACC people random  
‘S/he gives to just anybody.’
  - b. *na=ni solo na gawu-mu lawe=go*  
1SG.S=IRR wash ACC clothes-2SG.P DAT/BEN=2SG.O  
‘I’ll wash your clothes for you.’
  - c. *nu wehe samwegi-ni=e siu mo*  
1SG.S.TEL kill be.unable-TR=3SG.O then REAL  
*wehe=a lawe=eu*  
kill=3SG.O DAT/BEN=1SG.O  
‘I couldn’t kill it, so he killed it for me.’
  - d. *go=ni mas uli na leta lawe=eu*  
2SG.S=IRR must write ACC letter DAT/BEN=1SG.O  
‘You must write a letter to/for me.’ (Hyslop 2001: 147–148)

- (16) Thai (Daic)
- a. *kháw sòŋ còdmǎaj hâj phýan*  
 he send letter give friend  
 ‘He sends his friend a letter.’
  - b. *dɛɛŋ jɪŋ nóg hâj sùdaa*  
 PN shoot bird give PN  
 ‘Deng shoots a bird for Sudaá.’
  - c. *dɛɛŋ paj talàad hâj sùdaa*  
 PN go market give PN  
 ‘Deng is going to the market for Sudaá.’ (Bisang 1992: 366)

In these languages Recipients, RBs, and Beneficiaries all bear the same marking, i.e., the semantic differences between the encoded roles have been neutralized. The three languages illustrate three different manifestations of the neutral type. In Warlpiri, all the arguments bear dative marking. In Lolovoli, on the other hand, the preposition *lawe* is used to mark these three arguments. The neutrality of this preposition is best illustrated in the ambiguity of (15d), in which both a recipient and a pure beneficiary reading are possible with no formal differences in the encoding of the roles. Thai, in turn, illustrates a language in which the verb ‘give’ can occur in a serial verb construction regardless of whether this is compatible with the original semantics of ‘give’ (see also (1) from Hokkien). We may thus perhaps say that in Thai (and also Hokkien) the verb ‘give’ has developed into a general de-semanticized preposition in cases like (16) without any connection with its original meaning (see also Song 1998a).

There are no formal differences between Recipients and Beneficiaries in (14)–(16), which means that the starting point for examining recipient-prominence or beneficiary-prominence is lacking. Only the origin of the marking and the “direction” of grammaticalization can be examined in these cases. Different (hypothetical) paths of grammaticalization may be helpful here. There are two ways of analyzing languages like Warlpiri, Lolovoli, and Thai. First, we may say that the original semantics of recipient has faded making it possible for RBs and beneficiaries to be encoded as Recipients as well. This seems rather plausible at least for Thai in which this origin is still manifest, since the verb used for this is ‘give’. The original semantics of ‘give’, however, is rather obscure in (16b) and (16c) (see also (1)). The other possible origin is that the marking of Recipient has emerged on the basis of RBs and/or Beneficiaries, in which case the benefaction would be more prominent. The latter does, however, seem far less probable given the fact that RBs and Beneficiaries are always optional constituents of clauses. It is more important for a language to have the means of expressing mandatory arguments. This is also in accordance with Heine et al. (1991: 159), who state that the degree of grammaticalization of dative is

higher than that of benefactive. For present purposes this means that reference to the recipient is grammaticalized earlier, which makes the second proposed development rather unlikely (even though I cannot rule it out without concrete diachronic data). The first proposed grammaticalization path is more probable also in light of the fact that ‘give’, despite the very prominent role of recipient, also displays beneficial traits in favorable conditions. We can thus think of a grammaticalization path that produces neutral languages like Warlpiri, Lolo-voli, and Thai. Certain changes and reanalyses are required, since originally the substitutive benefaction is not a part of the verb ‘give’.

### 3.6. *Fluid languages*

Thus far, I have examined languages in which the role encoding is constant: roles are either distinguished formally (Sections 3.2–3.4) or they are not (Section 3.5). In addition, there are languages in which these roles are only optionally encoded distinctively: there are options as regards the form of Recipient, RB, and Beneficiary. In what follows, different types of this will be examined.

As noted in passing in Sections 1 and 2, Rbs allow two readings due to the dual nature of the role in question. Put more concretely, clauses like ‘he built the house for me’ allow both an Rb and a pure beneficiary reading. Even though the intended reading is often retrievable from context, some languages have additional strategies of disambiguating cases like these. In what follows, I will look at how languages deal with this ambiguity. It needs to be stated here that roles other than Rb may be considered as well, as long as there are unambiguous mechanisms for either recipient(-beneficiary) or beneficiary readings. Some of the cases discussed below may thus fall outside the scope of the article in a very strict sense. They do, however, provide us with clear examples of recipient-prominence and beneficiary-prominence. In accordance with Sections 3.3 and 3.4, languages will be divided into recipient-prominent and beneficiary-prominent types. The distinction is based on whether the languages have an unambiguous mechanism available for Recipient or Beneficiary. The languages to be discussed below differ from those in Sections 3.3 and 3.4, in which the marking of Rbs is identical to one or the other of the two roles without any semantic consequences. In the examples that follow, in contrast, either recipient-like or beneficiary-like traits of Rbs are completely absent, which makes an unambiguous reading of a clause possible. In addition to pure optional languages, languages in which the marking is more semantically-driven will be touched upon.

3.6.1. *Optionally recipient-prominent languages.* Languages discussed in this section have the means of disambiguating clauses in favor of a recipient reading. Two examples are given in (17) and (18).

- (17) Thai (Daic)
- a. *dɛɛŋ sǒn lɛɛg hâj sùdaa hâj phŷan*  
 PN teach math give PN give friend  
 ‘Deng teaches Suda a math for a friend.’
- b. *dɛɛŋ sǒn lɛɛg kɛɛ sùdaa hâj phŷan*  
 PN teach math PREP PN give friend  
 ‘Deng teaches Suda a math for a friend.’ (Bisang 1992: 367, cited from Pongsri 1970: 123)
- (18) Babungo (Grassfields Bantu, Niger-Congo)
- a. *m̀̀ k̀̀ fá ṭ wùumbǎ ɲwāa*  
 I give.PERF thing to friend my  
 ‘I gave something to my friend.’
- b. *m̀̀ g̀̀ táa yìwìŋ ṭ wùumbǎ ɲwāa*  
 I go.PERF to market to friend my  
 ‘I went to the market for my friend.’
- c. *m̀̀ k̀̀ wùumbǎ ɲwāa ǹ̀ fá*  
 I give.PERF friend my with thing  
 ‘I gave something to my friend.’ (Schaub 1985: 144)

Thai uses serial verb constructions for accommodating Recipients, RBs, and Beneficiaries (the verb is usually ‘give’, see also (16)). The verb *sǒn* ‘teach’ can mark its arguments in two different ways: either both Recipient and Beneficiary are preceded by *hâj* (17a), or the Recipient is marked with the preposition *kɛɛ*, as in (17b). The Beneficiary retains the marking with *hâj* also in this case. In Babungo, the situation is very much the same. There is an optional construction for an unambiguous recipient reading illustrated in (18c). The changes are more drastic in Babungo, and they affect the clause structure as a whole.

Further examples of optionally recipient-prominent languages are English and Icelandic, categorized as tripartite in Section 3.2. In English, clauses like *He baked the cake for me* are ambiguous between a substitutive beneficiary reading and an Rb reading. The ambiguity can be resolved in favor of the Rb via dative shift, which excludes the pure beneficiary reading (thus, the clause *He baked me a cake* necessarily involves an RB). In Icelandic, on the other hand, there are two distinct prepositions for RBs and Beneficiaries, i.e., *handa* and *fyrir*. The latter of these is potentially ambiguous, while the former only allows an Rb-reading, which means that the ambiguity can be resolved by employing the preposition *handa*. Despite the optionality of the differences, English and Icelandic can be regarded as tripartite, since the three arguments can be explicitly distinguished. This is not possible in Thai or Babungo, which have only two mechanisms for encoding three roles.

3.6.2. *Optionally beneficiary-prominent languages.* In Section 3.6.1 optionally recipient-prominent languages were discussed. The other optional type are languages that optionally mark the Beneficiary explicitly.

## (19) Qiang (Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Tibetan)

- a. *sum the: tɕə pi: xsə-la de-l*  
 teacher 3SG-GEN pen-three-CL DIR-give  
 ‘The teacher gave him three pens.’
- b. *ma: qa-tɕə fa spetɕ*  
 mama 1SG-GEN(BEN) clothing sew  
 ‘Mama sews my clothes/mama sews clothing for me.’
- c. *the: qa-ɣuani sə ge-kə*  
 3SG 1SG-because firewood chop-go  
 ‘He went to chop wood for me.’ (LaPolla 2003: 578)

## (20) Manipuri (Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Tibetan)

- a. *əy-nə tombə-gi yum ləy*  
 1SG-NOM PN-GEN house bought  
 ‘I bought Tomba’s house/a house for Tomba.’
- b. *əy-nə tombə-gi-də-mək yum ləy*  
 1SG-NOM PN-GEN-LOC-only house bought  
 ‘I bought a house for the sake of Tomba.’
- c. *ma-nə əy-gi səjgom yon-bi*  
 3SG-NOM 1SG-GEN milk sell-BEN  
 ‘He sells milk for me (on my behalf).’ (Bhat & Ningomba 1997: 131)

## (21) Mandarin (Chinese, Sino-Tibetan)

- a. *tā xiěle xìn gěi wǒ*  
 3SG write.PAST letter to/for 1SG  
 ‘S/he wrote letters to/for me.’
- b. *tā gěi wǒ xiěle xìn*  
 3SG to/for 1SG write.PAST letter  
 ‘S/he wrote letters for me.’ (Sebba 1987: 180)
- c. *wǒ gěi tā xiě yì fēng xìn*  
 1SG give 3SG write 1 CL letter  
 ‘I am writing a letter to/for him.’
- d. *wǒ tì tā xiě yì fēng xìn*  
 1SG replace 3SG write 1 CL letter  
 ‘I am writing a letter for him.’ (Bisang 1992: 171)

Qiang is a seemingly recipient-prominent language, as the identity of Recipient and RB marking illustrated in (19a, b) shows. Example (19b) illustrates the ambiguity of RBs, in which case the possible readings are possessor and Rb.

The ambiguity can be resolved, as shown in (19c), where only the beneficiary reading is possible. The close relation of possessors and Rbs and/or beneficiaries (see, e.g., Lichtenberk 2002) makes overt disambiguation necessary. The situation is very much the same in Manipuri, in which there are two disambiguating mechanisms. First, the marking of the RB/Possessor can be manipulated and changed into (unambiguous) Beneficiary, as in (20b), where only a beneficiary reading is possible. The other option is to modify the verb morphology, which also disambiguates the semantic role of the genitively marked argument in favor of the beneficiary. Mandarin is also a language with two ways of dealing with the ambiguity at issue. In (21a) and (21c), two readings (recipient vs. beneficiary) are possible. However, only a beneficiary reading is allowed if the Recipient/Beneficiary argument immediately follows the Agent, as in (21b). The other way of resolving the ambiguity is to change the serial verb from *gěi* 'give' to *tì* 'replace', as in (21d). In this case, the word order remains constant, but as in (21b) an unambiguous reading is assured.

Languages like Qiang, Manipuri, and Mandarin are the best examples of cases in which either the recipient-like or the beneficiary-like traits of Rbs are completely absent. As stated in Section 2, (concrete) benefaction is an optional part of recipients in that the thing transferred to the recipient's sphere of control or domain of possession is usually regarded as somehow beneficial. On the other hand, pure beneficiaries are never recipients. This means that in (19)–(21) one of the relevant notions (reception or benefaction) of Rbs is completely lacking in the unambiguous cases, even though the bearers of the role optionally have this feature, which is illustrated in (19b), (20a), and (21a, c).

The changes illustrated in (19)–(21) have resulted from the ambiguity associated with RBs. For example, in Mandarin, serial verb constructions with 'give' render two readings possible, because of which an overt disambiguation may be needed in case the intended reading is not contextually retrievable. A somewhat different case is seen in (22).

- (22) Vietnamese (Mon-Khmer)
- a. *tôi mua cho Giáp quyển sách này*  
 1SG buy 'give' PN CLASS book DEM  
 'I buy this book for Giap.' (Bisang 1992: 314)
  - b. *tôi đi chợ cho mẹ*  
 1SG go market 'give' mother  
 'I go to the market for mother.' (Bisang 1992: 314)
  - c. *bà đưa hình tôi cho bạn giúp tôi*  
 2SG.HON bring photo 1SG give friend help 1SG  
 'Would you please give this photo to my friend for me.' (Bisang 1992: 315)

At first sight, Vietnamese appears to be a typical neutral language, since Recipients, RBs, and Beneficiaries are all accommodated through the verb ‘give’. However, as the shift from ‘give’ to ‘help’ in (22c) shows, there is an unambiguous encoding mechanism available for the role of beneficiary. The unambiguous marking seems to be confined to cases where both Recipient/RB and a Beneficiary are present (dative and benefactive in terms of Bisang 1992: 314), which distinguishes between Vietnamese and the other languages.

3.6.3. *Semantically conditioned optionality.* In the cases examined in the previous subsections the conditioning factor for the changes is the disambiguation of two (equally) probable readings (like Rb and beneficiary or possessor and beneficiary). As such, the meaning remains constant even though the number of possible readings decreases (from two to one). However, nothing new is added to the meaning of clauses in (17)–(22), since the highlighted reading is a part of the meaning of these clauses also in the ambiguous cases. This kind of (optional) marking may also have semantic consequences. This means that a language has at least two ways of encoding one of the three roles, but in contrast to (17)–(22), the variation is semantically conditioned, and thus affects the meaning of clauses. Typical examples of this are in (23)–(25).

## (23) Maori (Polynesian, Austronesian)

- a. *i hoatu a mere i te keke ki tana*  
 T/A give PERS Mary DO the cake PREP SG.GEN.3SG  
*tama*

son

‘Mary gave the cake to her son.’ (to carry, to look after, without any necessary expectation what to do with it)

- b. *i hoatu a mere i te keke maa tana*  
 T/A give PERS Mary DO the cake INT.GEN SG.GEN.3SG  
*tama*

son

‘Mary gave the cake to her son.’ (for himself to keep, with the expectation that he will eat it) (Bauer et al. 1993: 272)

## (24) Khmer (Mon-Khmer)

- a. *khpom nuj bxt tvì:ər ʔaoy*  
 1SG FUT close door give  
 ‘I close the door for him.’ (Bisang 1992: 425)

- b. *kət baək tvì:ər səmrap khpom*  
 3SG open door use 1SG  
 ‘He opens the door for me (in order that it remains open and I can make a use of this favor).’ (Bisang 1992: 426)

- c. *ʔo:pùk tɛɲ siəvphɿu ʔaoy khɿom*  
 father buy book give 1SG  
 ‘Father bought a book for me.’ (Bisang 1992: 424)
- d. *khɿom tɛɲ siəvphɿu nih sɔmrap kox-pros*  
 1SG buy book DEM use son  
 ‘I buy this book for my son (in order that he will use it).’ (Bisang 1992: 425)
- (25) Epena Pedee (Chocó)
- a. *warrá-pa p<sup>h</sup>áta tee-hí či nawe-má-a*  
 SON-ERG plantain give-PAST REF mother-LOC-DAT  
 ‘The boy gave the plantain to his mother.’
- b. *jose-ʔit<sup>h</sup>ée mi-a hápa óo tee-hí*  
 PN-for 1SG-ERG canoe make give-PAST  
 ‘I made a canoe for José.’ (Harms 1994: 67–68)

In a purely formal sense, examples in (23)–(25) are very similar to those in Sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2. However, differences arise if we take the semantic consequences of the changes into account. In (17)–(22), the different ways of encoding the roles are to some extent interchangeable, especially if the direction is from unambiguous to ambiguous readings. As opposed to this, formal changes always coincide with semantic changes in (23)–(25). The prototype of this kind of change seems to be whether the intended recipient is actually going to use the transferred thing for his/her purposes, or whether the clause only focuses on the transfer with no further implications for what happens after that. This is clearly the conditioning factor in Maori and Khmer, in which the ‘to’- or ‘give’-variant merely denotes an event in which a thing is transferred to the recipient’s sphere of control or domain of possession without any implication about what the recipient is going to do with the transferred thing. (See also Roberts 1891: 149 for Khasi.) The motion is decisive here. The ‘for’- or ‘use’-variants, on the other hand, imply that the recipient is going to use the transferred thing (or the result of the event in the case of (24b)) for his/her purposes. The English *to/for*-variation in the case of *bring* is also very close to this in meaning. A similar case is also attested in Afrikaans, where the prepositions *aan* vs. *vir* vary according to how permanent the transfer is (de Stadler 1996: 276). In Maori, the preposition employed in the semantically more specific construction is the same that is usually used for Beneficiaries or RBs. In Khmer, the serial verb is the semantically more specific “use”. In contrast to Khmer and Maori, the variation is governed by a different factor in Epena Pedee. The form of the Recipient varies depending on whether an actual physical transfer is involved or not. This variation is also understandable, since ‘give’ is an event that can merely indicate a change in the possession relations, or there can also be concrete transfer involved. In some cases it might be nec-



essary to distinguish between the two. The three languages diverge in that in Maori and Epena Pedee the argument relevant to the variation is the Recipient, while in Khmer it can be either Beneficiary (24b) or RB (24d).

### 3.7. *Closing words*

The discussion in Sections 3.2–3.6 is based on clear cases in which it is rather easy to determine what role we are dealing with and to analyze the languages accordingly. In this section I will examine a couple of less than clear cases and discuss some factors relevant to how clauses are interpreted.<sup>6</sup>

In many of the cases above the lexical information allows only one reading. For example, the event ‘he gave me the book’ clearly involves a recipient, while ‘he baked me a cake’ involves an Rb and ‘he parked the car for me’ contains a beneficiary. However, as was noted above, constructions with RBs allow variation between Rb and pure beneficiary readings in many languages. This is also the case in English in which clauses like *He baked a cake for me* can involve an Rb as well as a beneficiary. In the former case, the referent of *for me* receives the transferred thing, while in the latter the event in question is carried out by someone instead of the beneficiary. This variation follows from the nature of the event denoted. In the world we live in both readings are equally possible (both semantically and pragmatically). In this particular case, the theme of the event is such that it can be received and used for further purposes; the usual thing to do with a cake is to eat it. Context usually resolves potential ambiguity. On the other hand, there are numerous events whose nature strongly favors one reading, but the other one cannot be excluded. An example of this is (26).

- (26) Finnish (Finno-Ugric, Uralic)
- |    |   |                |                      |                |
|----|---|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| a. | <i>isä</i>                                  | <i>tappo-i</i> | <i>perhee-lle-en</i> | <i>hirve-n</i> |
|    | father.NOM                                  | kill.PAST-3SG  | family-ALL-3POSS     | moose-ACC      |
|    | ‘The father killed a moose for his family.’ |                |                      |                |
| b. | <i>'isä</i>                                 | <i>tappo-i</i> | <i>perhee-lle-en</i> | <i>miehe-n</i> |
|    | father.NOM                                  | kill.PAST-3SG  | family-ALL-3POSS     | man-ACC        |
|    | ‘!The father killed a man for his family.’  |                |                      |                |

Example (26a) profiles a typical event in an environment in which hunting game constitutes an important means of getting food. This example implies that the killed moose will be eaten, which means that the allatively marked Recipient refers to a typical Rb. On the other hand, the pragmatically more natural reading of (26b) is that the referent of the Theme has been killed as a favor to the family. Example (26b) would thus be pragmatically appropriate, for example in case that a man has been threatening a family, which will not be

6. For a more detailed examination of similar cases in Finnish, see Kittilä (forthcoming b).

the case after the profiled event has occurred. In languages with an ambiguous RB, this would certainly be the expected reading of (26b). However, in Finnish the allative can only mark Recipients and RBs, whence for (26b) to be grammatical, a reading of this kind has to be made possible. This occurs, if (26b) is interpreted in the same way as (26a), i.e., if the theme is going to be used for a specific purpose after the event has taken place. Examples of this include practicing necrophilia or cannibalism, but since these are relatively rare activities in modern society, this reading has to be forced. What is important, however, is that (26b) is not ungrammatical.

In principle, recipient, recipient-beneficiary, and beneficiary are clearly defined roles, even though it is a less straightforward matter which of them is the most appropriate reading semantically or pragmatically, as the brief discussion above shows. However, there are also borderline cases in which it might be difficult to state definitely which role we are dealing with, as exemplified by (27).

- (27) Finnish (Finno-Ugric, Uralic)
- a. *oppilas ava-si opettaja-lle ove-n*  
pupil.NOM open-3SG.PAST teacher-ALL door-ACC  
‘The pupil opened the door for the teacher.’
  - b. *oppilas ava-si ove-n opettaja-n puolesta*  
pupil.NOM open-3SG.PAST door-ACC teacher-GEN instead.of  
‘The pupil opened the door instead of the teacher.’
  - c. *!opettaja ava-si oppila-i-lle ikkuna-n*  
teacher.NOM open-3SG.PAST pupil-PL-ALL window-ACC  
‘The teacher opened the window for/because of the pupils.’

Pragmatically, all the examples in (27) seem to denote beneficial events. One of the reasons for this is that the nature of the event does not render a concrete transfer possible. Opening a door or a window does not result in the door or window being transferred into the sphere of control of the referent of the allatively marked argument. Nonetheless, both (27a) and (27c) are fully grammatical in a very strong recipient-prominent language like Finnish. The conditioning factor here is that the teacher is going to use the result of the profiled event for his/her purposes. For example, in (27a) s/he has to enter or exit a room whose door has been opened for him/her. In the case of a pure beneficiary reading we have to resort to Beneficiary marking, as in (27b). In this case, the door has been opened instead of the teacher for getting some fresh air, for instance. Example (27c) further illustrates the effects of pragmatics on the reading of clauses with allatively marked arguments in Finnish. Opening windows is more typically carried out as a favor without any implication that the result of the event will be used for any specific purpose. Thus, (27c) seems odd at first. However, the use of allative is fully grammatical here too in case

the reading is the same as in (27a), i.e., the students will exit or enter through the window. The examples in (27) are somewhat similar to (23)–(25), where the marking was seen to vary on the basis of whether the recipient, Rb, or beneficiary is actually going to use the transferred thing or the favor in question for his/her purposes.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this paper different ways of encoding the roles of recipient, recipient-beneficiary, and beneficiary have been illustrated. It has been shown that languages can be divided into four types on the basis of how the roles are encoded. In some languages all these roles are distinguished formally, while in others the role of recipient or that of beneficiary is more important in this respect. In addition, there are also languages in which the distinction is not formally manifested at all (Section 3.5), while in some languages the differences are optional (Section 3.6). The languages were thus divided into recipient-prominent and beneficiary-prominent languages on the basis of which role primarily determines the marking of the relevant arguments.

The role of recipient was defined on the basis of events, like ‘give’ or ‘send’, which inherently involve an entity that receives a thing transferred to its sphere of control. Beneficiaries, in turn, benefit from events without receiving anything concrete. Recipient-beneficiary represents a combination of the two, and thus the notions of reception and benefaction are both relevant to this role. The corresponding arguments were defined as the formal manifestation of these semantic roles. The encoding of Rbs usually corresponds to either Recipient or Beneficiary depending on which of the roles present a given language has grammaticalized as the more important one. By typologizing languages, I have shown that on the basis of the differences in the encoding of the three roles, it is justified to conclude that the label *BENEFACTIVE* as typically used in the literature is rather problematic for some languages. The most important languages in this regard were illustrated in Sections 3.2 and 3.3. In both of these, the notion of benefactive is formally split, and this necessitates dividing the label into two. The solution suggested here is to divide the notion into two. The division is not ad hoc, since there are clear semantic differences between the roles treated as one (Section 2), in addition to which the division is also linguistically relevant, as the discussion above has shown. The traditional use of the label *BENEFACTIVE* is appropriate only in beneficiary-prominent languages (Section 3.4), since in these cases the two non-recipient roles are encoded in the same way. Neutral languages are not readily analyzable in either way, even though it is far more likely that the origin of the marking is ‘give’ or some other verb of similar valency. What is also noteworthy here is the rarity of tripartite languages. Since languages usually have the means of encoding the roles of

recipient and beneficiary in isolation, it is more economical to extend the form of either Recipient or Beneficiary to RBs, which have features of both. In case the encoded role would be completely different from (instead of a combination of) recipients and beneficiaries, we would expect more languages to exhibit a formally distinct RB.

The problems associated with the label *BENEFACTIVE* have been recognized, for example by Newman (1996: 220, 1999: 131) and Sebba (1987: 177), but the kind of division proposed in the present paper has not, to my knowledge, been made to date. It would be very fruitful to study the behavior of verbs like 'give', 'buy', 'bake (for)', 'build (for)', 'go to X (for)', and 'close X (for)' across languages, since detailed studies on this area of grammar are still lacking for the great majority of the world's languages. Table 3 suggests a list of relevant sentences to elicit, which would help us to understand the notions of reception and benefaction better.

Table 3. *Crucial sentences, listed for the benefit of future fieldworkers*

---

1.	The man gave the book/fish to the boy
2.	The man bought a book/fish for the boy
3.	The man baked bread for the boy
4.	The man built a house/a hut for his family
5.	The man went to the village for his family
6.	The man closed the door for the boy

---

One further issue that needs to be studied in more detail is the distribution of the language types. My findings suggest that beneficiary-prominent and neutral languages are the most frequent, but the number of languages I have reliable data for is too low to make any generalizations. It might also be interesting to study whether the number of formally ditransitive (i.e., double object) verbs correlates with either strategy illustrated here. We may predict that languages with few formally ditransitive verbs are more prone to beneficiary prominence: Rbs constitute a deviation from the recipient archetype, and since the number of genuine recipients is low to begin with, changes occur in the case of Rbs. In this respect, the formal mechanisms employed in the encoding of the roles may also be relevant, since a high formal transitivity (like double object marking) may favor beneficiary-prominence, since here too Rbs deviate from the recipient archetype and the marking needs to be replaced with a formally less transitive strategy.

*Received: 19 September 2003*

*Revised: 5 January 2005*

*Turun yliopisto*

Correspondence address: Yleinen kielitiede, Hämeenkatu 2 A 8, 20014 Turun yliopisto, Finland; e-mail: sepkitt@utu.fi

*Acknowledgements:* This study was made possible by Grant No. 105771 from the Academy of Finland. I thank Geoffrey Haig, Jae Jung Song, Fernando Zúñiga, and the two anonymous referees of *Linguistic Typology* for their invaluable comments on earlier versions of this paper, both content-wise and with regard to language. The discussion following my talk at the 26. *Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Sprachwissenschaft* (workshop *Evolution of Syntactic Relations*) also helped me to clarify some problematic issues. All remaining flaws are naturally my own responsibility.

*Abbreviations:* ACC accusative; ALL allative; APPL applicative; ART article; BEN benefactive; CAUS causative; CL/CLASS classifier; CLR clarification; COMP complementizer; COMPL completive; DAT dative; DEF definite; DEM demonstrative; DIR directional; DO direct object; EMP emphasis; ERG ergative; F feminine; FUT future; GEN genitive; HON honorific; IA intransitive animate; IN inanimate; INT.GEN intended genitive; IRR irrealis; LOC locative; M masculine; NOM nominative; NONPAST non-past tense; O object; P patient; PART partitive; PASS passive; PAST past tense; PE perceived evidence; PERF perfective; PERS person marker; PI past imperfective; PL plural; PN personal name; POSS possessive; PREP preposition; PRES present tense; PRT preterite; REAL realis; REF known referent; REU reported evidence unknown; S subject; SG singular; SUB subordinator; T/A tense/aspect particle; TEL telic aspect; TI transitive inanimate; TR transitive; TWD toward.

## References

- Bauer, Winfried (with William Parker & Te Kareongawai Evans) (1993). *Maori*. London: Routledge.
- Bhat, D. N. S. & M. S. Ningomba (1997). *Manipuri Grammar*. München: Lincom Europa.
- Bisang, Walter (1992). *Das Verb im Chinesischen, Hmong, Vietnamesischen, Thai und Khmer*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Borg, Albert J. & Bernard Comrie (1984). Object diffuseness in Maltese. In Plank (ed.) 1984, 109–126.
- de Stadler, Leon (1996). The indirect object in Afrikaans. In van Langendonck & van Belle (eds.) 1996, 251–288.
- Dehghani, Yavar (2000). *A Grammar of Iranian Azari*. München: Lincom Europa.
- Dryer, Matthew (1986). Primary objects, secondary objects, and antidative. *Language* 62: 808–843.
- Foris, David P. (2000). *A Grammar of Sochiapan Chinantec*. Dallas: SIL and University of Texas at Arlington.
- Frajzyngier, Zygmunt (1993). *A Grammar of Mupun*. Berlin: Reimer.
- Givón, Talmy (1984). Direct object and dative shifting. In Plank (ed.) 1984, 151–182.
- Goldberg, Adele (1995). *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Harms, Philip L. (1994). *Epena Pedee Syntax*. Dallas: SIL Publications.
- Heine, Bernd, Ulrike Claudi, & Friederike Hünemeyer (1991). *Grammaticalization: A Conceptual Framework*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hyslop, Catriona (2001). *The Lolovoli Dialect of the North-East Ambae Language, Vanuatu*. (Pacific Linguistics, 515.) Canberra: Australian National University.
- Jackendoff, Ray (1990). *Semantic Structures*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Kittilä, Seppo (forthcoming a). The anomaly of the verb ‘give’ explained by its high (formal and semantic) transitivity. *Linguistics*.
- (forthcoming b). On distinguishing between ‘recipient’ and ‘beneficiary’ in Finnish. In Marja-Liisa Helasvuo & Lyle Campbell (eds.), *Grammar from the Human Perspective: Case, Space, and Person*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kouwenberg, Silvia (1994). *A Grammar of Berbice Dutch Creole*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

- LaPolla, Randy J. (2003). Qiang. In Graham Thurgood & Randy J. LaPolla (eds.), *The Sino-Tibetan Languages*, 571–587. London: Routledge.
- Lehmann, Christian, Yong-Min Shin, & Elisabeth Verhoeven (2000a). *Direkte und indirekte Partizipation: Zur Typologie der sprachlichen Repräsentation konzeptueller Relationen*. München: Lincom Europa.
- (2000b). *Person Prominence and Relation Prominence*. München: Lincom Europa.
- Leino, Jaakko (2001). Antamiskehys kognitiivisena konstruktiona. [The ‘give’ schema as a cognitive construction]. In Pentti Leino, Ilona Herlin, Suvi Honkanen, Lari Kotilainen, Jaakko Leino, & Maija Vilkkumaa (eds.), *Roolit ja rakenteet: Henkilöviitteinen allatiivi Biblian verbikonstruktioidissa*, 67–103. Helsinki: SKS.
- Lichtenberk, Frantisek (2002). The possessive-benefactive connection. *Oceanic Linguistics* 41: 439–474.
- Newman, John (1996). *Give: A Cognitive Linguistic Study*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- (1998). Recipients and ‘give’ constructions. In Willy van Langendonck & William van Belle (eds.), *The Dative, Volume 2: Theoretical and Contrastive Studies*, 1–28. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- (1999). Figurative giving. In Leon de Stadler & Christoph Eyrych (eds.), *Issues in Cognitive Linguistics: 1993 Proceedings of the International Cognitive Linguistics Conference*, 113–140. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Newman, John (ed.) (1998). *The Linguistics of Giving*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Plank, Frans (ed.) (1984). *Objects: Towards a Theory of Grammatical Relations*. London: Academic Press.
- Pongsri, Lekatawana (1970). Verb phrases in Thai: A study in deep-case relationships. Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan.
- Roberts, H. (1891). *A Grammar of the Khasi Language*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner.
- Rowlands, E. C. (1969). *Yoruba*. (Teach Yourself Books.) Sevenoaks, Kent: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Schaub, Willi (1985). *Babungo*. London: Croom Helm.
- Sebba, Mark (1987). *The Syntax of Serial Verbs: An Investigation into Serialisation in Sranan and other Languages*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Shibatani, Masayoshi (1996). Applicatives and benefactives: A cognitive account. In Masayoshi Shibatani & Sandra A. Thompson (eds.), *Grammatical Constructions: Their Form and Meaning*, 157–194 Oxford: Clarendon.
- Simpson, Jane (1991). *Warlpiri Morpho-syntax: A Lexicalist Approach*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Song, Jae Jung (1998a). On the development of MANNER from GIVE. In Newman (ed.) 1998, 327–248.
- (1998b). Benefactive marking in Oceanic languages: From possessive classifiers to benefactive markers. In Anna Siewierska & Jae Jung Song (eds.), *Case, Typology and Grammar: In Honor of Barry J. Blake*, 247–276. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- van Langendonck, Willy & William van Belle (eds.) (1996). *The Dative, Volume 1: Descriptive Studies*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Tuggy, David (1996). Dative-like constructions in Orizaba Nahuatl. In van Langendonck & van Belle (eds.) 1996, 407–452.
- (1998). Giving in Nawatl. In Newman (ed.) 1998, 35–65.
- Willett, Thomas L. (1991). *A Reference Grammar of Southeastern Tepehuan*. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.