Observations presented in this paper regarding verbs of giving provide new insight into the “non-productivity” puzzle of the dative alternation, especially with respect to the class referred to as “Latinate” verbs. I show that, far from being a quirk of lexical entries or of a Latinate lexicon, availability of the double object construction (DOC) is systematic, and can be explained by the existence of two distinct types of to-PP, only one of which takes complements which may also appear as a DP goal, as in (1).

(1)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PP</th>
<th>content</th>
<th>wh</th>
<th>Co-occurs w/ do ellipsis</th>
<th>alternates?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to(dir)</td>
<td>directional</td>
<td>where, to+who, to+what</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to(f)</td>
<td>functional</td>
<td>to+who, to+what</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation 1: Superficially, the PPs found in (2)a and (3)a appear similar. However, this apparent similarity breaks down when we consider (2)b/(3)b, which (2)a/(3)a could be answers to, respectively.

(2) a. John sent the letter to Mary.
   b. Who did John send the letter to?
   c. * John didn't send the letter to Mary, but he will do to Jane.

(3) a. John sent the letter to London.
   b. Where did John send the letter?
   c. John didn't send the letter to London, but he will do to Sydney.

Proposal: The to-PP in (2) corresponds to to+who, while that in (3) corresponds with where. I propose that any Goal which is realized as where is an instance of to(dir), a contentful P specifying direction. On the other hand, to+who/what is ambiguous between to(dir) and to(f), a semantically void P which establishes a syntactic relation between the Theme and Goal, similarly to an applicative (Pylkkänen 2002). Because of the nature of this relation, with the Goal functioning as a sort of “inner subject” (Larson 1988), a DP Goal is typically animate. However, as shown in (4), the wh contrast between (2) and (3) is not due solely to an animacy contrast.

(4) a. John gave a coat of paint to the bathroom wall.
   b. What did John give a coat of paint to?
   c. * Where did John give a coat of paint?

Another diagnostic for the to(dir)-PP is that it can occur with British English do ellipsis ((3)c). The to(f)-PP, being in a different syntactic position, is contained within the constituent that is elided under do ellipsis, and thus the two cannot co-occur ((2)c).

These facts are summarized in (7), with the addition of two new examples, (5) and (6), which illustrate that not only does the DP seem to correlate with the type of to-PP, but so does the verb.

(7)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wh</th>
<th>PP co-occurs w/ do ellipsis</th>
<th>alternates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) John sent the letter to(f) Mary.</td>
<td>to+who</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) John sent the letter to(dir) London.</td>
<td>where</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) John gave ten dollars to(f) Smith.</td>
<td>to+who</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) John donated ten dollars to(dir) Smith.</td>
<td>where/ to+who</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While (2) and (3) vary only with respect to the Goal, (5) and (6) vary with the verb. Yet we see the same to-PP contrasts in both pairs. (7) re-iterates, with examples, the correlation between the wh and do contrasts and the dative alternation stated in (1). Based on these correlations, I argue that only predicates with a to(f)-PP “alternate” with the DOC. This is because to(f) is purely functional and thus no semantic information is ‘lost’ in the DP Goal variant. To(dir), being contentful, is not optional.

**Observation 2:** While *donate* is typically cited as ungrammatical in the DOC, this is not the case for all speakers. Not only do some speakers accept *donate* in the DOC, but some find it to be more acceptable in a particular usage - that of organ donation (8). This sensitivity cannot be due to a simple case of lexical variation, where *donate* has a +DOC lexical entry for some speakers, and -DOC for others. Were this the case, then we would expect *donate*’s distribution in the DOC to match that which it shows with a PP Goal.

**Proposal:** The contrast between *donate* in organ donation vs. other contexts is due to the different PPs. For speakers whose lexicon allows for *donate* with to(f), *donate* can appear in the DOC, in those cases where a syntactic relation is established between the Theme and Goal and directionality need not be specified. Such is the case for organ donation, because there is an indirect transfer via surgery. This is further supported by the fact that the to-PP in (8)a cannot be realized with *where* as shown in (9), and thus has the potential to be a to(f). In addition, British English speakers who accept (8)b find (10) degraded, suggesting that for these speakers a to-PP with *donate* can appear as to(f).

(for some speakers)

(8) a. John donated a kidney to(f) Mary.  
   b. John donated Mary a kidney.  
   c. John donated money to(dir) the ASPCA.  
   d. *John donated the ASPCA money.

(9) *Where did John donate a kidney?*  

(10) % John didn’t donate a kidney to Mary, but he will do to Jane.

**Conclusion:** This approach shows that DOC compatibility is not a property of verbs, but depends on the arguments of the verb as well. This impacts how we might try to represent such an alternation in the syntax and/or lexicon. Making use of the notion of contentless and contentful Ps allows us to account for the productivity facts without resorting to the Latinate lexicon distinction, as previous literature has for verbs such as *donate* (Storm 1977, Pinker 1989, Harley 2002). It also presents an alternative explanation for some of the variation found in the dative alternation as described in Bresnan & Nikitina (2003).

Distinguishing the two types of Ps also gives us a concrete test for which DPs can appear in the DOC with which verbs. Given the overt correlations with the to-PP distinction, in wh and other environments outlined in the paper, there is overt evidence available to the learner for a completely productive alternation. Unlike accounts which describe a semi-productive alternation which would provide limited evidence for the learner acquisition, the approach sketched here presents an alternation that is learnable.

**References:**
Storm, Peter. 1977. ‘Predicting the Applicability of Dative Movement.’ The CLS book of squibs.