

A Study of the Use of Prepositions [a] and [para] in contexts with Triargumental Verbs in Western Santa Catarina/Brazil

Aline Peixoto Gravina*

PhD teacher linked to the degree course in Portuguese and Spanish and linked to the Postgraduate Program in Linguistic Studies
Federal University of Fronteira Sul, Santa Catarina, Brazil;

Greici Moratelli Sampaio

Master by the Postgraduate Program in Linguistic Studies
Federal University of Fronteira Sul, Santa Catarina, Brazil

Abstract:

Several studies show some variation in the use of the prepositions [para] and [a] and defend the loss of categorical dative constructions in Brazilian Portuguese. From theoretical assumptions of generative grammar, this research sought to broaden this discussion by presenting the description of results and analyses of the use of these variants in constructions with tri-argumentative verbs. The corpus of analysis was made up of two television programmes with speakers from Chapecó and other regions of western Santa Catarina. The data analysed indicated a preference for the preposition [para] over the preposition [a] in constructions with internal argument prepositioned with tri-argumentative verbs. There was a change in the Brazilian pronominal scenario, and now the 3rd person clitic pronoun no longer belongs to the grammar of the western Santa Catarina speaker; instead, there are constructions with the preposition [para] and the pronouns [ele / ela], [você], [a gente], among others, causing the loss of dative constructions in the language. Another important factor would be the fact that the prepositions [a] and [para] share the beneficiary thematic role in tri-argumentative contexts, enabling the preposition [para] become categorical.

Keywords: Linguistic Change; Tri-argumentative verbs; semilexical preposition

1- Introduction

In European Portuguese (EP), the use of the functional preposition [a] in constructions with triargumental verbs¹ is characterized as a categorical way of marking the dative case in the language, having some traces of identification of thematic roles² of possession and beneficiary, as can be seen in example 1(a) below. Apart from the use of the functional preposition [a], the internal prepositional argument of a triargumental verb (indirect object) can be carried out by the dative clitic “lhe”, as can be seen in Example 1 (a’), in a composition of the two main ways to identify the dative in EP:

(1)

a. *Você deu flores à Maria?* (PE)

a’. *Sim, dei-lhe uma dúzia de rosas vermelhas* (PE)

(Torres Morais, 2012, p.40)

[English:

a. Did you give flowers to Maria?

a’. Yes, I gave her a dozen red roses]

Differently from EP, in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) the preposition [a] has been losing ground in constructions with triargumental verbs in the function of the dative. In its place, we see a greater use of the preposition [para] –

¹Triargumental verbs are those that select three arguments: one external argument and two internal arguments. These include the verbs *dar* (to give), *receber* (to receive) and *colocar* (to place).

² A Thematic Role corresponds to the semantic roles of syntagms within the sentence, such as: agent, recipient, experimenter, place, causative factor in other words, the roles that each argument plays within the sentence or the scene. The thematic role allocators are just the lexical nuclei: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. The recipients of thematic roles are the arguments. The thematic theory as proposed by Chomsky (1981) is governed by the following criteria: (i) any argument needs to be given a thematic role; and every thematic role needs to be assigned to an argument.

identified with the lexical function, meaning a marker for thematic role and case – as can be seen in Example 2 (a). With regard to the use of the dative clitic “lhe”, in PB, we see that, in its place, there is the use of subject pronouns in their place (he/she), as can be seen in Example 2 (a’):

(2)

a. Você deu flores *para a Maria*? (PB)

a’. Sim, dei uma dúzia de rosas vermelhas *a/para ela* (PB)

(Torres Morais, 2012, p.40)

[English:

a. Did you give flowers to *Maria*?

a’. Yes, I gave a dozen red roses *to her*]

In the light of differences in production for the same speech contexts in EP and BP, one asks: quantitatively, how is the current use of the prepositions [a] and [para] in triargumentive contexts in BP as spoken in Western Santa Catarina? Based on the theoretical chart of generative grammar, how can we explain and classify Sentences 2 (a) and 2 (a’)? Is it possible to identify the factors that lead to a preference for the use of the preposition [para] instead of [a] in PB? The present article shall seek to answer these questions, in order to further kindle the discussion about the loss of dative constructions in BP.

First, the main problem with the contexts presented refers to the differences between the functions of the functional preposition [a] and the lexical preposition [para], as the presence of the attributing nuclei of Thematic Role and Case (the triargumental verb and the preposition [para]), clashes with the requirements of Generative Theory. In this theory, the lexical nucleus shall assign only one case and one thematic role to the argument concerned (Chomsky, 1981). In the following sections, we shall try to explain this issue in detail.

To back up the investigations of this study, a bibliographical study was carried out, with regard to this theme in the formal area, with authors such as Silveira (1997, 1999), Berlinck (2001), Gomes (2003), Farias (2006), Figueiredo-Silva (2007), Liz (2009), Campos (2010), Torres Morais (2010, 2012) Chaves (2013), Torres Morais and Berlink (2007, 2018). In an empirical and original manner, this work presents quantitative data on the use of the prepositions [a] and [para] in triargumental contexts in the region around the city of Chapecó in the Brazilian State of Santa Catarina (SC), and the qualitative analysis of this data.

For the construction of the corpus, there was an analysis of data on the language as spoken in Chapecó and surrounding regions, as taken from two local television programmes, namely “Ver Mais”³ and “Ric Rural”⁴. These programmes were chosen as they are a source that allows the inspection of data produced in real situations of interaction, and thus allows the description of the execution of complements of triargumental verbs of the region, in a situation of trustworthy use.

Apart from the presentation of quantitative data and analysis of the complements of triargumental verbs, this study has the main goal of identification of the possible formalisation of the preposition [para] in these contexts. In general, in this work, we have assumed the possibility of the preposition [para] taking on a semilexical function in BP, as proposed by Liz (2009). In other words, this preposition sometimes has elements of a lexical category, while in other cases the preposition has traits characteristic of a functional category. This means that this would be possible justification for the use of the preposition [para] instead of the dative constructions in contexts of triargumental verbs, which formerly used the preposition [a].

To allow understanding of the results presented here, we organise the next sections as follows: in Section 2, we present the formal studies on the issue, both diachronic and synchronic. Section 3 brings a discussion about the main differences between the prepositions [a] and [para].

In Section 4, we describe the corpora used in this work and the main methodologies used for data collection from the Western part of the state of Santa Catarina. Finally, Section 5 wraps up this paper by presenting the data analysis and, finally, the final comments on the study.

³VER MAIS is a programme with interviews and local entertainment, aired daily on RICTV. This programme is presented by an anchor reporter who welcomes guests from the city of Chapecó and surrounding area to discuss a range of topics: health, sports, leisure, education and others.

⁴ RIC RURAL is a programme with interviews and news regarding the food production sector. The programme is recorded and is broadcast once a week. Presented by a special anchor, it has the main goal of informing and publicising the agribusiness and agriculture sectors of Chapecó and surrounding area.

2. Studies on the uses of the prepositions [para] and [a] in diachronic and synchronic contexts

In this section, a bibliographical survey was carried out, with regard to papers that discussed the construction of the prepositioned internal argument (henceforth PIA) for triargumental verbs, considering the variation in the use of the prepositions [para] and [a] in these contexts. With due reservations, we seek the proximities of results of these studies.

In a diachronic perspective, Berlinck and Biazolli (2011) have found contexts of variations in the use of prepositions [a] and [para] in Brazilian newspapers between 1900 and 1915. The authors have identified greater occurrence of the preposition [para] in contexts with a predictor of material transfer, as in: *Joana mandou livros e roupas para seus pais*⁵. However, in contexts where there is a predictor of verbal or perceptual transfer, they found over 90% of data with the use of the preposition [a], as in: *Maria contou uma piada ótima ao João*⁶. Considering these results, the researchers showed evidence of change and said that the consequences of changes in written style would be a sign of its more frequent use in the spoken language.

Chaves (2013) also found a variation in the use of these prepositions in historical data of the 18th and 19th Centuries. The author describes that the use of the preposition [a] was more favourable in cliticisable contexts, as in Example 3 (a); the use of [para] was more present in contexts that are not cliticisable, 3(b):

(3)

a) Continuo a escrever a ambos conjuntamente assim como podem ambos, ou cada um dirigir a mesma **ao** Vovô e a Dindinha. (cp III nc).

b) (...) por estar com muitas dores de Cabeça não escrevo para a Senhora Dona Paula e **para** a Senhora Dona Anna. (Personal Letters, 18th Century)."

Chaves, 2013, p. 86)

[English:

a) I continue to write to both together, as can also both, or each one, direct the same **to** Grandpa and Grandma. (cp III nc).

b) (...) as I have a Headache I do not write to Dona Paula and **to** Senhora Dona Anna. (Personal Letters, 18th Century)."]

Chaves observed that there is still a predominance of the use of [para] as an introduction to the PIA, especially when the construction has evidence of [+place]. The use of the preposition [a], on the other hand, is restricted to the sentences where the PIA has traces of [+person]. In general, it is possible to see the presence of a variation in this context in Brazil, ever since the 18th Century.

In a synchronous perspective, studies carried out by Silveira (1999), Gomes (2003) Figueiredo Silva (2007) and Torres Morais (2010, 2012) point to a deletion of the use of the preposition [a] in many different contexts, together with a greater occurrence of the preposition [para]. In his study, Figueiredo Silva (2007) says that dative constructions would be limited to crystallised constructions, like in "a pé"⁷.

The research carried out by Campos (2010) calls attention, compared to others, as the results diverge from most in relation to the occurrence of the preposition [a]. While Gomes (2003), Torres Morais (2010, 2012), and Torres Morais and Berlinck (2018) suggest an expansion in the use of the preposition [para], Campos (2010) states, in his data, that the preposition [a] is still productive both in occurrence of syntagmas that are [+animated] and those that are [-animated], suggesting the existence of a dative use in triargumental constructions in the city of Belém, in the Brazilian State of Pará. This means that, differently from other work, Campos presents a context of resistance of the preposition [a] in a dative context in BP.

According to Torres Morais (2010, 2012), the more common use of the preposition [para] rather than the preposition [a] in constructions with triargumental verbs would be caused by the non-execution of categorial construction of these sentences, which means with traits that classify them as dative. This fact is due to the reconfiguration of the use of clitic and strong pronouns (4.a), as well as the non-execution of PIA (4.c), which is

⁵ Translation: Joana sent books and clothes to her parents.

⁶ Translation: Maria told an excellent joke to João.

⁷ Translation: to foot

often implicit from the context. This means that the use of the preposition [para] has becoming more significant in constructions with triargumental verbs; this means that BP would appear to be losing its dative construction.

(4)

- a. [...] ele não rompe o fio, [ele DP-AE] [dá V] [muito brilho DP-AI] [pro (para o) cabelo AIP].
 b. Hoje [Deus DP-AE] [deu V] [a Clara DP-AI] [pra (para) ela AIP] que completa os dias, por isso ela aproveita cada minuto.
 c. Além de alisar ele faz um tratamento no fio e [[☉] DP_AE] [dá v] [um aspecto supernatural DP-AI] [[☉] DP-AIP].

(VER MAIS, 2017)

[English:

- a) [...] he does not break the strand [he] [gives] [a lot of shine] [to the hair].
 b) Today [God] [gave] [Clara] [for her] that completes the days, and for this reason she makes the most of every minute.
 c) Apart from straightening, it treats the strands and [[☉] [gives] [a super-natural appearance] []

Apart from diachronous and synchronous results with qualitative and quantitative data regarding the variation in use between the prepositions [a] and [para], we also bring the research carried out by Liz (2009). In her formal study about the prepositions used as introduction to prepositioned internal arguments, the author describes the different values that the category of prepositions can take on in a given sentence, and may thus be relativised and therefore show differentiated functions: sometimes lexical, sometimes functional. This possibility as defended by this author, based on studies by Littlefield (2006), shall be essential for the discussion of the data found in this work, to come up with justification for the loss of dative constructions with triargumental verbs in BP. This means that, in the next section, we shall be addressing the categories of the prepositions [a] and [para] in generative theory before moving on with the more advanced discussion of the issue.

2.1 The categories of the prepositions [a] and [para] in generative theory

Raposo and Gonçalves (2013) define the prepositions [para] and [a] as being directional, with a slight difference of application: The preposition *a* can be classed as episodic, and the preposition *para* as stable. The former is used for short movements to a place, which assumes a somewhat rapid return to the origin [...] The later, on the other hand, is for longer movements or when there is no assumption made about a quick return to the point of origin [...] (Raposo; Gonçalves, 2013, p. 1542).

According to these authors, in relation to semantic values, the preposition [a] is used with different verb nuclei, but its main function in language is that of introducing the PIA of verbs that select different functions. The authors mention canonical verbs: [dar]⁸, [entregar]⁹, among others, with transfer values that could represent a beneficiary, an addressee, or an experimenter.

on the other hand, the preposition [para] is considered as being a particle to introduce an object complement¹⁰ with values of direction, target, source, and beneficiary, as described by Torres Morais (2010, 2012).

The preposition [a], as described by the literature of the area, is a functional preposition – which means that it does not have a thematic role. According to Torres Morais and Berlink (2018), the preposition [a] would be like a coupled suffix, attached to arguments of a given sentence. In other words, the preposition [a], within a context of

⁸ Dar = to give.

⁹ Entregar = to deliver.

¹⁰ According to Torres Morais (2012), the object complement is a construction with an internal argument as introduced by the prepositions [para], [com] e [em] and receive different thematic roles. “The OBL function is very productive in the expression of different types of complements and prepositioned adjuncts, including the locative (5a), instrumental (5b), comitative (5c), etc.” (Torres Morais, 2012, p. 175).

- (05) a. Ele colocou o caderno na estante. [He put the copybook on the shelf]
 b. A cozinheira cortou o pão com a faca. [The cook cut the bread with the knife]
 c. O menino foi ao mercado com o pai. [The boy went to the Market with his father]

The constructions with an object complement are considered separately in this research. This decision was taken because object complements are not pronominalised by the clitic particle [lhe] that, at least in theory, excludes them from our research sample, which includes constructions that are open to pronominalisation by the particle [lhe]. In addition, these constructions are not contexts of variation in usage of the prepositions [para] and [a], the main object of this study.

triargumental verbs, would show characteristics of what is known as a ‘dummy’ preposition¹¹, meaning a preposition devoid of meaning. All the authors that accept the existence of dummy prepositions also indirectly assume that they do not have a thematic role (BERG, 1998, p.117), meaning that [a] is the only preposition that can introduce the dative term in constructions with triargumental verbs. But how can one explain the use of the preposition [para], considered lexical, in a typically dative context, which would only be permissible for the preposition [a] – which has thematic roles of beneficiary/possession or can be pronominalized through the clitic element [lhe]?

The prior assumptions of Generative Grammar classify the preposition [para] in a lexical category, which means an allocator of a thematic role and case¹² and the verb nuclei as well. In this way, would the PIA of a triargumental verb receive a thematic role of the verb or a lexical preposition? To discuss these issues, we initially base ourselves on the following statements:

We shall divide the prepositions in two types, the predicators [lexical] and the functional, according to the predicative relationships that they establish: those of the first type, predicators, are those that assign a thematic role to their complement. Those of the second type, of a functional ilk, are those that do not assign a thematic role to their complement. Here we warn that the classes of predicatives and functionals are not mutually exclusive classes, but rather functions. (Berg, 2009, p. 104).

In this way, according to the theoretical prerequisites as listed for this research study, the preposition [a] is a functional preposition for the introduction of PIA, within the context of triargumental verbs. This means that it does not assign a thematic role.

3- Establishment of the Corpus of the work

Apart from proposing a discussion on the prepositions [a] and [para], particles that introduce the PIA of triargumental verbs, this study has also sought to present quantitative data on the use and frequency of these prepositions in data relating to the Western part of the Brazilian State of Santa Catarina. The purpose of choosing a corpus based on television programmes was that of obtaining data of current speech in the city of Chapecó and surroundings, in real situations of communication, making it possible to have a wide and trustworthy view of the language in use. This means that the regional television programmes selected to form the corpus of this research were: “Ver Mais” and “Oeste Rural”, both from the network of TV Ric Record.

The collection of data from the two programmes was carried out over a period of five months, between February 2017 and June 2017, and the total analysed was 142h50min of the Ver Mais programme and 11h33min of Oeste Rural. This quantity was sufficient for the quantification of 272 sentences containing triargumental verbs that have selected, as their PIA, a construction with possible variation between [a] and [para].

This is the corpus that has been put together for this work, that intends to contribute with regional quantitative studies, showing the data of a region as yet not studied, for the phenomenon of variation in usage of the prepositions [a] e [para] in triargumental con-texts: Chapecó/SC, anchored by theoretical prerequisites of Generative Grammar. In addition, there is the intention to present possible answers for the existence of this variation or change.

The cohort cuts used for collection of data for this research study are: sentences with triargumental verbs where the PIA is being introduced by the preposition [para] or [a], and pronominalized, both by the clitic element [lhe], as also by subject pronouns [he/she], as we can see in the examples shown in (5):

(5)

- a. Paulo deu uma bicicleta para/a Pedro.
- b. Paulo deu-lhe uma bicicleta.
- c. Paulo deu uma bicicleta pra/para/a ele/ela

[English:

- a. Paulo gave a bicycle to Pedro.

¹¹Considered semantically empty, the only function being that of granting a casual licence to the nominal complement.

¹²Case theory is a grammatical category that is essential for the grammaticality of the sentence. The whole DP as pronounced needs a case to be realised.

- b. Paulo gave him a bicycle.
c. Paulo gave a bicycle to him/to her]

4- Results and Analyses

After the collection of data in our corpus, we observed that the frequency of use of the preposition [para] in a triargumental context strongly prevailed (91.75%) when compared to the frequency of the preposition [a] (8.25%). Due to the enormous difference, we can say that this result may be interpreted as strong evidence of changes to the language:

Table 1 – Variations in the prepositioned internal argument with use of the prepositions [a] and [para] in contexts of triargumental verbs:

Representation	Of the	Events
Elements analysed	N	%
[para]	200	91.75%
[a]	18	8.25%
Total	218	100%

Source:

Prepared by the Authors.

Quantitatively, our study is close to the research studies that defend the use of the preposition [para] as preferential in constructions with triargumental verbs in this way, BP would be shedding its dative construction, defined as the construction that can be replaced and pronominalised by the clitic element [lhe], which can express situational values of possession and beneficiary, in its values of thematic roles. In the case of the preposition [para], the main values for thematic roles as shown by the studies are: directionality, target, source and beneficiary, in BP.

Based on these definitions, we call attention to the intersection of semantic values, as exist between the two prepositions addressed in this study: the value of the beneficiary, as a possibility for the clitic element [lhe] and for the preposition [para] in BP. This semantic intersection shall be important for our hypothesis, and for the analysis we shall be making in the following sections.

The result found backs up studies of other regions of the country, such as the work carried out by Gomes (2003), which shows a significant rise in the use of the preposition [para] in the speech of the carioca (inhabitant of Rio de Janeiro). The author showed this preference for the use of [para] for two reasons: (i) the change in the pronoun structure with the loss of the clitic element [lhe] and the increase in the use of subject pronouns; and ii) due to the fact that the use of the preposition [para] is not frowned upon, meaning that its introduction to circles of speakers goes down well with speakers. We agree with the first item that the author has mentioned. However, we have some reservations with regard to the second statement. We believe that the use of the preposition [para] goes well beyond the fact that it is not frowned. There is a need to highlight other factors that could explain the replacement of one preposition, using another instead.

We disagree with the studies as proposed by Campos (2010) with regard to the statement that the preposition [a] would still be widely used in BP. We even beg to differ when it comes to specific verb nuclei. For example, in contexts containing the verb [pedir], Campos (2010) says that the preferential context would be the use of the preposition [a] in his study, while our data suggest that sentences using the verb [pedir] had the use of the preposition [para] in all cases. See the example below:

(6). A Idiane Machado aqui diz que é música das boas, aí **tá pedindo** qualquer uma **pra ela**.

(VER MAIS, 2017)

[English

Idiane Machado here says that it is good music, and then they **are requesting** any song **for** her.]

Based on the results of Table 1, we feel that we are experiencing linguistic change. We therefore ask the same question: in which contexts is the innovative format occurring? We know that the main characteristic of a triargumental verb is its need to select three arguments so that the sentence may have a full meaning. Note that

there are factors that allow the use of the preposition [para] in constructions with specific syntactic and semantic values that previously were part of dative constructions.

Based on the assumptions made above, in example (7) we identify a triargumental verb with a dative complement. The verb nucleus [dar]¹³ needs three arguments to make complete sense, one being an EA¹⁴ and two IA¹⁵, one having a preposition. In this case, the preposition selected is [a] which, according to Torres Morais (2010), in BP is configured as ‘an additional argument, an extra, introduced into syntax by the functional nucleus known as an application’ (Torres Morais, 2010, p. 174); in other words, “[...] this isa function that has been morphologically analysed: the morpheme a which introduces it [...] is a case marker for the dative case” (Torres Morais, 2010, p.172), and does not assign a thematic role, not having a lexical meaning. This means that the cases where we still find use of the preposition [a], in the context studied, are merely residual.

(7) [...] [Estados Unidos PD-EA], por exemplo, que compra produtos oriundos de Santa Catarina, e o [Japão P-EA] mesmo que [dão V] [muita importância DP-AI] [ãP] [ausência de febre aftosa DATIVE] [...]

(RIC RURAL, 2017)

[English:

[...] [United States], for example, that purchases goods from Santa Catarina, and (the) [Japan] even if they [give] [a lot of importance] [to] [lack of foot-and-mouth disease] [...]

In Example (9) below, with the same verb nucleus [dar], the preposition that introduces the PIA is the lexical preposition [para]. The introduction of the preposition [para] in constructions with triargumental verbs leads to another problem: would there be a construction with two lexical nuclei to assign a thematic role to one same PD? An affirmative answer would make the sentence ungrammatical, as, according to the rules for attribution of a thematic role: “(i) each argument shall need to receive one and only one thematic role; (ii) each thematic role shall have to be assigned to one, and only one, argument. (MIOTO et al., 2013, p. 142). However, we then have a grammatical sentence. So the queries are set out thus: how to classify the PIA introduced by the preposition [para]? How to syntactically license the example sentence (6) within the rules as assigned by generative theory? To answer this question, this study shall make a proposal in Section 7.

In Example (8) below, with the same verb nucleus [dar], the preposition that introduces the PIA is the lexical preposition [para]. The introduction of the preposition [para] in constructions with triargumental verbs leads to another problem: would there be a construction with two lexical nuclei to assign a thematic role to one same Noun Phrase (NP)? An affirmative answer would make the sentence ungrammatical, as, according to the rules for attribution of a thematic role: “(i) each argument shall need to receive one and only one thematic role; (ii) each thematic role shall have to be assigned to one, and only one, argument. (MIOTO et al., 2013, p. 142). However, we then have a grammatical sentence. So, the queries are set out thus: how to classify the PIA introduced by the preposition [para]? How to syntactically license the example sentence (8) within the rules as assigned by generative theory?

(8) [...] ele não rompe o fio, [ele DP-AE] [dá_V] [muito brilho DP-AI] [pro (para o) cabelo AIP].

(VER MAIS, 2017)

[English:

[...] he does not break the strand [he] [gives] [a lot of shine] [for the hair].

5- Verbs expressing material and perceptual transfer, and physical and abstract movement

According to Moreti(2010), verbs of material or perceptual transfer show characteristics indicative of characteristics de concession/transfer of something (direct object – theme) to someone (indirect object - receiver). In the occurrences found to have these semantic values, one could observe a greater occurrence of the use of the preposition [para]:

¹³ Dar: to give

¹⁴EA = External Argument

¹⁵ IA = Internal Argument, without a preposition

Table 2 – Verbs of material and perceptual transfer

Preposition	Total occurrences - %	[-anim.]	[+anim.]
[Para]	155 / 73.8%	57	98
[a]	11 / 5.25%	08	03
Total	166/100%	32	16

Source: Prepared by the Author.

With regard to the contexts that are [+animated] and [-animated], we have observed conditions that are more favourable to the occurrence of the preposition [para] in sentences that are [+animated], as can be seen from the examples in (9); the use of the preposition [a] showed a preference for its presence in constructions with a value that is [-animated], as can be seen in the examples in (10). These examples also showed the possibility of replacing the PIA of these verbs by the clitic particle [lhe], which leads us to believe that these are remnants of dative structures in BP. These results match the findings of studies like that of Torres Morais (2010, 2012).

(9)

a. [...] mas, [o instinto de uma grande mãe_{DP-AE}] [deu_V] [força_{DP-AI}] [pra (para) Magda_{AIP}] continuar [...]

b. [A produção do Junior Vila_{DP-AE}] [mando_V] [um aparelho novo_{DP-AE}] [pra (para) ela_{AIP}]

(VER MAIS, 2017)

[English:

(9) a. [...] but, [the instinct of a great mother] [gave_i] [strength] [for Magda] (to) continue [...]

b. [The production of Junior Vila] [I send] [a new piece of equipment] [(for) her]]

(10)

a. Então, Ana é aqui no seu ateliê que [você_{DP-AE}] costuma [dá (dar)_V] [uma cara nova_{PD-AI}] [às peças_{DATIVE}]

b. Depois da doença [eu_{PD-EA}] sinto que fiquei mais forte e [do (dou)_V] [mais valor_{PD-IA}] [à vida_{DATIVE}] [...]

c. [...] e aí, a pessoa que tá (está) em casa, [ela_{DP-EA}] consegue [dá_V] [mais atenção_{DP-AI}] [a esse animal_{DATIVE}], né [...]

(VER MAIS, 2017)

[English:

(10)

a. So, Ana is here in her studio that you] [normally give_i] [a new appearance] [to the pieces.]

b. After the illness I felt I got stronger and [I give] more value to life

c. [...] and then, the person who (is) at home, she manages to give more attention to this animal, right

Apart from the verbs representing material and perceptual transfer, we shall also analyse the verbs representing physical and abstract movement. As described by Moretti (2010), verbs that have the semantic characteristic of movement of target or theme (direct object) out to someone or something, a place or target (indirect object). In the table below, we present the results for this context:

Table 3 – Verbs of physical and abstract movement

Preposition	Total occurrences - %	[-animated]	[+animated]
[Para]	45 / 76%	28	16
[a]	04 / 7%	04	-
Total	49/100%	32	16

Source: Prepared by the Author.

On checking the sentences for the use of the preposition [para] and/or [a], we see a much larger use of the preposition [para], both in contexts with traits with [-animated] as also in those which have [+animated].

(11)

- a. [...] [a gente_{DP-AE}] [traz_V] [sempre um telespectador_{PD-IA}] [para o programa pra aprende a receita_{AIP}] [...]
 b. [...] [Ela_{PD-IA}] [coloca_V] [pra mim_{AIP}] [o peso_{PD-IA}], mas eu não sei a altura [...]

(VER MAIS, 2017)

- c. [Eu_{PD-AE}] procuro, assim, sempre depois de uns três dias [coloca_V] [o dedo na terra_{DP-AE}] [pra sentir como que tá_{PIA}].

(RIC RURAL, 2017)

[English:

- (11) a. [...] [We bring] [always a spectator] [for the programme, to learn the recipe] ...

- b. [...] [She] [places] [for me] [the weight], but I do not know the height [...]

- c. [I] search, you know, and after three days [I place] [my finger in the ground] [to feel how things are].

Out of the total sentences analysed, 76% were constructions with [para], 7% are constructions with [a]. Hence, one can say that the increase in the use of the preposition [para] rather than the preposition [a] as a dative does no longer configure a battle between grammatical options, but rather as a path towards consolidation of the use of this preposition in the representation of the internal argument with a preposition with verbs of physical or abstract movement.

In general, it was observed that, regardless of the semantic context, the scope of the preposition [para] expanded and acquired substantial preference (over 70%) among the contexts here analysed.

6 – The clitic pronoun [lhe] and the change of the pronoun chart in BP

Out of the total number of occurrences with triargumental verbs, only one sentence showed the clitic element [lhe] in an accusative function, in the 2nd person. This result confirms the findings of the research study by Campos (2010) and other linguists, who mention the loss of the dative function of the clitic element [lhe] in the 3rd person and its recategorisation in the accusative role in the 2nd person.

- (12) [...] um aplicativo em que você encontra pessoas [que possam_{PD-EA}] [lhe_{ACCUSATIVE}] [dá_V] [um pouso_{PD-IA}], uma pousada [...]

(VER MAIS, 2017)

[English:

- (12) [...] an application in which you find people [who may] [to you] [give] [a rest, a resting place [...]]

The recategorisation of the clitic element [lhe] and the increase in usage of the preposition [para] mean that the use of the subject pronouns he/she is now in the function of the pronominal 3rd person in place of [lhe]:

(13)

- a. [A produção do Junior Vila_{PD-EA}] [mando_V] [um aparelho novo_{DP-AI}] [pra ela_{PIA}]

- b. [A Luciana Sales_{PD-EA}] lá do Efapi tá acompanhando o Ver Mais que tá muito bom tá [mandando_V] [um beijo_{PD-IA}] [pra ti_{PIA}], Ivone.

(VER MAIS, 2017)

[English:

(13)

- a. [The production of Junior Vila] [I send] [a new unit][for her]

- b. [(The) Luciana Sales] over there from Efapi is following Ver Mais, which is very good, right, [sending] [a kiss] [to you], Ivone.

Apart from the use of the subject pronouns he/she in the role of PIA, we also noticed the use of other pronouns in this function, also introduced by the pronoun [para] in a reasonable number of sentences (Table 4):

Table 4 – Chart representing pronominalized PIA

Pronoun ¹⁶	Number of Sentences	%
Para ela/ele	14	22%
Para você	16	25%
Para a gente	27	42,50%
Para mim	03	4,50%
Para ti	03	4,50%
Para nós	01	1,50%
Total	64	100%

Source: The Author

The possibility of use of many pronouns as a prepositioned internal argument, in sentences with triargumental verbs, could be one of the factors that has contributed to the vanishing of the preposition [a]. This makes it possible to say that these contexts are not referring to variation of the prepositions [a] and [para], but rather of the categorical use of the preposition [para]. Depending on the context, on attempting to replace the preposition [para] by [a], the sentence becomes ungrammatical, showing that, in this environment, the use of the preposition [para] is the only possibility. Similarly, if PIA is a noun, then there shall always be a preference of being accompanied by the preposition [para].

(14)

a. A Idiane Machado aqui diz que é música das boas, aí tá pedindo qualquer uma pra ela (*a ela/ *a mim/ *a gente/*a nós/ *a você/ *a ti).

b. A Gabriela já mando uma mensagem pra gente/*a gente/*a mim/*a nós também [...]

c. A gente tá aqui pra realmente dá todo um suporte pra ela/ a ela, não só nesse momento [...]

d. Cada 7 ou 8 dias tu tem que dá um antiinflamatório pra ele/ a ele.

f. A Elis do Santo Antonio tá mandando um beijo pra você/*a você Ediane.

g. Oi, manda um beijo pra mim/*a mim, Angela [...]

h. [...] e agora manda o nome da tua mãe pra eu/* a eu lembrar [...]

i. As meninas que mandam fotos pra/* a gente

j. [...] pode colocar um papel toalha e enxugar um pouquinho pra gente/*a gente diminuir a quantidade de gordura.

k. Nós acompanhamos esse encontro e mostramos pra/*a você- pra/a ela/Maria agora no programa.

(VER MAIS, 2017)

[English:

(14)

a. (The) Idiane Machado here says it is good music, then they are requesting any song for her (*to her/ *to me/ *us/*to us/ *to you/ *to thou).

b. Gabriela has already I sent a message to us/*us/*to me/*to us as well [...]

c. We are here to really give a lot of support for her/to her, and not only at this moment [...]

d. Every 7 or 8 days you have to give an antiinflammatory pill to him/for him.

f. Elis from Santo Antonio is sending a kiss for you/*to you Ediane.

g. Hi, send a kiss for me/*to me, Angela [...]

h. [...] And now send your mother's name for me/* to me to remember [...]

i. The girls who send photographs for/* us

j. [...] you can place a paper towel and rinse a bit, so that we/*us may reduce the fat content.

k. We have monitored this meeting and show it to/*for you- for/to/Maria now, in the programme.

¹⁶Top to bottom: For her/him, For you, For us, For me, For you, For Us

In this manner, we conclude that the clitic pronoun [lhe] is no longer used as a 3rd person, in constructions with triargumental verbs, in speech as spoken in the city of Chapecó and region, which suggests the restructuring of the pronoun structure. This issue has been widely discussed in specialised literature on linguistics.

Regarding the hypotheses and doubts as initially penned: what factors have an influence on the choice of the preposition [para] by Brazilian speakers of Portuguese? What we think is that the loss of the dative construction is linked to the values of the preposition [para] and to the changes which have taken place in the pronoun chart, as there are many sentences that use different pronouns to introduce the PIA, not giving any suggestion that the type of verb would be responsible for alternation and/or prevalence of the use of [para] compared with the preposition [a].

7 – Proposal: [for] a semilexical preposition

Based on these previous assumptions, we consider example (16). It is possible to check a triargumental verb with a dative construction, meaning a verbal nucleus [dar] needs three arguments to be a full sentence, where one has a preposition. In this case, the preposition chosen is the preposition [a] that, according to Torres Morais (2010) in PE operates as ‘an additional argument, an additional argument, introduced into syntax by the functional nucleus known as an ‘application’ (Torres Morais, 2010, p.174), meaning that “[...] it is a function that has been morphologically identified: the morpheme a that introduces it [...] is a marker of the dative case”, hence not assigning a thematic role, lacking a lexical significance.

(15) [...] [Estados Unidos_{PD-EA}], por exemplo, que compra produtos oriundos de Santa Catarina, e o [Japão_{DP-AE}] mesmo que [dão_V] [muita importância_{DP-AI}] [à_{PP}] [ausência de febre aftosa_{DATIVO}] [...]

(RIC RURAL, 2017).

[English:

(15)[...] [United States], for example, that buys products from Santa Catarina, and (the) [Japan] even if they [give] [much importance] [to] [the lack of foot and mouth disease [...]

In Example (16), the verbal nucleus [dar] selects three arguments so that the sentence may acquire a full significance. In this case, the preposition that introduces the PIA is the preposition [para], considered a lexical nucleus, meaning that it is an assignor of role and case.

(16) [...] ele não rompe o fio, [ele_{DP-AE}] [dá_V] [muito brilho_{DP-AI}] [pro (para o) cabelo_{AIP}].

(VER MAIS, 2017).

[English:

(16) [...]It does not break the strand, [it] [gives] [a lot of shine] [(to the) hair].

How can one explain the use of the preposition [para], considered lexical, within a typically dative context, only permissible for the preposition [a] – that has theme roles of beneficiary/owner or can be pronominalized through the clitic element [lhe]?

Studies developed by Liz (2009), anchored by the research of Littlefield (2006), suggest a subcategorisation of the category [-N –V]. As defined by Chomsky, this category includes adverbs, particles and two types of prepositions. However, Littlefield (2006) defends the view that within this category – here known as a domain – there is a division into subcategories, which here are called categories. Within these subcategories we have one considered sublexical, which includes the category including the prepositions and their functions.

In the light of this fact, Liz (2009) assumed that prepositions make up a class of their own, this being because, even though they have the licence to assign both a thematic role and a Case, according to the proposal postulated by Larson (1988) and taken up by Liz (2009), in triargumental constructions, the preposition [para], that introduces a beneficiary PIS, as well as a target and goal, is only an attributor of class, and hence functional. It is based on the wide variety of the category of prepositions that we investigate the preposition [para] as an introducer of PIA in triargumental constructions.

Regarding what has been discussed so far, we shall now investigate the relationships or functions that preposition take up in the triargumental sentences connected to our data. For this, we have reinforced the concept of the dative term, based on Latin.

According to van Hoeske (1996, p.6), the dative indicates ‘the person to whom something is given, said, sent or brought’, with the term ‘dative’ (from the Latin verb *dare*) therefore meaning an ‘attribution’ or *casus dandi*¹⁷. Making a paraphrase, one can say that the dative shows something of which someone takes possession, or something that is received, and then benefit from. According to Torres Morais (2010, p.175), “The meaning of dynamic possession can only be constructed with the dative construction” in which the internal argument is introduced by the preposition [a].

Based on these statements, Torres Morais (2010, 2012) assume, based on the studies carried out by Cuervo (2003), that constructions with verbs like [dar]¹⁸, [enviar]¹⁹, [entregar]²⁰, would in fact be transitive verbs that select a relationship. In this case, the dative argument is introduced by means of an applicative nucleus that introduces the preposition [a] and assigns an inherent dative Case and thematic roles to the PIA; in other words, this would be a morphological rather than a syntactic mark. The author also states that, in the case of BP, [a] e [para] are transitive prepositions that project a PP.

On the other hand, the preposition [para], considered lexical by current literature, brings the following semantic characteristics: *of movement, a final stop on a path, and a benefit or receipt of something*. However, in triargumental constructions, these features shall not be considered. For example, in contexts with transitive verbs, we have the following situation: “*Maria escreveu os documentos para Pedro*”²¹. In this case, the preposition [para] assigns a thematic role and a case to the PD [Pedro] as being a *receiver or beneficiary*, confirming the lexical category.

In this work, we defend the change of function of the preposition [para], when in a triargumental context. The path chosen is checking the main characteristics of the category of prepositions. We know that, in the theoretical chart of generative grammar, the lexical elements, which are the nuclei able to semantically select their arguments, are divided into four categories: [-V +N= nouns; +V +N= adjectives; +V - N = verbs; -V -N = prepositions].

Prepositions are considered a [-N -V] category. However, there is no set definition of their real function within a given sentence, due to the plurality with which speakers make use of prepositions. We therefore propose a more detailed analysis, in which, in a construction with a dative element – (17a) –, the PIA is introduced by the functional preposition [a], and then pronominalized by the clitic particle [lhe], with thematic roles of receiver/goal/target, being categorical in EP and almost non-existent in spoken Brazilian Portuguese. In the example given in (17b), PIA is introduced by the preposition [para] – which we shall analyse as semilexical, in BP, maintaining the thematic role of receiver/goal/target.

- a. Maria deu um livro ao Pedro
- b. Maria deu um livro para o Pedro.

[English:

- (17) a. Maria gave a book to Pedro
- b. Maria gave a book for Pedro.

Finally, in (18) we have a construction with the verb to do[*fazer*] that selects two arguments. We shall assume that, in this case, [para] is a lexical preposition that introduces a complement PD with the thematic role of beneficiary and an object case. The phrase with this object value is also grammatically correct in EP. Therefore, in BP, we have the preposition [para] acting in different ways in different contexts, but with the same thematic role – that of beneficiary – in both sentences:

- (18). João fez o trabalho para Pedro.

[English:

- (18) John did the work for Peter.

¹⁷ Casus dandi = case of giving. (Latin)

¹⁸ Dar = To give.

¹⁹ Enviar = To send.

²⁰ Entregar = To deliver.

²¹ Translation: Maria wrote the official documents for Pedro.

We can therefore say that, even if the preposition [para] is in a triargumental context and introducing the PIA, it cannot be considered a marker of the dative case in BP, different from what happens with the preposition [a]. What actually happens is that there is an overlap of the thematic roles of beneficiary, between these prepositions. This leads to a situation of ambiguity. Indeed, the values of the dative, as defined by Van Hoecke (1996), Berlinck (2001) and Torres Morais (2010, 2012), include many thematic roles.

Littlefield (2006) strengthens the singularity of prepositions and, in their study, show evidence of why the preposition [para] is used in contexts of the preposition [a]. The author defends the division of the preposition category [-N -V] into subcategories, this being a subclassification in which some prepositions are semilexical (+L +F), meaning that they can assign content either syntactically or semantically, or just syntactically. The prepositions that fall into this category, with their Portuguese correspondents, are: in (em), under (debaixo, sob), with (com), for (para, that contribute both with substantive and grammatical information (assignment of case). These elements, according to the author [Littlefield, 2006], represent the semilexical area of the domain. (Liz, 2009, p. 90).

Thus, according to the verbal nucleus of the sentence, the preposition behaves in a different way, alternating between being a true lexical preposition that assigns a thematic role, a Case, or a functional preposition assigning only a Case.

This means we can say that the preposition [para] has two entries: one lexical and the other functional, which can be activated or not, depending on the context in which it is inserted. On considering the sentences below, with the preposition [para], we see that the values of a role of beneficiary of internal arguments (IAs) with prepositions are maintained, thereby sharing the same values as assigned when using the preposition [a].

(19)

- a. Maria fez o jantar para/à família.
- b. Maria deu um livro para /ao Pedro.

[English:

- a. Maria made dinner for/to family.
- b. Maria gave a book for/to Pedro

Thus, the thematic role of beneficiary, that both prepositions, [para] and [a], could preach, would justify the possibility of variation in their uses in triargumental sentences, regardless of any loss for the interpretation of the sentence, and widely accepted by speakers in BP. This can be seen in the sentences shown in (21), and we see that there would be no change in meaning were we to change the prepositions in the sentence – the thematic role of beneficiary assigned to PD would be maintained, showing the closeness of the tracks carried by these prepositions in these contexts.

(20)

- a. [...] Suelen manda um beijo pra (para)/à irmã [...]
- b. [...] o sistema público oferece toda a assistência pro /ao autista.
- c. Então, Ana, é aqui no seu ateliê que você costuma dá (dar) uma cara nova às/para as peças.

(VER MAIS, 2017)

[English:

(20)

- a. Suelen sends a kiss for/to her sister
- b. The public system offers all assistance for/to autistic.
- c. So, Ana, it is here in your studio that you usually give (give) a new face to/for the pieces

The thematic roles of beneficiary as assigned by the preposition [para] are not restricted to the contexts of triargumental verbs. Based on the sentences in (21), with verbs of two arguments, or even with one sole argument, we confirm that the complements introduced by the preposition [para] also have the thematic role of beneficiary in different contexts. Hence, the preposition [para], in addition to the attributed role of direction and the final point on a path or journey, can also assign the thematic role of beneficiary to its DP. This issue becomes important for our hypothesis because, on confirming that this is something internal to the preposition [para] and that expresses itself with different verb nuclei, we see possible evidence of a possible change to a greater use of [para] instead of [a]: both carry semantic characteristics of a beneficiary.

This intersection of features between these prepositions could explain the fact that, with the loss of the dative, the preposition [para] is now becoming the main preference in the replacement of [a], even though [para] lacks dative characteristics.

- a. João fez o trabalho para Pedro.
- b. João escreveu um livro para a editora.
- c. João leu a história para as crianças.

[English:

(21)

- a. John did the work for Peter.
- b. John wrote a book for the publisher.
- c. John read the story to the children.

Differently from the *beneficiary* feature, on analysing the sentences of the data, we have seen no sentences where the PIA has a thematic role of possession with the use of the preposition [para], one of the characteristics normally assigned to the dative. Torres Morais (2012) observed that the constructions, where the thematic roles are of possession, occur with non-directional dynamic verbs; in our data, for BP, we did not observe these differences, that shown in the examples in (22). These are cases that occur in EP grammar. In sentence (22a), the PIA can be interpreted either as an owner beneficiary, these being both the thematic roles assigned by the preposition [a]. In example (22c), we have an attribution of possession, with the use of the preposition [de] with a genitive case. In sentence (22d), the preposition [para] only assigns a beneficiary role.

- a. O detective desvendou o mistério à polícia (posse/ beneficiário)
- b. O detective desvendou-lhe o mistério (posse/ beneficiário)
- c. O detective desvendou o mistério da polícia (posse/* beneficiário)
- d. O detective desvendou o mistério para a polícia (*posse/ beneficiário)

(Torres Morais, 2012, p. 33)

[English:

(22)

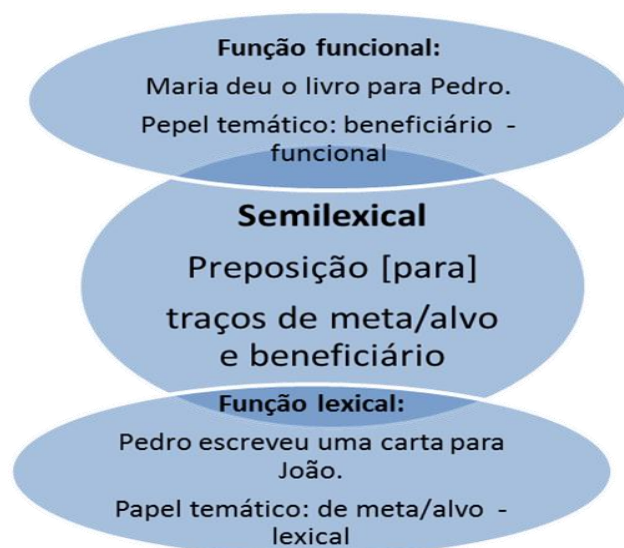
- a. The detective solved the mystery to the police (possession/beneficiary)
- b. The detective solved the mystery (possession/beneficiary)
- c. The detective solved the police mystery (possession/*beneficiary)
- d. The detective solved the mystery for the police (*possession/ beneficiary)

The ambiguity of the structures with the use of the preposition [a] makes two different interpretations possible: that of beneficiary and that of possession. In BP, depending on the information that one plans to produce, the speaker shall choose the preposition [para], in the case of a value of beneficiary, while the preposition [de] shall be chosen in the case of the value being that of possession. This means we can say that the ambiguity of the sentences like (23a) in BP may have triggered a search for more precise alternatives, so that the information desired may be transmitted. The solution that the speaker found was the use of the preposition [para] to indicate beneficiary and [de] to indicate possession.

The preposition [de], as present in example (23c), was not the object of analysis of data in this work but, due to the fact that we have not found any occurrence of dative constructions with a thematic role of possession in our corpus, we consider the hypothesis that the thematic role of possession, characteristic of the preposition [a] in EP, is disappearing in BP, this disappearance being boosted by the loss of dative construction, thereby restructuring the attributions of thematic roles of possession and beneficiary in the language dialect of BP. In contexts with triargumental verbs, the results of our study show preference of the speaker in choosing the semilexical preposition [para], which can operate as a functional preposition in these triargumental contexts, although it can be lexical in others. In the same way, these results show that in the possessive relationship, the speaker would have the use of the preposition [de] as an option. This hypothesis should be checked out in future work projects.

Thus, the solution found by the speakers was the use of the preposition [para] in contexts of *beneficiary* theme roles due to its semilexicality – the possibility of it being a lexical preposition in one sentence and functional in another, as described and presented in this work.

Figure 1: Representation of the preposition [para]²²



Source: Prepared by the Author.

We therefore agree with Liz (2009) and Littlefield (2003) with the subcategorisation of the category [- N - V] and state that some prepositions do indeed act as semilexical, activating their values depending on the verbal nucleus.

8 – Final Comments

Quantitatively, the results of our data regarding speech in Chapecó and surrounding region showed a Strong preference for the use of the preposition [para] as a way of introducing the prepositioned internal argument of triargumental verbs, which are present in over 90% of all sentences. This high rate of use of the preposition [para], compared with the preposition [a], suggests evidence of a change in BP compared with EP, agreeing with the findings of many other studies described herein, such as Silveira (1999), Gomes (2003), Figueiredo-Silva (2007), Liz (2009), Berlinck (2011), Torres Morais (2010, 2012) Chaves (2013), Torres Morais and Berlink (2018).

Hence, in a move to identify possible factors for the expansion of use of the preposition [para], we checked the results of data by specific contexts. However, due to the small number of data found with use of the preposition [a] and the lack of any standards in accomplishments, the main conclusion of the study led us to see these contexts as remnants of dative constructions in BP.

²²Translation figure 1:

Functionalfunção:

Maria deu o livro para Pedro.

Thematic role: Beneficiary – Functional

Semilexical:

Preposition [para]

Elements of goal/target and beneficiary

Lexical function:

Pedro escreveu uma carta a João.

Thematic role: Goal/target - lexical

With regard to order, we observed that the context of inversion of internal arguments, the order EA V PIA IA, showed some variation in the usage of [para] and [a], 70% and 30%, respectively. The other orders found have shown results of over 95% for the use of [para].

Turning now to verbs considered as being of material/perceptual transfer and verbs classified as being of physical and abstract movement, thus obtained the very same result: a strong prevalence of the use of the preposition [para] in all contexts. The only reservation for the use of the preposition [a], in both verbs, would be the fact of a preference for a less animated context, this being considered a remnant of the dative constructions in the language.

Finally, on looking at the use of the clitic particle 'lhe' and the use of subject pronouns, it is even more clear that this is a context of change, and no longer one of variation in the Chapecó region. Only one case was found with the use of the clitic 'lhe' and, even so, this was recategorised as being the second person and not the third. In addition, the analysis of the subject pronouns ele/ela (he/she) has shown that these contexts are not contexts involving variation of the prepositions [a] and [para], but rather cases of categorical use of the preposition [para].

In the light of these results, the investigation turned to the prepositions [para] and [a] and their categories within generative grammar. Anchored by the works of Littlefield (2003) and Liz (2009), we assume that the category of prepositions can be subdivided according to their functions on sentences.

In this way, we shall assume that the preposition [para] is part of a subcategory which the author has called 'semilexical', where the function changes depending on the context, meaning that in some cases there is allocation of a theme role, behaving like a lexical preposition, and sometimes just assigns case, as if a functional preposition. In the case of the constructions with triargumental verbs, the verbal nucleus assigns the thematic role to its complements. This means that, in these constructions, the prepositions [a] and [para] are functional, allocating case only. The explanation for permission of use of [para] instead of [a] is due to the intersection of the theme role of beneficiary, as shared by the two prepositions.

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