

Ditransitive constructions in Northern Mansi

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1 The ditransitive construction

The most common definition of ditransitive constructions is: a construction consisting of a ditransitive verb, an agent argument (A), a recipient (recipient-like, addressee) argument (R) and a theme argument (T):

Mary gave John a book.
A R T

Ditransitive verbs are typically physical transfer verbs such as *give, send, sell, bring* etc. Although less prototypical, in most languages some verbs expressing mental transfers like *say, tell, show* etc. behave in a similar way, so these are also listed as ditransitive verbs, cf.:

English	Hungarian
<i>Mary gave John a book.</i>	<i>Mari könyvet adott Jánosnak</i>
<i>Mary told John a story.</i>	<i>Mari mesét mondott Jánosnak</i>

2. The typology of the ditransitive constructions

The most general typological characterisation of ditransitive constructions is based on the comparison of monotransitive and ditransitive constructions.

1. **indirect object alignment** (where the T and the P have the same morphological marking, but the R is treated differently from the T and P)

T = P R

e.g. Hungarian	
(monotransitive)	<i>János könyv-et néz.</i> János book-ACC look at 'János is looking at a book.'
(ditransitive)	<i>János könyv-et vesz Anná-nak.</i> János book-ACC buy Anna-DAT 'János buys Anna a book.'

2. **secondary object alignment** (or **primary object construction**) (where the P and the R have the same marking and the T is treated differently)

T P = R

e.g. Khanty	
(monotransitive)	<i>löy mänt wuj</i> (s)he I.ACC see.PST3SG
(ditransitive)	<i>löy mänt vikä-tə jantəs</i> (s)he I.ACC coat-INSTR sew '(S)he sewed me a coat.' (lit. '(S)he sewed me with a coat.')

3. **neutral alignment** (or **double object construction**) (where the P, the R and the T are encoded in the same way)

T = P = R

e.g. English

(monotransitive) *Mary saw **John***

(ditransitive) *He gave **John** a book.*

2. The ditransitive constructions in Northern Mansi

2.1. Typological alignment

Mansi belongs to the group of languages that show a mixture of constructions. It means that one and the same verb can occur with different constructions. This phenomenon is called **alternation**. The Mansi constructions are:

(1) **Indirect object construction**, where the theme of the ditransitive construction is an unmarked object, and the recipient is encoded with the lative-dative *-n* suffix.

Taw tinal-as-te ēka-te χon wańka-n.
 He sell-PST-3SG>SG wife-3SG belly Vańka-DAT
 'He sold his wife to „belly” Vańka.'

In indirective constructions the verb can be in the subjective and objective conjugations.

Tōrəm naŋən matər mi-s
 god you.LAT something give-PST.3SG
 'God gave you something.'

Al-ne χul-anəl gosudarstw-ən miy-anəl
 kill-PTPRS fish-3PL>PL state-DAT give-3PL>PL
 'They give their fish to the state.'

(2) **Secondary (primary) object construction**, where the R of the ditransitive construction are unmarked objects and the T is marked with the instrumental *-l* suffix. (If R is a personal pronoun it is in ACC form.) In this construction the verb is in the objective conjugation.

Pi-mēn manər nam-əl piniŋlə-mēn?
 Son-1DU what name-INSTR put-1DU>SG
 'What name shall we (2) give to our son?'

Nēnan am šopr-šonaχ-əl wāri-jaγəm.
 You(2).ACC I silver-cup-INSTR make-1SG>DU
 'I make you (2) cups.'

ńāl-əl liγ-aγ-mēn
 arrow-INSTR shoot-1DU>DU
 'We (2) shoot arrows in your (2) direction.'

2.2. The choice of constructions

If a language allows for two kinds of ditransitive constructions, the main question is what determines the usage of these constructions. The answer to this question requires further investigation. According to the research of Nikolaeva in Khanty and Skribnik in Mansi topicality is the main factor which determines the rules of usage. The choice depends on which object is more topical: the more topical constituent becomes „direct object”.

<i>Am</i>	<i>tawen</i>	<i>mōjt</i>	<i>mōjt-eyəm.</i>	<i>Am</i>	<i>tawe</i>	<i>mōjt-əl</i>	<i>mōj-tiləm.</i>
I	(s)he.DAT	tale	tell-1SG	I	(s)he.ACC	tale-INSTR	tell-1SG>SG
'I tell him a tale.' (T is more topical)				'I tell him a tale.' (R is more topical)			

2.3. Passivization

Passivization is one of the most investigated behavioral properties of ditransitive constructions. In typological frames the alignment types of passivization follow the patterns of basic alignment types of ditransitive constructions.

1. The first type is the **indirective passivization**, when the T passivizes – like the P of the monotransitive construction – but R does not.

e.g. Finnish

<i>Kirja</i>	<i>annettin</i>	<i>pojalle.</i>
Book	give-PST.PASS	boy-DAT
'A book was given to the boy.'		

**Poika annettiin kirja.*

This type of passivization can also be used in Mansi, but it is not common. E.g.:

<i>Jārm-ən</i>	<i>take</i>	<i>maj-w-äs-əm</i>
distress	that	give-PASS-PST-1SG
'I was given to distress.'		

2. **Secundative passivization** means that R passivizes – like the P of monotransitive construction – but T does not. The Mansi language shows a preference for R-passivization. E.g.:

<i>200 gramm</i>	<i>ńańəl</i>	<i>mi-w-ew</i>
	bread-INSTR	give-PASS-1SG
'We were given 200 gr. of bread.'		

3. The ditransitive verbs in Mansi

Languages vary as to how many verbs and which verbs belong to the group of ditransitive verbs. In Mansi this group of verbs is open and fairly large. There are physical transfer verbs ('give', 'buy', 'take', 'shoot'), verbs with benefactive affect ('do', 'sew', 'provide'), mental transfer verbs ('tell', 'say', 'show', 'think', 'sing'), etc. It is interesting that in Mansi, as opposed to other languages, these verbs occur in both alignment types. It seems that there are almost no lexical restrictions. (Cf. Nikolaeva 40)

E.g.

Puŋk-iŋ *uj* *puŋk-əl* ***namejāl-iləm***,
head-POSS animal head-INSTR name-1SG>SG

puŋk-iŋ *uj* *puŋk-əl* ***kāstāl-iləm***
head-POSS animal head-INSTR offer-1SG>SG

'I name the head of the headed animal for you, I offer the head of the headed animal for you.'

Puŋk-iŋ *uj* *puŋk-e* *nanən* ***kāstā-s-ləm***
head-POSS animal head-3SG you.DAT offer-PST-1SG>SG

'I offered the head of the headed animal for you.'

Lātəŋ manawn ***lawiyl-as-ən***
word we.DAT say-PST-2SG

'You said a word to us.'

Ŋōtne ēryəl ***ēryililəm***
nice song-INSTR sing-1SG>SG

'I sing you a nice song'

posəŋ *nomtəl* *nēnan* ***nomijanuwa***
nice/bright thought-INSTR you(2).ACC think-1PL>PL

'We think of you with nice thoughts.'

Literature:

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