

# DITRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN GERMANIC LANGUAGES: DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC ASPECTS

## ORGANISER(S)

Timothy Collemann | Ghent University

Melanie Röthlisberger | KU Leuven

Eva Zehentner | University of Vienna

This workshop aims to showcase and bring together empirical (corpus-based and/or experimental) research on ditransitive constructions in Germanic languages and their dialects past and present.

Most basically, ditransitive verbs can be defined as verbs typically involving three semantic roles, namely an agent, a recipient-like argument, and a theme argument (cf. Malchukov et al. 2010: 1). As exemplified in the following sentences, in Germanic languages these verbs typically occur in (or alternate between) nominal and prepositional patterns, although the semantic and syntactic relationship between these patterns is not equally systematic and pervasive in all languages.

(1) English:

- a. *The man* sent **his brother** a book.
- b. *The man* sent a book **to his brother**.

(2) Dutch:

- a. *De man* heeft **zijn broer** een boek gestuurd.
- b. *De man* heeft een boek **aan zijn broer** gestuurd.

(3) German:

- a. *Der Mann* schickte **seinem Bruder** ein Buch.
- b. *Der Mann* schickte ein Buch **(zu) seinem Bruder**.

In English, ditransitives are among the most extensively researched syntactic constructions, with the 'dative alternation' exemplified in (1) having received a great deal of attention in a wide range of theoretical frameworks (see e.g. Green 1974; Barss & Lasnik 1986, Pinker 1989; Goldberg 1995, 2006; Croft 2003; Levin & Rappaport Hovav 2005; Mukherjee 2005; Wolk et al. 2013; Gerwin 2014; Perek 2015). However, even within English, studies have mainly focused on synchronic descriptions of ditransitives, while interest in diachronic aspects of ditransitives has only rather recently been sparked (e.g. Colleman & De Clerck 2011; De Cuyper 2015a; Yáñez-Bouza & Denison 2015). The last decades have also seen a growing interest in ditransitives in other Germanic languages (e.g. Barðdal 2008; Colleman 2009), and in the typology of ditransitives in general (Malchukov et al. 2010).

From a synchronic perspective, two different points of focus have been pervasive regarding research on ditransitives: Some researchers aim at pinpointing the subtle semantic differences between the constructions involved (e.g. Goldberg 1995, 2006; Levin & Rappaport Hovav 2005; Langacker 2008). Other studies have tended to explore and determine the simultaneous influence of language-external and -internal factors that shape the choice between the variants, thereby ignoring or somewhat downplaying semantic factors (e.g. Bresnan and Hay 2008, Wolk et al.

2014). Finally, more formal studies zoom in on the syntactic relation between the constructions involved (e.g. Ouhalla 1994; Culicover 1997).

From a diachronic perspective, research has mostly concentrated on changes in the available patterns for ditransitive verbs (e.g. the emergence of the prepositional *to*-construction in the history of English), changes in the formal and functional features of the respective constructions (such as the preferred order of objects and the factors influencing it, or the range of verb classes associated with the patterns), as well as the role played by morphological case marking in these developments (e.g. Allen 1995; McFadden 2002; Barðdal et al. 2011; Coleman & De Clerck 2009, 2011; De Cuypere 2015a, 2015b; Zehentner 2016). Investigations into these issues are aimed at providing historical explanations for the synchronic syntactic variation attested in present-day English or other languages.

Despite the broad coverage in the literature, we still know little about the cross-linguistic pervasiveness of ditransitive constructions (be they historical or synchronic), the variability of factors that drive the choice of dative variant, and the cognitive reality of these factors. It is the aim of this panel to tackle and, if possible, bridge these gaps. More specifically, the research questions that this panel would like to address include but are not restricted to:

- 1) To what extent do language-external factors, such as time, register or region, influence the choice of nominal or prepositional patterns? To what extent do these factors also condition the ordering of constituents in the ditransitive clause, i.e. the order of objects? Do we observe similar patterns of lectal variation in different Germanic languages?
- 2) How do the diachronic developments of ditransitives in different Germanic languages relate to one another: what differences or similarities can be found, and how can we explain them? What role did language contact and broader developments such as the loss of case marking play in these developments? Also, can we reconstruct the range of ditransitive patterns (and their formal and functional features) in earlier stages of Germanic languages, going back as far as Proto-Germanic?
- 3) To what extent do cognitive processes (e.g. processing) and language-internal factors offer explanations for regional or historical differences in ditransitives? What effect do psycho-/ neurolinguistic processes such as priming have on language acquisition and the use of ditransitives?
- 4) How are ditransitives (and alternation relationships) cognitively represented, and are these cognitive representations cross-linguistically robust?

Against this background, we invite abstracts of empirical studies (experimental or corpus-based) related to one or more of the questions above. We especially welcome studies that bring together different theoretical frameworks, research methodologies or languages.

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