DITRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN GERMANIC LANGUAGES:
DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC ASPECTS

ORGANISER(S)

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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** <u>a book</u>.
    b. *The man* sent <u>a book</u> **to his brother**.

(2) Dutch:

    a. *De man* heeft **zijn broer** <u>een boek</u> gestuurd.
    b. *De man* heeft <u>een boek</u> **aan zijn broer gestuurd**.

(3) German:

    a. *Der Mann* schickte **seinem Bruder** <u>ein Buch</u>.
    b. *Der Mann* schickte <u>ein Buch</u> **(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 Cuypere 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; Colleman & 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.

The provisional schedule of the workshop includes the following papers:

- **INTRODUCTION BY WORKSHOP ORGANIZERS (30')**

- **Reconstructing the Ditransitive Construction for Proto-Germanic**
  Jóhanna Barðdal | Ghent University
  Juan G. Vázquez-González | Huelva University

- **Syntactic mapping of arguments of location datives and possession change datives in early English**
  Katarzyna Sowka-Pietraszewska | University of Wrocław

- **Middle English Prepositional Dative: Grammaticalisation and contact with French**
  Richard Ingham | Universität Mannheim

- **Object alignment in ditransitive constructions in the history of German**
  Philipp Rauth | Universität des Saarlandes

- **Diachronic changes and geographical variety in double object argument construction`s semantics in Yiddish**
  Valentina Fedchenko | Saint Petersburg State University

- **Semantic shifts in the Swedish ditransitive construction**
  Fredrik Valdeson | University of Stockholm

- **On ditransitive constructions in Afrikaans, in comparison with Dutch and English**
  Dario Rens | Ghent University
  Timothy Colleman | Ghent University

- **The ditransitive alternation in present-day German. A corpus based investigation of *geben***
  Hilde de Vaere | Ghent University
  Ludovic de Cuypere | Ghent University
  Klaas Willems | Ghent University

- **Dialectal ditransitive patterns in British English**
  Johanna Gerwin | Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel

- **Investigating abstract representations in a structurally biased language over development**
  Alina Kholodova | Technical University of Kaiserslautern
  Michelle Peter | University of Liverpool
  Caroline Rowland | Max Planck Institute Nijmegen
  Shanley Allen | Technical University of Kaiserslautern

- **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION (30')**

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Reconstructing the Ditransitive Construction for Proto-Germanic

The aim of the present paper is to reconstruct the ditransitive construction for Proto-Germanic and to accommodate different levels of schematicity and the historical study of verb classes in such a reconstruction. On some constructional approaches, the meaning of schematic argument structure constructions is taken to be derived from the meaning of the verbs that instantiate it (Goldberg 1995, Barðdal 2008, Barðdal et al. 2012). If so, verbal meaning may be used to operationalize the meaning component of form–meaning pairings, thus aiding in the reconstruction of syntax.

 By means of a comparison between the North Germanic languages, seventeen narrowly-circumscribed verb classes were initially identified: giving, lending, paying, sending, bringing, future transfer, transfer along a path, enabling, communicated message, instrument of communicated message, creation, obtaining, utilizing, hindrance, constraining and mental activity (Barðdal 2007). These verb classes form seventeen verb-subclass-specific constructions which were later suggested to form the more schematic higher-level verb-class categories of Actual Transfer, Intention, Creation, Mode of Communication, Enabling, Retaining, Mental Processes, and Possession (Barðdal, Kristoffersen & Sveen 2011).

These early analyses are first and foremost based on North Germanic and some fragmentary evidence from West Germanic. After incorporating corresponding data from Old English (West Germanic) and Gothic (East Germanic) into our analysis, we aim to reconstruct the constructional scope of the Ditransitive Construction for Proto-Germanic. Such a reconstruction will largely be in consonance with the situation described above and motivated by a systematic data collection from all three Germanic sub-branches, North, West and East Germanic. We show how a syntactic reconstruction may be carried out on the basis of narrowly-circumscribed verb classes, including not only verb-subclass-specific and verb-class-specific constructions, but also event-type constructions. We also demonstrate how verb-class-specific constructions may move along the cline from the core to the periphery of a construction during the course of history.

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Syntactic mapping of arguments of *location change* verbs and *possession change* verbs in early English

Aim: In this paper, I analyze argument realization patterns of ditransitive *possession change* verbs and *location change* verbs in Old English (OE) and Middle English (MidE). The main aim is to show how the loss of morphological case influenced the syntactic realization of arguments of the analysed verbs. The hypothesis is couched in the Lexicalist framework (Levin 1993, Rappaport Hovav & Levin 2005).

Facts: In Present-day English (PDE), *possession change* verbs are characterized as verbs licensing the dative alternation [V IO DO] > [V DO *to*-IO]. In contrast, the OE predecessors of these verbs did not license the [V DO *to*-IO] construction, but instead occurred in a [V IO DO] frame (1a). Interestingly, *send*, a representative of *location change* verbs, commonly occurred in the [V DO *to*-IO] construction in OE, see (1b). For some yet unknown reason OE *possession change* verbs did not realize their IOs as prepositional phrases.

(1)   a. &   sealde   ðam fixum   sund
          and give-past   the-DAT.PL-fish-DAT.PL   power of swimming-ACC

          &   ðam fugelum   fliht
          and the-DAT.PL-birds-DAT.PL flight-ACC
          'And gave the fishes sea and the birds flight' (*ÆCHom* I, 1 182.106)

       b. He sende   þone halgan   gast   to eorþan.
          He send-past the   holy-ACC ghost-ACC to earth-DAT.
          'He sent the Holy Ghost to the earth.' (*ÆCHom* I, 22 360.168)

Hypothesis: Following McFadden (2002), *possession change* verbs or 'true datives', started to occur in the [V DO *to*-IO] construction only in the early ModE period. Given that, I claim that the PDE *give* and *send* realize their arguments in the overtly identical [V DO *to*-IO] constructions. Each of them, however, calls for a different semantic interpretation. The main difference is brought about by the different status of the preposition *to* in these constructions, which can be interpreted either as a dative marker or a Goal pointer.

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The Middle English prepositional dative: grammaticalisation and contact with French

The spread of the *to*-dative construction to verbs of possession transfer in Middle English (ME) can be taken as grammaticalising *to* as an indirect object marker (cf. McFadden 2002). *To* was common in Old English (OE) with directed motion verbs (Visser 1963), suggesting internal change by grammaticalisation. De Cuypere (2015) observed occasional uses of the *to*-dative marking recipients in OE, leading us to ask why grammaticalisation occurred in ME and not in OE. For Allen (1995), and De Cuypere (2015), the loss in ME of morphological dative does not properly account for this development. We argue that prior studies have given insufficient weight to linguistic contact, especially with Norman French, which lacked a ditransitive construction, using only the prepositional à-dative with possession transfer verbs, e.g.:

(1) ...pur çoe ke il dona a la beste tel poeir.   *Apoc* 63
   '... because he gave the beast such power'

This provided the model for replication (Heine & Kuteva 2005) of the recipient *to*-dative construction, and crucially explains the timing of the change.

The *to*-dative was also extended in ME to the Experiencer argument of certain psych verbs (Trips, Ingham & Stein 2015); Norman French again provided the replication source for this development. Significantly, where Old French equivalents of OE dative-taking psych verbs, e.g. *eglian* ('ail'), and *hreowan* ('rue') did not take an Experiencer prepositional dative, in ME the Experiencer argument could be a nominal, e.g. (2), but not a *to*-PP:

(2) Ða hali children..hie ne eileden nauerȝiete ne gode ne manne.   *Vices&Virtues* 133,8
   'The holy children... they never yet troubled God or man'

The paper concludes by arguing that grammaticalisation theory benefits by recognising contact triggers more generally, and should not privilege language-internal explanations of change.

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Object alignment in ditransitive constructions in the history of German

In general, we can find similarities in the history of German and English ditransitive constructions. But, as my diachronic corpus study (approx. 2,000 ditransitives) reveals, German has drawn different conclusions from it: Like in Old English (cf. Allen 1995), Old Saxon provides an almost equal frequency of IO>DO and DO>IO alignments. During Middle English the inflectional case system was completely lost, and the prepositional IO spreads and DO>IOPP replaced DO>IODP (cf. Koopman & Wurff 2000). Both changes can also be observed in German: First, since the 17th century most parts of Modern Low German have lost their case distinction system, while the variability of object alignment has decreased significantly (only 2.2% DO>IO). Surprisingly, we still find DO>IO in highly ambiguous contexts containing two animate objects. Second, a prepositional IO has been established in parts of modern Alemannic (by preserving article inflection). Contrary to English, the IOPP can precede the DO and the prepositional marking even seems to promote the variability (23% DO>IO: highest rate of all dialects).

Apart from that, the variability in German shows a slight decrease over time: 22% DO>IO in the 13th century, 15% DO>IO in the 15th–17th century, 10% DO>IO in the 19th–20th century. However, unlike Speyer (2011, 2013, 2015) observes in his corpus, my data suggests that the alignment has always been quite variable with regard to Modern Standard German (16% DO>IO, cf. Røreng 2011).

Thus, the decrease of variability can neither be the sole response to the loss of case inflection nor to the need for avoiding ambiguous readings. Furthermore, even in some conservative dialects the rate of variability with respect to case inflection is very low. Similar observations in Icelandic or Afrikaans suggest that variability rather seems to be a language inherent feature than determined by its morphological or semantic conditions.

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Diachronic changes and geographical variation in the semantics of the double object construction in Yiddish

This paper presents a corpus study on variation in the semantics of the double object construction in the Yiddish language. Yiddish was formed on the basis of Middle High German through a process of language shift and developed in a situation of intense linguistic contact. It has a complex dialect system and several different standards, e.g. the early Yiddish of the14th-18th ct., the literary koine of the 19th-20th ct. (which includes non-unified dialectal features), the standard language of the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO), Soviet Yiddish, and the Hasidic dialect. In this paper, only the three most representative variants of Yiddish were examined. More precisely, we analyzed evidence from the classic literature of the 19th-20th ct., taken from the new digital *Corpus of Modern Yiddish* (CMY; about 1 million words from 19th-20th ct. literary texts), and also created two sub-corpora of early Renaissance texts (about 50,000 words) and of modern Hasidic texts (about 40,000 words). This choice of material provides a wide geographical and chronological coverage. As a result, we expect to observe significant differences between the three Yiddish variants.

The steps taken in the analysis were as follows:

1. Using a set of lexical queries (object pronoun + definite or indefinite article), ditransitive constructions were extracted from the CMY, and a list of 98 verbs created. On this basis, a distinctive collexeme analysis was conducted for ditransitive constructions and constructions with the prepositions *tsu* and *far*. The lexemes with the highest degree of attraction for ditransitive constructions (36 items) were selected.

2. Using the two subcorpora, the diachronic development of the construction's semantics was analyzed on the basis of the selected verbs.

3. Potential contact influence from Slavic languages (for the 19th-20th ct. texts) and from English (for the Hasidic dialect) on changes in the constructional semantics was investigated.

Semantic shifts in the Swedish ditransitive construction

The semantic range of the ditransitive construction in Germanic languages is a topic that
has acquired an increasing amount of attention over the last ten years. Within the framework of
construction grammar, the starting point of the discussion is usually Goldberg's (1995) work on the
English ditransitive construction. In more recent time, an increasing amount of work has been done
on investigating how the semantics of the ditransitive construction have changed over time, and
research has been conducted regarding the ditransitive construction in English (see e.g. Colleman &
De Clerck 2008, 2011), Dutch (Colleman 2011, Delorge & Colleman 2006) and various Scandinavian
languages, mainly Icelandic (Barðdal 2007, Barðdal et al. 2011). While Barðdal (2007) also discusses
data from archaic Swedish dialects, the ditransitive construction in standard Swedish has not
received much attention in previous research, and neither has the diachronic development of the
construction in the history of Swedish.

In this paper, which comprises results from a current PhD project, I will present data from a corpus
study covering the Modern Swedish period from 16th century to present-day Swedish. The main
purpose is to lay out the semantic range of the ditransitive construction [Sbj V Obj Obj] in present-
day Swedish as well as in earlier periods of Modern Swedish, and to determine in which ways the
semantics of the construction has been altered over the last 500 years. The study mostly covers
quantitative changes within the construction (cf. Colleman 2011:402–405), comparing the
distribution of tokens in different semantic categories over time. The results will be explicitly
compared to results from previous studies on English, Dutch, Icelandic and Swedish dialects (cf.
above), thus placing the diachronic development of the ditransitive construction in Swedish within
the general context of ditransitives in the Germanic languages.

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On ditransitive constructions in Afrikaans, in comparison with Dutch and English

Afrikaans presents an interesting case for a workshop on ditransitive constructions in the Germanic languages in several respects:

1. It displays a *three-way* dative alternation: next to the ditransitive and the prepositional dative with *aan* (cognate with English *on*) – both of which were already present in the Dutch base – many ditransitive verbs are also attested in a construction with the Recipient marked by the preposition *vir* 'for' (e.g. *Hy gee vir my 'n boek* 'He gives me a book'), which is used as an optional marker for (animate) direct objects in monotransitive clauses, too. De Stadler (1996) observes that *vir* is mostly found with high-frequency verbs such as *gee* 'give' and *sê* 'say' but does not provide empirical data in support of that claim. We will use (multinomial) logistic regression to test the effects of frequency as well as more "traditional" predictors known to determine the (two-way) dative alternations of Dutch and English on the three-way alternation of Afrikaans.

2. The Afrikaans ditransitive displays a number of formal and semantic characteristics which are not found in the equivalent construction in Dutch but which can be potentially traced back to English influence (also see Colleman to appear). One of these is the possibility to link *both* the Recipient and the Theme to subject function in the ditransitive passive. We will document this passive alternation, focusing on the kinds of verbs which show a preference for the Recipient passive and comparing these to the verbs which preferred the Recipient passive over the Theme passive in older stages of English.

The Afrikaans data for the investigation will be drawn from the *Taalkommissiekorpus* as well as from a self-compiled corpus of newspaper language.

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The ditransitive alternation in present-day German. A corpus based investigation of *geben:* Empirical observations

It has been claimed that *geben* in German is confined to the Indirect Object Cx with the RECipient in the dative case (IOC) to the exclusion of the Prepositional Object Cx (POC) (e.g. Sabel 2002, Levin 2006, Adler 2011)*.* However, there are many occurrences of both constructions in the Mannheim *Deutsches Referenzkorpus* (*DeReKo*), in which REC is either coded in the dative (IOC) or as a prepositional phrase with *an* + accusative (POC):

> (1) *Der Doktor zu seiner Assistentin: "Geben Sie der Dame bitte mal die Rechnung".*
> (2) *Oma und Opa dürfen Geld an die Enkel geben*.

Research Objectives

The aim of this paper is to provide empirical evidence for the existence of the alternation with *geben* on the basis of extensive corpus research, and to explore the motivating factors behind the IOC-POC alternation in German.

Methodology

The paper draws on a dataset of 745 IOC sentences and 582 POC sentences extracted from *DeReKo* (note that in the corpus the IOC is much more frequent than the POC). The sample sentences were annotated for animacy, concreteness, definiteness, givenness, order of arguments vis-à-vis the predicate, length difference, pronominality (all factors with regard to both THeme and REC) as well as verb form, verb type and voice.

Results

There is statistical evidence to posit a canonical word order for both constructions: IOC normally occurs with REC–TH order, as in (3), whereas POC normally occurs with TH–REC order, as in (4):

> (3) *Die scheidende Rechnerin Marlene Wetzel gab <den Anwesenden> [einen Überblick über die Einnahmen und Ausgaben des letzten Jahres].*
> (4) *Die Künstlerin wird [sie] bis Oktober <an eine Galerie in Frankfurt/Main> geben.*

A logistic regression analysis of N = 1327 observations shows the following findings: the POC is positively associated with RECs that are longer than THs, given or accessible THs (givenness), concrete or propositional THs, concrete RECs, new or accessible RECs, and collective or inanimate RECs. Overall, the observed tendencies show parallels with the English dative alternation.

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Dialectal ditransitive patterns in British English

The question of what determines the choice between a prepositional or a double object construction as complementation pattern of ditransitive verbs has generally been neglected by variationists. This is because the alternation exists in the standard language and has been explained by language-internal factors such as verb semantics, heaviness of the objects, constructional meaning differences etc. (cf. e.g. Givón 1984, Gropen et al. 1989, Goldberg 1992). This study takes a novel approach by looking at language-external factors, such as region, style and time, which determine the linguistic choices of speakers, and by regarding ditransitives as a sociolinguistic variable in the Labovian sense of 'two ways of saying the same thing' (Labov 1972) (cf. also Bresnan & Hay 2008, Siewierska & Hollmann 2007, Gast 2007).

The distribution of ditransitive variants was analysed by means of spoken data from the *Freiburg English Dialect Corpus* (FRED) and the *British National Corpus* (BNC), two corpora that not only lend themselves to an investigation of regional preferences in ditransitive patterns in England but also enable a diachronic perspective, spanning about two generations of speakers.

An analysis of 21 ditransitive verbs indicates considerable (quantitative) differences in the regional usage of ditransitives, especially with respect to 'alternative' patterns such as *give it me* and *give it the woman*. The diachronic development in the 20th century shows that double object patterns are on the rise in all regions, even with two pronominal objects such as *give it to me/give me it*, thus reversing a historical trend in earlier centuries (cf. e.g. Koopman & van der Wurff 2000; Allen 2006).

Incorporating language-external factors such as origin of the speaker furthers our understanding of linguistic choices and thus contributes to an integrated approach to the explanation of the dative alternation in (British) English.

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Investigating abstract representations in a structurally biased language over development

Research on syntactic priming (i.e. unconscious reproduction of a syntactic structure similar to the one just heard) has deepened our understanding of structural representations in both children and adults [5], [6]. To date, most syntactic priming paradigms on the dative alternation have been conducted in languages like English, where both the double object (DO) and the prepositional object (PO) structures are relatively equally frequent. But how do children and adults represent dative structures in structurally biased languages like German, where the PO structure is strongly dispreferred?

In a video-clip description task, we primed monolingual German-speaking children (age 3-6 years; n=33) and adults (n=37) with PO vs. DO structures (*Micky gives the fish to Minnie/Minnie the fish*) using either the same (SV) or different verb (DV) in prime and target, in order to test whether priming increases when the verb overlaps in prime and target (following the methodology outlined in [6]). Additionally, we incorporated a baseline condition containing intransitive (neutral) primes.

In line with the literature [6], adults showed a greater priming effect in the SV condition than in the DV condition (41%; p=0.00***), whereas children did not. In contrast, children seem to not have acquired lexical linking between verbs and dative structures yet, or children might lack explicit memory traces. Neither of the two major priming models proposed – Residual Activation [4], [5] and Implicit Learning [1], [2], [3] – can explain these processing differences. We also observed an increase in PO production after a PO prime compared to an intransitive prime in children (11% p=0.02) and adults (15% p=0.03). This indicates that children and adults have lexically-independent abstract dative representations from early on. Moreover, strong structural biases do not prevent priming effects, but rather hint at an implicit learning effect in children.

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