

Ditransitive constructions in Tlapanec

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1. General background

- The variant studied: Azoyú, Guerrero, Mexico (a few hundred speakers).
- Tlapanec belongs to the Otomanguean family (*pace* WALS).

2. Conventions

- In general IPA is used for segments, except for the 5 vowels which qualities similar to the Spanish ones; “mb”, “nd”, and “ng” are unit phonemes.
- 3 level tones and 4 contour tones (normally restricted to the last two syllables):

á high; a mid; à low; ǎ low-mid; â mid-low; Ǻ mid-high; â high-mid

Non-standard abbreviations

AN	added animate participant
CL	possessive classifier (for entities having life or force)
G	given topic (see Wichmann 2007a)
INAN	inanimate
N	new topic (see Wichmann 2007a)
PEG	pegative
POSS	possessor

Gender is not encoded in verbal indices or pronouns. As a convention I use female actors and male undergoers in glosses.

3. Grammatical background

- Strongly headmarking.
- Predicates inflect for aspect, polarity, and person, while nouns may inflect for person of possessor and behave morphologically like verbal stative predicates.
- Predicates agree with their arguments in animacy and the verbs forms depend on whether the predicate takes zero, one, two or three animate arguments.
- Verbal suffixes index person and mark case of one animate participant (Wichmann 2005, forthc.):
 - Ergative: highly effecting actor
 - Pegative: mildly effecting actor
 - Absolutive: highly affected undergoer
 - Dative: mildly affected undergoer
- There are no constructions motivating the stipulation of grammatical relations like subjects and objects (so ‘actor’ and ‘undergoer’ is used).
- The highest-ranking third person animate participant on the role hierarchy (actor > undergoer > theme) is cross-referenced on the verb for a given vs. new distinction, which bears some resemblance to both obviation and switch-reference (Wichmann 2007a). This distinction is also expressed by pronouns, possessed nouns, and numerals, which are all elements that behave morphologically, although not syntactically, like predicates.

5. Other uses of the dative

(2) Statives implying affectedness:

baʃ-ó 'she is nude'

(3) Transitives generally implying low degree of control, and taking inanimate undergoers:

a. *na-mbiʔy-ú* 'she is called (something)'

b. *na-nd-ó* 'she wants it'

c. *na-hmy-úʔ* 'she is using it'

d. *na-kan-ú* 'she is given (receives) it'

(4) Dipersonals implying mildly affected undergoers:

a. *na-niyúʔ* 'she is leaving him'

b. *na-njaú* 'she listens to/obeys him'

c. *na-raʔnú* 'she is meeting him'

d. *na-šnéʔdó* 'she is loading it (e.g. an animal) (with something)'

e. *na-ʔyó* 'she sees him'

(5) Emotion predicates. The actor is at the same time portrayed as mildly affecting and mildly affected through case marking on a finite monopersonal verb and on a non-finite dipersonal auxiliary verb.

(a) *na-kum-ú* *kay-òʔ*
IPFV-think-3SG.DAT AUX-3SG > 1SG.DAT
'S/he is thinking about me.'

(b) *na-kum-ùʔ* *kay-ó*
IPFV-think-1SG.DAT aux-1SG.PEG > 3SG
'I am thinking about him/her.'

6. Flagging (of R)

For most semantically ditransitive situations a ditransitive verb is available which does not require flagging of the R since the R and its status as core argument with recipient status is encoded in the verbal morphology by means of suffixes that express case role and person, as in (6).

- (6) *ma-mbày-é?* *mba* *gù?wa*
FUT-sell-3SG.G > 1SG.DAT a house
'She will sell me a house.'

Some predicates are not ditransitive morphologically but may occur in semantically ditransitive constructions. In this situation, a flag is required, as illustrated in (7-9).

- (7) *ni-fíáh-ù?* *mba* *iyì?* *in-û* *ǵahò?*
PFV-send-1SG.ERG a paper face-3N.POSS elder.sibling-1SG.POSS
'I sent a letter to my sister.'

- (8) *ni-nì?y-ǔ?* *stabòf-o?* *hmâ* *ǵah-ò?*
PFV-leave-1SG.PEG bag-1SG.POSS with elder.sibling-1SG.POSS
'I left my bag with my sister.'

- (9) *ma-?ka* *káyò?* *bùhká* *pa* *ru?d-ǔ?*
fut-go.1SG *carry.1SG.DAT money for mother-1SG.POSS
'I will bring money for my mother.'

Pronouns are redundant because of the presence of verbal indices, but can potentially occur.

(10) *ni-fiàh-ú?* *mba* *iyì?* *in-ù?* (*ikǔ?*)
 PFV-send-3SG.G.ERG a paper face-1SG.POSS 1PRON
 ‘She sent a letter to me.’

(11) *ni-niy-ú?* *stabùfa* *hm-ù?* (*ikǔ?*)
 PFV-leave-3SG.PEG bag with-1SG.ABS 1SG.PRON
 ‘She left the bag with me.’

But if R is flagged by means of Spanish *pa* or *para* it is normal to use both pronouns and full NPs since *pa* ~ *para* does not encode information about the R.

(12) *ma-?ka* *káyò?* *bùhká* *pa* *iká / ikí / ikǎ?* / etc.
 FUT-go.1SG *carry.1SG.DAT money for him / them / you
 ‘I will bring money for him / them / you etc.’

7. Indexing of R

The normal pattern is for the R to be indexed through the dative paradigm. 11 ditransitive verbs have been found which behave in this way. Two ditransitives behave exceptionally in that they index R through the absolutive: ‘to charge (payment)’ and ‘leave something for someone’. These are illustrated in (13-14).

(13) *na-rum-ǎ?* *fkàmba di* *sta?d-ǎ* *in-ú*
 IPFV-charge-3SG.G > 2SG.ABS all REL have-2SG.PEG face-3SG.G.POSS
 ‘She is charging you everything you owe her.’

(14) *ni-niniahm-á* *gù?wa*
 PFV-leave-3SG.G > 3SG.ABS house
 ‘She left him the house.’

The exceptional behavior of these two verbs may relate to their etymologies. The first, ‘to charge’, may derive from the Spanish word *tomin*, a coin and monetary

unit of the epoch of Colonial Mexico, and would seem to mean ‘to money someone’ (Wichmann 2007b). The second verb is of unknown etymology, but the long stem suggests that is originally a compound.

There is no flagging of full NP Ts.

8. Indexing of T

An inanimate T is not indexed. However, when a ditransitive construction involves an animate T, a suffix *-y* is inserted between the lexical stem and the case-person suffixes to indicate the presence in the predication of the animate T. If this entity is different from third person an auxiliary possessed noun is used to further specify the person and number of the T. The paradigm for this possessed noun is given in (18).

(15)	<i>nenɕò?</i>	‘1st person sg theme’
	<i>nenɕá?</i>	‘2nd person sg theme’
	<i>nenɕó</i>	‘3rd person (given topic) theme’
	<i>nenɕà? = lu?</i>	‘1st person pl inclusive theme’
	<i>nenɕà? = lò?</i>	‘1st person pl exclusive theme’
	<i>nenɕà? = là?</i>	‘2nd person pl theme’
	<i>nenɕû</i>	‘3rd person pl (given topic) theme’

It is not clear whether the *-y* suffix can be regarded as indexing or as a flag. Six verbs have been found which allow for this sort of construction. (16-21) contrast dipersonal construction (inanimate T) with tripersonal counterparts. The suffix is inaudible following *f* or *y*. Its putative underlying presence in these cases is indicated in the glosses.

(16)	a.	<i>mà-fn-ú</i>
		FUT-give-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT
		‘She will give it to him.’

- b. *mâ-fn-y-ú* *nendɔ̃-ò?*
 FUT-give-AN-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT AUX-1SG.POSS
 ‘She will give me to him.’
- (17) a. *mâ-fnàf-ú*
 FUT-hand.over-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT
 ‘She will hand it over to him.’
- b. *mâ-fnàf-ú* *nendɔ̃-ò?*
 FUT-hand.over(-AN)-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT AUX-1SG.POSS
 ‘She will hand me over to him.’
- (18) a. *ma-mbày-ó*
 FUT-sell-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT
 ‘She will sell it to him.’
- b. *ma-mbày-ó* *nendɔ̃-ò?*
 FUT-sell(-AN)-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT AUX-1SG.POSS
 ‘She will sell me to him.’
- (19) a. *ma-tsahm-ú*
 FUT-show-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT
 ‘She will show it to him.’
- b. *ma-tsahm-y-ú* *nendɔ̃-ò?*
 FUT-show-AN-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT AUX-1SG.POSS
 ‘She will show me to him.’
- (20) a. *ma-teʔy-ó*
 FUT-borrow-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT
 ‘She will borrow it from him.’

- b. *ma-teʔy-ó* *nendʒòʔ*
 FUT-borrow(-AN)-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT AUX-1SG.POSS
 ‘She will borrow it from him.’
- (21) a. *ma-fna-teʔy-ó*
 FUT-give-borrow-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT
 ‘She will lend it to him.’
- b. *ma-fna-teʔy-ó* *nendʒòʔ*
 FUT-give-borrow(-AN)-3SG.G > 3SG.DAT AUX-1SG.POSS
 ‘She will lend me to him.’

The construction involving *-y* and the stem *nendʒV* is a general mechanism for augmenting the valency of the predication with an animate participant when the relation involved is the pegative-dative relation. This need not be a ditransitive situation as in the above examples. For instance, there is a verb meaning ‘to use’, or perhaps better translated ‘serve someone’, which subcategorizes for the dative. To encode an animate undergoer this verb requires *-y* and the auxiliary. The monopersonal predication involving this verb is illustrated in (22) and the dipersonal predication in (23).

- (22) *na-hm-ùʔ* *tʃilu mô* *na-yiʔtù* *hmâ jùwiʔ*
 IPFV-use-1SG.DAT knife because IPFV-cut-1SG.ERG with.itmeat
 ‘I use the knife (or: it serves me) because I cut meat with it.’

- (23) a. *ni-hm-y-ùʔ* *nendʒ-ó*
 PFV-use-T-1SG.G.DAT AUX-3SG.POSS
 ‘I used him (or: he served me).’
- b. *ni-hm-y-úʔ* *nendʒ-òʔ*
 PFV-use-T-3SG.G.DAT AUX-1SG.POSS
 ‘She used me.’

‘I will give my daughter to Juan (in marriage).’

R-T

- b. *ma-fn-y-û* *hwá a?d-y-o?*
 FUT-give-AN-1SG.PEG > 3SG.G Juan son/daughter-CL-1SG.POSS
 ‘I will give my daughter to Juan (in marriage).’

Conclusion: (A-)R-T is neutral. (A-)T-R may or may not be possible, but is almost certainly marked.

10. The effect on word order of non-neutral information-structural properties of R and T

For full NPs, either R or T may occur in the preverbal focus position but not both. The given vs. new topic category discussed in Wichmann (2007a) comes into play in (28a) vs. (28b). The category involves third person primary objects, i.e. the R in this case; since, in (28a), *hwá* appears before the predicate—in the position of given information—‘given’ marking occurs; in contrast, since, in (28b), *hwá* occurs postverbally—the position of new information—‘new’ marking occurs there.

- (28) a. *hwá mà-mbay-ó* *ʃkù?*
 Juan fut-sell(-AN)-1SG.PEG > 3SG.G animal
 ‘It is Juan (not someone else) that I’ll sell the animal to.’
 Or: ‘As for Juan, I’ll sell him the animal.’
- b. *ʃku?* *màmbayõ* *hwá*
 animal fut-sell(-AN)-1SG.PEG > 3SG.N Juan
 ‘It is the animal (not something else) that I’ll sell to Juan.’
 Or: ‘As for the animal, I’ll sell it to Juan.’
- c. **hwá ʃkù?* *mambayó*
- d. **ʃkù?* *hwá mambayó*

Summary

- Ditransitives involving an inanimate T are a subset of dipersonals and only stand out from other dipersonals in having an extra syntactic slot.
- The status of inanimates as core arguments is doubtful.
- 13 morphosyntactic ditransitives have been registered.
- 11 assign dative to the R: ‘to give’, ‘to deliver’, ‘to sell’, ‘to borrow’, ‘to lend’, ‘to take away from’, ‘to steal’, ‘to indicate’, ‘to ask for’, ‘to tell’, ‘to show’.
- 2 assign absolutive to the R: ‘to charge’, ‘to leave to someone’.
- Some monopersonals (‘to send’, ‘to leave’, ‘to bring’) can appear in syntactically ditransitive constructions, but then require flagging of the R.
- Tripersonal constructions require an auxiliary element to encode the animate T.
- Most aspects of ditransitive constructions follow from the behavior of the case marking system; flagging and word order have little importance.

References

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