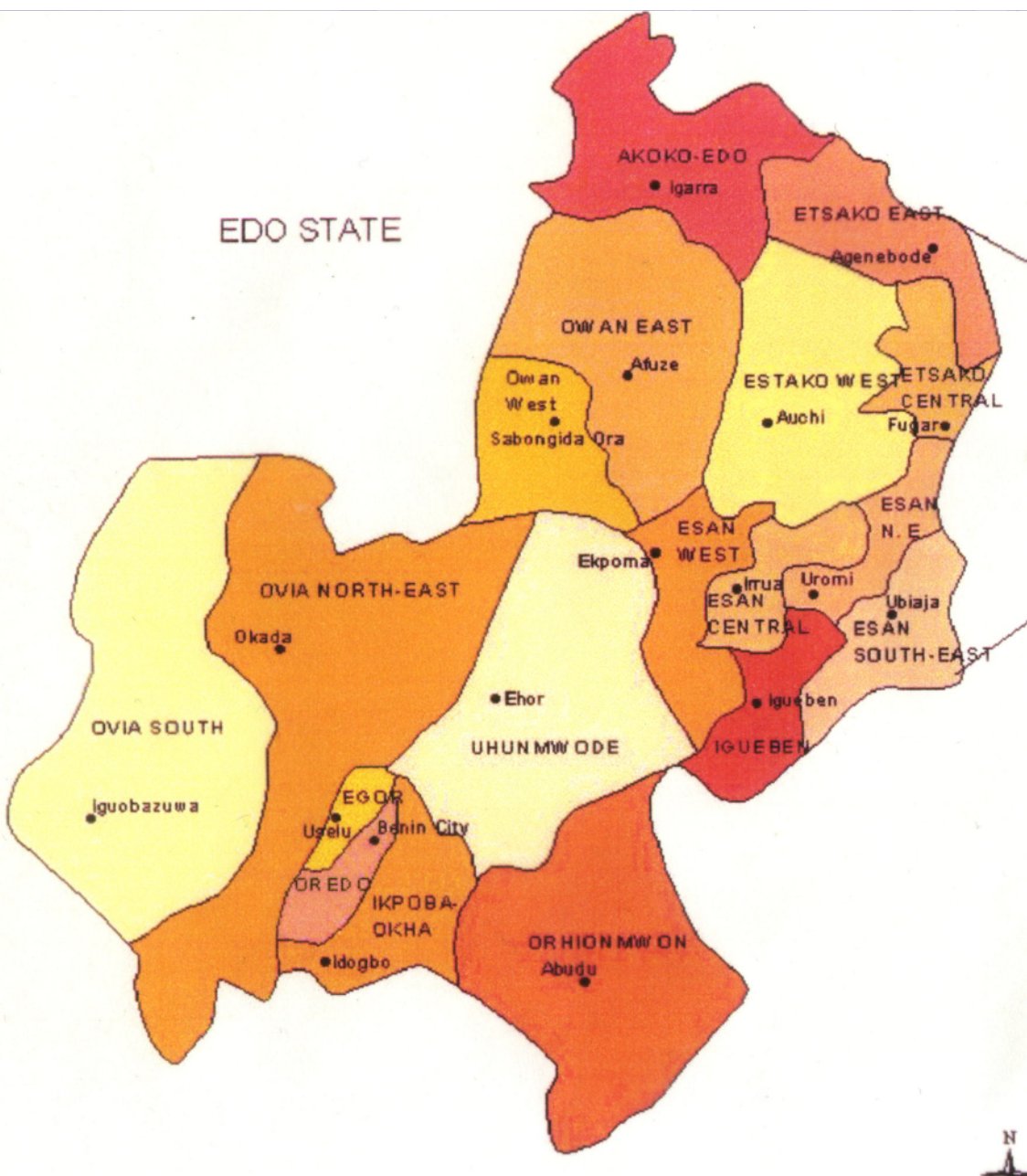# ON EMAI DITRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

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- Ditransitive as construction with argument positions realizing agent, theme and recipient roles

- Construe recipient broadly to include theme destination in permanent and temporary possession change and unidirectional and bidirectional information exchange

- Examples from Emai, member of Nigeria's Edoid group within Benue-Congo branch of Niger-Congo

- Emai spoken north of Benin City, Edoid center of powerful Benin Kingdom of pre-colonial Africa, known for bronze casting and ivory carving

- Emai is strict SVO, grammatical and lexical tone, postverbal particles and verbs in series

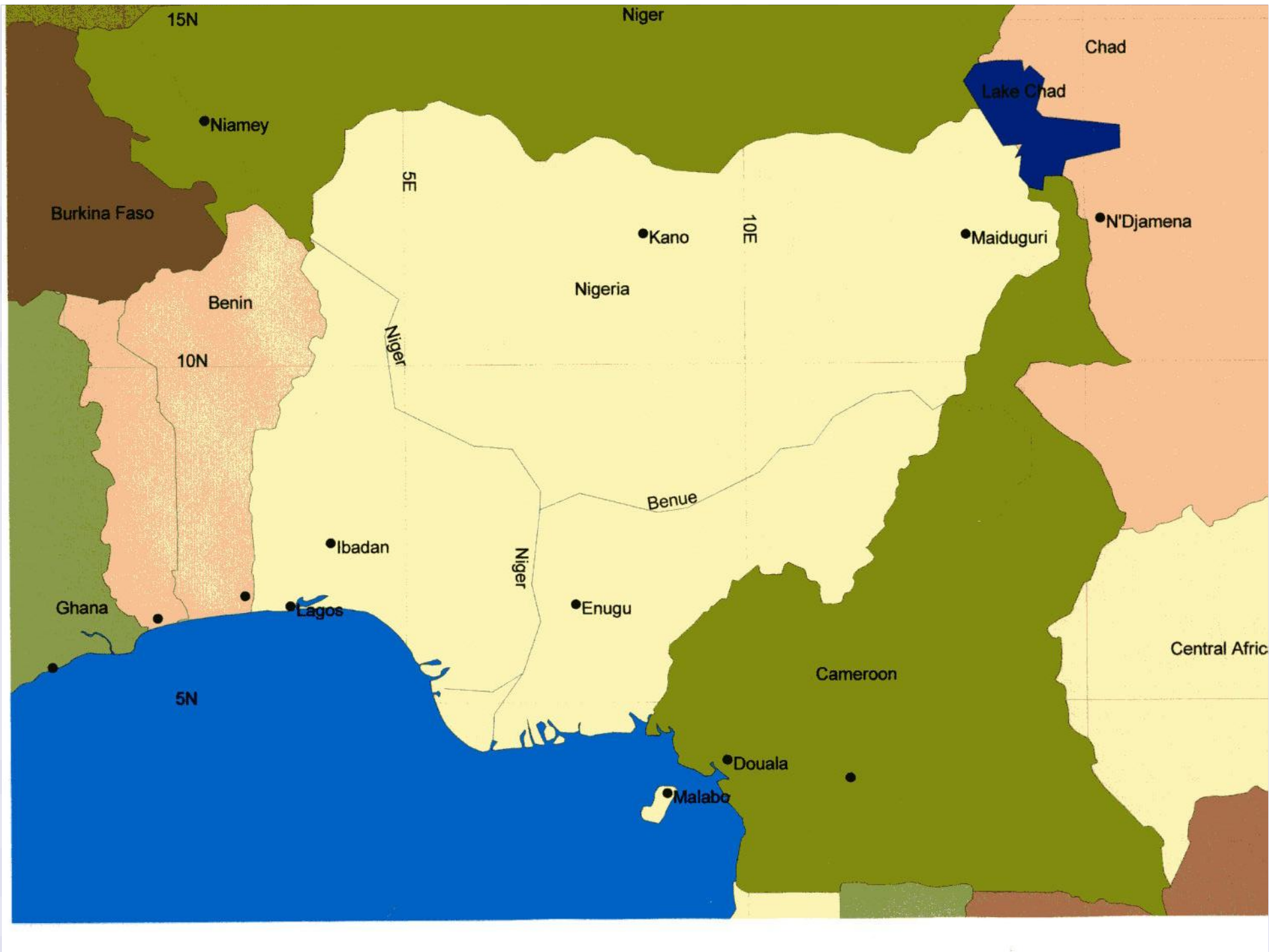- No generic or light verbs: 'give,' 'take,' 'bring,' and 'put'

EDO STATE

NIGERIA

AKOKO-EDO
• Igarra

ETSAKO EAST
• Agenebode

OWAN EAST
• Afuze

Owan West
• Sabongida Ora

ESTAKO WEST
• Auchi

ETSAKO CENTRAL
• Fugar

ESAN N.E

ESAN WEST
• Ekpoma

OVIA NORTH-EAST
• Okada

ESAN CENTRAL

• Irrua • Uromi
• Ubiaja

ESAN SOUTH-EAST

OVIA SOUTH
• Iguobazuwa

• Ehor

UHUNMWODE

• Igueben
IGUEBEN

EGOR
Uselu • Benin City

OREDO

IKPOBA-OKHA
• Idogbo

ORHIONMWON
• Abudu

20   0   20   40 Miles

N

AFRICA

Nigeria

Table 1. Recipient marking by verb type.

	MAN MOT	BALL MOT	COM TRANS	COGN / COMM	SEND	SHOW	TEACH
li	√		√				
li h<u>on</u>				√			
ye ALL	√	√	√		√		
vbi<u>ee</u>				√		√	
<u>ree</u>					√		
DOC			√	√	√ / * R		√

Table 2. Recipient with manner of motion verbs.

	nwu take hold	ze scoop	roo pick out	vo fetch	vun uproot
li	√	√	√	√	√
ye ALL	√	√	√	√	√
TRAN	√	√	√	√	√
vbi PT		√	√	√	√

li and *ye* exhibit contrasting assumptions about recipient

1a. ólì òkpòsò nwú   émà lí   ólì ònwìmè.
   the woman take.hold yam APP the farmer
   'The woman gave yam to the farmer.'
   'The woman took hold of yam, giving it to the farmer.'

b. ólì òkpòsò nwú   émà yé   ólì ònwìmè.
   the woman take.hold yam move.to the farmer
   'The woman took yam to the farmer.'
   'The woman took hold of yam, taking it to the farmer.'

c. ólì ònwìmè ríì vbí ààn.
   the farmer   be   LOC here.area
   'The farmer is here in the area.'   *li* assumes

d. ólì ònwìmè í ì   è vbí ààn.
   the farmer   SC NEG be LOC here.area
   'the   farmer is not here in the area.'   *ye* assumes

Other manner of motion take *li* and *ye*, manipulate object

2a. ólì òkpòsò zé èkèn lí ólì ònwìmè.
   the woman scoop sand APP the farmer
   'The woman gave sand to the farmer.'
   'The woman scooped sand, giving it to the farmer.'

b. ólì òkpòsò zé èkèn yé ólì ònwìmè.
   the woman scoop sand move.to the farmer
   'The woman scooped sand, taking it to farmer.
   'The woman took sand to the farmer.'

c. òjè vún ìbòbòdí lí òhí.
   Oje uproot cassava APP Ohi
   'Oje gave cassava to Ohi.

d. òjè vún ìbòbòdí yé òhí.
   Oje uproot cassava move.to Ohi
   'Oje uprooted cassava, taking it to Ohi.'
   'Oje took cassava to Ohi.'

Manner of motion are transitive,
   detransitive pluractional DO referent for some
3a òjè nwú   émà.
     Oje take.hold yam
     'Oje carried a yam.'
b. òjè zɛ́   èkɛ̀n.
     Oje scoop sand
   'Oje scooped sand.'
c. òjè zɛ́   vbí   ólì èkɛ̀n.
     Oje scoop LOC the sand
     'Oje scooped from the sand.'
d * òjè nwú   vbí élí émà.
     Oje take.hold LOC the yam
     'Oje carried from the yams.'

li also marks semantic roles benefactive and aversive

4a. <u>ó</u>lí <u>ó</u>vbèkhàn fí àgbò lí <u>ó</u>lì òkpòsò.

    the youth   blow flute   APP the woman

    'The youth blew a flute for the woman.'

b. élí ívbèkhàn <u>ò</u> <u>ó</u> gbè àb<u>ó</u> lì òjè.

  the youths   SC C hit   hands APP Oje

    'The youths are clapping their hands for Oje.'

c. òjè nwù <u>ó</u>lì <u>è</u>kpà láhèè lí àlèkè.

  Oje take.hold the bag   hide   APP Aleke

  'Oje hid the bag from Aleke.'

d. òjè láhèè lí àlèkè.

  Oje hide   APP Aleke

  'Oje hid from Aleke.'

li in class of postverbal particles, co-occur with benefactive *li*

5a. ólí óvbekhan gbé   ólí ákhe á.

   the youth   break the pot   CS

   'The youth broke the pot.'

b. ólì òkpòsò kú   évbìì   ó   vbí   émàè.

   the woman pour palm.oil CL LOC food

   'The woman poured palm oil onto the food.'

c. àlèkè ò ó fòò òlí ómí á lì òlí ómò.

   Aleke SC C cool the soup CS APP the child

   'Aleke is cooling down the soup for the child.'

d. òjè ré óbò ó vbí ébè lí àlèkè.

   Oje put finger CL LOC paper APP Aleke

   'Oje signed / put his mark on the paper for Aleke.'

Allative *ye* from directional motion verb, place noun DO

6a. <u>ó</u>lí <u>ó</u>m<u>ò</u>hè yé   áfúzé'.

   the man   move.toward Afuze

   'The man has moved toward Afuze.'

b. <u>ó</u>lì òkpòsò yé   èvb<u>ò</u>.

   the woman move.toward there

   'The woman has moved toward there.'

c. * <u>ó</u>lì òkpòsò yé   <u>ó</u>ì.

   the woman move.toward it

   'The woman move toward it.'

d. * <u>ó</u>lì òkpòsò yé   <u>ó</u>lí   <u>ó</u>vbékhán.

   the woman move.toward the youth

   'The woman move toward the youth.'

Table 3. Residual Manner of Motion Verbs.

	re give/take	kuee present	kuee betroth
li	√	√	√
ye ALL	√	√	
TRAN			
vbi PT	√		
INTR			√

re to manipulate mass, no transitive, detransitive with *li*

7a. òjè ré ìkhùnmì lí òhí.

    Oje take medicine APP Ohi

    'Oje gave medicine to Ohi.'

b. òjè ré ìkhùnmì yé òhí.

   Oje take medicine move.to Ohi

   'Oje took medicine to Ohi.'

c. * òjè ré ìkhùnmì.

    Oje take medicine

    'Oje took medicine.'

d. òjè ré vbí ìkhùnmì lí òhí.

   Oje take LOC medicine APP Ohi

   'Oje gave from the medicine to Ohi.'

Verb *re* requires following change verb or change postverbal particle

8a. ólì òkpòsò ré ògèdè chíén ísì òí.

the woman take banana become ASS her

'The woman made the banana hers.'

b. òjè ré ìkhùnmì ó vbì èkò.

Oje take medicine CL LOC maize.meal

'Oje put charms into the maize meal.'

'Oje put medicine into the maize ball.'

Sense present takes *li* and *ye*, transitive, no detransitive

9a. òjè   kúéé   òkpàn   lí   íré'.

   Oje   present   gourd   APP   visitors

   'Oje presented a gourd to visitors.'

b. òjè   kúéé   òkpàn   yé   íré'.

   Oje   present   gourd   move.to   visitors

   'Oje presented a gourd to the visitors.'

c. òjè   kúéé   òkpàn.

   Oje   present   gourd

   'Oje presented a gourd.'

d. * òjè   kúéé   vbí   élì   òkpàn.

   Oje   present   LOC   the   gourds

   'Oje presented from the gourds.'

Sense betrothal, *li* not *ye*, no transitive but intransitive

10a. élí   édíòn   kúéé   ólì òkpòsò lí   òhí.

　　　the elders present the woman APP Ohi

　　　'The elders betrothed the woman to Ohi.'

b.* élí   édíòn   kúéé   ólì òkpòsò yé   òhí.

　　the elders present the woman move.to Ohi

　　'The elders betrothed the woman to Ohi.'

c. à   kúéé   ólì   òkpòsò   lí   òhí.

　one   present the   woman   APP   Ohi

　'The woman was betrothed to Ohi.'

d. à   kúéé   lí   òjè.

　one   present APP Oje

　'Oje got betrothed.'

Table 4. Ballistic motion verbs.

	fi throw	bum<u>e</u> fling
li		
ye ALL	√	√
TRAN	√	√
vbi PT		
ye LC	√	√

Ballistic motion takes *ye*, not *li*, also change of location, transitive, but no detransitive

11a. òjè   fí   úkpóràn   yé   àlèkè.
       Oje   throw stick   move.to   Aleke
       'Oje threw a stick to Aleke.'

b. * òjè   fí   úkpóràn   lí   àlèkè.
       Oje   throw stick   APP Aleke
       'Oje threw a stick to Aleke.'

c. òjè   fí   úkpóràn   yé   ékéín   ògò.
     Oje   throw stick   move.to inside bush
     'Oje threw a stick inside the bush.'

d. òjè   fí   úkpóràn.
     Oje   throw stick
     'Oje threw a stick.'

Table 5. Commercial transaction verbs.

	de buy	shen sell	hae pay	momo borrow	momo lend	momo lend
li	√	√	√		√	
ye ALL	√					
TRAN	√	√	√	√		
ye LC						
vbi PT	√	√	√			
DOC			√			√
vbi óbò				√		
ASS			√			

Buy takes *li* and *ye*, sell takes *li* but not *ye*

12a. àlèkè dé̱ émà lí   ó̱lì ònwìmè.

    Aleke buy yam APP the farmer

    'Aleke bought yam for the farmer.'

b. àlèkè dé̱ émà yé   ó̱lì ònwìmè.

  Aleke buy yam   move.to the farmer

  'Aleke bought yam for the farmer.'

c. àlèkè shé̱n émà lí   ó̱lì ònwìmè.

  Aleke sell   yam APP   the farmer

  'Aleke sold yam to the farmer.'

d. * àlèkè shé̱n émà yé   ó̱lì ònwìmè.

    Aleke sell   yam   move.to the farmer

    'Aleke sold yam to the farmer.'

Sell not buy in location change *ye*, buy and sell in detransitive, buy not sell in source construction

13a. * òjè dé̱ émà yé áfúzé'.

Oje buy yam move.to Afuze

'Oje bought yam to Afuze.'

b. òjè shé̱n émà yé áfúzé'.

Oje sell yam move.to Afuze

'Oje sold yam to Afuze.'

c. òjè dé̱ vbí élí íkpùn.

Oje buy LOC the cloths

'Oje bought from the cloth pieces.'

d. òjè dé̱ émá vbí óbó̱ ísì àlèkè.

Oje buy yam LOC hand ASS Aleke

'Oje bought yam from Aleke.'

Pay takes *li* not *ye*, transitive and detransitive

14a. àlèkè háé ìnáírà èvá lí   ólí ómóhè.

    Aleke pay naira two APP the man

    'Aleke paid two naira to the man.'

b. * àlèkè háé ìnáírà èvá yé   ólí ómóhè.

    Aleke pay naira two move.to the man

    'Aleke paid two naira to the man.'

c. àlèkè háé   ìnáírà èvá.

    Aleke pay   naira two

    'Aleke repaid the two naira.'

d. àlèkè háé   vbí   élí ìnáírà.

    Aleke pay LOC the naira

    'Aleke paid from the naira.'

hae ósà pay takes *li,* double object, uniquely marks benefactive in associative complement

15a. àlèkè   háé   ólí ómóhé ósà.

     Aleke   pay   the man   debt

     'Aleke paid the man a debt.'

     'Aleke paid his debt to the man.'

b. àlèkè   háé   ósà   lí   ólí   ómóhè.

   Aleke   pay   debt   APP the   man

 'Aleke paid a debt to the man.'

c. àlèkè   ò   ó hàè òsá ísì   òhí.

   Aleke   SC C pay debt ASS Ohi

   'Aleke is paying a debt for (on behalf of) Ohi.'

m<u>o</u>m<u>o</u> has transitive borrow sense, takes source construction, but no transitive lend sense

16a. òjè   m<u>ó</u>m<u>ó</u>   <u>ó</u>pìà.

    Oje borrow   cutlass

    'Oje borrowed a cutlass.'

b. òjè   m<u>ó</u>m<u>ó</u>   <u>ó</u>pìà   vbí   ób<u>ó</u>   ísì   òhí.

  Oje borrow cutlass LOC hand ASS Ohi

  'Oje borrowed a cutlass from Ohi.'

c. * òjè   m<u>ó</u>m<u>ó</u> <u>ó</u>lì   <u>ó</u>pìà.

    Oje lend   the   cutlass

    'Oje lent / loaned the cutlass.'

li requires lend sense, never allows borrow sense, double object requires lend sense

17a. òjè   mómó   ópìà   lí   òhí.

     Oje   lend   cutlass APP Ohi

     'Oje lent / loaned cutlass to Ohi.'

b. òjè   mómó òhí   ópìà.

  Oje lend   Ohi cutlass

  'Oje lent /loaned Ohi a cutlass.'

Table 6. Communication verbs.

	kpe narrate	z<u>oo</u> recount	so sing	gue relate	z<u>e</u> utter	ta speak
li h<u>o</u>n	√	√				√
vbi<u>ee</u>	√	√	√	√	√	
TRAN	√	√	√	√	√	√
vbi PT						
ye ALL						
vbi ób<u>ò</u>						

Many take bidirectional *li hon* and unidirectional *vbiee*

18a. òjè kpé ítàn lí áléké hòn.

   Oje narrate saying APP Aleke hear

   'Oje narrated a saying to Aleke.'

b. òjè kpé ítàn vbíéé àlèkè

   Oje narrate saying become.apparent.to Aleke

   'Oje conveyed a saying to Aleke.'

c. òjè zóó ìnyèmì lí áléké hòn.

   Oje recount matter APP Aleke hear

   'Oje recounted the matter to Aleke.'

d. òjè zóó ólì ìnyèmì vbíéé áléké.

   Oje recount the matter become.apparent.to Aleke

   'Oje recounted the matter to / for Aleke.'

Unidirectional sing, *vbi<u>ee</u>*, and bidirectional speak, *li h<u>o</u>n*

19a. * òjè só íòò lí   áléké h<u>ò</u>n.

       Oje sing song APP Aleke hear

       'Oje sang a song to Aleke'

b. òjè só   íòò   vbí<u>éé</u>   àlèkè.

   Oje sing song become.apparent.to Aleke

   'Oje sang a song to Aleke'

c. òjè tá   étà   lí   áléké h<u>ò</u>n.

   Oje speak word APP Aleke hear

   'Oje spoke to Aleke'

d. * òjè tá   étà   vbí<u>éé</u>   àlèkè.

     Oje speak word become.apparent.to Aleke

     'Oje spoke to Aleke'

Sing as transitive, no detransitive, no allative *ye*, speak type

20a. òjè   só   íòò.

    Oje sing   song

    'Oje sang a song.'

b. * òjè   só   vbi   íòò.

    Oje sing   LOC   song

    'Oje sang from the song.'

c. * òjè   só   íòò   yé   àlèkè.

    Oje sing song move.to Aleke

    'Oje sang a song to Aleke.'

d. òjè   tá   étà.

    Oje speak word

    'Oje spoke. / Oje spoke his words.'

Table 7. Directed information exchange.

	ye send	ye send	ye send
li			
ye ALL	√		
ye CL	√		
TRAN	√	√	
ree after		√	
DOC			√ / *R
DOC ye ALL			√
DOC ye CL			√

Send, unidirectional message, no response required, *ye* no *li*

21a. òjè   yé   òhí   yé   àlèkè.
        Oje   send Ohi   move.to Aleke
        'Oje sent Ohi to Aleke.'

b. òjè yé   úhùnmì   yé   àlèkè.
    Oje send   message   move.to Aleke
    'Oje sent a message to Aleke.'

c. * òjè   yé   òhí   lí   àlèkè.
        Oje   send Ohi   APP   Aleke
        'Oje sent Ohi to Aleke.'

d. * òjè   yé   úhùnmì   lí   àlèkè.
        Oje send message APP Aleke
        'Oje sent a message to Aleke.'

Send is transitive with human noun theme, not with
    metonymic noun *úhùnmì*, but change of location *ye*

22a. òjè   yé   òhí.

         Oje send Ohi

         'Oje sent Ohi.'

b. * òjè   yé   úhùnmì.

      Oje send message

      'Oje sent message.'

c. òjè yé   òhí   yé   áfúzé'.

   Oje send Ohi move.to Afuze

   'Oje sent Ohi to Afuze.'

Bidirectional *ye <u>ree</u>*, expect return message, from follow verb

23a. òjè   yé   òhí   r<u>éé</u>   àlèkè.

   Oje   send   Ohi   after   Aleke

   'Oje sent Ohi after Aleke.'

b. òjè   yé   úhùnmì   r<u>éé</u>   àlèkè.

   Oje   send message   after   Aleke

   'Oje sent a message after Aleke.'

c. òjè   <u>ò</u>   <u>ó</u>   r<u>èkhàèn</u>   òhí.

   Oje   SC   C   follow.after   Ohi

   'Oje is following Ohi.'

d. ójé   <u>ó</u>   <u>ò</u>   r<u>éé</u>   <u>ò</u>   vbí   étá   ísì   ìny<u>ó</u>   <u>ó</u>ì.

   Oje   SC H   follow   CL LOC   word ASS   mother his

   'Oje adheres to his mother's words.'

Unidirectional send, double object with instrument not recipient, allative *ye*, location change *ye*,

24a. òjè yé   òhí   úhùnmì.

    Oje send Ohi   message

    'Oje sent Ohi on an errand / with a message.'

b. * òjè yé   àlèkè   òhí.

    Oje send Aleke   Ohi

    'Oje sent Aleke to Ohi.'

c. òjè yé   òhí úhùnmì   yé   àlèkè.

    Oje   send Ohi   message   move.to Aleke

    'Oje sent Ohi on an errand to Aleke.'

d. òjè yé   òhí   úhùnmì   yé   áfúzé'.

    Oje   send Ohi   message   move.to Afuze

    'Oje sent Ohi on an errand to Afuze.'

Table 8. Demonstration and instruction verb.

	vbi̱ee show	vbi̱ee teach	vbi̱ee prove	vbi̱ee appear
li				
ye ALL				
re̱ NP	√			
re̱ Ø			√	
re̱ égbè				√
TRAN				
DOC		√		
re̱ INST		√		

Verb series and double object contrast for show and teach

25a. òjè   ré   ólí ébè   vbíéé   àlèkè.

Oje take the book become.apparent.to Aleke

'Oje showed the book to Aleke.'

b. òjè   vbíéé   áléké   ólí ébè.

Oje   make.apparent.to Aleke   the book

'Oje taught Aleke the book.'

c. òjè   rè   ólì ìsóòmù   vbíéé   òhí.

Oje   take the   arithmetic become.apparent.to Ohi

'Oje made the arithmetic apparent to Ohi.'

d. òjè   vbíéé   òhí   ìsóòmù.

Oje   make.apparent.to Ohi arithmetic

'Oje taught Ohi arithmetic.'

Teach double object takes instrument *re*, DO collocation limits

26a. òjè   ré   ólì   ìtàn   vbíéé   òhí   èwàìn.

  Oje   take the saying make.apparent.to Ohi wisdom

  'Oje used the saying to teach Ohi wisdom.'

b. òjè   ré   ólí ópìà   hían éràn.

 Oje   take the cutlass cut   trees

 'Oje used the cutlass to cut trees.'

 'Oje cut the trees with a cutlass.'

c. òjè   ré   úháóbì   vbíéé   òhí.

 Oje   take poison.arrow become.apparent.to Ohi

 'Oje showed the poison arrow to Ohi.'

Verb series for prove, no DO,

   cognitive state change with *égbè* DO

27a. émí   lí ójé ú-ì   r<u>ɛ́</u> vbí<u>éé</u> khí <u>ó</u>íá   lì òbè <u>óò</u>.

   thing R Oje do-F take show IND person R bad   be

   'The thing Oje did proved that he's a bad person.'

b. ú<u>éé</u>n   ísì   òjè r<u>ɛ́</u> vbí<u>éé</u> khí   óì   <u>óò</u>.

   behavior ASS Oje   take show IND   thief be

   'Oje's behavior proved that he was a thief.'

c. àlèkè   r<u>ɛ́</u>   égbè   vbí<u>éé</u>.

   Aleke   take body   become.apparent

   'Aleke appeared.'

d. àlèkè r<u>ɛ́</u>   égbè vbí<u>éé</u>   ívbíá   <u>ó</u>ì.

   Aleke   take body   become.apparent.to children her

   'Aleke appeared to her children.'

Table 9. Recipient marking by verb class.

	MAN MOT	BALL MOT	COM TRAN	COGN / COMM	SEND	SHOW	TEACH
li	√		√				
li h<u>on</u>				√			
ye ALL	√	√	√		√		
vbi<u>ee</u>				√		√	
<u>ree</u>					√		
DOC			√	√	√ / * R		√

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