Questionnaire on Ditransitive Constructions

Preliminaries

(i) *Ditransitive construction* is defined semantically as 'a construction with a recipient (R) and a theme (T) argument', where these semantic role labels are understood broadly. Typical ditransitive verbs are 'give', 'sell', 'show', 'promise', 'teach', but languages may treat other verbs in the same way, so that these verbs would also count as ditransitive for current purposes (e.g. in English *deny*, *envy*; in German *entziehen* 'withdraw from').

(ii) Languages may have more than one ditransitive construction. For instance, English has the Double-Object Construction (e.g. *Kim gave me a pen*) and the Prepositional Object Construction (e.g. *Kim gave a pen to me*). **This questionnaire asks about a particular construction; if the language has several such constructions, it must be filled in several times to give complete information about the language.** (It is not always obvious whether two expression variants should be regarded as different constructions or as the same construction with some variability. No general solution to this problem is known, so decisions have to be taken on an intuitive basis for the moment.

(iii) The following questions relate to the theme and recipient of the ditransitive construction, though for comparison corresponding information should always be given for the patient (P) of the monotransitive construction.

If a language has several ditransitive constructions, for each construction the first question to be answered should be: **Under which conditions is this construction used?**

Part I. Argument Coding Properties

-- Flagging (= case-marking/adpositional marking) of R and T --

1. How is R flagged (if it is a full NP)?

[For example, in English indirect object construction (*Mary gave a book to John*), as opposed to the double object construction (*Mary gave John a book*), R is flagged by preposition *to*.]

2. How is T flagged (if it is a full NP)?

[In the English indirect object construction and double object construction cited above there is no special marking for T (but see for other verbs: *Mary supplied John with food*). In some languages (showing the so-called primary vs. secondary object distinction, T is marked distinctly from P and R]

3. What effect on flagging does the full NP/(independent) personal pronoun distinction have?

[For example, in English special objective forms in ditransitive constructions and elsewhere are available only for pronouns]

4. What other relevant factors are there?

-- Indexing (= agreement/cross-referencing) of R and T --

(note that bound pronouns (=pronominal affixes or clitics) count as pronominal indices, regardless of whether they cooccur with a full NP, as in "agreement", or are mutually exclusive with a full NP)

5. How is R indexed (if it is a full NP)?

[Note that most languages with object agreement, use same marker to cross-references P and R arguments].

6. How is T indexed (if it is a full NP)?

7. What effect on indexing does the full NP/(independent) pronoun distinction have?

8. What other relevant factors are there?

-- The order of R and T --

9. What is the **neutral order** of R and T (if both R and T are full NPs, and both are either new information or old information)?

10. What effect on word order do non-neutral information-structural properties of R and T have?

11. What effect on word order does the difference between full NPs and (independent) personal pronouns have?

12. What other relevant factors are there?

[For example, the choice between prepositional and double object construction for English is related in the literature to the (relative) prominence (animacy/definiteness) of the T and R arguments, but also to "heaviness" of the respective constituents]

-- Animacy (hierarchy) effects --

13. Is it possible to construct ditransitive sentences with animate themes? Do these show any peculiarities?

[For instance, in Spanish animate themes generally do not show differential object marking: *El maestro presentó Ø su mujer a sus alumnos* 'The teacher introduced his wife to his pupils'. (Compare differential object marking of inanimate and animate Ps of monotransitives: only the latter should be introduced by the preposition *a*: *El hombre vio **a** su hija* "The man saw his daughter'].

13b. Is it possible to construct ditransitive sentences with pronominal themes (*I showed you*(T) *him*)? Do these show any peculiarities? What are the possible person combinations in constructions where both T and R are pronominal (cf. *I gave him it, him you, etc)*?

[For example, in (American) English double object constructions with pronominal Ts are impossible (*She gave me it), while they are possible in French (*Elle me le donna*)].

13c. What are word order possibilities in ditransitive constructions with pronominal and/or animate Ts.

[Some languages display word order "freezing" effects in double object constructions with animate Ts].

-- Interaction between coding strategies --

14. How do different coding strategies **interact** with each other?
(E.g. is flagging and indexing complementary, or does flagging obviate the need for a strict word order?)

Part II. Behavioral Properties

The illustrations in square brackets are intended to clarify the questions. They are not (necessarily) complete answers for the language in question.

15. **Passive**: Which arguments can be made subject of a passive construction?

[For instance, the English construction *Mary gave the book to John* gives rise to the passive *the book was given to John by Mary*, but not **John was given the book to by Mary*. The construction *Mary gave John the book* gives rise to the passive *John was given the book by Mary*, for some speakers also *the book was given John by Mary*.]

16. **Relative clause formation**: Which arguments can be relativized?

[For instance, the English construction *Mary gave the book to the boy* gives rise to both *the book (that/which) Mary gave to the boy* and *the boy to whom Mary gave the book/the boy (that/who) Mary gave the book to*. The construction *Mary gave the boy the book* gives rise to *the book (that/which) Mary gave the boy*, but at best marginally *?the boy (that/who) Mary gave the book*.]

17. **Constituent question**: Which arguments can be questioned in constituent questions?

[For instance, the English construction *Mary gave the book to the boy* gives rise to both *what did Mary give to the boy* and *to whom did Mary give the book/who did Mary give the book to*. The construction *Mary gave the boy the book* gives rise to *what did Mary give the boy*, but at best marginally *?who did Mary give the book*.]

18. **Suppletion**: With respect to which arguments is the lexical verb of the ditransitive construction suppletive?

[In English, the verb *give* is not suppletive with respect to any of its arguments. In Kolyma Yukaghir, the verb 'give' has different stems for a third person recipient (*tadi:-*) and for a first-/second-person recipient (*kej-*). In Huichol, the verb 'give' has different stems depending on the shape and consistency of the theme (e.g. *kʷeitïa-* 'give [a long object]', *'ïtïa-* 'give [a flat object]').]

19. **Nominalization**: Which variants of the ditransitive construction give rise to nominalizations, and what changes take place in the nominalization relative to the clause?

[For instance, the English construction *Mary gave the book to the boy* gives rise to *Mary's gift of the book to the boy*, with replacement of the bare post-head noun phrase by an *of* prepositional phrase, as is usual in English nominalizations. The construction *Mary gave the boy the book* does not form a nominalization (*Mary's gift of the boy (of) the book*). Note that "weaker" gerundive nominalizations may permit this: *His lending me money surprised me*]

20. **Reflexives**: Which arguments can serve as antecedent and target of reflexivization? and with respect to which other antecedents and targets?

[For instance, English readily allows *John showed himself to Mary* and *John showed himself to himself*, with some loss of naturalness also *John showed Mary to herself* and *John showed Mary herself*, but not *John showed herself to Mary* or *John showed herself Mary* – these examples can all be made pragmatically plausible by adding *in the mirror*.

20b. Do **possessive reflexives** display the same pattern with respect to antecedents and targets?

21. **Reciprocals**: Which arguments can serve as antecedent and target of reciprocal constructions? and with respect to which other antecedents and targets?

[Compare *John and Mary showed notes to each other* with *John and Mary showed each other to Sally*].

22. **Other**. What other behavioral (transformational) properties can be used to differentiate between T and R arguments and how do they relate to P of a monotransitive construction (see also questions 23-37 below for a checklist).

Behavioral Properties: Advanced questions

23. **Quantifier-variable relationships**: Which arguments can serve as antecedent and variable in a quantifier-variable construction such as *Kim gave every boy$_i$ his$_i$ pencil, Pat introduced every teacher$_i$ to her$_i$ students*?

[For instance, English does not allow *Kim gave his pencil to every boy*, or *Pat showed her students every teacher*, with the relevant quantifier-variable relationships. By contrast, French is said to allow *Kim a donné son$_i$ crayon à chaque$_i$ garçon*.]

24. Negative Polarity Items. Does your language have negative polarity items in constructions like *I didn't see anyone*. Which of the objects can license an NPI a ditransitive construction?

[E.g. in English double object construction, R is higher than T with regard to NPI licensing: *I showed no one anything*; **I showed anyone nothing*.]

25. **Quantifier float**: If the language has a pattern of quantifier float, which arguments can launch floating quantifiers?

[For instance, German allows quantifier float across an adverb with accusative objects (*Ich habe sie gestern **alle** gefunden*), but not with a dative object (**Ich habe sie ihnen gestern **allen** gegeben*).]

26. **Secondary predication**. Does your language have constructions with secondary predicates (depictives and resultatives) of the type *I saw them drunk*, *I like the coffee hot*. Which of the objects can control a secondary predicate in a ditransitive construction?
[Cf. *I gave him the meat raw*; vs. **I gave him the medicine sick*.]

27. Boundedness: Does your language have any boundedness markers delimiting an event and/or its object, like ACC/PART alternation in Finnish. In that case, to which object boundedness markers pertain in a ditransitive construction (this is especially relevant for ditransitive constructions of the neutral and secundative type).

28. Object raising. Does your language permit object raising of the type (John is hard to please)? Which of the objects can be raised in a ditransitive construction (e.g., in Georgian, T, but not R, can be made main clause subject under Object Raising, i.e. 'A gift is hard to give to Anzor', not: 'Anzor is difficult to give a gift to').

29. Extraction ("Weak cross-over"). Does your language show an asymmetry in extraction possibilities? (e.g. Which man saw his picture?; Whose picture did you show its owner?). Are there asymmetries between R and T in that respect (e.g., *Which man did you show his picture*?; **Whose picture did you show his mother*?).

30. Incorporation. If a language allows incorporation of some sort (with respect to P), which of the arguments (T and R) can be incorporated?

31. Antipassive. If a language allows for an antipassive construction in monotransitives, which of the ditransitive objects may undergo antipassivization?
[This is especially relevant for languages showing a primary/secondary object alignment; thus, do we have constructions of the type *I gave/fed at-child cookies*].

32. Inverse construction. If a language allows for a direct/inverse alternation with monotransitives, which of the ditransitive objects is relevant for the choice of the inverse pattern (that is, is it used if R or T is higher than A on the animacy hierarchy)?
[For example, in Chinantec, in constructions with animate Ts, the inverse is used when T is higher than A (T-inverse); in constructions with inanimate Ts, the inverse is used when R is higher than A (R-inverse)].

33. **Topicalization**: Which arguments can be topicalized? Note that this question may need to be answered separately for different topicalization constructions.

34. **Focusing**: Which arguments can be focused? Note that this question may need to be answered separately for different focusing constructions.

35. **Multiple questions**. Does your language show a subject object asymmetry ("superiority effects") with multiple questions? (cf. *Who saw what*?; *What saw who*?). Does it show any asymmetries between R and T in that respect (e.g., *Who did you show what*?, **What did you show whom*?).

36. **Reference-tracking**: What possibilities exist with respect to reference-tracking (e.g. pronouns, zero anaphora, switch-reference, obviation), including for different combinations of antecedents. Examples would include translation equivalents of:

a) John$_i$ arrived and Mary gave the book to him$_i$.
b) Mary gave the book to John$_i$ and he$_i$ left.
c) Mary gave the John$_i$ the book and Sally gave him$_i$ the picture.
d) Mary gave the book$_i$ to John$_j$ and he$_j$ gave it$_i$ to Sally.

37. Control ("equi-deletion"). Does your language permit "equi-NP deletion" in transitive constructions like *I told him [_ to go]*. Which of the objects controls the subject gap in ditransitive constructions? cf. *I gave her a book to _ read*; **I gave her a book _ to be read*. Which of the objects controls the object gap in ditransitive constructions? (cf. the examples from Hudson 1992: *He gave him it [to put _ on the table]. *He gave him it [to cheer _ up]*

Part III. Lexical properties of verbs and markers

38. **Verb lexemes.** Which verbs occur in the given ditransitive construction? (In particular, we would like information on verbs meaning 'give', 'sell', 'offer', 'show', 'teach', 'tell', 'bring', 'buy', 'send', 'throw', 'carry', 'push', 'ask for', 'feed')

[Note that different constructions permit such extensions to a different degree; cf. in English both *throw*-verbs and *carry*-verbs permit an indirect object construction, but only the former permit a double object construction: *I threw/kicked/tossed him a puck* vs. ??*I pulled/carried/pushed John a box*]

39. **Recipient marker**. If the construction has a flag for the recipient argument in ditransitives, does this marker have other uses outside of ditransitives? If so, which ones? (e.g. the English recipient-marking preposition *to* also marks spatial goals)

40. **Theme marker.** If the construction has a flag for the theme argument in ditransitives, does this marker have other uses outside of ditransitives? If so, which ones? (e.g. the English theme-marking preposition *with,* as in *They provided us with food*, also marks instrumental/comitative.

Appendix: Advanced questions about lexical properties and argument encoding

The following questions need to be filled in only once per language, not once per construction)

41. **Spatial goal marker.** How is the spatial goal coded in cases like 'I sent a package to Odessa', and 'I put the pen into a box'? Is there any overlap with ditransitive constructions? Is the pattern different for animate Goals: *I sent a package to John*?
[Cf. the well-known "animacy restriction" on the double object construction in English: *Bill sent Tom/*London a packag*]

42. **Beneficiary**. How is the beneficiary coded in cases like 'He built a house for me' or 'She opened the door for me'? Is there any overlap with ditransitive constructions? Is there a contrast between "benecipient" (= beneficiary who gets to possess the object) and other beneficiaries?

[Note that English is more restricted than German in encoding benecipients by a double object pattern (*Otto öffnet Karin die Tür* vs. * *John opened Mary a door),* while for beneficiaries no such restrictions hold (cf. *He built me a house*)].

43. **Source argument.** How is a human source coded, as in 'She took the pen from me', or 'They stole his money from him'? Is there any overlap with ditransitive constructions?

[Compare Japanese, where the same "dative" marker *ni* encodes the indirect object of both GIVE and   TAKE verbs].

44. **External possessor**. Is there an external possessor construction (cf. *He broke me the arm*), a construction in which a notional possessor is coded like an argument of the verb? If so, is there any overlap with ditransitive constructions?

45. **"Internal recipient".** Can the recipient sometimes be coded like a noun-phrase-internal possessive modifier?

[For example, in Evenki, one way of coding beneficiaries and R in a ditransitive construction is through a possessive construction in the direct object position where the head (the possessee) takes the "indefinite ACC" marker. Schematically: I his sledge-ACC-his give 'I gave him a sledge'].

46. **Indexing**. If a language uses indexing for R and/or T arguments of a ditransitive construction, what other semantic roles (in particular, those listed above) are indexed in the same way?

47. **Ditransitive verbs: other patterns**. Do ditransitive verbs listed under 38 display other patterns apart from the ditransitive pattern? What other verbs may occur in these constructions: do they form open semantic classes (few representative examples should be given then) or represent closed classes with idiosyncratic valency patterns (ideally, the verbs in each class should be listed, in this case).

48. **Ditransitives and instrumental verbs**. Does your language permit the use of a ditransitive pattern with HIT verbs (e.g., in Daghestanian languages 'I hit him with a stick' patterns as lit. 'I hit the stick at/to him'). Can this ditransitive pattern also occur with FEED, POUR (into/with), FILL, COVER, LOAD, BEAT, CUT, or the instrumental construction is used instead?

49. **Morphological structure**. How many verbs in the ditransitive class are formally derived (by causative and/or applicative markers; cf. show = CAUS-see, etc). What is the size of non-derived ditransitives (some languages have very few non-derived ones). Do the morphological/syntactic properties of basic ditransitives differ from those of derived mono-transitives?

50. **Grammaticalised and idiomatic uses**. Do ditransitive verbs reveal grammaticalization (e.g. in Japanese GIVE is grammaticalized into a benefactive marker), and do they appear in idioms (cf. English *give a glance*, etc). What are their grammatical properties in the latter constructions?

In particular, can idioms appear in different ditransitive constructions; cf. ungrammaticality of many English idioms in a prepositional constructions (??*I*

gave a glance to him), and can word order of objects be changed in such ditransitive constructions?