

The morphosyntactic variation of the ditransitive argument structure construction in present-day German

In Goldberg's Construction Grammar approach the ditransitive (or 'dative') alternation in English is analyzed in terms of two argument structure constructions. The ditransitive Double Object Construction 'X CAUSES Y to RECEIVE Z' (e.g., *John gave Mary an apple*) is contrasted with the Transfer-Caused-Motion Construction (e.g., *John gave an apple to Mary*) which in turn is considered a metaphorical extension of the Caused-Motion construction 'X CAUSES Y to MOVE Z' (e.g., *Joe kicked the bottle into the yard*) (Goldberg 1995, 2006).

The goal of this paper is to determine, from a typologically informed perspective, whether the ditransitive alternation in present-day German can be explained using the contrasts of constructions and senses proposed for English. It is argued that German differs from English in the way the Ditransitive Construction and the Caused-Motion Construction are morphosyntactically expressed with the transfer verbs *geben* 'give' and *schicken* 'send'. The analysis is based on a dataset drawn from the Mannheim DeReKo corpus. A random sample of N = 1179 occurrences of the Indirect Object Construction (IOC) with dative case and N = 1670 occurrences of the Prepositional Object Construction (POC) with prepositional case assignment was annotated for semantic, morphosyntactic and pragmatic factors as well as constituent length and then analyzed quantitatively (logistic regression analysis) and qualitatively.

Geben strongly prefers IOC and is attested only with the preposition *an* (+ accusative) in POC. IOC instantiates the Ditransitive Construction with a Recipient argument (cf. Malchukov et al. 2010, Bickel 2011, Haspelmath 2013, 2015) (1) but POC with *an* is observed both in the Caused-Motion sense (2) and in the ditransitive sense (3):

- (1) *Der Kassierer gab dem Räuber das Geld aus der Kasse.*
'The cashier gave the robber the money from the cash register.'
- (2) *Einen Teelöffel Honig an die Sauce geben.*
'Add a teaspoon of honey to the sauce.'
- (3) *Opa und Oma dürfen Geld an die Enkel geben.*
'Grandpa and grandma are allowed to give money to their grandchildren.'

Schicken is common in both IOC and POC. The verb is attested with five prepositions in POC, viz. *an*, *auf*, *in*, *nach*, and *zu*, whose meanings generally fall within the purview of English *to*. IOC instantiates the ditransitive sense. By contrast, while POC invariably instantiates the Caused-Motion sense with *auf*, *in*, and *nach*, POC can remain underspecified with regard to the distinction between the Caused-Motion and the ditransitive sense with *an* and *zu*, compare (4):

- (4) a. *Er wird dir helfen und deiner Oma eine E-Mail schicken.* (Ditransitive)
'He will help you and send your grandmother an e-mail.'
- b. *Man schickte sie zur Sommerfrische an die See.* (Caused Motion)
'They sent them to the seaside for the summer vacation.'
- c. *Die Ärztin schickte ungefragt Rezepte an ihre Patientinnen.* (Unspecified)
'The doctor sent unsolicited recipes to her patients.'
- d. *Die Polizei schickte einen Streifenwagen zu der Adresse.* (Caused Motion)
'The police sent a patrol car to the address.'
- e. *Liebe Jungs und Mädchen, bastelt Engel und schickt sie zu uns!* (Unspecified)
'Dear boys and girls, make angels and send them to us!'

To accommodate the data a layered approach in line with Gricean and neo-Gricean pragmatics (cf. Grice 1989, Levinson 2000) is proposed in which different levels of encoding and (default) inference are distinguished. On the systemic level we posit a construction with three arguments characterized by an extended Goal argument, which is not specified for Locative or Recipient in German. The Caused-Motion sense is realized by the dedicated prepositions *auf*, *in*, and *nach* (POC) with a verb such as *schicken* while the ditransitive sense invariably correlates with dative case (IOC). Conversely, POC with *an* and *zu* are used to express either sense. Moreover, logistic regression analysis indicates strong correlations between POC with *an* and *zu* and collective and metonymic Recipients (Locative > Recipient) which are predominantly discourse-new and longer than the Themes. This finding corroborates earlier research that found that information structure and constituent length play a key role in the ditransitive alternation in various languages.

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