



## Ditransitive Construction in English, Hungarian, Turkish, and Indonesian Language

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**Abstract:** Every language shows a different way of expressing ditransitive construction. Thus, the present study aims to investigate and compare the essential elements exhibit in the languages under discussion in constructing ditransitive sentences. This paper is a qualitative study. The data comes from detailed written grammar texts, corpora, and interviews with native language speakers. The results show that the languages play with the word order to weigh the focus of sentences. English and Indonesian language do not apply any case-marking to mark the function of the noun phrase. However, in the basic prototypical ditransitive construction, Hungarian and Turkish languages apply an accusative marker to mark the theme and a dative marker to mark the recipient. On the other hand, the verbs' affixation also affects the semantic property of the ditransitive verbs in the Indonesian language. It is also revealed that the languages use the same ditransitive construction to express genuine transfer and beneficial transfer.



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## INTRODUCTION

Ditransitive construction is traditionally known as construction that consists of a (ditransitive) verb, an agent argument (A), a recipient-like argument (R), and a theme argument (T) (Conti, 2008 in Malchukov, A et al., 2010). On the other hand, Radden and Driven (2007) categorized this system as one way of expressing transfer schema based on cognitive grammar. They explained that “a transfer schema describes events in which an agent passes a thing to a recipient”. The prototypical transfer schema can be seen in example (1). The traditional definition of the ditransitive clause does not differentiate between (1a) and (1b) because they show the same meaning. The

construction in (1b) is called dative alternation and is seen as an alternative pattern of the ditransitive construction.

- (1) a. John gave Mary a flower  
b. John gave a flower to Mary.

In cognitive grammar, grammar is not seen as a set of formal rules describing how people have to follow appropriately to speak a language adequately. Instead, it is the solution that speakers have found to structure their thought in order to communicate. It tries to find the motivation that underlies the grammatical structures (Langacker, 2013). As a consequence, cognitive grammar differentiates between (1a) and (1b) patterns. (1a) is ditransitive construction focuses on the recipient, and (1b) is caused-motion construction focuses on the

transfer of the object (Radden and Driven, 2007). This research puts an explicit limitation to investigate the ditransitive construction defined by the cognitive grammar.

Abundant research regarding ditransitive construction has been done to investigate the ditransitive pattern in specific languages. For example, Schröter (2020) studies ditransitive construction in the Caucasian Urum language and indicates that it has undergone some change due to its contact with the Russian language. Vázquez-González's research (2019) shows how the ditransitive construction range in modern English was narrower than its historical stages, namely Gothic, Old English, and Old Norse-Icelandic. Mykhaylyk et al. (2013) investigate the experimental data on ditransitive structure acquisition in the East Slavic languages, Russian and Ukrainian. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, the comparative analysis of ditransitive construction in some languages that basically have no family relation has never been done yet. This problem is also mentined by Colleman (2010) in his investigation on benefactive construction in English, German, French, and Dutch. he stated "we need far more data from a large set of unrelated languages". In order to address this issue, this present study tries to compare four unrelated languages families, namely English (Indo-European family), Hungarian (Uralic family), Turkish (Turkic family), Indonesian language (Austronesian family) from the ditransitive construction perpective.

A problem may arise while performing cross-linguistic research because each language has its own set of grammatical features. In Indonesian, for example, some intransitive verbs correspond with transitive verbs in English (Sneddon, 1996). While in Turkish, some verbs which require dative may require a direct object in English (Lewis, 2001:37).

Moreover, in Hungarian, some verbs may be accompanied by a dative case or accusative case depending on the verb's semantic property (Dezső, 2017). To encounter these difficulties, the specific verbs, especially the verbs performing the frequent verbs of transfer such as to give, bring, send, and tell suggested by Langacker (2013), are chosen as a tool to compare the construction. Moreover, this study is intended to compare only the physical transfers and beneficial transfers.

The goal of this study is to look into the prototypical ditransitive constructions expressed in English, Hungarian, Turkish, and Indonesian. Since every language has its unique grammatical structure for expressing this construction, the main research question of this paper is "what is the basic prototypical ditransitive construction exhibit in genuine and beneficial transfer in English, Hungarian, Turkish, and Indonesian language".

## THEORETICAL SUPPORT

Ditransitive construction is strongly associated with the transfer schema (Goldberg, 1995, Radden and Driven, 2007). Though, Langacker (2013) added that the meaning of the transfer concept here is not basically that there is a recipient obtaining something from the agent. He emphasizes that this concept includes "the subject acts to make it available for the recipient's use by creating, preparing or acquiring it". He gave some illustrations that we can see in example (2).

- (2) a. She made him a kite.  
(creating)  
b. He wrote me a cheque.  
(preparing)  
c. I bought him a clock.  
(acquiring)  
(Langacker, 2013)

This comprehension leads to the three different types of transfer schema: genuine transfer, beneficial transfer, and metaphorical transfer (Radden and Driven,

2007:295). Genuine transfer consists of the physical (3) and abstract (4) transfer depending on the tangible or intangible of the theme. The beneficial transfer is a type of transfer where the agent performs an activity for the recipient's benefit. This type is similar to Langacker's statement about creating, preparing, and acquiring activity for the recipient or the beneficiary. The example of beneficial transfer can be seen in example (5), where the agent's activity does not directly represent the transfer of an item to the recipient but the activity for the recipient's benefit. When the verbs like make, write, buy, and bake is used ditransitively, they create the transfer schema where the agents do the activity and have the intention to give the result to the recipient. Whether the recipient will use the result of the activity for herself or other people (compare 5 and 6) fell out of the range of the ditransitive transfer schema.

- (3) I give him a book.
- (4) She told you the truth.
- (5) My mother bakes me a cake.
- (6) My mother bakes me a cake so that I can present it to my friend.

In metaphorical transfer, Radden and Driven (2007) explain that "the transfer schema is widely used as a source domain for metaphorical extensions, especially in the domain of human interaction". An example of a metaphorical transfer is (7), where the word hug is seen as a material that can be possessed and transferred.

- (7) Anna gives Tommy a hug.

Metaphor is expressed uniquely in every language. A metaphor in a language may not have the same concept equivalence in another language. For instance, the metaphor of hug, which can be possessed and transferred in English, is different from *hug* concept in Turkish. This word can only be expressed as a verb in the Turkish language, as we can see in (8). The uniqueness of metaphor in every language is relevant to Lakoff and

Johnson's statement about metaphor representing people's perception, way of thinking, and activities (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003).

- (8) *Anne-m-e saril-iyor-um.*  
mother-1SG.POSS-DAT hug-PRST-1SG  
'I am hugging my mother.'

The comparison of metaphorical transfer is not a part of the goal of this study due to its deeper comprehension of people's metaphorical thinking. Thus, since this investigation compares the basic prototypical ditransitive construction, the metaphorical transfer concept of ditransitive construction will not be discussed in this paper.

## METHOD

This study is qualitative research investigating the basic pattern of the ditransitive construction in English, Hungarian, Turkish and Indonesian languages. The evidence is gathered from comprehensive written grammar books, corpus, and interviews with native speakers of the languages. Grammar books as a reference for this investigation are 'Cognitive English Grammar' by Radden and Driven (2007) for the English language, 'Hungarian Descriptive Grammar' by Istvan Kenesei et al. (1998) and 'Hungarian: an Essential Grammar' by Round Carol (2009) for the Hungarian language, 'Turkish A Comprehensive Grammar' by Aslı Göksel and Celia Kerslake (2005) and 'Turkish Grammar' by George Lewis (2001) for the Turkish language, and 'Indonesian A Comprehensive Grammar' by James Neil Sneddon (1996). Corpus data is accessed from the sketch engine platform to support the evidence used in the actual communication. The corpora were collected from the web corpus of each language: English Ten Ten Corpus,

Turkish Ten Ten Corpus, Hungarian Ten Ten Corpus, and Indonesian Web Corpus. The token used to find the proper evidence of the ditransitive construction is taken from verbs give, bring, send, tell in English and their equivalence in Hungarian, Turkish, and Indonesian languages. The interview with native speakers is conducted when it is necessary to clear some language issues in more profound understanding. The interview is conducted with a chosen native speaker of the respective languages who has a good ability in communication and and linguistics knowledge.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Ditransitive construction in English

English belongs to the Indo-European language family. Ditransitive construction in English is also known as double object construction (Coleman, 2010). This language does not have a specific marker for the recipients and themes or direct and indirect objects. In English, the most common ditransitive constructions are shown in (9) and (10).

(9) Samanta brought Sara a beautiful flower.

(10) Jimmy told the kids a funny story.

From examples (9) and (10), we can see that the prototypical pattern is (A ditransitiveV NMLZ1 NMLZ2). NMLZ1 represents the recipient or indirect object of the ditransitive verbs, and NMLZ2 is the theme or the direct object. The word order plays an important role in differentiating ditransitive construction from the caused-motion construction. For example, in (12) as opposed to (11), the transition of theme and recipient logically moves the sentence's focus into the theme. This structure turns the ditransitive construction to become caused-motion construction. The change usually also needs a preposition to introduce the recipient.

(11) Today, your vet gave us a present.

A R T

(12) Today, your vet gave a present to us.

A T R

The specific change can only be seen, especially in the recipient pattern only with personal pronouns. As shown in (13a) and (13b), the personal pronoun of He and I change into its object form, him and me. However, this change does not appear in the people's names used in sentences (Lucy in (13c) does not change due to its position as a recipient).

(13) a. Sam sent him a toy set.

b. Father gave me a new book story.

c. Billy is giving Lucy a surprising gift.

In beneficial transfer, English shows the same structure as the prototypical pattern in the genuine transfer (14). Not all verbs categorized as ditransitive verbs have the flexibility to form this construction. However, the flexibility is a matter of degree, and "there is a growing tendency in English to use the ditransitive construction with beneficiaries also in non-creative contexts, which suggest a stronger beneficial effect on the beneficiary" (Radden and Driven, 2007) as we can see in (15).

(14) They brought me my cold coffee  
A R T

(15) The waiter poured Eduardo another glass of wine.

### Ditransitive construction in Hungarian

The Hungarian language belongs to the Uralic family spoken in Hungary region. In the Hungarian language, the direct-indirect object term does not properly represent the ditransitive construction (Istvan et al., 1998:70). The most prominent features to mark this construction are the dative and accusative

markers applied for the recipient and the theme, respectively. The Hungarian language places the focus element of the sentences typically stands before the verb in Hungarian (Kiefer, 1992 in Papp, 2011:146). This statement supports by Round (2009), who explained that focus affects the word order and puts the element behind the verbs.

Since the ditransitive clause schema weight the focus on the recipient, thus we can conclude that the prototypical pattern of the ditransitive construction in this language is (A ditransitiveV NMLZdat NMLZacc) as can be seen in (16) and (17) for the instances of the physical and abstract transfer and (18) for the beneficial transfer.

- (16) *Mari ad-ott János-nak*  
3SG give-PST.3SG 3SG-DAT  
*könyv-et.*  
book-ACC  
'Mary gave John a book.'
- (17) *Mari mond-ott János-nak*  
3SG tell-PST.3SG 3SG-DAT  
*mesé-t.*  
story-ACC  
'Mary told John a story.'
- (18) *János vesz Anná-nak könyv-et*  
3SG buy Anna-DAT book-ACC  
'János buys Anna a book.'

There is also some different pattern expressing ditransitive construction using the instrumental marker for the theme and accusative marker for the recipient. In (19), the object focus here is *Pál* that is placed near the verb. While the second object, different from the prototypical pattern) takes the instrumental form. However, since the transfer construction schema and the focus of ditransitive construction are fulfilled, construction in (19) can be accepted as a variant of

ditransitive construction in the Hungarian language. Let us compare ditransitive construction in (19) and caused-motion construction in (20).

- (19) *Péter meg-ajándékoz-ta Pál-t*  
3SG PFX-present-PST 3SG-ACC  
*a könyv-vel.*  
ART book-INSTR  
'Peter presented Paul with a book.'
- (20) *Péter könyvet ajándékozott*  
3Sg book-ACC present-PST  
*Pálnak*  
Pal-DAT  
'Peter presented a book to Paul.'  
(Dezső, 2017).

#### Ditransitive construction in the Turkish language

Turkish is a part of the Turkic language spoken widely in the Turkey region. Ditransitive construction in this language is structured by the case marking system where the accusative case marks the recipient and the dative case marks theme. The prototypical structure of the ditransitive construction can be investigated by looking at the examples of the physical transfer in (21), abstract transfer (22) and (23), and the beneficial transfer in (24). The examples show the same pattern (A NMLZacc NMLZdat ditransitiveV) or the agent that emerges in the verb as a morpheme. In the pattern, NMLZacc represents the theme, and NMLZdat represents the recipient.

- (21) *Ben o-nu*  
1SG(A) 3SG-ACC(T)  
*hanım-ım-a*  
wife-1SG-DAT(R)  
*ver-d-im.*  
give- PST.1SG(A)  
'I gave it to my wife.'
- (22) *Ben-de kal-abil-ecegi-ni*  
1SG-LOC stay-able-FUT-ACC (T)  
*o-na soyle-d-im.*  
3SG-DAT(R) tell-PST-1SG(A)

- (23) *Bu fikri-m-i bir*  
This idea-1SG-ACC(T) one  
*arkadas-a da soyle-d-im.*  
friend-DAT(R) too tell-PST-1SG(A)  
'I also told my idea to a friend.'
- (24) *Orman-da bul-duğ-um bir*  
Jungle-LOC find-PST-1SG one  
*şey-i san-a*  
thing-ACC(T) 2SG-DAT(R)  
*getir-d-im.*  
bring-PST-1SG(A)  
'I brought you something I found  
in the jungle.'

In the Turkish language, "suffixation or the production of a new word by attaching an affix to the right of a root is the most common word-formation process" (Göksel and Kerslake, 2005:43). The dative case is marked with the morpheme *-a* or *-e* as we can see in *hanımuma* 'to my wife', *ona* 'to him/her', *bir arkadasa* 'to a friend', and *sana* 'to you'. Moreover, as a comparison, the accusative case is marked with the morpheme *-i*, *ı*, *u* or *-ü* like appear in *onu* 'him/her', *bende kalabileceğini* 'staying with me', *bu fikrimi* 'this my idea', *ormanda bulduğum bir şeyi* 'something I found in the jungle'. The variation of the morphemes and the infix *-n-* appear in words (*o* 'he/she' -*n-a*(dative)= *ona*) is due to the phonemes harmonization purpose. Turkish word order has a very flexible construction because its case mark defines each element's function. However, Lewis (2001:240) explains that "any element which is to be emphasized may be placed immediately before the verb". For instances:

- (25) a. *Ressam geçen hafta Bebek-te*  
artist last week Bebek-LOC  
*biz-e resim-ler-ini*  
2PL-DAT picture-PL-ACC  
*göster-di.*  
show-PST.3SG

*'The artist showed the picture to us  
at Bebek last week.'*

b. *Geçen hafta Bebek'te ressam*  
*resimlerini bize gösterdi.*

*'The artist showed us the pictures  
at Bebek last week.'*

c. *Ressam Bebek'te bize resimlerini*  
*geçen hafta gösterdi.*

*'It was last week that the artist  
showed us his pictures at Bebek.'*

(Lewis, 2001 with some modification)

As it has been explained before that the difference between ditransitive construction and caused-motion construction is in the object to be the focus of the clause, here in Turkish ditransitive construction, we have to emphasize that the position of the recipient has to be put before the verb as shown in (25b). Thus, even the Turkish language has the same grammatical pattern to structure ditransitive and caused-motion construction; the word order puts the boundaries on it.

#### Ditransitive construction in the Indonesian language

The Indonesian language is a part of the Austronesian language family. The Indonesian language does not apply any case mark in marking its object. The relation between subject and object can only be differentiated by its exclusive SVO construction. This pattern can also be seen in its ditransitive construction, where the word order of the agent, verb, theme, and the recipient or beneficiary determined the ditransitive construction or caused-motion construction. To make it clear, we can see some examples below:

- (26) a. *Budi me-makan ayam.*  
3SG(S)ACT-eat (V) chicken(O)  
'Budi eats chicken.'
- b. *Budi ber-diri di*  
*jalan.*  
3SG(S) INTR-stand(V) on  
road

‘Budi is standing on the road.’

ditransitive construction:

c. *Budi mem-beri*  
3SG(A) ACT-give  
*istri-nya bunga*  
wife-.POSS.3SG(R) flower(T)  
‘Budi gives his wife a flower.’

caused-motion construction:

d. *Budi memberi*  
3SG(A) ACT-give  
*bunga kepada istrinya.*  
flower(T) to wife-POSS.3SG(R)  
‘Budi gives a flower to his wife.’

The Indonesian language makes a clear distinction between the transitive and intransitive clause by its form of the verbs (Sneddon, 1996). For instance, in *me-makan* (26a), prefix *-me* indicates a transitive verb for the clause, and prefix *-ber* in *ber-diri* (26b) indicates an intransitive verb. Though it does not work vice versa depends on the semantic properties of the verbs. The examples of the ditransitive construction in the Indonesian language show the prototypical pattern as (A ditransitiveV NMLZ1 NMLZ2). NMLZ1 stands for the recipient, and NMLZ2 stands for the theme. Moreover, similar to English, the change of the recipient and theme position affects the sentences’ focus and changes the ditransitive construction into caused-motion construction (compare (26c) and (26b)).

In ditransitive construction, besides the essential role of the word order, the affixation of the verbs is also important. One of the affixations is the circumfix *me-i* that indicates ditransitive verbs, which need a recipient of the action and the theme. In (27), the verb  *kirim* ‘send’ is accompanied by circumfix *me-i*, making it ditransitive. Let us compare (27) with (28) where the verb  *kirim* ‘send’ only get the prefix *me-*. In (27), with the verb  *kirim*,

*mengirim* becomes a transitive verb that needs the theme or patient directly after the verb. Prefix *me-* in this case, supports the caused-motion construction focused on the theme or the direct object of the clause. However, we have to bear in mind that *me-V* construction does not always build the transitive verb. Again, this condition depends on the semantic property of the verbs.

(27) *Penduduk negeri kembali me-  
ngirim-i putri kecil itu  
hadiah .*

People country again ACT-  
send-DIT girl little DET  
present

‘The people of the country are  
sending the little girl various  
presents.

(28) *Andi me-ngirim uang  
3SG ACT-send money  
untuk ayahnya.  
to father-POSS.3SG.  
‘Andi sent money to his father.’*

Example (27) shows the prototypical genuine physical transfer pattern where the theme is tangible material (food) and (29) and (30) are abstract transfer. From those examples, it can be seen that the prototypical pattern of the ditransitive construction in the Indonesian language (A ditransitiveV NMLZ1 NMLZ2) is applied. However, (29) and (31) the recipients of *dia* (3SG) and *kamu* (2SG) take the clitic forms (*-nya* and *-mu*) together with the verbs.

(29) *Anda telah mem-beri-nya  
makan selama hidup.  
2SG(A) PRF ACT-give-  
3SG(R) food(T) during life  
‘You have given him/her food  
during life.’*

(30) *Anak tidak akan mem-  
beritahu anda apa-apa.*

- Kid(A) NEG FUT ACT-tell  
2SG(R) what-REDUP(T)  
'The kids will not tell you anything.'
- (31) *Mereka biasanya mem-beri-mu ke-bahagia-an tak ternilai.*  
3PL(A) usually ACT-give-2SG(R) NMLZ-happy(T) NEG countable  
'They usually give you uncountable happiness.'

The Indonesian language applies the same structure and word order in the beneficial transfer but has special affixes to express the beneficial ditransitive verbs. One of the affixes is the circumfix *me-kan* in *membawakan* 'to bring for someone' shown in the example (32).

- (32) *Sawila mem-bawa-kan kami teh dan kue kukus.*  
3SG ACT-bring-BEN 1PL tea and cake steam  
'Sawila brings us tea and steamed cake.'

In sum, the result shows that the genuine transfer of physical and abstract transfer in the languages has the same structure as the beneficial transfer. This finding confirm Coleman's (2010) statement in his research about benefactive construction. This research is only limited on comparing the basic prototypical ditransitive construction in four unrelated language. In would be better to also comparing the complexities of the construction in the languages for the future research in more detailed and comprehensive data collection.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have investigated the basic prototypical pattern of ditransitive construction in four unrelated languages, namely: English, Hungarian,

Turkish, and Indonesian language. Each language has its unique pattern depending on the grammatical, syntactic, and semantic properties applied. In comparing the construction, we studied the basic typical structure of the ditransitive clause and put the focus on the recipient of the action. The process brought us to the conclusion of the patterns shown in table 1.

**Table 1.** prototypical ditransitive construction in four languages

Language	Prototypical ditransitive construction
English	A ditransitiveV NMLZ1(R) NMLZ2(T)
Hungarian	A ditransitiveV NMLZdat(R) NMLZacc(T)
Turkish	A NMLZacc(T) NMLZdat(R) ditransitiveV
Indonesian	A ditransitiveV NMLZ1(R) NMLZ2(T)

The table shows that English does not have exclusive morphological markers to mark the theme and the recipient of the ditransitive verb. Nevertheless, it uses different pronouns for the object. The word order also plays a role in differentiating ditransitive construction from caused-motion construction. Hungarian has a case-marking system. The recipient is marked using the dative marker, and the theme is marked using accusative construction. The word order in Hungarian affects the focus of the sentence. Turkish language, just like Hungarian, has a case-marking system. The recipient is marked using the dative marker, and the theme is marked using the accusative marker. Moreover, it has the same grammatical pattern between ditransitive construction and caused-motion construction but is



differentiated by its word order. The Indonesian language does not mark any recipient or theme. The ditransitive verb is determined by the morphological affixation of the verbs and the word order.

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