

Ditransitive constructions in Òko

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Òko is a lesser described West Benue-Congo language (Williamson & Blench 2000) spoken by the Ogori and Magongo communities in present-day Kogi State, north central Nigeria. In this presentation, I discuss ditransitive verbs, that is, verbs which in addition to their subject also take a “theme” and a “recipient”. I describe in detail the distribution of ditransitive verbs across ditransitive constructions. Haspelmath (2005a, b) identifies three basic types of ditransitive constructions across languages, namely, the indirect-object construction (indirective alignment), the double-object construction (neutral alignment) and the secondary-object construction (secondative alignment). Of the three basic types, Òko makes use of the double-object construction. However, apart from the double-object construction, Òko also makes use of four other types of ditransitive constructions, these are, the preverbal theme construction, the theme-marking serial verb construction, the recipient-marking construction with the benefactive marker, and the recipient-marking construction with the locative marker. I examine how all the five ditransitive constructions differ one from the other. The difference may be lexically determined, that is, based on the type of verb, or determined by some other syntactic or semantic factor(s). I also examine how each of the arguments (i.e. the agent (A), the theme (T) and the recipient (R)) of the ditransitive construction types is marked.