

TÉZISEK
(ANGOL NYELVEN)

Ditransitive Constructions in Jordanian Arabic

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Budapest

2026

1- Problem and research aim

Although advances have been made in understanding the distinct structures of Double Object Constructions (DOC) and Prepositional Dative Constructions (PDC), cross-linguistic variation remains unclear. Little research has examined ditransitives in Arabic, and no studies have specifically examined these structures in Jordanian Arabic (henceforth JA). Notably, JA has a prepositional construction with a word order resembling that of DOC, rather than resulting from the leftward scrambling of the Goal PP. Put differently, JA has three regular ditransitive patterns, one more than English. This thesis investigates how previous analyses of ditransitives can be applied to JA, a language characterised by complex morphosyntax and frequent clitic usage, and where adjustments to existing analyses are required in order to accommodate the JA data.

This thesis examines the semantic and syntactic features of ditransitive constructions in JA, highlighting variation across lexical and pronominal objects. The study contributes to the broader theoretical debate on argument structure, case assignment, and theta-role mapping in generative syntax, while providing the first detailed account of JA ditransitives. Based on a corpus of interviews and questionnaires, the analysis emphasises how ditransitive structures occur in natural discourse, demonstrating both productive and limited patterns.

This study aims to explore the following questions:

1. How are theta-roles assigned in ditransitive constructions?
2. What is the mechanism of word order variation in ditransitive constructions?
3. What are the distinctive features or properties of ditransitive constructions?
4. Which is the unmarked surface form of the ditransitive construction?

2- The structure of the thesis

This study is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 offers a theoretical framework for understanding ditransitive structures and DOCs and examines the debate surrounding their relationship with PDCs. The chapter reviews the literature on scrambling and A- and A-bar movements.

Chapter 3 presents and explores the corpus created through interviews and questionnaires (Appendices B and C) to collect linguistic data on how structures are actually used in the language. The analysis offers empirical data on syntactic patterns, rather than relying only on introspection or constructed examples. Additionally, it highlights which constructions are common, marginal, or missing in real speech.

Chapter 4 provides a typological overview of ditransitive constructions in JA, covering word-order variations, binding asymmetries, scope interactions, and passive constructions.

Chapter 5 examines the pronominal and lexical arguments in ditransitive constructions. It highlights the distinction between full DPs and pronominal objects, and their effects on derivation. It also explains the morphosyntax of personal pronouns in JA and investigates cliticisation and clitic doubling in ditransitive constructions.

Chapter 6 examines how ditransitive constructions are formed in JA, focusing on theta roles and case assignment to the two internal arguments of ditransitive predicates. It also analyses the syntactic properties of the functional heads involved and the semantic and syntactic relationships between the objects.

Chapter 7 concludes the study and suggests directions for future research.

3- Findings

The findings reveal that JA has two primary ditransitive constructions: the Double Object Construction (DOC) and the Prepositional Dative Construction (PDC). The PDC, in which the Goal argument is immediately preceded by the preposition *la*, is the unmarked and more common pattern, naturally derived from transitive structures. In contrast, the DOC requires two adjacent noun phrases, but it is a genuine construction in JA. Evidence from passivisation, cliticisation, clitic doubling, and scope interactions demonstrates its independent syntactic status. JA also includes a word-order variant, the Goal-Theme PDC, which, despite its surface similarity to the DOC, functions syntactically as a PDC. These findings highlight the richness of JA's ditransitive system compared to English. Consider the following examples:

- 1- Sami ʔaʕtʕə-Ø Rami ktaab (DOC)
Sami gave-3SGM Rami book
'Sami gave Rami a book.'
- 2- Sami ʔaʕtʕə-Ø ktaab lə Rami (Theme-Goal PDC)
Sami gave-3SGM book to Rami
'Sami gave a book to Rami.'
- 3- Sami ʔaʕtʕə-Ø lə Rami ktaab (Goal-Theme PDC)
Sami gave-3SGM to Rami book
'Sami gave a book to Rami.'

To show that the Goal-Theme PDC is not a DOC, contrary to analyses of Syrian and Iraqi Arabic, six syntactic diagnostics were employed: binding asymmetries, scope interaction, A and A-bar-movement, cliticisation, and clitic doubling. This study shows that the Goal-Theme order results from A-bar scrambling of the PP over the Theme into a higher Spec-VP position. The flexible word order of JA permits such movement while preserving information structure. This distinction highlights JA's distinctive syntactic behaviour.

Verbs in JA fall into two categories: those that permit both DOC and PDC, and those that permit PDC but resist DOC. The study further shows that JA *load* verbs are genuine DOCs and require two internal arguments, while word-order restrictions strictly prevent Theme–Recipient reversal within DOC. (1), (2), and (3) show that the verb ʔaʕtʕə 'give' can appear in the three ditransitive diatheses found in JA, whereas the verb baʕaθ, waddə 'send' resists the DOC diathesis. Consider the following examples:

- 4- Sami baʕaθ-Ø resaaleh lə Rami (Theme-Goal PDC)
Sami sent-3SGM letter to Rami
'Sami sent a letter to Rami.'
- 5- Sami baʕaθ-Ø lə Rami resaaleh (Goal-Theme PDC)
Sami sent-3SGM to Rami letter
Intended, 'Sami sent a letter to Rami.'

6- *Sami baʕaθ-Ø Rami resaaleh (DOC)

Sami sent-3SGM Rami letter

Literally, ‘Sami sent Rami a letter.’

The research also examines pronominal objects, showing that JA lacks weak pronouns and realises pronominal arguments as clitics. In JA, clitics are analysed as X° elements rather than XPs, which explains why they cannot appear independently, be coordinated, or be used in cleft constructions. An intervention effect limits cliticisation in JA: in PDCs, the Theme can attach directly to the verb, but in DOCs the intervening Recipient blocks this process, requiring an alternative host *ʔyya*. This system highlights the important role of cliticisation in shaping JA ditransitive syntax.

The syntactic analysis employs a Larsonian VP-shell framework to describe Theme–Goal PDCs, while Goal–Theme PDCs are formed by A-bar scrambling of the PP. For DOCs, a refined applicative analysis accounts for asymmetries in scope, binding, and case relations, aligning with a consistent mapping from thematic to syntactic relations (UTAH). The ApplP hypothesis is reconciled with the UTAH by positing a low ApplP that selects VP, with the Theme in Spec-VP and the applied object in Spec-ApplP, while high ApplP takes little vP as its complement. The study thus treats JA as a valuable testing ground for competing theories of dative alternation, offering evidence for both applicative and projectional approaches.

Overall, the thesis shows that JA ditransitives follow a structured system: the PDC is the standard, flexible, and productive pattern, whereas the DOC is limited but authentic, with precise syntactic diagnostics. These findings enhance our understanding of JA and support cross-linguistic theories of argument structure and argument-structure alternation.