Abstract

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When a ditransitive verb is used in Swedish, the recipient role can be realized either as an indirect object or as an adverbial. The criteria for choosing either construction are not exactly the same in Swedish spoken in Sweden and in Finland. This article concentrates on the choice of construction with the verb ge ‘give’. The analysis suggests that the criteria for choosing the ditransitive construction are the same in the two varieties of Swedish. The construction is used when the recipient is a thematic entity. The difference is that this construction is used mostly with abstract direct objects in Finland, while the usage is not restrained in such a way in Sweden. The difference is greater when the construction with the recipient realized as an adverbial is used. In the Swedish spoken in Finland the construction can be used when the recipient is thematic, which is rarely the case in Sweden. The adverbial can also be placed before the direct object in Finland, although this is normally contrary to word order restrictions in Swedish. The difference can most likely be explained by the influence of Finnish on Swedish spoken in Finland. The tendency to realize the recipient as an adverbial can be influenced by the phenomenon that the recipient of the Finnish equivalent to the verb ge can never be realized as an object. The difference in word order can also be explained by the influence of Finnish, where the word order normally corresponds to principles of information structure.

Keywords: ditransitive verbs, construction, information structure, spoken language, Swedish.