

## **Ditransitive constructions in Purepecha: a hybrid type<sup>1</sup>**

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### **1. Introduction**

This paper focuses on the constructions in which the verb, as the nucleus of the clause, is accompanied by three core arguments. Semantically they refer: (i) to an agent generally characterized as an animate entity, which operates the transfer (of a material object, or of a statement); (ii) to a patient, which indicates the transferred entity; and (iii) to a recipient, which receives the entity. Typical ditransitive verbs are those which express either the physical transfer of a material object - for example, 'give', 'sell', 'bring', 'take', 'send', 'lend' - or an act of speech - for example, 'say', 'tell'.

Generally, in nominative-accusative languages, at the syntactic level, the agent is the subject, while the patient and the recipient are both

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objects. In this paper, my purpose is to examine and establish the hierarchical relations between the two objects in ditransitive clauses in Purepecha<sup>2</sup>. The central point of discussion is the asymmetric alignment which is observed between the two object arguments of the verb.

I will examine a large cluster of properties which appear at various levels. Following Givón (1997), I consider it relevant to analyze various usage contexts, without limiting the study to a restricted number of characteristics. The hierarchy of the two objects is revealed by the morphology, through specific encoding properties (case marking, person indexing), and by syntactic accessibility to certain functions or particular processes (subject in passive constructions, deleted argument in antipassive constructions). The participant defined as preeminent (Queixalós 2003) shows the greatest proximity to, or intimacy with, the verb. Syntactically, this is the object that aligns with the object of the transitive construction, independently of its semantic role.

In recent years, several linguists have shown a particular interest for ditransitive constructions. Ditransitive constructions are relevant for typological studies of alignment systems (Comrie 2007). The functionalist and typological approaches have revealed two different paths. On the one hand, the way opened by Dryer (1986), followed in particular by Croft (1990) and Haspelmath (2005a and 2005b), which is based on a fundamental distinction between two types of alignment: the languages in which the semantic patient of the ditransitive verb is treated as the semantic patient of the transitive verb (preeminent patient called indirect-object construction), and the languages in which the recipient of the ditransitive verb aligns with the patient of the transitive verb (preeminent recipient called secondary-object construction). Dryer claims that the grammatical relations are organized differently in each of these two types of languages, thus he proposes a specific treatment for each one, and introduces a distinct terminology, which opposes direct and indirect objects for the former, and

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<sup>2</sup> Purepecha (formerly known as Tarascan) is classified as a language isolate spoken in the State of Michoacán, México. It is spoken by approximately 110000 speakers (Chamoreau 2003 [2000]).

primary/secondary objects for the latter<sup>3</sup>. These linguists also show that apart from these two major constructions, there exists a neutral alignment, in which the patient and the recipient are both treated like the patient of the transitive verb (also called double-object construction). Haspelmath (2005b) explains that it is possible to find a fourth simple tripartite alignment type, in which all three roles are treated differently from each other. Haspelmath (2005a, 2005b) proposes to study the alignment of the objects within ditransitive constructions essentially considering the word order and the coding properties of these objects. The two coding properties which are taken into account are flagging (case affixes or adpositions marking) and indexing (pronominal forms that are in or near the verb).

Givón (1997, 2001), also developed in Rude (1996, 1997), Kaswanti (1997) and Queixalós (2003), among others, take a slightly different approach, which favors a unified treatment of the languages, and seeks to determine which object in the ditransitive verb behaves syntactically like the single object of the transitive verb. In other words, the aim of these authors is to try to distinguish a direct object, whatever its semantic role, studying a large cluster of properties at various levels of analysis.

This latter approach has the merit of very clearly distinguishing the different levels, whereas the former approach tends to create confusion between the semantic role of the units and their syntactic function (see Queixalós 2003 and Kaswanti 1997). In the first approach, the definition of the indirect object is not based on a syntactic analysis, but is founded on its semantic role, that is, the indirect object is always the recipient. The second approach presents a perspective which makes it possible to account for various types of constructions using only one terminology: direct/indirect objects. My study of ditransitive constructions in Purepecha is grounded in this latter approach.

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<sup>3</sup> Haspelmath (2005a) uses indirect-object and secondary-object or directive/indirective and primitive/secundative (2005b).

## 2. A classification of ditransitive constructions

In order to account for the Purepecha strategies, it is necessary to distinguish various types of participant preeminence encountered cross-linguistically. I distinguish four main types, each divided into two or three sub-types:

- The hierarchy exists and is homogeneous.
  - The first sub-type shows the preeminence of the patient: the patient displays behavior similar to that of the patient of a transitive verb. French represents an example of this sub-type. The patient of transitive and ditransitive verbs is the direct-object whereas the recipient is the indirect object.
  - The second sub-type shows the preeminence of the recipient, which behaves like the patient of the transitive verb. Dryer (1986) shows that Ojibwa displays such characteristics. Dryer also shows that this sub-type is rather widespread across languages; a view that ran contrary to general belief at the time of publication. The patient of the transitive verb and the recipient of the ditransitive verb are the direct object whereas the patient of the ditransitive verb is the indirect object. For Dryer (1986) and Haspelmath (2005), this is a secondary-object construction, the patient of the transitive verb and the ditransitive recipient are grouped together as primary object, as opposed to the ditransitive patient, which is referred to as secondary object.
- The hierarchy exists and the change of hierarchy can exist by alternation. These languages display a mixed type.
  - The first sub-type groups together languages that show preeminence of the patient (word-order and case-marking coincide with the patient of the transitive verb, only the patient is accessible to passivization). Nevertheless, through a type of alternation called "dative-shifting" this hierarchy is reversed. In this grammatical process, an oblique argument of a verb,

usually one functioning as a recipient or a benefactive case, is placed in the same grammatical role as that of a patient. This process increases the valence of the verb, and forms a clause with two objects that appear morphologically unmarked. An example in English would be "He gave a present to me" *versus* "He gave me a present", the latter being the dative-shifted version. One of the two objects (the semantic recipient) is accessible to passivization, while the other, the semantic patient, is not. In this context, languages of this sub-type show a preeminent recipient. English and Indonesian are possible examples (Kaswanti 1997).

- The second sub-type shows a reversed image of the one mentioned above. The recipient is preeminent, while the patient can become preeminent through a type of alternation called "antidative-shifting" (Dryer 1986). In this process, the patient is the object, and the recipient appears in an oblique phrase. Sikuni is an example of this sub-type (Queixalós 2003).
- The hierarchy is absent.
  - The first sub-type consists of languages in which the two objects behave like the patient of the transitive verb (this is known as double-object construction). The identical behavior is expressed at the morphological level (similar coding), as well as at the syntactic level (either object can become the subject of the passive, can be demoted by antipassivization, can be relativized, can control inter-clause co-reference, etc.). In summary, all tests fail to distinguish the two objects. Some Panoan languages such as Matses (Fleck 2003) and Shipibo-Konibo (Valenzuela 2003), and other languages such as Tacanan Cavineña (Guillaume, this volume) and Peba Yaguan Yagua (Payne & Payne 1990), genetically unrelated but geographically close, are examples of this type.
  - In a second sub-type, the absence of preeminence is reflected through morphological encoding and three distinct syntactic

behaviors: the patient of the transitive verb, the patient of the ditransitive verb, and the recipient of the ditransitive verb are treated differently from each other. This type of construction is rare; Awa pit (language of the Barbacoan family spoken in Colombia and Ecuador), for example, has tripartite argument coding (Haspelmath 2005b).

- The hierarchy is present in certain constructions and absent in others. These languages belong to a hybrid type.
  - The first sub-type includes languages with various types of preeminence where first and second person are opposed to third person. An example of this sub-type is Pima Bajo (Estrada 2007). The non-subject personal pronouns may encode the patient of a transitive clause as well as the recipient, but not the patient of a ditransitive clause. So, Pima Bajo shows a clear preeminence of the recipient for these personal pronouns. On the other hand, the third person shows a double object construction, where any of the three arguments, the patient of a transitive clause, or the patient or the recipient of a ditransitive clause may equally be coded by a third non-subject pronoun.
  - The second sub-type includes languages with various types of preeminence, revealing a split between morphology and syntax. They show identical encoding of the two participants (double accusative), that is, an absence of preeminence. On the contrary, syntax permits differentiation. These constructions show preeminence of the recipient; the recipient of the ditransitive verb aligns with the patient of the transitive verb. Yindjibarndi (Dryer 1986: 829-830) is an example of this sub-type.
  - The final sub-type shows a split between morphology and some syntactic constructions, on one hand, and, on the other hand, constructions which include voice-changing. Purepecha is an example of this sub-type. In this language, reflexive, passive, and antipassive constructions make it possible to distinguish the direct object. Purepecha is morphologically

classified as a double accusative language. Syntactically, it can be classified as a double object language for certain constructions (topicality, focus, inter-clausal coreference control, relativization), but displays a direct object (which is always recipient preeminent) for other constructions (reflexive, passive, antipassive).

### 3. Ditransitive verbs in Purepecha

Ditransitive verbs are verbs with three core arguments: a subject and two objects. I will concentrate here on a small group of verbs that are not involved in derivative mechanisms such as causative or applicative constructions that increase the valence of the verb (Chamoreau 2008: 174-181). I will also look at ditransitive verbs whose non-patient object is an animate benefactive. Ditransitive verbs group into two semantic classes defined by the nature of the transferred object:

#### Act of giving

<b>ewa</b>	'take'
<b>pitsɿ</b>	'leave'
<b>ʃɿpa</b>	'steal'
<b>kwa-ne/ kwá-nta</b>	'lend'
<b>ínts-ku</b>	'give'

#### Speech Act

<b>aɿi</b>	'tell/say'
<b>eya-nku</b>	'tell/narrate'

Verbs in Purepecha are classified into two major groups: those not needing derivational morphemes, "free stems"; and those requiring a formative suffix, "dependent stems"<sup>4</sup>. Each group consists of verbs that have different valences. The ditransitive verb may be a free stem or a dependent stem.

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<sup>4</sup> The free stems can also appear with one or several derivative suffixes, and the dependent stems can have different derivative suffixes.

## Free stem

intransitive	<b>kwhi</b>	'sleep'
transitive	<b>pire</b>	'sing'
ditransitive	<b>ewa</b>	'take'

## Dependent stem (with formative suffix)

intransitive	<b>ké-tsi</b>	'go down'
transitive	<b>ero-ka</b>	'wait'
ditransitive	<b>ínts-ku</b>	'give'

**4. Basic information**

To distinguish between the subject and the objects, I base my discussion on four main arguments<sup>5</sup>: two morphological (a and b) and two syntactic criteria (c and d).

a) Purepecha is a case-marking language in which the nominal subject has no overt marker. In an intransitive construction like (1), the unique argument has no specific marker:

- (1) **nanaka ni-ra-ʃ-ti**  
 girl go-FT-AOR-ASS3  
 The girl went.

Purepecha is a nominative-accusative language in which the subject of a transitive verb, like **selia** 'Celia' in (2a), is encoded similarly to the subject of an intransitive verb **nanaka** 'girl' (1). The object is generally marked by the objective case marker **-ni**. This morpheme encodes the traditional markers for accusative and dative. The presence or absence of the object case marker depends on different continua: (i) inherent semantic properties of the referent (human, animate, count noun vs. mass noun); (ii) properties related to grammatical features (definite, number); and (iii) pragmatic strategies (topic, focus). These continua function as complementary degrees: in (2a), **misitu-ni** 'cat', a definite animate noun, takes the object case marker **-ni**, whereas in (2b), **ma misitu** 'a cat', an

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<sup>5</sup> For more details and other arguments, see Chamoreau 2007.



indefinite animate entity, can appear without the object case marker (Chamoreau 1999, 2008: 144-153).

- (2) a. **xo selia ata-ʃ-ti imeri misitu-ni**  
 yes Celia beat-AOR-ASS3 POS3 cat-OBJ  
 Yes, Celia beat her cat. (Jaracuaro-Alfredo25, 94)
- b. **ima tsípku xi ife-ʃ-ka ma misitu urapiti**  
 DEM morning 1IND see-AOR-ASS1/2 a cat white  
 This morning, I saw a white cat. (Jaracuaro-Celia6, 71)

b) Purepecha is an agglutinative and synthetic language, and uses only suffixes. It has a very elaborate derivational verbal system. In this language, a verb is necessarily marked for mood. The most frequently marked is the assertive mood, which always appears as a syncretic element, marking mood and person together: **-ti** indicates third person (2a), and **-ka** first and second persons (2b). Correlation between the subject and the assertive mood can take place: a difference in the subject person triggers a different mood-and-person suffix. In (3), the assertive mood marker agrees in person with the subject.

- (3) **xi=kini ife-ʃ-ka**  
 1IND=2OBJ see-AOR-ASS1/2  
 I saw you.

c) The subject controls inter-clausal co-reference: between the subject of the first clause, **nana khéri** 'the old woman', and the subject of the coordinated clause, included in **-ti**. With zero anaphora, it thus creates a referential pivot as in (4).

- (4) **nana khéri; tatsikwa wantiku-ʃ-ti ima ukhuri-ni ka ni-ra-ʃ-ti;**  
 woman old after kill-AOR-ASS3 DEM opossum-OBJ and go-FT-AOR-ASS3  
 [...] then, the old woman<sub>i</sub> killed the opossum and left<sub>i</sub>. (Cocuchucho-xiwats1, 203)

d) Purepecha is generally an SV and AVO constituent order language (A, S, and O are similar to Dixon's use). This order is the basic order in the area where I work (Eastern area), that is, the order that is pragmatically unmarked (Capistrán 2002 and Chamoreau 2003 [2000]: 156-158, 2008: 53-56). Other orders indicate pragmatic features (topic and focus).

## 5. Behavior of objects in ditransitive constructions

In order to identify the hierarchies between objects, one must analyze ten different criteria.

### 5.1. Nominal argument coding by case markers

We have already seen that the object case marker is **-ni**, and that its presence depends neither on functions nor on semantic roles, but on semantic, grammatical or pragmatic properties. With a transitive verb, the second argument can display the **-ni** objective case marker, while, with a ditransitive verb, the two objects can receive the same case marker, whatever their semantic role, as with the patient **inteni wantantskwani** and the recipient **Pukini** (5). The case marker does not allow a distinction to be made between the two objects. At this stage, one may describe this situation as a "double accusative", that is, having two objects, which, from the morphological point of view, behave like the direct object of a transitive verb.

- (5) **xo selia aŋi-ŋ-ti inte-ni wantantskwa-ni Puki-ni**  
 yes Celia tell-AOR-ASS3 DEM-OBJ story-OBJ Puki-OBJ  
 Yes, Celia told Puki a story. (Jaracuaro-Alfredo25, 36)

### 5.2. Pronominal clitics

Purepecha has three paradigms that represent grammatical person: independent pronouns, pronominal clitics, and the suffix of third person plural. The units of the first two paradigms take on the functions of both subject and object, whereas the last paradigm's unit takes on only the function of object. In this paper, I report on the behavior of the objects of the last two paradigms (pronominal clitics in 5.2, and third person plural suffix in 5.3). Independent object pronouns are unusual and show the same syntactic behavior as the pronominal clitics.

The pronominal clitics paradigm contains unstressed pronominal enclitics (Table 1); these require a preceding host.

	Subject	Object
1	<b>ø / ni</b>	<b>rini / tshɛni</b>
2	<b>ri</b>	<b>kini / kʃɛni</b>
3	<b>ø</b>	
1pl	<b>kʃɛ / tʃe</b>	<b>tshɛni</b>
2pl	<b>tshɛ</b>	<b>kʃɛni</b>
3pl	<b>kʃɛ</b>	<b>kʃɛni</b>

Table 1. Personal enclitics

They can be attached to the last unit of the first immediate constituent of either a main or a subordinate clause. They can appear after adverbs, negation words, nouns, interrogatives, spatial deictics, subordinating conjunctions, demonstratives, etc. (Chamoreau 2003). They can also be attached to the verb. Only one position on the verb is available for the pronominal enclitic (post-mood position), thus competition is created for the same syntactic slot. Two possibilities exist: (i) The subject follows the verb, and the object becomes an enclitic to the unit of the first constituent, never the opposite (6), or (ii) Purepecha also has two pronominal enclitics occurring in the first constituent, as in (7) and (8):

- (6) **mameni=rini kuɕa-tʃi-ʃin-ka=ri itʃuskuta**  
 always=1OBJ ask-1/2APP-HAB-ASS1/2=2 tortilla  
 You always ask me for tortillas. (Jaracuaro-Celia3, 82)
- (7) **no=tʃka=ni xi=thu=kini xaɕoata-s-ki phiku-ntha-ni**  
 NEG=well=1 1IND=too=2OBJ help-AOR-INT harvest-IT-INF  
 Well, have I not also helped you to harvest? (Zipiajo-Emelia4, 71)
- (8) **peru no=tʃka=re no=reni kuɕa-nku-ʃin-ka**  
 but NEG=well=2 NEG=1OBJ hear-PROL-HAB-ASS1/2  
 But you don't listen to me. (Pacanda-Miguel1, 54)

They can combine with other unaccented discursive or adverbial second-position enclitics. For example, =**tʃka** 'well' in (8), or =**thu** 'too' in (7).

In transitive constructions, the second argument can be indicated by a pronominal enclitic. In (9), the first person =**rini** shows the semantic patient.

- (9) **ata-ʃa-ti=rini**  
 beat-PROG-ASS3=1OBJ  
 He is beating me.

In ditransitive constructions, the two objects can be expressed by pronominal enclitics. In (10), the first person =**rini** denotes the patient (it refers to a young girl in the story) and, in (11), it indicates the recipient.

- (10) **ka xima xutʃi tata=rini kwane-ʃin-ti xiwatsɿ khéri-ni**  
 and there POS1 father=1OBJ lent-HAB-ASS3 coyote old-OBJ  
 [...] and there my father lends me to the old coyote. (Cocuchucho-xiwatsɿ1, 42)
- (11) **thu=rini pitsɿ-ʃin-ka itʃuskuta**  
 2IND=1OBJ leave-HAB-ASS1/2 tortilla  
 You leave tortillas for me. (Jaracuaro-Celia3, 29)

### 5.3. The suffix of third person plural

The suffix of the third person plural, **-a**, appears in the verb before tense, aspect and mood markers. In transitive constructions, it refers to the patient as in (12)

- (12) **thu tʃe-ra-a-ʃin-ka sapi-etʃa-ni**  
 2IND be afraid-CAUS-3PL.OBJ-HAB-ASS1/2 small-PL-OBJ  
 You frightened (them) the small children. (Ihuatzio-Agustina5, 26)

In ditransitive constructions, both objects may be cross-referenced by this 3pl suffix. In (13), the suffix **-a** is co-referent with the semantic patient, **xutʃari misitu-etʃa-ni** 'my cats', and, in (14), it indicates the recipient, **atʃati-eʃa-ni** 'the men'. Its presence reveals that one of the objects is plural.

- (13) **xi ínts-a-s-ka xutʃiti misitu-etʃa-ni petu-ni**  
 1IND give-3PL.OBJ-AOR-ASS1/2 POS1PL cat-PL-OBJ Peter-OBJ  
 I gave my cats to Peter. (Cocuchucho-Francisco2, 90)
- (14) **xi ínts-a-s-ka xutʃiti misitu-ni tsɿmi atʃati-eʃa-ni**  
 1IND give-3PL.OBJ-AOR-ASS1/2 POS1PL cat-OBJ DEM.PL man-PL-OBJ  
 I gave my cat to (them) these men.

In sum, I have shown that argument encoding, through pronominal enclitics or the third person plural suffix, fails to distinguish between the two object types.

#### 5.4. Topicality

Purepecha has AVO constituent order. The initial position of an object expresses its topicality. In the transitive construction in (15), the left-dislocation of the second argument, **yamintu tumina** 'all the money', indicates that this nominal phrase is topicalized. A pause is observed and a co-referential demonstrative, **inte-ni**, is present.

- (15) **yamintu tumina, inte-ni xwa-ø**  
 all money DEM-OBJ bring-IMP2  
 All the money, this one, bring it. (Jaracuaro-ladron1, 306)

In ditransitive constructions, the two objects can be topicalized by left-dislocation. In (16), the patient, **waka-etfa-ni** 'the cows', appears at the beginning of the sentence; it is left-dislocated. This noun phrase is followed by an intonation break and the interjection **xo** 'yes'. A co-referential demonstrative, **tsima**, is attested in the sentence (Givón 2001: 265-267).

- (16) **ka waka-etfa-ni=tshz, xo, tsima-ni=tshni tatsni pitsi-a-a-ka**  
 and cow-PL-OBJ=2PL yes DEM.PL-OBJ=1PL.OBJ after leave-3PL.OBJ-FUT-ASS1/2  
 [...] and the cows, yes, these-ones you bring them to us after [...]  
 (Cuanajo-Evaristo2, 193)

Under the same conditions, the recipient of a ditransitive construction can be topicalized. In (17), the speaker introduces the sentence with the noun phrase **nanaka-etfa-ni** 'these girls', to mark topical referents.

- (17) **nanaka-etfa-ni, xi fipa-a-f-ka tumina**  
 girl-PL-OBJ 1IND steal-3PL.OBJ-AOR-ASS1/2 money  
 From these girls, I stole money from them. (Jaracuaro-ladron1, 58)

The two objects of the ditransitive construction behave like the patient of the transitive construction. It is impossible to distinguish between them with the topicality test.

#### 5.5. Focus

Purepecha has an enclitic whose function is to signal that a phrase is in contrastive focus. Generally, the enclitic =**fɪ**, and its host, are attracted to the initial position of the sentence. For example, in the transitive construction (18), the second argument, **kurutfja-ni=fɪ** 'fish', appears in first position.

- (18) *kurutfa-ni=fɿ*      *a-ɕa-f-ti*  
 fish-OBJ=FOC          feed-FT-AOR-ASS3  
 He ate FISH (in answer to the question: what did he eat, fish or meat?)  
 (Pacanda-Miguel2, 89)

Both objects in a ditransitive construction can be focused. In (19), *tsɨma-ni khoɕunta-etɕa-ni=fɿ* 'the tamales', the semantic patient, occurs sentence-initially and is the anchor of the enclitic focus. In (20), the semantic recipient, *inte-ni waɕi-ni=fɿ ka inte-ni atɕa-ni=fɿ* 'to these women and to these men', has the same syntactic characteristics.

- (19) *xo, tsɨma-ni khoɕunta-etɕa-ni=fɿ lola-ni ewa-a-a-ka=ni*  
 yes DEM.PL-OBJ tamal-PL-OBJ=FOC Lola-OBJ take-3PL.OBJ-FUT-ASS1/2=1  
 Yes, these are the tamales that I will take to Lola. (Ihuatzio-Vida1, 89)
- b. *inte-ni waɕi-ni=fɿ ka inte-ni atɕa-ni=fɿ ínts-a-sin-ti=ksi*  
 DEM-OBJ woman-OBJ=FOC and dem-OBJ man-OBJ=FOC give-3PL.OBJ-HAB-ASS3=3PL  
*yamintu wiraterak<sup>w</sup>a ka sáni tsíri o sáni xapumata*  
 all alcohol and few corn or few roasted-corn  
 To these women and to these men, they used to give everything, alcohol, a few ears of corn or a few ears of roasted-corn.  
 (Jaracuaro-Animas2, 79)

The two objects of the ditransitive construction can be focused like the second argument of the transitive construction.

### 5.6. Inter-clausal coreference control

In the transitive construction in (20), coreference of the subordinate clause subject, the third person, is achieved with the patient of the main clause, *tɕi witsu-ni* 'your dog'.

- (20) *ife-f-ka=ni tɕi witsu-ni; ximpoka=ø; xwaxwari-ɕa-ka*  
 see-AOR-ASS1/2=1 POS2 dog-OBJ SUB=3 bark-PROG-SUBJ  
 I saw your dog because it barked. (Jaracuaro-Celia6, 49)

In ditransitive constructions, either object may control inter-clausal coreference. In (21), the subject of the subordinate clause, *=kɕɿ* 'they', corefers with the patient of the main clause, *-a* 'them'. Conversely, in (22), there is coreference between the subject of the subordinate clause, *kuɕitsɿ* 'buzzard', and the 3sg object (marked by *ø*) which refers to the recipient of the main clause.

- (21) **énka tsikata-etſa pukhu-ka=kſɿ ya pablu=reni ínts-a<sub>i</sub>-nthá-s-ti**  
 SUB hen-PL fatten-SUBJ=3PL already Pablo=1OBJ give-3PL.OBJ-IT-AOR-ASS3  
 When the hens (they) got fatter, Pablo gave them to me. (Cuanajo-Evaristo8, 60)
- (22) **énka kuſitsɿ kwhiripe-ka tata iretſa pitsɿ-s-ti ma marikwa-ni (ø<sub>i</sub>)**  
 SUB buzzard grow-SUBJ man king leave-AOR-ASS3 a young girl-OBJ  
 When the buzzard grew, the king gave him a young girl.  
 (Cocuchucho-xiwatsɿ1, 309)

In transitive constructions, the coreference can be between the subject of the main clause, **tataka** 'boy' in (23), and the patient of the subordinate clause, **ima-ni** 'him'.

- (23) **tataka<sub>i</sub> wina-nthá-tá-s-ti ampe-itſá-ni ximpoka imeri tata ima-ni<sub>i</sub>**  
 boy pack-IT-CAUS-AOR-ASS3 thing-PL-OBJ SUB POS3 father DEM-OBJ  
**ata-ka**  
 beat-SUBJ  
 The boy has packed his things because his father has beaten him.  
 (Janitzio-Simon6, 100)

In ditransitive constructions, the two objects of the subordinate clause may corefer with the subject of the main clause. In (24), the subject of the main clause, **=kſɿ** 'they', corefers with the semantic patient of the subordinate clause, **-a** 'them'. In (25), the subject of the main clause, **ima** 'he', is in coreference with the semantic recipient of the subordinate clause, **ø** 'him'.

- (24) **kaxa sesi xa-ŕa-ſ-ti=kſɿ éнки=kini kwane-a<sub>i</sub>-ka**  
 box well be.there-FT-AOR-ASS3=3PL SUB=2OBJ lend-3PL.OBJ-SUBJ  
 The boxes (they) were in good shape when I lent them to you.  
 (Ihuatzio-Agustina3, 66)
- (25) **ima<sub>i</sub> kwanatse-nthá-ſ-ti antes de ke kwhani-ra-ka=kſɿ ma bala (ø<sub>i</sub>)**  
 DEM return-CENTRIF-AOR-ASS3 SUB shoot-CAUS-SUBJ=3PL a bullet  
 He is going to return before they shoot a bullet into him. (Ihuatzio-Agustina22, 152)

### 5.7. Relativization

In a transitive construction, as in (26), the patient, **matſeti-ni** 'machete', can be the referent of the relative clause.

- (26) **xatsi-ſ-ka=ni matſeti-ni [nénki=rini kwáne-ka]**  
 have-AOR-ASS1/2=1 machete-OBJ SUB=1OBJ lend-REL  
 I had the machete that you had lent me.  
 (Pacanda-Miguel2, 14)

In ditransitive constructions, both arguments can be the antecedent of the relative clause. In (27), it is the patient, **siranta-itfa-ni** 'papers'. In (28), the recipient, **atsati-ni** 'the man', is the antecedent of the relative clause.

- (27) **maria ínts-a-s-ti tsi siranta-itfa-ni**  
 Maria give-3PL.OBJ-AOR-ASS3 DEM.PL paper-PL-OBJ  
**[enki=reni eše-ra-a-p-ka] wámpa-ni**  
 REL=1OBJ see-CAUS-3PL.OBJ-AOR.PAST-SUB husband-OBJ  
 Maria gave the papers that she had shown me to her husband. (Ihuatzio-Vida2, 59)
- (28) **šipapiri-itfa aři-š-ti=kšī ma tškwantirakwa atsati-ni [enki=kšī**  
 thief-PL tell-AOR-ASS3=3PL a lie man-OBJ REL=3PL  
**xatsi-p-ka para ints-a-ni tsi waka-itfa-ni]**  
 have-AOR.PAST-SUB for give-3PL.OBJ-INF DEM.PL cow-PL-OBJ  
 The thieves told a lie to the man to whom they had to give these cows.  
 (Jaracuaro-ladron1, 96)

These seven tests fail to distinguish between the two objects. I will now describe three voice changing constructions that make it possible to distinguish between them.

### 5.8. Reflexive construction

Purepecha has a reflexive suffix, **-kuři**, which constrains the subject and the direct object of a sentence to be coreferent. In the transitive active construction (29), the agent, **selia** 'Celia', acts upon the patient, **misitu-ni** 'cat', which is the second argument. In the reflexive construction (30), the argument, **selia** 'Celia', as the subject, acts upon herself. Semantically, **selia** 'Celia' is both the agent and the patient, thus the construction is intransitive.

- (29) **tšúrekwa selia ata-š-ti misitu-ni kampu santhu-ču**  
 night Celia beat-AOR-ASS3 cat-OBJ cemetery-LOC  
 Tonight Celia beat the cat in the cemetery. (Ihutazio-Vida6, 90)
- (30) **selia ata-kuři-š-ti**  
 Celia beat-REF-AOR-ASS3  
 Celia beat herself. (Jaracuaro-rubio1, 23)

In (31a), the ditransitive construction has two objects: the semantic patient, **šukuparaqwa-ni** 'cloth', and the source, **ama-mpa-ni** 'her mother'. In the reflexive construction in (31b), the argument which disappears is never the patient. Semantically, the agent corefers with the source. This is a



semantic consequence of the coreference constraint. A syntactic consequence is that the direct object becomes the semantic source.

- (31)a. **nanaka ewa-ʃ-ti ʃukupaʃakwa-ni ama-mpa-ni**  
 girl take-AOR-ASS3 cloth-OBJ mother-POSP3-OBJ  
 The girl has taken the cloth from her mother. (Jaracuaro-rubio2, 263)
- b. **nanaka ewa-kuʃi-ʃ-ti ʃukupaʃakwa-ni**  
 girl take-REF-AOR-ASS3 cloth-OBJ  
 The girl took the cloth for herself. The girl took her cloth. (Jaracuaro-rubio2, 287)

Let us now analyze a ditransitive construction such as (32a) where the verb has two human referent objects. This sentence comes from a legend in which a father lends his daughter to an old coyote in order to obtain economic advantages. In this context, it is impossible for the agent and the patient to be coreferent. In a reflexive structure, as in (32b), the verb being intransitive, as in (30), the only argument is the subject, **tsimani tataka-itʃa ʃaniʃu anapu** 'two boys of Janitzio', while the recipient, **xuramuti-nkuni** 'the authority', is an oblique complement with the comitative case marker **-nkuni**.

- (32)a. **pitsi-ʃ-ki thu ʃiti nanaka-ni xiwatsi khéri-ni**  
 leave-AOR-INT 2IND POS2 watsi-OBJ coyote old-OBJ  
 Have you given your daughter to the old coyote? (Cocuchucho-xiwatsi1, 64)
- b. **tsimani tataka-itʃa ʃaniʃu anapu ínts-ku-kuʃi-ʃ-ti=kʃi xuramuti-nkuni**  
 two boy-PL Janitzio ORIG give-FT-REF-AOR-ASS3=3PL chief-COM  
 Two boys of Janitzio gave themselves up to the chief. (Jaracuaro-rubio2, 52)

## 5.9. Passive constructions

Purepecha has a derivative passive expressed by the suffix **-na**. This passive can be described as a promotional passive (Chamoreau 2007). It conforms to Givón's generalization regarding promotional passives (1997: 22), according to which if the subject of the passive clause is restricted to the direct object of the corresponding active clause, then a promotional passive probably exists. In the transitive active construction (33a), the subject is **-ni** 'I', and the second argument is the semantic patient, **ʃi watsi-ni** 'your son'. In the passive construction (33b), the second argument of (33a), **ʃi watsi** 'your son', becomes the subject of the clause. The verb decreases in valence, becoming intransitive (33b).

- (33)a. **eſe-ſ-ka=ni**      **tſi**      **watsɨ-ni**      **nenki**      **ni-ra-ni**      **xama-p-ka**  
 see-AOR-ASS1/2=1 POS2 son-OBJ when go-FT-INF walk-AOR.PAST-SUBJ

**eskwela-ɽu**

school-LOC

I saw your son when he walked to the school.

(Ihuatzio-Agustina11, 74)

- b. **tſi**      **watsɨ**      **eſe-na-ſ-ti**           **kampu-ɽu**      **ampe**      **ú-ſa-p-i**  
 POS2 son see-PASSIV-AOR-ASS3 field-LOC what do-PROG-PAST-INT

Your son was seen in the field, what was he doing?

(Ihuatzio-Agustina11, 93)

The ditransitive active construction in (34a) has a semantic patient, **ma ſɨpati** 'a secret', and a recipient, **ama-mpa-ni** 'his mother'. In the passive construction in (34b), only the direct object, **tataka sapitſu-itſu** 'the children', can become the subject. Semantically, the direct object corresponds to the recipient, while the semantic patient, **wantantskwa thaletskwa-itſa-iri** 'the story about the elves', cannot become the subject (34c).

- (34) a. **tsɨtsɨki**      **aɽi-ſa-ti**           **ma ſɨpati**      **ama-mpa-ni**  
 Tsɨtsɨki say-PROG-ASS3 a secret mother-POSP3-OBJ

Tsɨtsɨki is telling a secret to her mother.

(Cocucho-MariaElena1, 26)

- b. **tataka sapitſu-itſa**      **aɽi-na-ſa-ti=kſɨ**           **wantantskwa**      **thaletskwa-itſa-iri**  
 boy little-PL say-PASSIV-PROG-ASS3=3PL story elf-PL-GEN

The children are being told the story about the elves.

(Zipiajo-duende1, 73)

- c. \* **wantantskwa thaletskwa-itſa-iri**      **aɽi-na-ſa-ti=kſɨ**      **tataka sapitſu-itſu-ni**

### 5.10. Antipassive construction

Like reflexive and passive constructions, the antipassive construction provides a syntactic test that distinctively identifies the two objects, since it only allows the deletion of the direct object. In Purepecha, antipassive construction only affects nouns or pronouns with human referents.

The sentence in (35a) consists of two arguments: the subject, **Lola**, and the object, **imeri wámpa-ni** 'her husband'. In the antipassive construction, in (35b), the subject has not changed, but nevertheless it is not possible to express a second argument (35c). The verb is intransitive. In this context, the recipient is non-referential and plural. It is syntactically impossible to express it.

- (35)a. **lola ero-ka-ʃa-ti imeri wámpa-ni**  
 Lola wait-FT-PROG-ASS3 POS3 husband-OBJ  
 Lola is waiting for her husband. (Ihuatzio-Vida6, 198)
- b. **ima nana khéri ero-pe-ʃa-p-ti peru no-nema xu-ra-ʃ-ti**  
 DEM woman old wait-ANTIP-PROG-AOR-ASS3 but NEG-anyone come-FT-AOR-ASS3  
 This old woman was waiting (people) but nobody came [...] (Ihuatzio-Vida7, 65)
- c. \***ima nana khéri ero-pe-ʃɛn-p-ti imeri wámpa-ni**

The ditransitive construction in (36a) has three arguments: the subject, **kuritsɿ** 'the vulture'; and the two objects, one referring to the patient, **imeri kwhanintikwa-ni** 'her shawl', the other to the recipient, **wáɟi-ni ʃépitɿ-ni** 'the lazy woman'. In the antipassive, in (36b), the subject has not changed, but only one object appears, the one which expresses the semantic patient, **thirekwa** 'food'. In the antipassive construction, the argument which cannot be expressed is the source (or recipient). In the narrative, the sentence in (36b) expresses an habitual social event. It shows that, after certain events, the vulture was accustomed to stealing the food.

The example (36c) has only one interpretation: **wáɟi-ni ʃépitɿ-ni** 'the lazy woman' cannot be a source. The object is only interpreted as the patient.

- (36)a. **kuritsɿ ʃɛpa-ʃɛn-ti imeri kwhanintikwa-ni wáɟi-ni ʃépitɿ-ni**  
 vulture steal-HAB-ASS3 POS3 shawl-OBJ woman-OBJ lazy-OBJ  
 The vulture always steals the lazy woman's shawl. (Jaracuaro-kuritsɿ2, 57)
- b. **tatsɿkwa ménk'u kuritsɿ ʃɛpa-pe-ʃɛn-ti thirikwa**  
 after always vulture steal-ANTIP-HAB-ASS3 food  
 Afterwards, the vulture always steals food. (Jaracuaro-kuritsɿ2, 205)
- c. **tatsɿkwa ménk'u kuritsɿ ʃɛpa-pe-ʃɛn-ti wáɟi-ni ʃépitɿ-ni**  
 Afterwards, the vulture always steals from the lazy woman (patient)  
 \*Afterwards, the vulture always steals from the lazy woman (recipient)

In the ditransitive construction (37a), the two objects have a human referent. In the antipassive constructions in (37b) and (37c), both objects cannot coexist, the one that is present is always the patient. In this legend, the sentence in (37b) emphasizes the ritual: the father lends his daughter. In the antipassive construction in (37b), the first clitic object, =**rini**, is the patient, never the recipient. Example (37c) is a construction tested with various speakers in order to check the interpretation. The only possible one is that **xiwatsɿ khéri-ni** is the patient.

- (37)a. **ka xima xutʃi tata=rini kwane-ʃɪn-ti xiwatsɪ khéri-ni**  
 and there POS1 father=1OBJ lend-HAB-ASS3 coyote old-OBJ  
 [...] and there my father used to lend me to the old coyote. (Cocuchucho-xiwatsɪ1, 42)
- b. **xo, xutʃi tata=rini kwane-pe-ʃɪn-ti**  
 yes POS1 father=1OBJ lend-ANTIP-HAB-ASS3  
 yes, my father used to lend me. (patient) (Cocuchucho-xiwatsɪ1, 94)  
 \* yes, my father used to lend (something) to me. (recipient)
- c. **xutʃi tata kwane-pe-ʃɪn-ti xiwatsɪ khéri-ni**  
 POS1 father lend-ANTIP-HAB-ASS3 coyote old-OBJ  
 My father used to lend the old coyote. (patient)  
 \* My father used to lend (something) to the old coyote. (recipient)

In reflexive, passive and antipassive constructions, the direct object of a ditransitive verb, that is, the argument which aligns with the object of the transitive verb, is always the recipient.

## 6. Final remarks

In this study I point out that the two objects of the ditransitive verb display complex behavior. It reveals a hybrid strategy, showing two different semantic facets: (i) an absence of preeminence, and (ii) a preeminence of the recipient.

Purepecha displays two different strategies: (i) absence of distinction, with two sub-types: double accusative at morphological level (case marking, pronominal clitics and pronominal suffix), and double object at syntactic level (topicality, focus, inter-clausal coreference control and relativization); and (ii) possibility of distinguishing a direct object (reflexive, passive, antipassive). These characteristics are summarized in Table 2.

			Morphological coding properties	Accessibility to syntactic processes
Absence of distinction	Double accusative	Absence of preeminence	Case marking Pronominal clitics Pronominal suffix	
	Double object			Topicality Focus Inter-clausal Coreference control Relativization
Presence of distinction	Direct object	Recipient preeminence		Reflexive Passive Antipassive

Table 2. Summary

### Phonological note

Word stress affects the first or second syllable; it is indicated with an acute accent on the vowel only when it appears in the first syllable (except in monosyllabic words). I use the IPA transcription: **ɾ** is a retroflex, **x** is a velar fricative, etc. Aspiration is indicated by **h**, for example, **ph**.

### Abbreviations

ANT	antipassive	FUT	future	PASSIV	passive
AOR	aorist	GEN	genitive	PL	plural
APP	applicative	HAB	habitual	POSP	kinship possessive
ASS	assertive	IMP	imperative	PROG	progressive
CAUS	causative	IND	independent	PROL	prolongation
CENTRIF	centrifugal	INF	infinitive	REF	reflexive
COM	comitative	NEG	negation	REL	relator
DEM	demonstrative	OBJ	objective	ST	stative
FOC	focus	ORIG	origin	SUB	subordinating conj.
FT	formative	PAST	past	SUBJ	subjunctive

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