

Datives in Dependent Case Theory: Lexical, Dependent, or Unmarked?

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This paper examines the categorial nature of the dative in the context of Dependent Case Theory (DCT) with special attention to Russian dative infinitival structures. Since the seminal work by Marantz (1991), DCT has been described based on the idea that morphological case is assigned to noun phrases on a configurational basis (Bittner & Hale 1996, Bobaljik 2008, Baker 2015) in contrast with the syntactic approach presupposing that case is assigned by functional heads (Chomsky 2000, 2001). Nevertheless, details including how oblique cases are assigned remain to be discussed. This paper argues that oblique cases cannot be oversimplified into lexical cases as a whole, especially focusing on datives, the categorial nature of which has been the most problematic.

The dative has been regarded as a *lexical case*. As the first category of the *Disjunctive Case Hierarchy*, it is evaluated by lexical items such as adpositions or quirky case marking verbs. Baker & Vinokurova (2010) argue that some instances of the dative in Sakha are better understood as *dependent cases*, the second category, and this dative is assigned to a higher DP in a VP-phase in the presence of another DP that is yet to be case-marked. Alternatively, Puškar & Müller (2017) analyze other instances of lexical datives as dependent cases in Serbian. In this paper, I discuss the distribution of datives in Russian, mainly focusing on those structures used in Dative Infinitive Modal (DIM) and Dative Infinitive Existential (DIE) constructions (Jung 2011), exemplified in (1-4). While I largely adopt the viewpoint that the dative assigned to an indirect object is a dependent case, I argue that the dative in the DIM and DIE constructions cannot be understood as a lexical or dependent case; they are, in fact, realizations of the *unmarked case* within a non-finite TP phase.

Dative subjects in (1-4) cannot be considered to have received a lexical case for several reasons. First, the DIM and DIE constructions are independent of the idiosyncratic selection of specific verbs in a manner unlike lexical datives, which are selected by a limited set of verbs sharing semantic structures (e.g. psych verbs). There appears no other overt item that governs the dative case throughout the examples. Second, the dative case is not restricted to certain semantics in DIE construction, as shown in (3). This controverts the possible interpretation that the dative subject is assigned due to its θ -role as an Experiencer of modality. Third, even if we assume a hypothetical null head that might license the dative case, dative–accusative constructions in (2) cannot be deducted from the DCT. This is because lexical cases are assigned in advance of dependent cases and the object cannot receive accusative case when the other argument in the phase has already been marked for case. It is also impossible to understand the datives in (1-3) as dependent cases, for these constructions are readily compatible with intransitive verbs as in (1), which indicates that the subject can be assigned a dative while it is the sole argument in the whole sentence. An indirect object analysis on these datives is ruled out because the thematic role of indirect objects is most commonly restricted to the role of Goal, which is not the case in (4).

On the other hand, the gender agreement between the dative subject and predicate adjectives in (4) strongly supports the possibility that this dative is a realization of the unmarked case, as the *Revised Moravcsik Hierarchy* (Bobaljik 2008) suggests that unmarked case is most accessible for φ -feature agreement and there is no other evidence of agreement between predicates and arguments bearing dependent cases, such as accusative, in Russian. Moreover, the loss of ability to assign accusative case to object when passivized suggests that the dative subject and the accusative argument are involved in case-competition, implying that the subject has not been case-marked by the time the object is marked accusative. The last reason of that these datives are

unmarked case comes from the Second Dative phenomenon, where the secondary predicate *odin* ‘one, alone’ in the embedded infinitival phrase with a controlled subject is marked dative, as shown in (5) (Moore & Perlmutter 2000, Greenberg & Franks 2001, Fleisher 2006). From the observations that *odin* always agrees in case with its reference, it can be argued that the PRO subject in the infinitival clause bears a dative case in absence of other case assigners.

To summarize, I argue that the dative assigned to a subject in an infinitival clause in Russian is a realization of unmarked case in the framework of DCT.

- (1) *Gde mne spat’?*
 where me.DAT sleep.INF
 ‘Where is there for me to sleep?’ [Greenberg & Franks, 1991:72]
- (2) *Začem mne pokupat’ sigarety?*
 for-what me.DAT buy.INF cigarette.ACC.PL
 ‘For what I buy cigarettes?’ [Jung, 2013:173]
- (3) *Mne est’ čto skazat’.*
 me.DAT be.PRST what.ACC say.INF
 ‘There is something for me to say.’ [Jung, 2011:186]
- (4) *Toj rukopisi ne byt’ opublicovannoj*
 that manuscript.DAT.F NEG be.INF published.INST.F.SG
zarubezhnym izdatel’stvom.
 foreign publishing-house.INST [Moore & Perlmutter 2000:393]
 ‘It’s not (in the cards) for that manuscript to be published by a foreign publishing house.’
- (5) *Ja poprosil Ivana_i [PRO_i priiti odnomu_i].*
 I asked Ivan.ACC come.INF alone.DAT.M
 ‘I asked Ivan_i [PRO_i to come alone].’ [Jung, 2011:110]

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