

Ljiljana Šarić

On the semantics of the “dative of possession” in the Slavic languages: An analysis on the basis of Russian, Polish, Croatian/Serbian and Slovenian examples

1. Introduction

Studies of case in the framework of Cognitive Grammar (see Wierzbicka, 1986, 1988, Janda 1993, Dąbrowska 1997, for some of the analyses of the Slavic data) have shown that the meaning of case can be captured systematically and that its semantic characterization differentiates it from other semantic categories. Case markers are meaningful elements that are combined with nominals to specify the nature of their involvement in a clausal process. A case comprises a network of related senses pertaining primarily to semantic role, and takes some role archetype as its prototypical value (Langacker 1991). Other linguistic categories, such as number, person or tense, can be related to aspects of the non-linguistic environment in a fairly straightforward way, whereas it is not easy to find real-world correlates of a particular case. Each case category has a number of different functions. Their variety form a network held together by various categorizing relationships, which include extension from a prototype, schematization and mutual similarity.

The subject of this article is the analysis of the uses of the dative case known as the dative of possession (DP)¹ in a cross-Slavic perspective. The data concentrate mainly on Croatian, Slovenian, Russian and Polish, i.e. on examples like (1):

(1) a. Kolega **mu**_{Dat} je otišao iz kuće prije njega. [Cro]²

¹ The dative of possession is a means of expressing the attributive possession (Cro *pas*_{Nom} *Ivanu*_{Dat} ‘Ivan’s dog’). The first component of the NP need not be nominative.

‘His colleague had left the house before he did.’

b. Roko **starcu**_{Dat} Lambergar poljubi. [SI]

‘Lambergar kissed the old man’s hand.’

c. Žizn’ vy **mne**_{Dat} iskalečili. (Pogodin) [Russ]

‘You ruined my life.’

d. Jakiś szaleniec rozbił **Kasi**_{Dat} samochód. [Pol]

‘Some madman crashed Kasia’s car.’

The relationship of these uses and the possessive expressions which are often thought of as being semantically equivalent or very similar (i.e., the possessive adjective or possessive genitive) is discussed. This study also discusses the question of whether this use of the dative is an expression of possession at all, or of a more complex content. Furthermore, the notion of the inalienable possession and its importance for the description of the dative of possession is discussed, as well as the contextual factors which enable the appearance of the dative of possession. Similar uses of the dative and the characteristic of the dative network which shed light on this particular use of the dative are considered, too. Finally, the goal of the study is to find cross-Slavic regularities and differences in the use of the dative of possession. In discussing these topics, existing analyses of case and possession within the framework of Cognitive Grammar are considered (i.e., Cienki 1993, 1995, Langacker 1993, and others).

In analyzing the semantic and pragmatic factors³ which determine the usage of the DP in Russian, Croatian/Serbian, Slovenian and Polish, the aim is to identify and analyze differences among the languages and to highlight differences in the conceptualization which are reflected through the use of the DP.

2. Possession as a semantic category and the possessive role of the dative

In Cognitive Grammar, the entire meaning of a case can be described in the form of a radial network, consisting of a central/prototypical meaning, which is linked to other meanings via metaphorical, metonymical or antonymic extensions. Traditional

² Abbreviations: Cro = Croatian, SI = Slovenian, Russ = Russian, Pol = Polish, OCS = Old Church Slavonic, Slo = Slovak, Cz = Czech.

³ Syntactic factors will only be considered if they are semantically important.

descriptions, however, give long lists enumerating the different uses of a case. Instead of simply listing the DP one of a number of uses of the dative, this study attempts to link the DP to the overall meaning of the dative case.

The general nature of the possessive usage of the dative and its geography in the Slavic area will be considered first. In general descriptions of case, the role of the possessor is listed as one of the main functions of the dative (Blake 1994 gives Latin examples)⁴. The approaches that examine the category of all forms of possession discuss the same use of the dative. Heine (1997) describes in the cognitive frame the goal schema as one of the sources of possession.⁵ In the case of attributive possession, the possessor is introduced by means of some directional marker, usually an allative, dative, or benefactive adposition or case inflection. The goal schema is frequently the origin of the patterns of attributive possession.⁶

According to Langacker (1991), the term “possessive” is somehow misleading, since the possessive expressions are used for a diverse array of relationships, only some of which involve possession in the prototypical sense of ownership (e.g. *my red car*). The expressions also frequently mark the relationship between a whole and its parts (*his leg*), between associated individuals (*John’s sister*), or between a setting and some entity situated therein. Virtually any type of association is susceptible to possessive encoding. Langacker states that the only thing that all possessive locutions have in common is that one entity (the possessor) is invoked as a reference point for purposes of establishing mental contact with another (the possessed). The three basic values of possessives are ownership, kinship terms and part-whole relations (Langacker 1993: 7-9). In a nominal possessive expression employing the dative case as in Croatian *kćerka*_{Nom} *Marku*_{Dat} ‘Marko’s daughter’, the possessor (*Marko*) is the reference point by which the target, the entity possessed (*kćerka*) is identified.

⁴ The DP exists alongside the possessive genitive and the possessive adjective in Latin:

(i) *Illi*_{Dat} *duae*_{Nom} *fuere filiae*_{Nom}.

‘He had two daughters.’

(ii) *Illius*_{Gen} *duae*_{Nom} *fuere filiae*_{Nom}.

‘The two daughters were his.’

⁵ The other event schemas that account for the majority of possessive constructions are action, location, companion, genitive, source, topic, equation (Heine 1997: 91)

⁶ Heine (1997: 95) cites an example from Aranda:

(i) *Toby-ke*_{Dat} *alere*

‘Toby’s child’

Any kind of association can motivate a possible possessive relationship (Langacker 1991). The semantic import of possession is merely that two entities figure in the same cognitive domain – any conception whatever can function as the domain, and either relational participant can have any role within it. This is very general and fails to explain why the whole is generally construed as a possessor of a part, rather than conversely (**the neck’s girl*), or why the possessor’s status is virtually always conferred on the latter (**the knife’s boy*). The asymmetries are found in constructions that take the possessor as a landmark (*the roof of the house/*the house of the roof*) and in those that make it the trajector (*The house has a roof/*The roof has a house*).

Possessive constructions evoke an idealized cognitive model that is abstract, ubiquitous in its applicability to everyday experience and fundamental to how we conceptualize the world. The essence of the model is that some entities are most easily located with reference to others. The objects vary greatly in their salience to a given observer; if the viewer knows that a non-salient object lies near a salient one, he can find it by directing his attention to the latter and searching in its vicinity.

For the semantics of DP, the notion of the alienable and inalienable possession is very important. Inalienable category has also been called “intimate” and “inherent”, or has been associated with part-whole relations (Chappell & McGregor 1996). Items that cannot normally be separated from their owners are inalienable, while all others are alienable. The inalienable category consists of a closed set of nouns. The items belonging to the following conceptual domains are likely to be treated as inalienable: kinship terms, body parts, relational spatial concepts (top, bottom, interior), inherent parts of the items (branch, handle), physical or mental states (strength, fear). There are a number of individual concepts in a given language that may also be treated as inalienable (name, voice, smell, shadow, footprint, home...). The way inalienability is defined in a given case or in a given language is dependent on culture-specific conventions. Many languages mark a morphosyntactic distinction between an inalienable and an alienable category. The distinction is confined to attributive possession and is likely to be associated with a number of features. Inalienable possession involves a tighter structural bond between possessum and possessor, and possessive markers on inalienable nouns are more “archaic” (Nichols 1992: 117).

3. The DP in the Slavic languages

The DP is not a purely Slavic phenomenon, of course. The possessive role of the dative case is mentioned in analyses of case and of the category of possession in many languages. According to the grammatical descriptions, the usage of the DP in the Slavic languages ranges from absent (e.g. Ukrainian) to widespread (Czech). In Old Church Slavonic, grammatical possession is expressed by the dative or genitive of a noun, or by a denominal adjective⁷. The adnominal dative or genitive is used much more freely for plural than for singular possessors (*prědanъ imatъ byti synъ člověčьsky vъ r qcě člověkomъ_{Dat}* (Marianus) (Matthew 17.22) ‘the son of man will be betrayed into the hands of men’ (Huntley 1993: 177)). In OCS there are strong constraints against the adjective in the singular when the head noun is modified by more than one word. In that context the head noun is almost always modified by an adnominal dative or genitive.

The dative as an expression of possession is not mentioned in the description of the category of possession in Ukrainian (Comrie & Corbett 1993: 987-988), whereas it exists in Belorussian in some verbal phrases including body parts, and in some noun phrases in which the possessors as well as possessums are realized as personal pronouns (*ty vorah mne* ‘you are my enemy’) (Comrie & Corbett 935). The DP is an extremely rare phenomenon in Cassubian (*Jěmu běło miono Karól* ‘his name was Karól’) (Stone 1993: 789). In Polish, the DP is a common expression primarily for inalienable possession (*Józefowi umarl ojciec* ‘Joseph’s father died’) (Rothstein 1993: 747). The DP is not mentioned as an expression of possession in Sorbian (Stone 1993: 671-672), whereas it is claimed to be common in the sphere of intimate possession in Slovak (*vlasy mu vypadali* ‘his hair fell out’, *Petruške zomrela matka* ‘Petruška’s mother died’ (Short 1993: 581))⁸. In Czech, it is almost obligatory with the body parts (*Rozbil si nohu* ‘He

⁷ In Protoslavonic, the dative was the directional case, the case of the indirect object, and it denoted the agent/beneficiary in non-personal constructions; it was the subject in the “dative with the infinitive” construction (*tomu ne byti*).

⁸ The borderline between plain possession and various *dativi (in-)commodi* is a fine one (that applies to all Slavic languages which make use of the DP). The meaning of the verb influences the interpretation of the dative as *commodi* or *incommodi*. Not only a sentence with a DP, but every sentence with a dative can have, because of the verb meaning, the *(in)commodi* interpretation. The item possessed can be nominative or non-nominative:

broke his (own) leg’, *Umyla mu vlasy* ‘She washed his hair’ (Short 1993: 517-518)) as well as with other expressions of the intimate possession (*Unesli mu dceru* ‘They kidnapped his daughter’, *Strčil jí bonbony do kapsy kabátu* ‘He popped the sweets in her coat pocket’ (Short: 1993: 518)). The clitic form of the DP is restricted to kinship terms in Macedonian (*majka mu stara* ‘his old mother’, *majka mu na carot* ‘mother of the emperor’ ((Friedman 1983: 286; 293)).⁹ Dative clitic pronouns are the standard way to express possession in Bulgarian (*tova sa knjigite mi* ‘this books are mine’ (Friedman 1993: 237)).¹⁰

In Section 3.1 the DP in Russian as opposed to Croatian/Serbian is discussed. Section 3.2 discusses the use of the DP in Slovenian, whereas Section 3.3 examines the use of the DP in Polish. On the basis of the analysis in Section 3, in Section 4 the semantic factors which determine the use of DP are discussed.

(i) **Petrovi**_{Dat} vypadali vlasy.

‘Peter’s hair fell out.’

(ii) Záhrada **im**_{Dat}/**susedom**_{Dat} pekne kvitne.

‘Their/the neighbour’s garden is flowering nicely.’

(iii) Chalani rozbili **učitel’ovi**_{Dat} okno. [Slo]

‘Some lads broke the teacher’s window.’ (Short 1993: 581).

⁹ Terms denoting close relationships can add a possessive pronominal expression without the definite article for emphasis: *tatko mi moj* ‘my father’. The reflexive dative clitic *si* can be used in a verb phrase with the definite form of a noun that does not normally take the possessive dative clitic to indicate possession: *zemi si go paltoto* ‘take your coat’. (Mitkovska 2000: 293-294). Mitkovska’s analysis shows that the constructions which can be interpreted as DP are quite widespread in Macedonian. However, in many cases it is not a purely possessive construction (as in Bulgarian): it is still tied to the verb phrase and, with the exception of a number of family terms, cannot be attached to a noun.

¹⁰ The dative enclitic reflexive is regularly replaced by the reflexive possessive adjective for emphasis: *az vzex svojata kniga* ‘I took my own book’. In the first and second person, non-reflexive possessives are possible for greater emphasis: *vzex mojata kniga*. Here dative non-reflexive forms are ungrammatical or questionable: **Vzex knjigata mi*; ?*Dadox mu knjigata mi*. ‘I gave him my book.’ (Maslov 1981: 302)

3.1 The DP in Russian as opposed to Croatian/Serbian

The semantic features of the DP and possessive pronouns and their relation to each other in the following corpora have been examined¹¹: for Russian, the Uppsala corpus; for Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin, a corpus of fictional prose with about 700 000 word forms. Only examples of the DP with the personal pronoun were considered (105 Russian and 315 Serbian/Croatian examples), i.e. examples of the type:

- (2) a. On [...], vstavaj i begal po komnate, nastupaja **nam**_{Dat} na nogi.
(Vasil'ev)
'He stood up, ran through the room and trampled on our feet.'
- b. Prišao sam prozoru. I uplašio se mjesečine što **mi**_{Dat} je udarila u lice.
(Selimović)
'I went to the window and became frightened because of the moonshine, that hit into my face.'

Concerning the examples with the possessive pronoun, only those in which the possessum is a body part were extracted (78 Russian and 330 Croatian/Serbian examples).

The results are presented as they relate to the semantics of the DP, and the factors determining the usage of the DP are discussed.

In Russian there is a dynamic verb in each of the sentences analyzed, and its action is directed towards the possessum, as in example (2a) above. The effect of an action on a possessum and its possessor seems to be a very important factor in the choice of the DP construction. Stative verbs do not combine with the DP in Russian.¹² The DP is limited to contexts in which the action influences the possessum directly. The analysis has shown that the DP is the most natural possessive construction when the noun phrase involves body parts (87.6% of the examples of the possessums denote body parts, in other examples the possessums are human qualities, other abstract concepts, clothes and

¹¹ Only sentences with an animate possessor were considered.

¹² This concurs with Levine's (1984) analysis, which presupposes a dynamic verb and an accusative NP.

other concrete nouns). The examples show that with the body parts, the DP is more frequent than a possessive pronoun.

The DP tends strongly in Russian to refer to possessums inalienably linked with the possessor. In 96.2% of the examples, the possessums are inalienable. The data further show that Russian does not permit the expression of kinship terms as possessums with the DP.

The DP in Russian is thus a limited phenomenon, and grammatical descriptions hardly mention the DP at all.¹³ Concerning the argument structure of the sentence, the data show that the DP is much more limited in its usage than possessive pronouns. The conditions influencing the appearance of the DP in Russian are as follows: the function in the sentence (locational expression or a direct object), verbal semantics (a dynamic process is required), and the semantic functions (patient or directional expression). In Russian, the DP is almost always a construction expressing inalienability (though it is not exclusively used with the body parts). Alienable possessums are rare:

(3) [...] položila **emu**_{Dat} na tarelku kusok mjaso v krasnovato-zolotistom že. (Tokareva)

‘She put a piece of meat in the red-golden-brown jelly on his plate.’

Descriptions of the DP often emphasize loss or damage in connection with the semantics of DP. In fact, the majority of Russian examples express negative action (harm), as illustrated in (1c). Other examples behave neutrally in respect to loss or damage:

(4) On ser'ezno posmotrel **mne**_{Dat} v lico... (Granin)

‘He looked seriously in my face.’

Although many examples with the DP are connected with situations of harm or loss, positive action (benefit) for the possessor is possible, as in (5), but such uses are not as frequent as those connected with harm or loss:

(5) a. Postojal, potom naklonilsja i poceloval **ej**_{Dat} ruku. (Ganina)

‘He stood there for a certain time, bent forward and kissed her hand.’

¹³ Sullivan (1993: 329) regards the dative expression in the example *Ja položil knigu na ruku emu*_{Dat} ‘I have put the book into his hand’ as an unnecessary extension of the Goal, and claims that the translation might motivate the term “dative of possession”. This use is not productive, since in Russian productive adjectival and substantival possessums exist. He claims that the Russian dative is an unmarked realization of the Goal concept, and that non-locative uses can be described with help of locational uses.

b. Larisa Vasil'evna... blagodarno požala **ej**_{Dat} ruku. (Lidin)

‘Larisa Vasilevna... gratefully pressed her hand.’

In contrast to Russian, the use of the DP is very common in Croatian and Serbian (and corresponding grammatical descriptions mention the DP regularly).¹⁴ The DP is also very common in neutral or positive contexts. Nearly half of the extracted appearances of the DP are not expressive, but neutral expressions of possession. In accordance with the data from the corpus, the following tendencies can be seen. Concerning syntactic structure, the DP tends to be the first argument in a sentence (this is not possible in Russian):

(6) Slušam i trudim se da budem pribrana, a noge **mi**_{Dat} odjednom oslabiše i klecave jedva me drže. (Božović)

‘I am listening and trying to be concentrated, but my legs are suddenly weak and trembling, they hardly hold me.’

With respect to semantic features, the verbs in the data are mainly dynamic (the ratio of dynamic to non-dynamic verbs is 4:1). The presence of stative verbs means that, in contrast to the Russian examples, the effect of an action on the possessum and its possessor is not the defining factor in choosing the DP:

(7) Lice **mu**_{Dat} bijaše opušteno [...] (Barbieri)

‘His face was relaxed.’

The possessums tend to be inalienable. Nouns denoting body parts¹⁵ are the most frequent (about 61%), followed by those denoting human qualities (about 10%), other abstract nouns (about 9%), kinship terms (about 8%), other concrete nouns (6%), clothing terms (about 5%), and other humans (less than 1%). Of the kinship terms, the most frequently occurring are *mother* and *father*, as the central elements of this semantic category:

(8) I oca su **mi**_{Dat} ubili komite još prije. (Krleža)

‘Earlier the Komitadji killed my father too.’

3.2 The DP in Slovenian

¹⁴ Cf. z. B. Barić et al. 1997: 562-563, Raguž 1997: 136, Težak-Babić 1994: 255.

¹⁵ The most frequent nouns are *glava* ‘head’ (26 examples), *ruka* ‘hand’ (25), *oči* ‘eyes’ (21), *lice* ‘face’ (20), *srce* ‘heart’ (13), *noga* ‘leg/foot’ (7), *grlo* ‘neck, throat’ (7), *prst* ‘finger’ (6).

The use of genitive and dative personal pronouns to express possession is considered stylistically marked and somewhat archaic in Slovenian. The adjective is a most common expression of the possessive relation with an animate possessor (*materina hiša* ‘mother’s house’ is more common than *hiša matere_{Gen}*) (Priestly 1993: 440). However, the DP is mentioned in both older and newer grammatical descriptions of Slovenian (cf. Bajec et al. 1956, Toporišič 1991, 1992). The DP in Slovenian is used significantly less than in Croatian/Serbian. Instances like (9a)-(9d), which illustrate the use of the DP in Slovenian, are stylistically marked (archaic or poetic) expressions:

- (9) a. Ti kondor, **soncu**_{Dat} brat!
 ‘Thou condor, brother of the sun’
- b. Umril je Bercetov France, **družini**_{Dat} skrben oče.
 ‘France Bercetov, the caring father of the family, died.’
- c. Up, **bolniku**_{Dat} najzvestejši tovariš, je tudi nesrečnemu fantu dajal moči.
 (Bajec et al. 1956: 323).
 ‘The hope, the truest friend of a sick person, gave strength to the unlucky boy, too.’
- d. Bodi **mi**_{Dat} prijatelj. (Bajec et al. 1956: 137).
 ‘Be my friend’

The DP is presented in the grammars as being substitutable by a genitive attribute or an adjectival attribute, as shown in example (10):

- (10) a. Roko **starcu**_{Dat} Lambergar poljubi (roko *starčevo*).
 ‘Lambergar kissed the old man’s hand.’
- b. Ogenj pritajen v očeh **jim**_{Dat} gori (v *njihovih* očeh).
 ‘The hidden flame glows in their eyes.’
- c. Rad gledam **ti**_{Dat} v valove bodre (v *tvoje* bodre valove). (Bajec et al. 1956: 137).

‘I watch your sprightly waves with pleasure.’

Alternative constructions sometimes coexist in the same context, a further argument for substitutability:

(11) Kaj je **naša** tretja luč? Kaj **nam**_{Dat} je četrta luč?

‘What is our third light? What is the fourth light for us?’

As in Croatian, the use of the dative of personal pronouns is limited in that the stressed position in the sentence requires the possessive pronoun rather than a clitic. Compare (12a) with (12b):

(12) a. **Njegovo** knjigo sem našel, **svoje** pa ne.

‘I have found his book, but not mine.’

b. Oči so se **mu**_{Dat} razširile, usta so se **mu**_{Dat} odprla

‘His eyes grew wide, he opened his mouth.’

Although a clitic cannot appear at the beginning of a sentence or at a stressed position, the DP phrase (with a dative clitic pronoun) can appear at such positions in Slovenian as well as in Croatian:

(13) a. Sobo **mi**_{Dat} je očistil. [Sl.]

b. Sobu **mi**_{Dat} je očistio. [Cro]

‘He cleaned my room.’

Examples (12a) and (13a) with the pronominal form of the DP are considered neutral expressions.

The ethical (emotional) dative coincides with the possessive dative in some cases, so that it is not possible to determine the type of the usage without taking the broader context into account.

(14) Kje tihi si **mi**_{Dat} dom, ti sreča moja prava. [...] tiha žalost pa je v duši razlita - ne rabim te... A žalost ne gre **mi**_{Dat} proč skrita!

‘Where are you, my/the quiet home, you [are] my true joy. [...] the still hidden sadness is in the soul – I do not need you... And my/the sadness will not go away from me.’ (Toporišič 1991: 243)

In addition to the similarities in syntactic positions, the semantics of the possessums in the Slovenian DP is comparable to that in Croatian and Serbian (i.e. the possessums are usually body parts, kinship terms). The Slovenian DP, however, is strongly stylistically marked and is used far less than in Croatian/Serbian. The DP of nouns is particularly rare (cf. examples (9a)-(9b), (10a)). Accordingly, examples (15a) and (15b) with the DP of

pronouns are considered neutral expressions, while (15c), using DP of a noun as expressive (archaic, poetical or rare):

(15) a. Sen **mu**_{Dat} ne stisne oči.

‘The sleep did not close his eyes.’

b. So črni lasje **mi**_{Dat} in črne oči.

‘My hair and eyes are dark.’

c. Sonce žarko se zbudi, **viru**_{Dat} vale posuši.

‘The burning sun woke up and dried the waves of the spring.’

3.3 The DP in Polish

The DP is a common means of expression mainly for inalienable possession in Polish. Inalienable possessions (and some others) permit the use of a dative noun or pronoun to specify the possessor:

(16) a. **Józefowi**_{Dat} umarł ojciec.

‘Jozef’s father died.’

b. Zajrzała **mi**_{Dat} do gardła/do kieszeni.

‘She looked into my throat/my pocket.’ (Rothstein 1993: 747)

The typical use of the Polish DP can be illustrated by (17b). The sentences in (17) describe the situation in which an agent did something to a patient that “belongs” to another individual. The possessor can be expressed either by genitive or the dative:

(17) a. Jacek rozbił samochód **Roberta**_{Gen}.

b. Jacek rozbił **Robertowi**_{Dat} samochód.

‘Jacek crashed Robert’s car.’

Both (17a) and (17b) assert that Jacek crashed the car. (17b) additionally specifies that Robert was affected by the event in some way. It does not mean that (17a) rules out this possibility. However, the possibility of such an interpretation is much higher with (17b). The difference between sentences (17a) and (17b) is similar to the difference between the use of dative and *u* + *Gen* in Russian. Cienki’s (1993) research with native speakers of Russian shows that the tendency in Russian is to use the dative when referring to humans (as well as animals) with which the speaker feels empathy and to use of *u* +

genitive with inanimate entities and animals afforded less or no empathy by the speaker. So most of his informants preferred dative in (18a) and genitive in (18b):

(18) a. **Emu**_{Dat}/**u nego**_{Gen} minoj otorvalo nogu. (Cienki 1993: 82)

‘His leg was blown off by a mine.’

b. **U krokodila**_{Gen}/**Krokodilu**_{Dat} vyrvali bol’noj zub. [Russ]

‘They pulled the crocodile’s sore tooth.’ (Cienki 1993: 83)

As Cienki observes, there is a strong connection between the animacy hierarchy¹⁶ and empathy. Empathy is based upon seeing a similarity with oneself, including shared, common concerns. If the affected object is at the top of the animacy hierarchy, a speaker will more likely assume the “inner” perspective of the affected being and thereby have empathy with it. If the affected object is at the bottom of the hierarchy, a speaker will more likely retain the outside perspective, i.e., the more objective viewpoint of the observer of the situation. The following is a simplified version of the animacy hierarchy: Pronouns (1st person > 2nd > 3rd) proper names > kinship terms > other humans > other animals > physical objects > abstract entities

In discussing the uses of the *Dativus sympatheticus*, Havers (1911: 327f) states that the use of that construction has developed in the following way:

1st person > 2nd person > 3rd person > proper names > kinship terms > other common nouns

The topicality scale of Givón (1984: 159) can be connected with Haver’s proposition:

-degree of referentiality/topicality: pronoun > definite NP > indefinite NP

-degree of individuation: singular > plural

-degree of egocentricity: 1st person > 2nd person > 3rd person

On the basis of the animacy hierarchy, the empathy hierarchy can be established:

body parts > kinship terms > other relations between humans > clothes > other objects an individual is interested in, etc.

If we go back to the Polish examples in (17) in light of this observation, it may be concluded that the speaker in (17a) is more likely to concentrate only on the single relation of possession expressed by the genitive, whereas the speaker in (17b) is more

¹⁶ Silverstein (1976) originally developed the animacy hierarchy to explain case-marking in split-ergative languages.

likely to focus on how the possessor is affected by an outside force acting on its possession. Assuming empathy with the possessor, the speaker can relate to its dual role as an Experiencer/Possessor which is reflected by the dative case (Cienki 1993). Therefore Janda (1993) describes the DP construction as the “dative of affectedness via possession”.

In a nominal possessive expression that employs the dative case in Polish, the possessed entities are often body parts, kinship terms, personal belongings, the territory of the possessor, e.g., objects connected with very personal aspects of one's life:

- (19) a. Matka umyła **Kasi**_{Dat} głowę.
 ‘Mother washed Kasia’s hair.’
 b. Żona **mu**_{Dat} umarła.
 ‘His wife died.’
 c. Ola pochlapała **Kasi**_{Dat} kurtkę.
 ‘Ola splashed water on Kasia's skirt.’
 d. Adam wkradł się **Ewie**_{Dat} do sypialni.
 ‘Adam stole into Ewa's bedroom.’

If the described actions involve more peripheral elements of the personal sphere, the degree of acceptability of the DP decreases, cf. (20a) and (20b), respectively:

- (20) a. Pies polizał **mi**_{Dat} rękę.
 ‘The dog has licked my hand.’ (Wierzbicka 1988: 402)
 b. ??Pies polizał **mi**_{Dat} zderzak. (Dąbrowska 1997: 22)
 ‘The dog has licked my [car’s] bumper.’

There is an inverse correlation between centrality in the personal sphere and the degree of affectedness of the direct participant.¹⁷ That degree influences the acceptability of the expression with the dative nominal. Peripheral elements have to be very affected (i.e., they must undergo a change of state or location) in order the DP construction be fully acceptable:

- (21) a. ??Piotr wszedł **Ewie**_{Dat} do biura.
 ‘Piotr came into Ewa’s office.’

¹⁷ Wierzbicka (1988) uses the term “target person” to refer to affected individuals.

b. Piotr włamał się **Ewie**_{Dat} do biura.’

‘Piotr broke into Ewa’s office.’

The location does not undergo a change of state if someone merely moves into it and the person associated with the location would not normally be seen as affected; hence the low acceptability of (21a). The conditions of affectedness and change of state are not necessary for Croatian/Serbian equivalents of the Polish examples (20b) and (21a) to be absolutely acceptable (although they are relevant and make DP in Croatian/Serbian more likely). The dative of possession in Polish is more strongly connected with these conditions and with inalienable possession than in Croatian/Serbian. In other words, it can be claimed that the range of the ways entities could be affected are conceptualized differently in Polish as opposed to Croatian/Serbian.

4. The semantic factors which determine use of the DP

The majority of Russian examples analyzed in Section 3.1 express negative action (harm) for the possessor or are neutral statements, although positive action (benefit) is possible. The negative or positive connotations of context, however, seem less important than the phenomenon of affectedness. Possessors are generally more affected by loss or damage than by a “neutral” event or state. They are also affected by a positive event or state, since this event or state happens within its personal sphere.¹⁸ As long as the possessors are affected, i.e. the events happen within their personal sphere, positive events are as likely to occur with DP as negative ones.

Some analyses have associated the possessive dative with inalienability (e.g. Levine 1984, Cienki 1993; 1995). The use of the DP is associated with inalienability to the degree that inalienable entities play the most important role in the personal sphere. This means that the issue is not about inalienability per se, but rather the possessor must be closely associated with the possessum or the possessum bears a certain importance for the possessor. That is why example (1c) *Žizn’ vy mne iskalečili* means not only ‘You have ruined my life’, but also implies the following context: ‘You have ruined my life; I am affected by this; it has harsh consequences for me and you have destroyed my

¹⁸ Wierzbicka (1986: 404) suggests that the dative can encode the idea of a personal sphere.

future’. The sources for such an understanding of the DP can usually be found in the larger context (written or spoken), provided such context exists. This means that “pure” possession is not decisive for the prototypical meaning of the DP, as is the case for a possessive pronoun or a possessive adjective, but rather the semantic component of the affectedness of the possessor - possession is rather a means through which the dative entity can be affected. Possession acts merely as a vehicle for affecting the dative entity, thus the DP expression is different in value from ordinary expressions of possession by means of the genitive case or possessive adjective. Accordingly, Kottum (1979: 125) observes that the Polish DP is not entirely synonymous with the use of other possessive expressions. Levine (1984: 495) notes for the Russian DP that it is more informative than corresponding sentences with the genitive. Pit’ha (1971: 310) asserts for the Czech DP that the dative is not the bearer of the possessive meaning in such constructions: possession is emphasized but not established by this use of the dative.

Therefore the DP, in a strict sense, is not a synonym of the other possessives. The fact that the dative expresses affectedness via possession rather than possession per se is upheld by the fact that there is no rule preventing the DP from co-occurring with other possessives. Janda (1993) cites the Czech sentence (22a) which is acceptable to three out of five native speakers. The Croatian equivalent in (22b) is also judged as acceptable, though as very expressive:

- (22) a. Když se vrátil, viděl, že **mu**_{Dat} shořel **jeho** dům. (Janda 1993: 86) [Cz]
 b. Kada se je vratio, vidio je da **mu**_{Dat} je izgorjela **njegova** kuća. [Cro]
 ‘When he returned, he saw that his house had burned down.’

Hence the possible overlapping spheres of the possessive pronoun and the DP are decided by pragmatic factors and knowledge about the world of the speaker. Namely, if the speaker is not at the same time possessor in the utterance, he must have a motivation to use the DP – he must know or presume that the possessor is affected, or the nature of the event leads him to suggest this to the hearer. If the speaker is the possessor in the utterance, the DP express his emotional commitment.¹⁹ The DP is the more emphatic possibility in a situation in which the speaker wants to express more than a possessive

¹⁹ This observations are based on examples discussed in this article. However, they may apply to other Slavic languages which make use of DP as well. Janda’s analysis (1993: 82-88) shows that they hold in general for Czech, too.

relationship (see the discussion above of Cienki’s (1993) connection between the use of the dative and empathy as it relates to the animacy hierarchy).

The DP is used whenever the effect of an action on the possessor is central in an utterance. The uses of the DP can deviate from the prototypical meaning, of course. We cannot speak of affectedness or empathy in some uses of the DP in Croatian/Serbian (particularly in 5.4% of the examples in which the possessor has the semantic function of the agent, see Section 3.1). Here the uses are generated through analogy after the prototypical DP:

- (23) [...] glas **joj**_{Dat} presiječe oštar vrisak sirene. (Marinković) [Cro]
 ‘Her voice cut the shrill screeching of the siren.’

However, in about half of the examples with the DP the possessor is affected by a process, so 50% of examples of the DP in Croatian/Serbian function to portray the possessor as affected by the action. Because of the extensions of the prototypical sphere of the DP in Croatian and Serbian, the DP holds functions that in Russian are shared by the DP and possessive pronouns.

The semantics of the DP evokes the following question: how is the use of the dative connected with the general meaning of this case? In the framework of cognitive grammar, all linguistic forms have meaning. The meaning of a case can be realized in the form of a radial network (Lakoff’s term), in which different parts of the network are related by different categorizing principles. These principles include the extensions of a prototype, as well as schematizing principles and similarity principles. Janda (1993), in her description of the meaning of the dative in Czech, presupposes two parts of the dative network: one part covers the uses of the dative as the indirect object; the other covers the uses of the so-called free dative. Janda supposes that the indirect object is the prototypical use of the dative, and thus the verbs of giving are of decisive importance. The indirect object in connection with verbs of giving does not necessarily have to hold a specific status, because the indirect object is also strongly connected with possession. It can also be ambiguous whether a dative expression in a sentence is the indirect object, the DP, or the dative of the beneficiary,²⁰ cf. example (24):

²⁰ Janda (1993: 48 ff.) gives the following Czech examples:

(i) Ludmila **mu**_{Dat} dala kytku.
 ‘Ludmila gave him a flower.’

(24) Očistio **mi**_{Dat} je sobu. [Cro]

‘He cleaned my room/He cleaned the room for me.’

It appears more important to work with the terms controlled sphere, sphere of influence or personal sphere. These terms can connect prototypically all parts of the cognitive dative network.²¹ The verbs of giving do not have to hold a specific status in this network. Giving means to add an object into the personal sphere of an individual – and possession is necessarily a part of an individual’s personal sphere. The personal sphere is commonly connected with the human being. However, it can also be ascribed to an entity or an organization that metaphorically possesses, or could possess, a personal sphere. Some parts of the personal sphere are more salient than others. In the case of DP, we have seen that some elements are more central than others in its use (body parts are more central than clothes, clothes are more central than other elements of personal possession, etc.). Moreover, some events have more influence on the affected person.²² The dative is a grammatical expression of the role of the affected person (whether actual or potential). An individual is typically affected when his/her personal sphere is affected. Central elements of the personal sphere are body parts and objects directly connected with the body. However, the personal sphere is an open category, and inclusion into this sphere is determined by cultural and contextual factors that vary from language to language. The use of the DP is connected closely with centrality in the personal sphere, so that some examples seem to be more acceptable than others or more natural than others. (25a) is perhaps more natural than (25b), although both are absolutely acceptable in Croatian.²³

(25) a. Kćerka **mu**_{Dat} je otišla u Indiju.

‘His daughter went to India.’

b. Kolegica **mu**_{Dat} je otišla u Indiju.

[Cro]

‘His colleague went to India.’

(ii) Ludmila **mu**_{Dat} dala pusinku na čelo. [Cz]

‘Ludmila kissed his forehead.’

²¹ See Dąbrowska 1997 for similar examinations of the Polish dative.

²² This concept is very similar to the one which Gallis (1963) termed “involved object” on the trace of H. Hübschmann (Zur Kasuslehre, 1875).

²³ Concerning the differences between the analyzed languages, it is significant that the informants did not consider the Slovenian equivalent of (25b) acceptable with the DP, but only with the DP of a personal pronoun.

The connectedness of all elements of the semantic network of the dative and the fact that the DP only originates in connection with semantic and pragmatic factors in a context (hence not a purely syntactic phenomenon) is shown by the uses in which (without a broader context) it is ambiguous whether a dative is the DP or a dative of the beneficiary (cf. example (24)). Many examples can be interpreted both as DP or ethical dative²⁴, or as dative of solidarity (*dativus sympatheticus*), or sometimes even as an indirect object. If we include the allative uses of the dative in contemporary Slavic languages, they are connected with the other uses according to family resemblance principles.²⁵

5. Conclusion

A number of syntactic and semantic factors determine the speaker’s choice of a linguistic expression. In the case of the choice between the DP and other possessive constructions, a speaker’s high degree of empathy with the possessor and his/her construal of a strong effect on it would enlarge the possibility of use of the DP – that is true in general for the languages which make use of this construction. Here the factors which determine the “empathy value” (Cienki 1993) are very important²⁶ and are to some extent subjectively judged by the speaker. It is significant that cross-linguistic differences in use of the DP are fairly systematic. We have seen that the referents of the dative are usually body parts and other intimate possessions. In the languages where DP is considered to be extremely rare, it appears only with personal pronouns (Belorussian). That factor is connected with the empathy hierarchy (see Section 3.3).

The DP is more egocentric, more referential and more individuated than other possessive expressions. This is the reason why it is used frequently with body parts, kinship terms and other elements of the personal sphere. This also explains why the DP is usually a pronoun (cf. the situation in Slovenian where the DP of personal pronouns,

²⁴ The ethical dative is a pragmatic means by which the speaker includes the event in the personal sphere of the hearer, so that he/she is included in the narration of the event.

²⁵ Directedness towards a goal also implies directedness towards the personal sphere; this is especially true for the uses of the “dative of directedness” without prepositions in Croatian/Serbian (Cro *Idem Vladi* ‘I go to Vlado’). Allative uses of dative were previously central. However, the networks can change diachronically.

²⁶ These factors are: high on animacy hierarchy, familiar referent, informal, emotional speech situation, verb of action/motion toward referent, singular (individual possessor).

especially of the 1st person pronoun, are judged to be neutral, whereas nominal uses of the DP are judged stylistically marked or unacceptable).

The more central an element is within the personal sphere, the higher the probability of the DP. As shown in the analysis, languages differ to some extent with respect to the variety of elements that can be included in the personal sphere. The degree to which speakers can empathize with the referent of dative, i.e. the degree to which the speakers of the individual language can treat a person as affected or personally involved in a state of affairs, seems to differ, too (compare the differences between Croatian/Serbian and Polish in Section 3.3). The more peripheral the elements of the personal sphere are, the more change in their state can be expected if they are encoded as the DP. This occurs in Slavic languages with a fairly common use of the DP. This is true for Russian and Slovenian where the use is semantically and/or syntactically limited and rare. This is also true for about a half of the uses of DP in Croatian and Serbian (where the DP keeps its original connection with inalienable possession or with central elements of the personal sphere). However, in most Croatian and Serbian examples the DP has lost this original connection with the personal sphere, empathy and expressiveness. It has become a purely neutral expression of possession, as it is e.g. in Bulgarian.²⁷ This is shown by the frequent use of the DP in scientific texts, where it is used parallel with the possessive pronoun to avoid repetition.

When the frequency of the DP in Croatian and Serbian is compared to the frequency in Slovenian, Russian and Polish, it can be seen that Croatian and Serbian are closer to the West Slavic Languages (Polish, Czech, Slovak) than to Slovenian or Russian. This is also the case for other extensions of dative meanings.²⁸

References

- Bajec, A., R. Kolarič, M. Rupel 1956. *Slovenska slovnica*. Ljubljana.
 Barić, E. (et al.) 1997. *Hrvatska gramatika*. Školska knjiga: Zagreb.
 Blake, B. J. 1994. *Case*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

²⁷ In Bulgarian, the DP is not considered marked (Hinrichs 1999: 445 ff.), but rather as a facultative variant that competes with possessive pronouns.

²⁸ According to Janda (1993: 13), the North-Eastern languages in Central and Eastern Europe (Russian and Ukrainian) do not allow for extensions of the category indirect object via antonymy, while they are frequent in the Southern languages (Czech, Croatian and Serbian, German, Lithuanian, Romanian and Greek).

- Chappell, H. & W. McGregor (eds.) 1996. *The grammar of inalienability: A topological perspective on body part terms and the part-whole relation*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Cienki, A. 1993. Experiencers, possessors, and overlap between Russian dative and *u* + genitive. *Proceedings of the 19th Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*: 76-89.
- Cienki, A. 1995. The semantics of possessive and spatial constructions in Russian and Bulgarian: a comparative analysis in cognitive grammar. *Slavic and East European Journal* 39: 73-114.
- Comrie, B. & G. G. Corbett 1993. *The Slavonic languages*. Routledge: London and New York.
- Dąbrowska, E. 1997. *Cognitive semantics and the Polish dative*. Berlin – New York: Mouton de Gruyter
- Friedman, V. A. 1993. Macedonian. In: Comrie, Bernard & Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic languages*. Routledge: London and New York: 249-305.
- Gallis, A. 1963. Datel’nyj padež napravlenija v slavjanskih jazykax. *Scandoslavica* 9: 104-22.
- Givón, T. 1984. *Syntax: A functional-typological introduction*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Havers, W. 1911. *Untersuchungen zur Kasussyntax der indogermanischen Sprachen*. Straßburg: Verlag von Karl J. Trübner.
- Heine, B. 1997. *Cognitive foundations of grammar*. New York. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hinrichs, U. 1999. Die sogenannten ‘Balkanismen’ als Problem der Südosteuropa-Linguistik und der allgemeinen Sprachwissenschaft. In: Hinrichs, U. (Hrsg.), *Handbuch der Südosteuropa-Linguistik*. Wiesbaden, 429-462.
- Huntley, D. 1993. Old Church Slavonic. In: Comrie, Bernard & Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic languages*. Routledge: London and New York: 125-187.
- Išačenko, A. V. 1974. On ‘have’ and ‘be’ languages: A typological sketch. In: Flier, M. S. (ed.) *Slavic Forum: Essays in Linguistic and Literature*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Janda, L. A. 1993. *A geography of case semantics. The Czech dative and the Russian instrumental*. Berlin – New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kottum, S. E. 1979. *A semantic distinctive feature analysis of the Polish case system with a comparison to Russian*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Indiana University.
- Langacker, R. 1991. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Volume II. Descriptive application*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, R. 1993. Reference-point constructions. *Cognitive Linguistics* 4, 1: 1-38.
- Levine, J. D. 1984. On the dative of possession in contemporary Russian. In: *Slavic and East European Journal* 28: 493-501.
- Maslov, Ju. S. 1981. *Grammatika bolgarskogo jazyka*. Moskva: Vysšaja škola.
- Mitkovska, L. 2000. On the possessive interpretation of the indirect object in Macedonian (manuscript.)
- Nichols, J. 1992. *Linguistic diversity in space and time*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.
- Pit’ha, P. 1971. Existuje dativ posesivni? In: *Slovo a slovesnost* 32: 301-311.

- Priestly, T.M.S. 1993. Slovene. In: Comrie, Bernard & Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic languages*. Routledge: London and New York: 389-451.
- Raguž, D. 1997. *Praktična hrvatska gramatika*. Medicinska naklada: Zagreb.
- Rothstein, R. A. 1993. Polish. In: Comrie, Bernard & Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic languages*. Routledge: London and New York: 686-758.
- Scatton, E. A. 1993. Bulgarian. In: Comrie, Bernard & Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic languages*. Routledge: London and New York: 188-248.
- Short, D. 1993. Czech. In: Comrie, Bernard & Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic languages*. Routledge: London and New York: 455-532.
- Short, D. 1993. Slovak. In: Comrie, Bernard & Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic languages*. Routledge: London and New York: 533-591.
- Silverstein M. 1976. Hierarchy of features and ergativity. In: R.M.W. Dixon (ed.): *Grammatical Categories in Australia Languages*: 112-171. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.
- Smith, M. B. 1985. Event chains, grammatical relations and the semantics of case in German. *CLS* 21: 388-407.
- Smith, M. B. 1987. *The semantics of dative and accusative in German: An investigation in Cognitive Grammar*. Ph.D. dissertation. San Diego: University of California.
- Stone, G. 1993. Cassubian. In: Comrie, Bernard & Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic Languages*. Routledge: London and New York: 759-794.
- Stone, G. 1993. Sorbian (Upper and Lower). In: Comrie, Bernard & Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic Languages*. Routledge: London and New York: 593-685.
- Sullivan, W. J. 1993. The meaning of the dative case in Russian, *The nineteenth LACUS Forum* 1992: 327-331.
- Težak, S., S. Babić 1994. *Gramatika hrvatskoga jezika*. Školska knjiga: Zagreb.
- Toporišič, J. 1992. *Enciklopedija slovenskega jezika*. Cankarjeva založba v Ljubljani.
- Toporišič, J. 1991. *Slovenska slovnica*. Založba obzorja: Maribor.
- Wierzbicka, A. 1986. The meaning of a case: A study of the Polish dative. In: R. D. Brecht & J. D. Levine, *Case in Slavic*. Columbus: Slavica: 386-426.
- Wierzbicka, A. 1988. *The semantics of grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.