

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

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1 Introduction

The problem:

- In the framework of Dependent Case Theory (DCT), **datives** have been argued to be assigned as a *lexical case* (Marantz 1991; McFadden 2004) or as a *dependent case* (Baker and Vinokurova 2010; Puškar and Müller 2014) for some instances.
- However, both analyses are not applicable for datives in Russian Dative Infinitive Modal (DIM) and Dative Infinitive Existential (DIE) constructions (Jung 2011). The categorial nature of oblique cases, including dative, needs to be reconsidered.

(1) *Dative Infinitive Modal (DIM)*

Mne budet ne sdat' ekzamen.
1SG.DAT be.FUT.N.SG NEG pass.INF exam.ACC
'It won't be (in the cards) for me to pass the exam.'

[Fleisher 2006:5]

(2) *Dative Infinitive Modal (DIE)*

Mne nečego skazat'.
1SG.DAT no what.GEN say.INF
'There is nothing for me to say.'

[Jung 2011:186]

Claim:

- DAT assigned to a subject in an infinitival clause in Russian is a realization of *unmarked case*.
- The realization of the unmarked case is sensitive to the local domain in which the NP is found. For Russian, the unmarked case is realized as NOM in finite TP/CP and DAT in non-finite TP/CP.

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1.1 Dependent Case Theory (DCT)¹

- Result of the work of [Marantz \(1991\)](#); [McFadden \(2004\)](#); [Baker and Vinokurova \(2010\)](#); [Baker \(2012, 2015\)](#), among others, adopting similar ideas by [Yip, Maling, and Jackendoff \(1987\)](#); [Bittner and Hale \(1996\)](#); [Kiparsky \(1992, 2001\)](#); [Wunderlich \(1997\)](#).

- Case assignment in DCT relies primarily on [Marantz's \(1991\)](#) disjunctive case hierarchy:

(3) *Case disjunctive hierarchy* ([Marantz 1991:24](#))

- Lexical case (e.g. case governed by adpositions, Icelandic quirky case)
- Dependent case (e.g. ACC, ERG)
- Unmarked case (e.g. ERG, ABS, GEN inside DP)
- Default case (e.g. case in fragment answers)

(taken in the adapted form from [Baker 2015:48](#))

- *Step 1: Lexical case*

- All DPs selected by lexical items (verbs, prepositions, etc.) that idiosyncratically assign a particular case, receive the corresponding case from the lexical head upon c-selection.

- *Step 2: Dependent case*

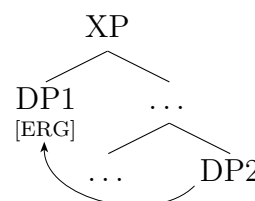
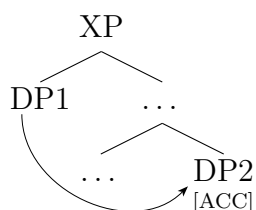
- Pairs of remaining caseless DPs are inspected in their local domains. Dependent case is assigned to them according to (a variation of) the following case assignment rules:

(4) *Rules for dependent case assignment* ([Baker 2015:48–49](#))

- If there are two distinct DPs in the same spell out domain such that DP1 c-commands DP2, then value the case feature of DP2 as accusative unless DP1 has already been marked for case (5a).
- If there are two distinct DPs in the same spell out domain such that DP1 c-commands DP2, then value the case feature of DP1 as ergative unless DP2 has already been marked for case (5b).

(5) Assignment of dependent case via case-competition

- nominative-accusative alignment
- ergative-absolutive alignment



- *Step 3: Unmarked case*

- The remaining DPs that have not received case by means of competition with another DP, receive the unmarked case.
- Unmarked case depends on the local domain in which the DP is found (NOM/ABS in TP/CP, GEN in DP)

¹Adopted from [Puškar and Müller \(2014\)](#)

- *Default case*
 - Fragment answers and free-standing DPs usually get the default case (“Who bought the bread?” “Him./*He.”)

2 Datives in Russian

2.1 Russian Dative Infinitive Modal (DIM) Construction

- The Russian Dative Infinitive Modal (DIM) construction consists of a dative argument, *byt'*, and an infinitival clause, as exemplified in (6). (Greenberg and Franks 1991; Kondrashova 1994; Franks 1995; Komar (1999); Moore and Perlmutter 2000; Sigurðsson 2002; Fleisher 2006)

(6) Mne budet ne sdat' ekzamen.
 1SG.DAT be.FUT.N.SG NEG pass.INF exam.ACC
 ‘It won’t be (in the cards) for me to pass the exam’ [Fleisher 2006:5]

- DIM (usually) conveys the deontic modality which is roughly translated into *in the cards*.

2.1.1 Dative is structurally assigned in DIM

- There is no thematic restriction in DIM. Unergative and unaccusative verbs are applicable as well, as in (7-8).

(7) Mne ne rabotat' odnomu.
 1SG.DAT NEG work.INF alone.DAT
 ‘It’s not (in the cards) for me to work alone.’ [M&P 2000:388]

(8) Toj popytke ne uvencat'sja uspexom.
 that attempt.DAT NEG be crowned.INF success.INF
 ‘It’s not (in the cards) for that attempt to be crowned with success.’ [M&P 2000:389]

- Compare with the EXPERIENCER subjects of psychological verbs in (9-10).

(9) Emu zal' etu devusku.
 3SG.M.DAT sorry that girl.ACC
 ‘He feels sorry for that girl.’ [G&F 1991:71]

(10) Mne nraivit'sja Sasa.
 1SG.DAT like.3SG.REFL Sasha.NOM
 ‘I like Sasha.’ [Germain 2015:98]

- Secondary agreement with adjective predicate

(11) **Toj rukopisi** ne byt' **opublikovannoj** zarubezhnym
that manuscript.F.DAT NEG be.INF **published.INST.F.SG** foreign
 izdatel'stvom.
 publishing house.INST
 'It's not (in the cards) for that manuscript to be published by a foreign publishing house.'
 [M&P 2000:393]

- Ability to be Passivized

(12) a. **Drugu** ne obmanut' **Vasju**.
friend.DAT NEG deceive.INF **Vasja.ACC**
 'It's not (in the cards) for a friend to deceive Vasja.'
 b. **Vasje** ne byt' obmanutym **drugom**.
Vasja.DAT NEG be.INF deceived.INST **friend.INST**
 'It's not (in the cards) for Vasja to be deceived by a friend.'
 [Kondrashova 1994:249]

- Alteration with GENNEG in the subjects of unaccusatives

(13) a. **Čtoby** ne byt' ètogo, **nado** očen' s detstva sledit' ...
 in order NEG be.INF that.GEN, necessary very from childhood follow ...
 'In order that that not be, it is necessary from childhood to follow ...'
 [Germain 2017:108, from the Internet²]
 b. **Destvovat'** nužno bystro, **čtoby** ne suščestvovat' ètogo ubljuka.
 act.INF need fast in order NEG exist.INF that bastard.GEN
 'One needs to act fast, in order that that bastard not exist.'
 [Germain 2017:108, from the Internet³]

2.1.2 DIM is bi-clausal raising

- Fleisher (2006) argues that DIM is bi-clausal: *byt'* is a modal verb that selects a non-finite CP complement.

(14) [_{TP} mne_i [_{T'} ∅ (byt') ··· [_{CP} PRO_i ne sdat' ekzamen] ···]] [Fleisher 2006:6]

- *byt'* precedes negation, while in the personal future imperfective it follows negation.

(15) a. Mne **budet** ne sdat' ekzamen.
 1SG.DAT **be.FUT.N.SG** NEG pass.INF exam.ACC
 'It won't be (in the cards) for me to pass the exam' [Fleisher 2006:5]
 b. Ja **ne budu** sdat' ekzamen.
 1SG.NOM NEG **be.1SG** pass.INF-IMP exam.ACC
 'I won't pass the exam' [Germain 2017:108]

²<http://poncini.com/userfiles/skachat-tantsi-dlya-pohudeniya-talii-cherez-torrent-5747.xml>

³<http://www.goldtravel.it/esli-zhenshina-konchaet-ot-etogo-hudeyut-2163.xml>

- [Jung \(2008\)](#) argues that DIM is a raising construction, observing that the subject in (16) can be interpreted below the null copula.

(16) **dvum studentam iz Ameriki** \emptyset [rešit' sledujuščuju zadaču],
two.DAT student.DAT from America *be* solve.INF next problem.ACC
 čtoby amerikanskoj komande \emptyset vyigrat?
 in order American team.DAT *be* win.INF

Context: Student teams from various countries participate in a math contest. Individual students' performances contribute to each team's record.

(i) 'There are 2 students from America. Is each of them supposed to solve the next problem in order for the American team to win?' *2 > be*

(ii) 'Is it necessary that any 2 students from America solve the next problem in order for the American team to win?' *be > 2*

[Jung 2008:158]

- [Germain \(2017\)](#) uses the scopal interaction between the universal quantifier and negation to support the raising construction.

(17) a. **Vsem ne sdat' ekzamen.**
everyone.DAT NEG pass.INF exam.ACC

a. ???It's (in the cards) that everyone won't pass the exam. Q > Neg

b. It's not (in the cards) for everyone to pass the exam (but some will). Neg > Q

b. **Vsem ne prijti' vo vremja.**
everyone.DAT NEG arrive.INF on time

a. ???It's (in the cards) that everyone will not arrive on time. Q > Neg

b. It's not (in the cards) for everyone to arrive on time (but some will). Neg > Q

- [Melnikova \(2015\)](#) extends a bi-clausal raising analysis to dative subject with overt impersonal modals.

(18) **Vse čaše Vovei nužno [t_i prinimat' lekarstvo reže].**
more often Vova.DAT need.N take.INF medicine.ACC more rarely

'More often Vova needs to take medicine more rarely.' [Melinkova 2015:11]

2.2 Russian Dative Infinitive Existential (DIE) Construction

- The Russian Dative Infinitive Existential (DIE) construction consists of a dative noun, *byt'*, and an infinitive; the infinitive is always headed by a *wh*-word ([Rappaport 1986](#); [Babby 2000](#); [Kondrashova 1994](#); [Jung 2008](#))
- DIE is distinguished from the DIM in that *byt'* 'be' is overt in the present tense (*est'*), which is typical of the existential copula in Russian. ([Jung 2008](#))

(19) a. **Mne nečego skazat'.**
1SG.DAT no what.GEN say.INF

'There is nothing for me to say.' [Jung 2011:186]

b. **Mne est' čto skazat'.**
1SG.DAT be.PRES[-AGR] what.ACC say.INF

'There is something for me to say.' [Jung 2011:186]

2.2.1 DIE is a language-internal variant of the DIM

- Jung (2011) suggests that DIE has the same underlying structure with DIM, as in (20–21).

(20)	DIE	[_{BeP} BE _{EXIST}	[_{CP} RelPron P	[_{IP} DP _{DAT2} V _{INF}	<i>t</i> ₁]
		<i>est'</i>	<i>čto</i>	<i>mne</i>	<i>skazat'</i>
(21)	DIM	[_{BeP} BE	[_{CP}	P	[_{IP} DP _{DAT2} V _{INF} DP _{ACC1}]
		∅		<i>mne</i>	<i>delat' eto</i>

*1: Infinitival object 2: Infinitival subject 3: Existential theme

- An infinitival clause is embedded under BE; the infinitive has an overt object; the dative argument only denotes the subject of the infinitive. The difference between (20) and (21) is that in the former the matrix clause is existential, having an additional thematic role, but not in the latter.

3 Categorial nature of the dative in DIM and DIE

3.1 Dative as lexical case

- The dative has been regarded as a lexical case. According to this analysis, dative is evaluated by lexical items (e.g. adpositions or quirky case-marking verbs), at the first step of the case calculus.
- However, dative subjects in DIM and DIE **cannot** be considered to have received a lexical case for below reasons.
 1. 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). Compare (7-8) with (9-10).
 2. The dative case is **not restricted to certain semantics**. Some deontic and some epistemic semantics for DIM, but no semantic restriction for DIE. (Again, compare with EXPERIENCER subjects of the psychological verbs)

(22)	Mne	<i>est'</i>	<i>čto</i>	<i>skazat'</i>	
	1SG.DAT	<i>be.PRES</i>	<i>what.ACC</i>	<i>say.INF</i>	
	'There is something for me to say.'				[Jung 2011:186]

3. Even if we assume a hypothetical null head that might license the dative case, **dative-accusative constructions** cannot be deducted from the DCT.

(23)	<i>Začem</i>	mne	<i>pokupat'</i>	sigarety?	
	<i>for what</i>	1SG.DAT	<i>buy.INF</i>	cigarette.ACC.PL	
	'For what I buy cigarettes?'				[Jung 2013:173]

3.2 Dative as dependent case

- Baker and 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.

- (24) *Sakha accusative and dative case assignment* (Baker and Vinokurova 2010)
- If there are two distinct argumental NPs in the same **VP-phase** such that NP1 c-commands NP2, then value the case feature of NP1 as dative unless NP2 has already been marked for case.
 - If there are two distinct argumental NPs in the same **phase** such that NP1 c-commands NP2, then value the case feature of NP2 as accusative unless NP1 has already been marked for case.

- (25) a. Sardaana Aisen-y/*Aise-a yta(a)-t-ta.
Sardaana Aisen-ACC/*DAT cry-CAUS-PAST-3SS
'Sardaana made Aisen cry.' [B&V 2010:607]
- b. Misha Masha-qa miin-(i) sie-t-te.
Misha Masha-DAT soup-(ACC) eat-CAUS-PAST-3SS
'Misha made Masha eat (the) soup.' [B&V 2010:607]

- This analysis of dative as dependent case can be applied to the instances of datives assigned to indirect objects. However, it is **not applicable** to datives in DIM and DIE.
 - DIM and DIE are compatible with **intransitive verbs**. The subject can be assigned a dative while it is the sole argument in the whole sentence.

- (26) Gde mne spat?
where 1SG.DAT sleep.INF
'Where is there for me to sleep?' [G&F 1991:72]

- 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.

- Alternatively, Puškar and Müller (2014) analyze other instances of lexical datives as dependent cases in Serbian, claiming that the DAT is assigned by another silent or overt co-argument DP in the VP-phase.

3.3 Dative as unmarked case

Proposal The unmarked case is realized as NOM in finite clause and DAT in non-finite clause.

- This proposal is a DCT version of the Russian-specific rule, discussed by Comrie (1974), proposed as below.

- (27) *Russian morphosyntactic rule*
Surface subjects of finite clauses are nominative; surface subjects of infinitival clauses are dative.

- Supporting evidence

- The loss of ability to assign accusative case to object when passivized.

- (28) a. Drugu ne obmanut' Vasju.
friend.DAT NEG deceive.INF Vasja.ACC
'It's not (in the cards) for a friend to deceive Vasja.'

- b. **Vasje** ne byt' obmanutym **drugom**.
Vasja.DAT NEG be.INF deceived.INST **friend.INST**
 'It's not (in the cards) for Vasja to be deceived by a friend.'

[Kondrashova 1994:249]

2. The appropriateness of a target is evaluated along the Revised Moravcsik Hierarchy (Bobaljik 2008, building upon Moravcsik 1974, 1978)

- (29) *Revised Moravcsik Hierarchy*
 unmarked case >> dependent case >> lexical/oblique case

Since no verb agrees with accusative argument in Russian, only unmarked case is accessible for ϕ -feature agreement.

- (30) Toj **rukopisi** ne byt' **opublikovanoj** zarubezhnym
 that **manuscript.F.DAT** NEG be.INF **published.INST.F.SG** foreign
 izdatel'stvom.
 publishing house.INST
 'It's not (in the cards) for that manuscript to be published by a foreign publishing house.'
 [M&P 2000:393]

3. There are nominative/dative alternations visible in contrasting finite/infinitival pairs.

- (31) DIM

- a. **Ja** ne sdam ekzamen.
1SG.NOM NEG pass.1SG exam.ACC
 'I won't pass the exam'

- b. **Mne** ne sdat' ekzamen.
1SG.DAT NEG pass.INF exam.ACC

'It's not (in the cards) for me to pass the exam' [P&M 2002: 620]

- (32) Purpose clauses

- a. [Čtoby **my** uexali na vokzal] ...
 in order **1PL.NOM** go out.SUBJT to railway station
 'In order that we go out to the railway station, ...'

- b. [Čtoby **nam** uexat' na vokzal] ...
 in order **1PL.DAT** go out.INF to railway station
 'In order for us to go (out) to the railway station, ...' [P&M 2001: 11]

- (33) Purpose clauses (2)

- a. [Čtoby **den'gi** im ne byli nužny] ...
 in order **money.NOM** them.DAT NEG be.SUBJT need.pl
 'In order that they not need money, ...'

- b. [Čtoby **den'gam** im ne byt' nužny] ...
 in order **money.DAT** them.DAT NEG be.INF need.pl
 'In order for them not to need money, ...'

- (34) Temporal clauses

- a. Do togo, kak **deti** ušli guljat' ...
 before PRON COMP **children.NOM** went out.PL play.INF
 'Before the children went out to play, ...'
- b. Do togo, kak **detjam** ujti guljat' ...
 before PRON COMP **children.DAT** go out.INF play.INF
 'Before the children went out to play, ...' [P&M 2001: 11]

4. There exist other instances of infinitival clauses having dative as a subject

(35) Conjoined main clauses

Oni zamečate'no život v N'ju Jorke, a **mne**
 3PL.NOM wonderfully live.3PL in New York, but **1SG.DAT**
 prozjabať na Aljaske
 live miserably.INF in Alaska
 'They live wonderfully in New York, but it is my fate to live miserably in Alaska.'
 [M&P 2000:387]

(36) Imperative

- a. **Vse** vstan'te
all.NOM stand up.2PL
 '(You) all stand up!'
- b. **Vsem** vstat'!
all.DAT stand up.INF
 '(You) all stand up!' [Jung 2008:110]

3.4 Conclusion

- Datives in the Russian DIM/DIE constructions cannot be regarded as lexical case or dependent case, following the bi-clausal raising analysis, but should be regarded as unmarked case.
 - *Lexical case* is **not** applicable because datives in DIM and DIE are (i) independent of the idiosyncratic selection of specific verbs, (ii) not restricted to certain semantics, and (iii) able to have an accusative argument.
 - *Dependent case* is **not** applicable because datives in DIM and DIE are (i) compatible with intransitive verbs and (ii) not restricted to the role of Goal.
 - *Unmarked case* analysis is supported by (i) the loss of ability to assign accusative case when passivized, (ii) predicate agreement, and (iii) other instances of datives that are prevalent in infinitival clauses.
- I propose that, in Russian, the unmarked case is realized as nominative in finite clause and **dative in non-finite clause**.

Insights to the DCT

- While DCT has long focused on primary case alterations including NOM-ACC and ERG-ABS, it neglected other structurally assigned oblique cases including DAT.

- In order to elaborate the DCT with more rigor, further contemplation on the categorial nature of oblique cases are required.
- This proposal to amend the Russian case-assigning mechanism gives us insights that the case assignment in is not only sensitive to the category of the locality domains but also depend on the features (e.g. finiteness) of the domain.

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