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

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1 Introduction

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 (Marantz 1991; Bittner and Hale 1996; McFadden 2004; Baker and Vinokurova 2010) 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 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. Alternatively, Puškar and Müller (2016) 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 (1-2). 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.

(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]

1.1 Dependent Case Theory (DCT)

In the framework of Dependent Case Theory (DCT), primarily suggested by Marantz (1991), morphological case is explained to be assigned at a configurational basis. It was further developed by 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*, summarized in (3). The main idea underlying in this calculus is that case is assigned to a DP based on the interplay of two factors: the identity of the head that selects it, and the position of the DP relative to others in the clause.

(3) *Case disjunctive hierarchy* (Marantz 1991:24)

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

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

The first step of the case calculus is assigning *lexical cases*. 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. Cases that are governed by adpositions or quirky-assigning verbs fall in this category.

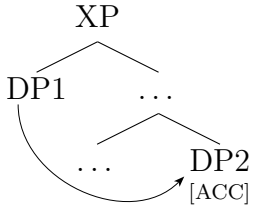
Then, pairs of remaining caseless DPs are inspected in their local domains. The case assigned in this step is called *dependent cases*. Dependent case is assigned to them according to (a variation of) the following case assignment rules:

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

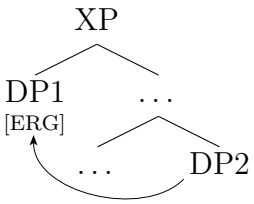
a. If there are two distinct DPs in the same spell out domain such that DP1 c-commands DP2, then value the case feature of DP2 as accusative unless DP1 has already been marked for case (5a).
b. If there are two distinct DPs in the same spell out domain such that DP1 c-commands DP2, then value the case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

(5) Assignment of dependent case via case-competition

a. nominative-accusative alignment



b. ergative-absolutive alignment



Finally, 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. For example, nominative or absolutive case is assigned in TP/CP, while genitive is assigned in DP. Meanwhile, 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) DIM (usually) conveys the deontic modality which is roughly translated into *in the cards*.

(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]

In the following section, I will review several literature that have studied DIM and follow the analysis that the dative in DIM is structurally, not inherently, assigned and the DIM is a bi-clausal raising construction.

2.1.1 Dative is structurally assigned in DIM

First of all, DIM is compatible with a wide variety of clause type, including transitive, unergative, unaccusative clauses, 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** nravit'sja Sasa.
1SG.DAT like.3SG.REFL Sasha.NOM
'I like Sasha.' [Germain 2015:98]

Moore and Perlmutter (2000) also draw on evidence from secondary agreement between the dative subject and predicate adjectives, as shown in (11) below, and the ability for these datives to be controlled to argue that dative subjects of infinitives are "true" subjects.

(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]

In her argument for structural dative case assignment by a null Modal head, Kondrashova (1994) points out that it alternates with accusative in passive constructions. In (12b), passive *v* is unable to assign accusative to the Theme, *Vasja*, instead it raises and is assigned dative.

(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]

One other piece of evidence for these subjects being assigned a structural case is that they can be assigned the Genitive of Negation (GenNeg), as in (13).[1]

(13) a. Čtoby ne byt' ètogo, nado očen' s detstva
in order NEG be.INF that.GEN, necessary very from childhood
sledit' …
follow …
'In order that that not be, it is necessary from childhood to follow …'
[Germain 2017:108, from the Internet[2]]

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 Internet[3]]

2.1.2 DIM is bi-clausal raising

In this section, I will review arguments for the bi-clausal, raising status of the DIM construction in Russian.

The bi-clausal proposal of Fleisher (2006) for dative infinitives arises from the placement of the auxiliary *byt'* 'be'. He argues that 'be' in these clauses is a modal verb that selects a non-finite CP complement. As (14) shows, it is null in the present tense like the copula 'be'.

(14) $[_{TP}$ mne$_i$ $[_{T'}$ ∅ (byt') $\cdots$ $[_{CP}$ PRO$_i$ ne sdat' ekzamen] $\cdots$]] [Fleisher 2006:6]

[1] Several native speakers suggested that these examples are unacceptable in personal communications.
[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

The past and future forms of the constructions in (14) are different from the personal future imperfective form in (15) with respect to the location of the auxiliary *byt'*. In the dative infinitive construction, *byt'* precedes negation, as shown in (15), while in the personal future imperfective it follows it.

(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]

While Fleisher's proposal is based on the control of a null expletive, Jung (2008) is the first to propose that this construction is actually a raising one. She observes that in (35) the subject can be interpreted below the null copula. 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 ∅ [rešit' sledujuščuju
two.DAT **student.DAT** from America *be* solve.INF next
zadaču], čtoby amerikanskoj komande ∅ vyigrat?
problem.ACC 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]

Moreover, 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 subjects with overt, impersonal modals. One major piece of evidence that these constructions are bi-clausal is that adjectives that are semantically incompatible co-occur in these clauses, as shown with *vse čaše* 'more often' and *reže* 'more rarely' in (18).

(18) **Vse čaše** Vovei nužno [t_i prinimať 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]

Following these arguments, I will adopt the bi-clausal raising analysis of DIM in this paper.

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) Nevertheless, 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 skazať.
1SG.DAT no what.GEN say.INF
'There is nothing for me to say.' [Jung 2011:186]

b. **Mne** est' čto skazať.
1SG.DAT be.PRES[-AGR] what.ACC say.INF
'There is something for me to say.' [Jung 2011:186]

I will introduce the argument made by Jung (2011) that that DIE has the same underlying structure with DIM in the following section.

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} t_1]]
est' *čto* *mne* *skazat'*

(21) DIM [$_{BeP}$ BE [$_{CP}$ P [$_{IP}$ DP_{DAT2} V_{INF} DP_{ACC1}]]
∅ *mne* *delat'* *eto*

*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. See Jung (2011) for further arguments supporting this analysis.

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.

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). Compare (22-23) with (24-25).

(22) **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]

(23) **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]

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

(25) **Mne** nravit'sja Sasa.
1SG.DAT like.3SG.REFL Sasha.NOM
'I like Sasha.' [Germain 2015:98]

Second, 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)

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

Last, even if we assume a hypothetical null head that might license the dative case, dative–accusative constructions cannot be deducted from the DCT. It is because, the step for lexical case precedes the dependent case assignment step. If dative argument is already assigned its case, it cannot contribute to the case calculus in the second step, resulting inability to assign accusative case to other arguments.

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

3.2 Dative as dependent case

If dative cannot be analyzed as lexical case, can it be a 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.

(28) *Sakha accusative and dative case assignment* (Baker and Vinokurova 2010)

a. 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.

b. 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.

(29) 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. This analysis is simply ruled out because 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.

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

Alternatively, Puškar and Müller (2016) analyze other instances of lexical datives as dependent cases in Serbian, claiming that the dative is assigned by another silent or overt co-argument DP in the VP-phase. In their analysis, they adopt a structure resembling an indirect object construction with existence of a null external expletive. However, 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.

3.3 Dative as unmarked case

The only left category in DCT is unmarked case. In this section, I will suggest some arguments that it is possible and beneficial to view dative in DIM and DIE as unmarked case.

I propose that the unmarked case is realized as nominative in finite clause and dative in non-finite clause. This proposal is a DCT version of the Russian-specific rule, discussed by Comrie (1974), proposed as below.

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

First of all, the loss of ability to assign accusative case to object when passivized supports this analysis. When 32a is passivized to result in 32b, *Vasja* loses its accusative case because the 'friend' in the construction is removed from the principal arguments. This shows that the 'friend' is 32a is the source of assigning accusative to *Vasja*, meaning it remained unassigned in the second step of case disjunctive hierarchy. Therefore, the dative argument was left

unassigned until the accusative is assigned. This supports the idea that the dative in DIM and DIE is unmarked cse.

(32) 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]

Moreover, the dative argument is more accessible for person/gender/number agreements. The appropriateness of a target is evaluated along the Revised Moravcsik Hierarchy (Bobaljik 2008, building upon Moravcsik 1974, 1978)

(33) *Revised Moravcsik Hierarchy*
unmarked case ≫ dependent case ≫ lexical/oblique case

Since no verb agrees with accusative argument in Russian, it is apparent that only unmarked case is accessible for φ-feature agreement. We can observe that the adjectival predicate in 34 agrees with dative argument in gender and number. This supports the argument that the dative in DIM is unmarked case.

(34) 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]

Finally, there are nominative/dative alternations visible in contrasting finite/infinitival pairs. This is evidence outside DIM/DIE to support the idea that the unmarked case is realized as nominative in finite clause, dative in non-finite clause, exemplified in (35-38).

(35) 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]

(36) 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]

(37) 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, …'

(38) 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]

There exist other instances of infinitival clauses having dative as a subject: conjoined main clauses in (39) and imperatives (40).

(39) Conjoined main clauses

Oni zamečate'no živut v N'ju Jorke, a **mne** prozjabat'
3PL.NOM wonderfully live.3PL in New York, but **1SG.DAT** live miserably.INF
na Aljaske
in Alaska

'They live wonderfully in New York, but it is my fate to live miserably in Alaska.'
[M&P 2000:387]

(40) 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]

From the observation above, it is clearly shown that the finiteness of the clause is correlated with the nominative/dative case alteration of the subject.

In this section, I have suggested arguments opposing the view that dative is either lexical case or dependent case and proposed that the dative in DIM and DIE is actually the realization of unmarked case in non-finite clause.

4 Conclusion

In brief, 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.

In this paper, I proposed that, in Russian, the unmarked case is realized as nominative in finite clause and dative in non-finite clause.

What kind of insights to the DCT itself can be drawn from this proposal? First, while DCT has long focused on primary case alterations including nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive, it neglected other structurally assigned oblique cases including dative. 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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