

IS THE LITHUANIAN DATIVE A UNIFIED SEMANTIC CATEGORY?

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A Lithuanian sentence with a dative and an accusative object can be translated into English in five different ways: using the English "internal dative" construction, the constructions with the prepositions to, for, on, and a possessive modifier. The question whether the Lithuanian sentences with dative and accusative objects are instances of the same construction or whether they are only superficially similar instances of different underlying structures is addressed in the paper. Dąbrowska (1997) dealing with similar constructions in Polish introduced the concept of the Target Person supplemented by the notion of the personal sphere as the central concept in the interpretation and understanding of the construction with dative and accusative objects. The concept of the Target Person supplemented with the notion of personal sphere is very closely related to the concept of Possession used in linguistics (cf. Seliverstova 1990, Grigaliūnienė 1989, Heine 1997). An attempt is made to look at the sentences under consideration as possessive. The Lithuanian dative is only used when the referent of the first indirect object is affected by the action performed, when it becomes the possessor of the result of the action performed upon the patient.

I. A Lithuanian sentence with a dative and an accusative object can be translated into English in five different ways:

1. Using the English "internal dative":
Jonas padovanojo Marytei žiedą. (Geniušienė 1978, 15)
'John gave Mary a ring.'
2. Using the preposition *to*:
Jonas padovanojo Marytei žiedą.
'John gave a ring to Mary.'
3. Using the preposition *for*:
Jonas nupirko Marytei žiedą. (Geniušienė 1978, 15)
'John bought a ring for Mary.'
4. Using a possessive modifier
Jis pabučiavo motinai ranką. (Ambrasas et al 1997, 508)
'John washed Mary's face.'
5. Using the preposition *on*
Jonas sudaužė mums mašiną.
'John wrecked the car on us.'

Therefore, the question can be raised whether all Lithuanian sentences with a dative and an accusative object are instances of the same construction or whether they are only superficially similar.

Another question that could be posed is connected with the choice the speakers are faced with: how do they know which of the five ways should be used?

Let us consider each of the five ways separately.

II. The so-called 'internal dative' sentences are notorious for their highly idiosyncratic character and elude satisfactory linguistic description (Dąbrowska 1997, 115). The question which verbs dativeize and allow internal dative construction has been discussed by many linguists (Gropen et al 1989; Mazurkewich 1984; Wierzbicka 1988, etc.) Mazurkewich & White 1984, citing Oehrle 1976, Green 1974, Goldsmith 1980 and Stowell 1981, propose a semantic criterion for dativeizable verbs: the referent of the first (indirect) object must be the prospective possessor of the referent of the second object. More specifically, the first object of double-object verbs must be a possessor and goal in the case of *to*-datives, or a possessor and beneficiary in the case of *for*-datives. Thus, *John gave Mary a car* is acceptable, but **John washed Mary a car* is not - presumably because Mary is asserted to be only the beneficiary, but not the possessor of the car, as the result of the action. In the same way, we can rule out double-object forms of *stir, cut, brush, solve, prove*, and so on. Verbs of communication (e.g. *tell, teach, read, write him something*) fit the hypothesis under the assumption that they are mentally represented as metaphoric extensions involving the notion of ideas being possessed and transferred (Gropen et al 1989, 207). Dąbrowska (1994) also recognizes that English allows the internal dative only when the verb denotes some kind of transfer (real or potential, physical or metaphorical) of the Patient into what she calls the Target Person's personal sphere. The Target Person is "an individual who is perceived as affected by a change, activity, or state in his or her personal sphere" (1994, 110), which comprises persons, objects, locations, and facts sufficiently closely associated with an individual so that any changes in them are likely to affect the individual as well (Dąbrowska 1997, 16). It should be noted that, unlike the direct participants in an event, i.e. the agent and the patient, the target person need not be present at the scene of the action, and may not be affected by the action until well after it has been completed. However, the target person must be at least potentially affected by the action performed. What does the personal sphere comprise? The body is one of the most central parts and when a part of an individual's body is affected, the individual is affected as well, and introduced by a dative nominal:

6. *Ji išplovė Jonui galvą.*
She washed John:DAT hair:ACC
'She washed John's hair.'

The clothes are also conventionally considered extensions of the body:

7. *Jis suplėšė jai suknelę.*
He tore her:DAT dress:ACC
'He tore her dress.'

Family members, possessions, houses, bedrooms, gardens, offices, seats on the bus, etc. are included in one's personal sphere, motivating the use of the dative in the sentences (8 - 9):

8. *Autobusų stotyje jam kažkas ištraukė piniginę* (the example taken from the corpus of the Lithuanian language, available at: <http://donelaitis.vdu.lt>)
'At the coach station he:DAT got his purse:ACC stolen.'
9. *Ši geraširdė moteris užleido mums savo buto du kambarius* (the example taken from the corpus of the Lithuanian language, available at <http://donelaitis.vdu.lt>)
'This kind-hearted women offered us :DAT two of her rooms:ACC'

Thus, parts of the target person's body, his clothes, "air bubble", possessions, the objects he is holding or about to use, his territory, relatives, and subordinates are all automatically included in the personal sphere (Dąbrowska 1997, 19).

The important point here is that no list could ever be exhaustive, because an individual's personal sphere is open-ended, and inclusion in it is largely a matter of subjective construal (Dąbrowska 1994, 112). On the other hand, she claims that the Target Person category, though not homogenous, is nonetheless fairly unified and cohesive. It becomes the central concept in the understanding of the dative.

The concept of the Target Person supplemented by the notion of personal sphere is, in my understanding, very closely related to the concept of Possession used in linguistics.

In contemporary linguistic theory there exist two tendencies in the interpretation of the notion of possession. On the one hand, possession is understood as ownership proper (Hawkins 1981), in other words, only sentences meaning 'having, being in possession of sth.' are considered possessive. Such a view, however, is not widely spread and the majority of scholars give a broader interpretation of this category. It should also be mentioned that some linguists give an extremely broad interpretation of possession and claim that it is a relationship between two substances (Seiler 1983). Such an interpretation is too broad and has the result that the concept of possession loses its specific character and gets lost in the sea of various relations that exist between two substances. For example, in (10) *He is throwing the ball* we can speak about the relationship between two substances, nevertheless, it is quite obvious that there is no possessive relationship here. True, there exists an even broader interpretation of possession where all the relations between a feature and its owner/carrier, an action and its performer are considered possessive. For instance, Warren (1984) claims that phrases like 'professional ladies' are possessive as they can be understood as 'ladies having professions'. I, however, think that these expressions cannot be regarded as possessive, because here we have a relation between an object and its feature. I adhere to the opinion that not any relation between two substances can be regarded as possessive. The sphere of possession can be understood as the sphere of influence of X, i.e. to say that a subject (X) has an object (Y) is simply to say that the object falls within the sphere of influence, power (moral, physical, spiritual) of the subject X or that it contains at least an element (part of X) that is dependent on X, derivative from X (cf. Seliverstova 1990; Grigaliūnienė 1989; Heine 1997). This concept is quite indefinite, but indefiniteness is in the character of the phenomena described. Possession belongs to the kind of concepts that tend to be described as being inherently vague or fuzzy (Heine 1997, 1). It is a concept that is realised through a definite list of variants. Possession is not a homogenous concept but it is fairly united and cohesive. It seems moreover that when we speak about possession, the owner is always at the centre of attention. The idea is connected with the concept of assimilation, with the idea of a person trying to assimilate the world that surrounds him to his own schemata, to make the world his own. That is why we can say: *my bus, my crow, my hill, my lake, my world* or,

11. *'He owns the world - it's always his blackbird that's singing, his spider that has made a web in the corner'* (Murdoch. *A fairly honourable defeat*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982, 447).

A distinction should be made between the two types of possessive relations: central and peripheral (cf. Grigaliūnienė 1989, Heine 1997). In other words, there exist relations like whole-part relation, kinship relations and others which are usually understood as possessive. Besides, there are cases of occasional usage, i.e. they get such an interpretation only occasionally - in such cases we can speak about the periphery of the possessive relationship.

Summing up, it can be stated that possession is the relation between two substances or things. However, not every relation between two substances is an example of possession but only the relation where X has some power, influence, control over Y, or is a part of X. The peculiarity of the concept of possession is that at the basis of it there is no grammatical category, but a semantic invariant uniting all the elements of the field. The centre is associated with the most typical relations: the whole-part relations, the relations of ownership, some kinship relations. At the periphery there are other relations which can be interpreted as possessive only under certain specific circumstances (cf. Grigaliūnienė 1989).

Bearing in mind the concept of possession presented here, let us now discuss the arguments in favour of claiming that the sentences under consideration can be regarded as possessive.

As was mentioned before, English internal dative can only be used when the verb denotes some kind of transfer of the patient *into* the target person's personal sphere, as a result of which the Target Person's personal sphere is 'inflated' (the Target Person comes into possession of something, some object becomes available for his or her use, etc), which is generally considered favourable. Therefore, only sentences carrying possessive relation can be translated using the *internal dative*:

12. *John gave Mary a gift.*
Jonas padovanojo Marytei dovaną.
13. *Tom built Spot a house.*
Tomas pastatė Spotui namą.

Let us consider now the prepositional constructions.

It has been noted by Geniušienė (1978, 15) that the Lithuanian sentences with the dative and accusative construction have only superficially identical structure; their underlying structures are different and depend upon the semantics of the verb. She provided three groups of verbs that are used in the construction under consideration.

The verbs in the first group are not very numerous in Lithuanian (there are around 40 of them): *duoti* 'give'; *perduoti* 'transfer'; *įteikti* 'hand over'; *skirti* (premija) 'grant'; *siųsti* (kam pinigų) 'send'; *grąžinti* 'return'; *linkėti* 'wish'; *parodyti* 'show'; *papasakoti* 'tell'; *pranešti* 'report'; *žadėti* 'promise'; *siūlyti* 'offer'; *paaiškinti* 'explain'; etc.

The verb defines a situation where besides a subject and an object a recipient which is introduced by the preposition *to* is obligatory:

14. *Jonas padovanojo Marytei žiedą.*
'John gave a ring to Mary.'

It should be noted that the patient here is brought into the Target Person's sphere of influence/control or possession.

The second group of verbs is more numerous (there are several hundred of them) *megzti* 'knit'; *siūti* 'sew'; *statyti* 'build'; *skalbti* 'wash'; *iškepti* 'bake'; *pagaminti* 'make'; *ipilti* 'pour'; *uždegti* 'light up'; *sutaupyti* 'save'; *atriekti* 'cut off'; *atidaryti* 'open'; *atnešti* 'fetch'; *pavogti* 'steal'; etc. In this group a subject and a direct object make the situation complete while the second object (indirect object) is not compulsory:

15. *Jonas nupirko Marytei žiedą.*
'John bought a ring for Mary.'

Here the indirect object becomes the beneficiary; the person referred to by the object is going to benefit from the action, he is going to use it.

The third group also contains around several hundred verbs: *prauti* (veida) 'wash'; *praskelti* (galva) 'injure'; *kasyti* (nugarą) 'scratch'; *uždengti* (veidą) 'cover'; *dažyti* (plaukus) 'dye'; *aplieti* (kojas) 'pour over'; *sutepti* (nugarą) 'soil'; etc.:

16. *Jonas nuprausė Marytei veidą.*
'John washed Mary's face.'

This group of verbs presents a situation, where the relationship between the accusative and dative objects is that of possession (the whole and its part).

The last group of sentences with the preposition *on* is restricted to situations where the action has a negative effect on the Target Person/Possessor:

17. *Jonas sudaužė mums mašiną.*
'John wrecked the car on us.'

III. To sum up, we see that the Lithuanian dative is always used when the referent of the first indirect object is affected by the action performed: in all the above cases it is used only when it becomes the possessor of the result of the action performed upon the patient. Therefore, the Lithuanian dative presents a fairly unified semantic category, i.e. that of a Target Person or a Possessor, while the English language resorts to different linguistic means as there is no specialised grammatical exponent of the target person in English.

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AR BENDRINĖS LIETUVIŲ KALBOS NAUDININKAS YRA VIENINGA SEMANTINĖ KATEGORIJA?

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje kalbama apie lietuvių kalbos konstrukciją su naudininko ir galininko linksniu NOM-DAT-ACC. Teigiama, jog ši konstrukcija į anglų kalbą gali būti išversta penkiais būdais: vartojant anglišką "internal dative" ("vidinį datyvą"), konstrukcijas su prielinksniais *to, for, on* ir posesyvinę konstrukciją. Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas klausimas, ar lietuviški sakiniai su naudininku ir galininku turi tik vienodą išorinę sandarą, tačiau skirtingą vidinę (semantinę) struktūrą. Lingvistinėje literatūroje tokių sakinių interpretacijai dažnai vartojamos "Target Person" ("taikinio") bei "asmeninės erdvės" ("personal sphere") sąvokos, kurios labai artimos posesyvo koncepcijai (žr. Seliverstova 1990, Grigaliūnienė 1989, Heine 1997). Straipsnyje siūloma tokius sakinius laikyti posesyviniais, įrodinėjama, jog naudininkas vartojamas tik tada, kai atliekamas ar atliktas veiksmas daro poveikį netiesioginio objekto referentui, kai jis tampa to veiksmo rezultato savininku (posesoriumi).