

Luka Szucsich

/luka sučić/

(Humboldt University, Berlin)

szucsich@googlemail.com

Dative Subjects of Finite Clauses in Slavic

1. Introduction and Data

Reflexive dative constructions:

Verbs *either*: (i) with default agreement ('non-agreeing morphology'), if there is no internal argument or if internal argument is in the accusative
or: (ii) agreement with a nominative internal argument

- (1) Fantom se je prepeva-l-o. (Slv)
 boy_{DAT:PL} REFL AUX_{3:SG} sing_{NEUT:SG}
 'The boys felt like singing.'
- (2) Mne ne sp-it-sja. (Ru)
 Me_{DAT} NEG sleep_{3:SG:REFL}
 'I cannot sleep.'
- (3) Jankowi się dobrze pracuj-e. (Po)
 Janek_{DAT} REFL well work_{3:SG}
 'The work is going well for Janek (e.g. because of the circumstances).'

Restrictions, esp. in Russian:

- (4) a. *Maše ne čita-et-sja knigu. (Ru)
 Maša_{DAT} NEG read_{3:SG:REFL} book
- b. Maše ne rabota-et-sja (*nad étoj stat'ej).
 Maša_{DAT} NEG work_{3:SG:REFL} on this paper
- c. *Vase ne rast-et-sja.
 Vasja_{DAT} NEG grow_{3:SG:REFL}

2. Dative arguments and subjecthood

Are dative NPs external arguments? Reflexive marker may manipulate selectional properties of the verb (the 'little' *v*).

v is the licenser of external arguments (= participants causing an event, i.e. agents or inanimate causers), cf. (5).

- (5) [_{VP} DP_{CAUS} *v* [_{VP} V (DP)]]
 SELECT [REFL may intervene]

Reflexive markers affect the realisation of external (and internal) arguments (e.g. reflexivization, passivization, or decausativization), cf. (6) and (7).

- (6) a. Janez je odpr-l-∅ vrata. (Slv)
 Janez_{NOM:SG} AUX_{3:SG} open_{PRT:MSC:SG} door_{ACC:PL}
 'Janez opened the door.'
- b. Vrata so se odpr-l-a.
 door_{ACC:PL} AUX_{3:PL} REFL open_{PRT:NEU:PL}
 'The door opened.'
- (7) a. Dmitrij otkry-l-∅ dver'. (Ru)
 Dmitrij_{NOM:SG} open_{PST:MSC:SG} door_{ACC}
 'Janez opened the door.'
- b. Dver' otkry-l-a-s'.
 door_{NOM} open_{PST:FEM:SG:REFL}
 'The door opened.'
- c. Plotniki stroj-at dom.
 carpenters_{NOM:PL} build_{PRES:3:PL} house_{ACC:SG}
 'The carpenters are building a/the house.'
- d. Dom stro-it-sja (plotnikami).
 house_{ACC:SG} build_{PRES:3:SG:REFL} carpenters_{INST:PL}
 'The house is being built (by (the) carpenters).'

Nominative personal reflexives vs. accusative impersonal reflexives in Slovenian and Burgenland-Croatian:

- (8) a. Starši se ubog-ajo. (Slv)
 parents_{NOM} REFL obey_{3:PL}
 'One obeys parents.'
- b. Starše se ubog-a.
 parents_{ACC} REFL obey_{3:SG}
 'One obeys (has to obey) parents.'
- (9) a. Starji se posluš-aju.¹ (B-Cro)
 parents_{NOM} REFL obey_{3:PL}
 'One obeys parents.'

¹ The "correct" 3rd person plural form in my dialect (and the dialect of my informants) is *posluš-aju*. I gave here the Burgenland-Croatian Standard marker which is also found in other dialect groups.

- b. Starje se posluš-a.
 parents_{ACC} REFL obey_{3:SG}
 'One obeys (has to obey) parents.'

- Nominative (personal) reflexive sentences do *not* allow for a reflexive possessive pronoun with the internal argument
- Accusative (impersonal) reflexive sentences allow for a reflexive possessive pronoun with the internal argument

- (10) a. *Svoji starši se ubog-ajo. (Slv)
 REFL:POSS parents_{NOM} REFL obey_{3:PL}
 b. Svoje starše se ubog-a.
 REFL:POSS parents_{ACC} REFL obey_{3:SG}
 'One obeys (has to obey) parents.'
- (11) a. ^{?(*)} Svoji starji se posluš-aju.² (B-Cro)
 REFL:POSS parents_{NOM} REFL obey_{3:PL}
 b. Svoje starje se posluš-a.
 REFL:POSS parents_{ACC} REFL obey_{3:SG}
 'One obeys (has to obey) his own parents.'

Conclusion: there is a covert antecedent (null external argument) binding the reflexive possessive pronoun

Accusative marking can be reconciled with *Burzio's Generalization* (descriptively: If a verb licenses accusative, it also selects an external argument)

Reflexive elements are not bound to absorption of arguments. Null elements may also bind anaphors, cf. (12).

- (12) Teraz się myśl-i tylko o sobie. (Po)
 now REFL think_[-AGR] only of self
 'Nowadays one thinks only of oneself.' (Rivero 2001)

Are dative NPs in (1)-(3) realizations of the external argument (or coindexed with a covert pronoun in the position of an external argument), cf. Schoorlemmer (1994), Rivero (2001), Rivero & Milojević Sheppard (2002, 2003) among others?

Prediction: In the accusative version, NP_{DAT} should be able to bind a reflexive possessive pronoun. cf. (13).

- (13) a. Janezu_i se jejo *svoji_i/^{ok}njegovi_{i/j} cmoki. (Slv)
 Janez_{DAT} REFL eat_{3:PL} REFL:POSS//POSS dumplings_{NOM}
 'Janez feels like eating his dumplings.'

² Most speakers find (11a) not entirely ungrammatical but very marked or very "unusual". These judgments may be influenced by the logophoric use of *svoj*. I find them ungrammatical, but this, in turn, might be theory-driven ;-).

- b. Janezu_i se jé *svoje_i/^{ok}njegove_{i/j} cmoke.
 Janez_{DAT} REFL eat_{3:SG} REFL:POSS//POSS dumplings_{ACC}
 'Janez feels like eating his dumplings.'

Conclusion: NP_{DAT} cannot occupy a position from which it can bind reflexive possessive pronouns.

Polish:

Polish allows for binding in accusative impersonal sentences, cf. (14) and (12) for related data.

- (14) Wtedy czyta-ł-o się swoje książki tylko z niechęcią. (Po)
 then read_{PRT:NEU:SG} REFL REFL:POSS books_{ACC} only with unwill
 'At that time people read their own books only unwillingly.'
 (better lexical option is *własne* 'own', but *swoje* is grammatical)

NP_{DAT} cannot bind a reflexive possessive pronoun, cf. (15).

- (15) *Jankowi czyta-ł-o się swoją książkę z przyjemnością. (Po)
 Janek_{DAT} read_{PRT:NEU:SG} REFL REFL:POSS book_{ACC} with pleasure
 'Janek read his own book with pleasure.'
 (ok. with *własną* 'own', but not with *swoją*)

Russian:

Controllability of NP_{DAT}: Covert subject of infinitives may be controlled in appropriate contexts. *But:* (17b) shows that the alleged subject of a dative reflexive cannot be controlled by a matrix subject.

- (16) Borisu teper' rabota-et-sja lučše. (Ru)
 Boris_{DAT} now work_{PRES:3:SG:REFL} better
 'Boris is now able to work better.'
- (17) a. Boris_i sdela-l vse vozmožnoe [čtoby PRO_i rabota-t'
 Boris_{NOM} did_{PST:MSC} all_{ACC} possible_{ACC} that_{SJUNCT} PRO work_{INF}
 odnomu].
 alone_{DAT}
 'Boris did everything possible to work alone.'
- b. *Boris_i xod-it k psixiatru dlja togo [čtoby PRO_i
 Boris_{NOM} goes_{PRES:3:SG} to psychiatrist_{DAT} for that_{GEN} that_{SJUNCT} PRO
 rabota-t'-sja lučše].
 work_{INF:REFL} better
 'Boris goes to a psychiatrist in order to be able to work better.'

Root infinitives and purpose clauses: NP_{DAT} may not appear in main clause infinitives with a dative and may not be embedded into a purpose clause with an overt dative argument, cf. (18).

- (18) a. *Borisu ne rabota-t'-sja u sebja doma. (Ru)
 Boris_{DAT} NEG work_{INF:REFL} at self at-home
 'It is not (in the cards) for Boris to be able to work at his own place (at home).'
- b. *... čtoby Borisu rabota-t'-sja u sebja doma.
 ... that_{SJUNCT} Boris_{DAT} work_{INF:REFL} at self at-home
 '... in order for Boris to work at his own place (at home).'

Last, lack of agreement = the lack of a syntactic relation (but see Icelandic).

Conclusion:

- Reflexive marker in (1)–(3) suppresses the ability of *v* to license agentive arguments (two versions of the reflexive marker)
 - (i) absorbs the external argument (nominative reflexives)
 - (ii) adds a 'null' nominal element as external argument (accusative impersonals)
- Russian lacks the second version of the reflexive marker
- NP_{DAT} similar to other experiencer- and benefactive NP_{DAT}; either introduced in the domain of the lexical verb or licensed by applicative heads (lower than little *v*);

Cf. also Finnish causative morpheme *-tt(a)-* (forms transitive verbs from unaccusatives); can be added to unergative intransitives producing a 'desiderative causative' reading (cf. Pykkänen 1999), cf. (19).

- (19) a. Minä laula-n. (Fin)
 I_{NOM} sing_{1:SG}
 'I am singing.'
- b. Minu-a laula-tta-a.
 I_{PART} sing_{CAUS:3:SG}
 'I feel like singing. ≈ Something makes me singing.'

3. Restrictions with reflexive dative impersonals (Russian)

Russian does not allow for accusative internal arguments, for PP-augmentations and for unaccusative roots with dative reflexives, cf. (4).

Additional factors for the grammaticality of dative reflexives

[data from a questionnaire study, Moscow; 24 informants per item; scale from 1 (totally ungrammatical) to 7 (perfectly grammatical); notation: 1—2,5 = *; 2,5—4 = ??; 4—5,5 = ?; 5,5—7 = ok].

average rating is given in brackets: []; sometimes the/some individual judgments—if interesting—are provided in parentheses: ();

Negated unergative verbs are rated best, cf. (20).

- (20) a. Mne ne sp-it'-sja. [6,833] (Ru)
 I_{DAT} NEG sleep_{PRES:3:SG:REFL}
 'I cannot sleep.'
- b. Borisu ne spa-l-o-s' [6,958]
 Boris_{DAT} NEG work_{INF:REF}
 'Boris could not sleep.'

Without negation: ratings degrade, cf. (21) (but cf. (16) with manner adverb; some informants find (21) still fine: great variation in the judgments).

- (21) a. ^{??}Mne rabota-et-sja. [3,917] (5x1, 1x2, 3x3, 6x4, 3x5, 3x6, 3x7)
 I_{DAT} work_{PRES:3:SG:REFL}
 'I feel like working/can work.'
- b. ^{??}Mne rabota-l-o-s'. [3,25] (6x1, 2x2, 3x3, 6x4, 3x5, 2x6, 2x7)
 I_{DAT} work_{PST:NEU:SG:REFL}
 'I felt like working/could work.'

Transitive verbs without internal arguments: judgements are somewhat inconsistent, but "rather grammatical", cf. (22).

- (22) a. Marine ne po-et-sja. [5,625] (but: 2x2, 1x3, 4x4)
 Marina_{DAT} NEG sing_{PRES:3:SG:REFL}
 'Marina doesn't feel like singing/doesn't manage to sing.'
- b. [?]Nataše ne čita-et-sja. [4,875]
 Nataša_{DAT} NEG read_{PRES:3:SG:REFL}
 'Nataša doesn't feel like reading/cannot read.'
- c. ^{??(*)?}Sergeju ne es-t-sja. [3,292] (9x1, 2x2, 2x3, 4x4, 1x5, 3x6, 3x7)
 Sergej_{DAT} NEG eat_{PRES:3:SG:REFL}
 'Sergej doesn't feel like eating/cannot eat.'

Transitive verbs with internal arguments: ratings degrade; nominative internal arguments better than accusative internal arguments, cf. (23).

- (23) a. ^{*(?)}Marine ne pe-l-a-s' èta pesnja. [2,304]
 Marina_{DAT} NEG sing_{PST:FEM:SG:REFL} this song_{NOM}
 'Marina didn't feel like singing this song/didn't manage to sing this song.'
- b. ^{??}Toliku ne čita-l-a-s' èta kniga. [3,125]
 Tolik_{DAT} NEG read_{PRES:3:SG:REFL} this book_{NOM} (7x1, 4x2, 2x3, 7x4, 1x5, 3x7)
 'Tolik didn't feel like reading/couldn't read this book.'
- c. *Marine ne pe-l-o-s' ètu pesnju. [1,417]
 Marina_{DAT} NEG sing_{PST:NEU:SG:REFL} this song_{ACC}

d. *Toliku ne čita-l-o-s' ètu knigu. [1,958]
 Tolik_{DAT} NEG read_{PRES:3:SG:REFL} this book_{ACC}

Aspect: perfective aspect yields significantly worse judgments, cf. contrast in (24) and (25) compared to (23b);

(24) a. ? Lene ne gulja-l-o-s'. [4,625] (2x1, 2x2, 3x3, 6x4, 5x6, 6x7)
 Lena_{DAT} NEG stroll_{PST:NEU:SG:REFL}
 'Lena doesn't feel like walking.'

b. *Lene ne po-gulja-l-o-s'. [1,917]
 Lena_{DAT} NEG po_{PF}-stroll_{PST:NEU:SG:REFL}

(25) *Toliku ne pro-čita-l-a-s' èta kniga. [1,375]
 Tolik_{DAT} NEG pro_{PF}-read_{PRES:3:SG:REFL} this book_{NOM}

Consequences for a strictly derivational model:

- Relation between *v* and VP is strictly local (*v* selects VP); certain VPs cannot be selected by a *v* selecting an external argument, cf. the Russian unaccusative verbal root *ras-* 'grow' (in contrast to its English counterpart);
 Consequence: Only VPs without any argument (unergatives) and marginally transitive VPs can be selected by *v*-s manipulated by a reflexive marker;
- Ungrammaticality of accusative marking: Russian lacks reflexives which allow *v* to select for a covert, semantically bleached external argument;
- Negation and aspect. Possible solution: the features represented by negation and aspect are part of the feature bundle of *v*.
Aspect: Close relation between case licensing and grammatical aspect, cf. e.g. Finnish (aspectual compositionality, telicity); *v* licenses structural case features of internal arguments → contains also aspectual features;
 With respect to polarity features, the assumption is less obvious;

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