External Possession in Lithuanian

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In this article, a first attempt is made to characterise the Lithuanian constructions with external possessors (alternating with adnominal genitives) taking into account the results of recent typological research into external possession. Only preliminary observations are made, but it is already possible to state that, in a European context, the Lithuanian constructions with external possessors belong to the prototypical area, in which these constructions are subject to a number of constraints mainly with regard to animacy and degree of affectedness. In this respect, Lithuanian differs markedly from its sister language Latvian. There is thus no common Baltic type of external possession.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Graeco-Latin grammatical tradition, the term *dative* (DAT) refers to a particular (surface) case of the noun, its determiners or substitutes. In Lithuanian grammar, the dative is defined as a case expressing an object (animate or inanimate) that may be affected positively or negatively by a certain action or event, i. e., the action is performed for the benefit or to the prejudice of the object (Ambrazas, ed., 1997: 513). Recent linguistic work shows that the dative case may appear in rather varied constructions where it takes on apparently quite different values.

Traditionally several semantically distinct types of datives are singled out. They are referred to in the literature as *dativus commodi* or *incommodi, dativus finalis, dativus possessivus, dativus sympatheticus, dativus ethicus,* etc. (Van Hoecke 1996: 3–6). They have their distinctive semantic properties, but may differ also with regard to syntactic behaviour. When the dative takes on a possessive aspect, it is referred to as *dativus possessivus*. Its basic meaning is then 'to be at the disposal of' or 'to have something at one's disposal', 'to possess' (Van Hoecke 1996: 13). Syntactically, the possessive dative is often identified as the case associated with external possession (EP), i.e. the mechanism by which a possessor typically encoded as an adnominal possessive modifier takes on the appearance of a clause-level constituent. Unlike the ethical dative, for instance, the possessive dative characterizes noun phrases that manifest all the properties of genuine clause-level constituents, and unlike the *dativus (in)commodi*, it does not combine with noun phrases containing adnominal possessors, unless these are co-referent with the dative phrase (Podlesskaya & Rakhilina 1999: 506; König 2001: 971). The possessive dative has been identified and discussed in Lithuanian scholarship as well. Both Šukys (1998) and Paulauskienė (1989) discuss instances of datives alternating with the genitive and characterized by the meaning of possession. In this article, an attempt is made to characterize the Lithuanian

possessive dative in terms of the basic notions and typological classifications that have been introduced in the literature of the last decade.

2. THE POSSESSIVE DATIVE

2.1. Concept

In recent linguistic literature, constructions with an external possessive dative are defined as

> "[...] constructions in which a semantic possessor-possessum relation is expressed by coding the possessor as a core grammatical relation of the verb and in a constituent separate from that which contains the possessum. Despite being coded as a core argument, the possessor phrase is not licensed by the argument frame of the verb root itself." (Payne & Barshi 1999: 3)

The external possessive dative in the sense meant here was first identified and described by Havers (1911). The term he proposed was *dativus sympatheticus*, which reflects the view of this dative as a case by means of which it is possible to express a sympathetic attitude towards the person undergoing the action described by the verb. According to Havers, the *dativus sympatheticus* alternates with the more "objective" genitive, which merely states the existence of a possessive relationship.

In more recent linguistic literature, this use of the dative is usually referred to as external possession (EP). In recent years, it has been the object of extensive typological research. In their introduction to a collection of studies on this subject, Payne and Barshi state that external possession is a characteristic feature of many languages not only in the Indo-European family, but also in many so-called exotic languages including Southeast Asian, South American, North and Meso-America, Australian, African, the Pacific, Semitic and Caucasian languages (Payne & Barshi 1999: 3).

The Baltic languages, notably Lithuanian, should not be an exception. Lithuanian is, of course, among the Indo-European languages mentioned by Havers, but the material he had at his disposal was restricted. Fraenkel, the author of the first monograph on the syntax of the Lithuanian cases, mentions the *dativus sympatheticus* as a separate type (following Havers in this repect). He notes, however, that the Baltic languages often give preference to the adnominal genitive where other Indo-European languages (notably Slavic and Germanic) would have a dative (Fraenkel 1928: 57–60). However, as Holvoet (2001: 202) points out, Fraenkel based his conclusions mainly on Old Lithuanian writings and did not take the Latvian facts into account.

2.2. Basic types

Despite a certain fundamental unity, different languages have various patterns of possessive dative marking. There must be two main constituents, viz. a possessor and a possessum. Haspelmath (1999: 110) names four prototypical patterns of external possession in European languages:

			Possessor	Possessum	
a.	SUBJ	V	DAT	OBJ	
b.	SUBJ	V	DAT	OBJ	PP
c.	SUBJ	V	DAT		PP
d.		V	DAT		SUBJ

Haspelmath (1999: 110) characterizes the dative of external possessor as a clause-level dative-marked NP argument, while the possessum is a direct object, a locative argument marked by a prepositional phrase, or an unaccusative subject. These facts suggest that European languages require a dative or a dative-like prepositional phrase for the possessor, whereas the possessum may vary depending on the individual language. A broader typological perspective is taken by Payne and Barshi, whose attempts at formulating a language-independent generalization are necessarily less specific as to the formal properties of the construction: They state that in the possessive construction the possessor (PR) may be expressed as

"subject, direct object, indirect object or dative, or as ergative or absolute depending on the language type. That is the PR may be expressed like a direct, governed, argument of one of the three universally attested basic predicate types (intransitive, transitive, or ditransitive). In some languages the PR can also be expressed by a pronoun or pronominal affix internal to the NP containing the possessum; but the Genitive-NP-internal coding cannot be the only expression of the PR. Furthermore, the possessor-possessum relationship cannot reside in a possessive lexical predicate such as *have*, *own* or *be located at* and the lexical verb root does not in any other way have a PR within its core argument frame." (Payne & Barshi 1999: 3)

For the purpose of this article, Haspelmath's definition is of a sufficient degree of generality. We will now attempt to formulate the prototypical properties of the dative of possession.

2.3 Prototypical features

Two main types of possessors are distinguished in the European languages: the ADNOMINAL or INTERNAL POSSESSOR and the EXTERNAL POSSESSOR. Generally speaking, the main distinction between them is that internal possessors usually express both alienable possession (as in *Onos mašina* 'Ann's car') and inalienable possession (as in *Onos ranka* 'Ann's hand'), whereas an external possessor is prototypically the possessor "of the relevant body part expressed by a separate clause-level constituent in the dative case that is not a part of the same phrase as the possessum" (König 2001: 970).

(1)	German	*Mir*	*zittern*	*die Hände.*
	Lith.	*Man*	*dreba*	*rankos.*
		me:DAT	are shaking	the hands:NOM.
		'My hands are shaking.'		

(2)	German	*Ich habe*	*es*	*ihm*	*ins Gesicht*	*gesagt.*
	Lith.	*Aš*	*tai*	**jam**	*į akis*	*pasakiau.*
		I	it	him. DAT	into- face	said

'I said it into his face.'

From the syntactic point of view, the possessum is usually a direct object while the possessor can be a direct/indirect object. However, a great variety of constructions occurs in different languages. For instance, in Swedish the possessor (PR) may be a type of locative, in other languages it can be an incorporated noun, or it can be expressed as an object (Payne & Barshi 1999: 6–8).

The prototypical external possession construction must meet the STRICT AFFECTEDNESS CONDITION, i.e. external possessors are only possible if the possessor is thought of as being mentally affected by the situation described. Since the affectedness condition is not equally strong in different languages, Haspelmath (1999: 113) advances four implicational hierarchies reflecting the different features with reference to with the "strength of the affectedness" may be formulated:

a. the ANIMACY HIERARCHY, (where EP constructions are favoured if the possessor is a) 1st/ 2nd p. pronoun $\Rightarrow$ 3rd p. pronoun $\Rightarrow$ proper name $\Rightarrow$ other animate $\Rightarrow$ inanimate.
b. the SITUATION HIERARCHY, (where EP constructions are favoured if the predicate is) patient-affecting $\Rightarrow$ dynamic non-affecting $\Rightarrow$ stative.
c. the INALIENABILITY HIERARCHY, (where EP constructions are favoured if the possessum is a) body part $\Rightarrow$ garment $\Rightarrow$ other contextually unique item.
d. the SYNTACTIC RELATIONS HIERARCHY, (where EP constructions are favored if the syntactic relation of the possessum is) PP $\Rightarrow$ direct object $\Rightarrow$ unaccusative subject $\Rightarrow$ unergative subject $\Rightarrow$ transitive subject.

Here the statement "EP constructions are favoured" means that if an EP construction is possible for a position at any point of the hierarchy, then that EP construction is also possible with all higher hierarchical positions.

With regard to all these hierarchies, European languages impose fairly strict requirements on their EP constructions. For example, with regard to the Animacy Hierarchy, many languages seem to restrict their EP constructions to animate possessors. With regard to the Situational Hierarchy, usually only verbs denoting an event may occur in this construction. With regard to the Inalienability Hierarchy, the dative EP constructions are sometimes restricted to situations in which the possessum is a body-part term and then the possessor is maximally affected. With regard to the Syntactic Relations Hierarchy, the possessum is generally a prepositional phrase, a direct object or an unaccusative subject (Haspelmath 1999: 112–115).

Taking into consideration the proposed system of EP hierarchies, it is possible to compare the syntactic and semantic peculiarities of EP constructions in the individual European languages. In this way, it should also be possible to make a few preliminary statements concerning the position of the Lithuanian external possessive dative on all four relevant clines.

3. CONSTRUCTIONS WITH EXTERNAL POSSESSORS IN LITHUANIAN

3.1. Syntactic properties

The above-mentioned descriptions of the prototypical possessor in constructions with external possession (Haspelmath, Payne and Barshi) seem to fit the Lithuanian constructions perfectly. It is easy to notice that the Lithuanian possessor is always a kind of indirect object whereas the possessum is a subject, a direct object or an oblique phrase, cf.:

(3) *Vincukui*   *kūnas*   *iš karto*   *sušalo į ragą.*
    Vincukas:DAT body   at once   froze to the bone
    'At once Vincukas's body froze to the bone.'

(4) *Norėjau paprašyti*   *švarkui*   *alkūnę*   *užlopyti.*
    I wanted to ask   jacket:DAT   elbow:ACC   mend
    'I wanted to ask you to mend the elbow of my jacket.'

(5) *Bitė*   *įgėlė*   *žmogui*   *į ranką.*
    bee   stung   person:DAT   into hand
    'The bee stung a person in his hand.'

When the verb is transitive, the following possibilities exist: the possessum is either indicated by the direct object (6, 7) or by a prepositional phrase (8, 9):

(6) *Ji*   *sulaužė*   *jam*   *kairę ranką.*
    she   broke   he:DAT   left arm.
    'She broke his left hand.'

(7) *Okulistas pritaikė*   *močiutei*   *akinius.*
    oculist   adjust   grandmother:DAT   glasses.
    'An oculist adjusted grandmother's glasses.'

(8) *Jis*   *sušnibždėjo jai*   *kažką*   *į ausį.*
    he   whispered   her:DAT   something   into ear
    'He whispered something into her ear.'

(9) *Jis*   *sviedė*   *pagalvę*   *vaikui*   *į veidą.*
    he   threw   pillow:ACC   child:DAT   into face
    'He throw a pillow into the child's face.'

A small number of verbs show a construction departing from the prototypical pattern as formulated above. It is also observed in German. These are cases where the possessor may apparently be expressed not only by the dative, but also by the accusative. The alternation can be illustrated with the following examples:

(10) a. German   *Er küsste*   *sie*   *auf die Wange.*
     b. German   *Er küsste*   *ihr*   *auf die Wange.*

(11) a. Lith. *Jis pabučiavo* *ją* *į skruostą.*
       he kissed her:ACC on cheek
  b. Lith. *Jis pabučiavo* *jai* *į skruostą.*
       he kissed her:DAT on cheek.
  'He kissed her on the cheek.'

The difference seems to be that the accusative with 'to kiss' implies a patient who is aware of and affected by the process. With the dative case, the process crucially affects a body part (the object NP), and the structure is essentially part-centered. With the accusative case, on the other hand, the structure is whole-centered, i. e. the possessor (the object NP) is primarily affected, whereas the part is indicated in an oblique (locative) case (Lamiroy & Delbecque 1998: 40). In this case, when the possessor is expressed by the accusative, the part of body or the possessum may be omitted, by contrast, if the possessor is expressed by the dative, the possessum is obligatory and the sentence would be ungrammatical without it in Lithuanian, cf.:

(12) *Jis* *pabučiavo* *ją*   *į skruostą.*
  he kissed her:ACC on cheek
  'He kissed her on the cheek.'
(13) *Jis* *pabučiavo* *ją.*
  he kissed her:ACC
  'He kissed her.'
(14) *Jis* *pabučiavo* *jai*   *į skruostą.*
  he kissed her:DAT on cheek
  'He kissed her on the cheek.'
(15) **Jis* *pabučiavo* *jai.*
  he kissed her:DAT
  'He kissed her.'

What is peculiar about structures like (10b, 11b) is that, unlike most constructions with an external dative possessor, they have no exact counterparts with an internal genitive possessor. If an internal possessor is used, the possessum will normally appear as a direct object rather than as an oblique phrase:

(16) *Er küsste ihre Wange.*
(17) **Er küsste auf ihre Wange.*
(18) *Jis* *pabučiavo* *jos ranką.*
  he kissed her hand:ACC
(19) **Jis* *pabučiavo* *į jos ranką.*
  he kissed on her hand

Constructions like (14) are attested only in a limited number of languages. Usually oblique (locative) marking of the possessum goes together with DO marking of the possessor (but then the construction has no external possessor in the sense of a dative alternating with an adnominal genitive); the construction with an external dative possessor requires the possessum to be in DO position, cf. the following examples from Russian:

(20) *On*   *poceloval*   *ee*   *v ruku.*
     he   kissed   her:ACC   on hand
(21) *On*   *poceloval*   *ej*   *ruku.*
     he   kissed   her:DAT   hand:ACC
     'He kissed her hand.'

In this case, there is a similar semantic distinction as formulated for (12), (14), viz. (20) is whole-centered whereas (21) is part-centered. Inasmuch as the kind of focussing meant here is associated with DO marking, we could refer to the oblique marking of the possessum in (20) and to the dative marking of the possessor in (21) as defocusing. This would mean that the German and Baltic constructions discussed here combine a 'possessor-defocusing' with a 'possessum-defocusing' type of marking. The redundancy of this marking would account for its relative rarity.

Thus, on the whole, despite the deviant cases discussed above, Lithuanian has prototypical constructions with external possessive datives. As to the peripheral types, König rightly points out that "additional patterns seem to be a consequence of the specific meaning (the affectedness of the possessor by something happening to the possessum) typically associated with semantic role" (König 2001: 975); pragmatic factors may also be involved.

2.5 Semantic properties

Semantic properties should be investigated with regard to all three components of constructions with EP: the possessor, the possessum and the lexical predicate.

With respect to the possessor, animacy is one of the constraints most requently mentioned. In the Lithuanian literature as well, it has been pointed out (Šukys 1998: 157) that animate possessors are required in order to make constructions with external possession acceptable. This can be understood in two ways: the dative is not used in the case of nouns grammatically marked as inanimate (20), but even in the case of nouns marked as animate the dative will not be used if reference is made to a dead person (23a, b):

(22) *Norėjau*   *surasti*   *puodelio* (*puodeliui*)   *lėkštutę.*
     I wanted   find   cup:GEN (*cup:DAT)   saucer:ACC
     'I wanted to find the saucer belonging to this cup.'
(23) a. *Pabučiuok*   *senelei* (*senelės*)   *ranką.*
        kiss:IMPER   grandmother:DAT (*grandmother:GEN)   hand:ACC
        'Kiss grandmother's hand.'
     b. *Vaikai*   *bučiavo*   *mirusios senelės* (*senelei*)
        Children   kissed   dead grandmother GEN. (grandmother:DAT)
        tik   *ranką.*
        only   hand:ACC
        'The children kissed only their dead grandmother's hand.' (at a funeral)

Prototypical external possessors, according to König (2001), are most typically animate, human and even speech-act participants. For Lithuanian as well as for the other European languages investigated, the animacy constraint may be formulated in terms of the well-known animacy hierarchy:

THE ANIMACY HIERARCHY: 1st/2nd person pronoun ⇒ 3rd person pronoun ⇒ proper name ⇒ other animate ⇒ inanimate nouns.

If an external possessor construction is possible for a type of possessor low on the hierarchy, it is also possible for any possessor higher on the scale (Haspelmath 1999: 113).

In Lithuanian, all these types are possible, but the last one is rather rare and usually associated with methaphorical use, cf. (24), (25):

(22) *Vaikai*   *sulaužė*   *Onai*   *akinius.*
children   broke   Ann:DAT.   glasses:ACC
'The children broke Ann's glasses.'

(23) *Jis*   *nukirto*   *medžiui*   *šaką.*
he   cut   tree:DAT   branch:ACC
'He cut the branch of the tree.'

The semantic characteristics of the possessum depend on certain universal semantic hierarchies. The most common hierarchy is *inalienable* ⇒ *alienable*; Payne and Barshi propose the following expanded version of Haspelmath's hierarchy:

THE INALIENABILITY HIERARCHY: body part ⇒ part-whole ⇒ other inalienable ⇒ alienable + proximate ⇒ garment ⇒ alienable + distal ⇒ non-possessable ⇒ other contextually unique item (Payne & Barshi 1999: 14).

With regard to the types of verbs occurring with external possessors, we can single out a few characteristic types, generally matching those singled out by Lamiroy and Delbecque (1998: 43–44):

✦ dynamic verbs, i.e. verbs expressing physical actions such as *suduoti* (hit), *perplėšti* (tear), *sudaužyti / sulaužyti* (break), *sviesti* (throw);

✦ causative verbs, i.e. expressing activities which cause the object to undergo a certain change, e.g. *nupjauti / nukirsti* (cut off), *nuskinti, nugnybti* (pick off, nip off), *amputuoti* (amputate);

✦ motion verbs, i.e. those expressing a change in position, e.g. *pakelti* (raise), *nuleisti* (lower), *pasukti* (turn);

✦ inchoative verbs, i.e. those expressing an activity that has a certain point which coincides with the beginning of a new state, e.g. *sustorėti* (get fat), *(iš)rausti* (redden);

✦ stative verbs expressing statives of suffering, e.g. *skaudėti* (ache, hurt).

3. CONCLUSION

Two aspects of the dative of external possession are examined in this article. First, a general concept is formulated, and the main difference with regard to other uses of

the dative are briefly discussed. Next, the theoretical insights gained in the first part of the article are applied to the Lithuanian material.

Even on the basis of the preliminary observations made in this article, it becomes clear that it is necessary to revise Haspelmath's (1999) statement according to which the Baltic languages, together with East Slavic, Balto-Finnic and Hungarian, belong to the periphery of the prototypical area of the dative external possessor in European languages. Haspelmath's material seems to comprise only Latvian, which differs crucially from Lithuanian in this respect. Actually, the Lithuanian dative of external possession corresponds rather accurately to the European prototype.

This article is but a first attempt to analyze the Lithuanian constructions with external possession. Further research is necessary in order to formulate, in a more precise way, the constraints with regard to animacy, affectedness etc.

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