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## **What is the Dative of Possession?\***

Possessive dative is a notion which recurs in the description of many languages that have overt case marking distinctions between nominatives (typical subjects), accusatives (typical direct objects) and datives (typical indirect objects). The basic ideas lurking behind the term possessive dative are that it is semantically equivalent to possessive determiners or genitives and that it can be used only with a limited set of nouns, which is usually restricted to nouns denoting inalienable possession (e. g. kinship terms and body parts).

This paper argues that possessive datives are not derived from the same source as possessive determiners or genitives and that they are therefore not semantically and pragmatically equivalent with them. The evidence in support of this claim is mainly adduced from Croatian, German and Polish, but a comparison is also made with some equivalent constructions in Dutch. More specifically, it is argued that the so-called dative of possession is a pragmatic device which enables the speaker to empathize with the referent of the dative, that is, to present the state of affairs expressed by the predication from the point of view of the referent of the dative.

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### **1. Introduction**

Traditional grammars of inflected languages like Croatian and German have long recognized that the dative as a morphological case category has a variety of functions or uses. Some of these functions have been described in purely syntactic terms, as for example, the dative is typically an indirect object, whereas other uses have been characterized in semantic and/or pragmatic terms, as is evident from labels such as *dativus commodi*, *dativus incommodi*, dative of possession, ethic dative, etc.

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Dependency or valency grammars, on the other hand, make a sharp distinction between datives which are verb dependents (indirect objects) and are therefore a part of the syntactic and semantic valency of a given verb<sup>1</sup>, and those datives that can be fairly freely added provided certain semantic and pragmatic conditions are met. The latter type of the dative construction is usually called a free dative, the assumption being that neither its omission nor addition to an independent predication make any contribution to the grammaticality of the sentence. It is also assumed that the free datives are more often than not dependents of lexically specifiable noun classes, such as body parts, kinship terms, parts of clothes, and possibly some other noun classes.

Grammarians and linguists are not unanimous in their subdivision of the so-called free datives into syntactic and semantic subsets, either cross-linguistically or language-internally. For example, Paul (1987) discusses free datives in a number of languages (French, German, Polish, Swedish) and distinguishes four subsets:

- a. possessive dative (or dative of pertinence);
- b. dative of advantage (or *dativus sympathicus*);
- c. deputed, and
- d. dative of disadvantage (or *dativus incommodi*)

Abraham (1973), whose discussion is limited to German, also distinguishes four subsets of the free dative, but gives them somewhat different names:

- a. *Pertinenzdativ*,
- b. *Sympathetic Dative*;
- c. *Dativus Comodi/Incomodi*, and
- d. *The Ethic Dative*.

Helbig (1981) argues that there is syntactic and semantic evidence for postulating the existence of seven subtypes of free dative in German. His classification and the examples, together with their Croatian equivalents, are given in (1) — (7):

- (1) *Possessiver Dativ*  
 Ihm klopft das Herz.  
 Kuca mu srce.  
 beats him–Dat heart–Nom  
 'His heart is beating.'

1 Indirect objects are taken for granted in this paper, but this does not mean that the author is not aware of the problems pertaining to their description both language-internally and cross-linguistically. Croatian grammars, for example, define indirect object as a verb dependent in one of the oblique cases (genitive, dative, instrumental) but do not give a single syntactic process whose description would crucially depend on the notion indirect object, that is, the definition of indirect object is often circular because it is defined as a verb dependent in the dative, and the dative is described as the case of indirect object (cf. Barić et al. 1979; Katičić, 1986). See also Kučanda (1984) for a discussion of problems related to the description of indirect object in English.

- (2) Trägerdativ  
 Das Wasser läuft mir in die Schuhe.  
 Voda mi ulazi u cipele.  
 water me–Dat enter in shoes–Acc  
 'Water is leaking into my shoes.'
- (3) Dativus commodi  
 Der Junge öffnet dem Lehrer die Tür.  
 Mladić otvara učitelju vrata.  
 young man–Nom opens teacher–Dat door–Acc  
 'The young man opens the door for the teacher.'
- (4) Dativus incommodi  
 Die Vase ist mir zerbrochen.  
 Razbila mi se vaza.  
 broke me–Dat refl vase–Nom  
 'My vase got broken / I have accidentally broken my/a vase.'
- (5) Dativ des Zustandsträgers  
 Es ist mir heiß.  
 Vruće mi je.  
 hot me–Dat is  
 'I am hot.'
- (6) Dativ des Maßstabs  
 Das Buch ist mir zu schwer.  
 Ova mi je knjiga preteška.  
 this me–Dat is book–Nom too difficult  
 'I find this book too difficult.'
- (7) Ethischer Dativ  
 Du bist mir ein schöner Freund!  
 Baš si mi ti neki prijatelj.  
 just are me–Dat you–Nom some friend–Nom  
 'You are some friend.'

Finally, Wierzbicka (1988) argues that Polish has as many as 31 different semantic subtypes of the free dative, some of which have the following semantic description: lucky/unlucky agent, warning, coming into contact with a body part, coming close to a body part, unintentional feeling, unintentional thought, unintentional wanting, unintentional sensation, unintentional process in the body, unintentional change in appearance, etc. Even this brief survey of various approaches shows that linguists do not agree on the number of subsets that should be distinguished within one language or in a cross-linguistic survey of free datives. Another problem facing a linguist studying the distribution of free datives in a number of languages is that linguists are not unanimous in their assignment of a particular dative type to one of the above categories even within the same language. Compare examples (8) — (10), which illustrate different classifications of similar dative constructions in German:

- (8) a Possessiver Dativ (Helbig, 1981: 324)  
Er klopft mir auf die Schultern
- b Sympathetic Dative (Abraham, 1973: 8)  
Ich blickte dem Mädchen ins Gesicht.
- (9) a Dativus incommodi (Helbig, 1981:328)  
Die Vase ist mir zerbrochen.
- b The Ethic Dative (Abraham, 1973:11)  
Peter zerbrach mir die Vase.
- (10) a Dativ des Maßstabs (Helbig, 1981:329)  
Die Zeit vergeht uns schnell.
- b The Ethic Dative (Abraham, 1973:11)  
Da vergeht dir immer die Zeit.

The differences illustrated above are not merely a matter of terminology. They stem not only from different theoretical frameworks, i. e. valency theory (Helbig 1981) vs. transformational–generative grammar (Abraham 1973), but also from different sets of semantic and syntactic criteria used for the identification of subsets of free datives. Helbig (1981:324) restricts the notion of possessive dative (or the dative of pertinence) to nouns denoting body parts. Additional features of this type of the free dative are the expression of the part–whole relationship and the transformation of the possessive dative into a possessive determiner or genitive without change of denotative meaning. Abraham (1973) also argues that the use of the dative of pertinence is determined by the semantics of the noun, but does not seem to restrict this notion to body parts, as is obvious from his example **Der Hut brennt mir**, which would be an example of a Trägerdativ in Helbig’s classification. Abraham (1973) takes the embedding under an NP node as the crucial property of the dative of pertinence, and this is what makes it different from the sympathetic dative, which is embedded under a PP node. A final consequence of these two approaches is that both authors agree that a sentence like **Mir schmerzt der Rücken** contains a possessive dative, whereas (8a) and (8b) represent in their view two different subsets of the free dative.

What linguists do agree on, despite their differences, is that the datives illustrated above are not verb dependents and are hence called free datives. This notion is obviously a syntactic one, that is, the deletion of the dative in any of the above examples would still result in a syntactically well–formed sentence. There is also a general consensus that the free dative makes a semantic contribution, but it is not always clear what this semantic effect should be, as is evident from the multiplicity of semantic labels attached to the free datives.

## 2. On the Semantics and Pragmatics of the Dative of Possession

In the remaining part of this paper I will try to argue that such a proliferation of free datives is quite unnecessary and that a unified account can be

given. Consider first the distinction between *dativus commodi* and *dativus incommodi*:

- (11) Ozdravilo mi je dijete. Dativus commodi  
 get well me-Dat is child-Nom  
 'My child got well.'
- (12) Razboljelo mi se dijete. Dativus incommodi  
 get sick me-Dat refl child-Nom  
 'My child got sick.'

In Croatian, at least, the dative itself does not make any contribution to the *commodi/incommodi* interpretation of the sentence. Whether the sentence is interpreted as something favourable or unfavourable for the referent of the dative depends on the semantics of the verb. Moreover, it can also be argued that the datives of possession, which some authors restrict to body parts, are also sensitive to the *commodi/incommodi* distinction. Compare (13) and (14):

- (13) Ihm blutet die Nase.  
 Krvari mu nos.  
 bleeds him-Dat nose-Nom  
 'His nose is bleeding.'
- (14) Ihm klopft das Herz.  
 Kuca mu srce.  
 beats him-Dat heart-Nom  
 'His heart is beating.'

The bleeding of someones nose is obviously a disadvantage, whereas the beating of someones heart is an advantage. Since the datives in (13) and (14) can be replaced with a possessive determiner in both languages, it could be argued that the *commodi/incommodi* distinction also applies to possessive determiners. What is being suggested is that the *commodi/incommodi* distinction is an additional layer of semantic interpretation which can be assigned not only to a special subset of free datives but also to possessive datives, the so-called dative subjects<sup>2</sup> and indirect objects:

- (15) a Dobro mi je.  
 good me-Dat is  
 'I'm feeling well.'
- (15) b Loše mi je.  
 bad me-Dat is  
 'I'm not feeling well.'

2 In Croatian at least, there is no evidence that dative subject is a viable syntactic notion. The apparent subject-like properties of the dative (control of reflexivization and implied subjects of dependent infinitives and gerunds) are due to its semantic and/or pragmatic function (cf. Kučanda 1990).

- (16) Ivan            je Mariji            dao knjigu.  
 John–Nom    is Mary–Dat    give book–Acc  
 'John gave Mary a book.'
- (17) Ivan            je Mariji            oteo            knjigu.  
 John–Nom    is Mary–Dat    wrestle from    book–Acc  
 'John wrestled the book from Mary.'

It should be noted that the dative in (15), as well as the datives in (13) and (14) are in fact not free datives in the usual sense of the word because their deletion results in general statements of the sort **The nose bleeds, The heart beats, or It is good/bad** where *it* can refer to anything (food, weather, etc). In (16) and (17) the dative is a verb dependent, i. e. part of the predicate frame but it is nevertheless subject to the commodi/incommodi interpretation.

Attention has so far been focused on the semantic aspects of the commodi/incommodi distinction. Some authors, however, have also offered syntactic correlates of this distinction. Helbig (1981), for example, argues that the transformation of dativus commodi into a prepositional object (*für* + accusative or *statt* + genitive) is a distinctive feature of this subset of free datives. Compare (3) which can be paraphrased as **Der Junge öffnet für den Lehrer die Tür** or **Der Junge öffnet statt des Lehrers die Tür**. Such a paraphrase (preposition *za* 'for' + accusative or preposition *umjesto* 'instead of' + genitive) is also applicable to many Croatian sentences with the dative of advantage (e. g. (3)), but this does not apply to all sentences that are intuitively felt to contain such a dative. Compare (11), which cannot be paraphrased as (18), although it fits semantically into the subset of datives of advantage. Notice also that the German equivalent of (11) is ungrammatical:

- (18) \* Moje je dijete            ozdravilo za mene.  
 my    is child–Nom    get well    for me–Acc
- (19) \* Das Kind ist ihr gesund geworden.            (Helbig, 1981: 328)

Similar examples against the view that the dative of advantage should be limited only to those instances where it can be transformed into a prepositional phrase can be also adduced from Polish (cf. (20) and (21)):

- (20) Syn    nam            się urodził.            (Wierzbicka, 1988:395)  
 son    us–Dat    was–born  
 'A son was born unto us.'
- (21) Krowa nam            się ocielila.  
 cow    us–Dat    calved  
 'Our cow has just calved.'

According to Wierzbicka (1988:395), (20) and (21) can be assigned to a special subset called the dative of emergence, but one might be tempted to make a finer semantic distinction between these two sentences. In (20), the subject

NP **son** did really come into existence, but in (21) it is not the subject NP **cow** that emerged but the **calf**, which is lexicalized in the meaning of the verb **to calve**. The term dative of emergence is therefore quite misleading because it is not the datively-marked NP that comes into existence.

The examples adduced so far amply illustrate two things: (i) syntactic tests applicable to one language are often invalid for a cross-linguistic characterization of the same category, and (ii) one can always make finer semantic distinctions between superficially similar or identical constructions within the same language. Paul (1987: 91*f*), for example, claims that the transformation into a prepositional phrase is not a sufficient criterion for the distinction between the dative of advantage and the deputive. He argues that “two separate types can be established on the basis of a distinction between those cases where an action is carried out by a deputy on behalf of a given person (deputive) and those where it is carried out to the advantage of a given person (dative of advantage)” (Paul, 1987: 92). What this boils down to is that for Paul (1987) the sentence (3) **Der Junge öffnet dem Lehrer die Tür** would probably be not a dative of advantage, as Helbig (1981) argues, but a deputive<sup>3</sup>, although the semantic difference between doing something on behalf of someone and doing something to the advantage of someone is difficult to understand. One seems to entail the other, and vice versa.

A similar discrepancy can also be found within the subset of free datives called the dative of possession or the dative of pertinence. Isačenko (1965) and Helbig (1981) restrict this notion in German only to nouns denoting body parts, as in (1), (8a), (13) and (14). Abraham (1973), too, includes body parts into datives of possession, but makes a difference between those datives that are dominated in the deep structure by an NP (cf. (22)), and those datives that are dominated by a PP, as in (23):

- (22) Pertinenzdativ (Abraham, 1973:6)  
Mir schmerzt der Rücken.
- (23) Sympathetic Dative (Abraham, 1973:8)  
Ich blickte dem Mädchen ins Gesicht.

3 It should be noted that like the term dative of emergence, the deputive is also a misnomer because it is not the dative NP that acts as a deputive. The semantic function deputive should be assigned to the subject/Agent since it is the Agent that actually does something on behalf of the dative NP. The same objection can be raised against Hawkins (1981) argument that indirect objects in (i) and (ii) have the semantic function Deputive:

- (i) Aunt Maud bought the blue dress for Betsy.  
(ii) I wrote a letter for John.

The indirect objects above denote persons instead of whom something is done and from a semantic point of view they are beneficiaries because someone else (the Agent) deputizes on their behalf.

Moreover, Abraham (1973) includes also parts of clothes into the subset of possessive datives, as in (24), but only if they are, like body parts, dominated by an NP. If they are dominated by a PP, they are described as the Sympathetic dative (cf. (25)):

(24) Pertinenzdativ (Abraham, 1973: 7)  
Der Hut brennt mir.

(25) Sympathetic Dative (Abraham, 1973: 8)  
Der Regen tropfte ihm in den Kragen.

Note that in Helbig's (1981) view the sentences (22) and (23) both contain the dative of possession, whereas the sentences (24) and (25) are instantiations of the Trägerdativ. Fillmore (1968), on the other hand, argues that in a cross-linguistic perspective the dative of possession is used with the set of nouns that has become known as nouns denoting inalienable possession and includes, in the prototypical case, nouns denoting body parts, kinship terms, parts of clothes and some other relational nouns, such as **friend, neighbour, boss, etc.**

The major syntactic test used for the identification of the dative of possession has been its transformation into a possessive determiner or genitively marked NP, as in (26) and (27):

(26) a Mir schmerzt der Rücken.  
b Mein Rücken schmerzt.

(27) a Dem Mann zittern die Hände.  
b Die Hände des Mannes zittern.

To be more precise, Isačenko (1965) and Fillmore (1968) take the construction with the possessive determiner or the genitive NP as the underlying structure, the assumption being that there is no semantic difference between (26a) and (26b) or (27a) and (27b). Occasional counterexamples to this claim, such as sentences which contain both a dative and a possessive determiner (cf. (28)) have been explained as cases of semantic redundancy (e. g. Helbig, 1981: 325):

(28) a Ich wasche mir meine Hände.  
b ?Dem Mann zittern seine Hände.

The apparent double marking of the same relationship seems to be the best piece of evidence that the dative of possession and the possessive determiner do not have the same function. First, given the principle of economy in language, it is very unlikely that a language or a dialect would mark the same relationship twice. Secondly, as Bolinger (1977) has stressed, meaning cannot be reduced to the logician's truth value because linguists have wider semantic responsibilities. The latter view is also adopted by Functional Grammar, as developed by Dik (1978, 1989). On this view, the sentences like (26a) and (26b) or (27a) and (27b) are not "alternative expressions of the same underlying content, but alternative interpretations/representations of what might be the same constellation in reality" (Dik, 1989:107).<sup>4</sup> The idea that the dative of posses-



sion and the possessive determiner/genitive NP represent different perspectives on what may be the same constellation in reality is, of course, not new. It has been expressed by Havers (1911:2) in the following terms: “Dieser Dativ drückt eben die innere Anteilnahme der von dem Verbalbegriff betroffenen Person aus, er ist subjektiver, wärmer und innerlicher als der Genitiv, der einfach objektiv ein Besitzverhältnis konstatiert.” Havers (1911) distinguishes six subsets of *Dativus sympatheticus* on the basis of lexical classes of nouns or verbs that take a dative: (i) the whole body or parts thereof; (ii) the human soul; (iii) persons or things that belong to a person; (iv) verbs that denote acquisition or loss of possession; (v) nouns denoting kinship terms and friendship, and (vi) verbs of motion. Another important conclusion Havers (1911: 327f) has made is that the use of *Dativus sympatheticus* has developed in the following way:

- (29) 1st person > 2nd person > 3rd person > proper names >  
 kinship terms > other common nouns

His explanation of this historical process is worth quoting at length: “Was gibt es aber für den Naturmenschen, an dem er ein größeres persönliches Interesse haben könnte, als das eigene Ich?... Beim Pronomen der 3. Person dürfte dagegen ursprünglich nicht die gefühlvolle dativische, sondern die genitivische Ausdrucksweise geherrscht haben, durch die rein objektiv ein Besitzverhältnis konstatiert wird; denn diesem Pronomen ist ein subjektiver Charakter nicht in dem Maße eigen wie dem Personalpronomen 1. und 2. Person. (...) Die ersten Nomina, auf die sich der symp. Dativ vom Personalpronomen ausbreitete, waren wohl die Eigennamen; diese stehen dem Personalpronomen besonders nahe; denn der name ist mit der Person aufs innigste verknüpft; das

- 4 Since Functional Grammar does not recognize transformations as structure changing operations, Vandeweghe (1987) has tried to account for the derivation of possessive datives by means of a predicate formation rule which takes a possessive construction as input and gives the dative of possession as output, that is, the construction with the possessive determiner is taken as basic, as is also the case in transformational-generative grammar. He also proposes a lexical restriction on the application of this predicate formation rule in Dutch: “A lexical restriction on the operation of this configurational rearrangement is that the thing possessed mentioned in the Compl, refers to a part of the body, a piece of clothing on a person, or anything else that can be seen as inherently relating to the body or the personal sphere” (Vandeweghe, 1987:140). This lexical restriction explains why (ii) is not a possible paraphrase of (i), since a desk cannot be seen as inherently relating to a person:

- (i) Ik gooide het rapport op zijn bureau.  
 I threw the report on his desk  
 ‘I threw the report on his desk.’  
 (ii) \*Ik gooide hem het rapport op het bureau  
 I threw him the report on the desk

Another important ingredient of Vandeweghes approach is the semantic condition which allows semantic reinterpretation of the possessor as affected participant: “It has to make sense to conceive of the combination of V + Compl as denoting an Affect relation, in such a way as to permit the possessor in Obj-position to be naturally reinterpreted as having the semantic function of Affected with respect to what is expressed in the complex predicate.” (1987: 140).

Ich und der dasselbe bezeichnende Name bilden eine untrennbare Einheit” (Havers, 1911:323f).

In more recent terminology, the accessibility hierarchy suggested by Havers (1911) can be translated into a more elaborate scale offered by Givón (1984:159):

- (30) a Degree of referentiality/topicality  
       pronoun > definite NP > indefinite NP  
       b Degree of individuation  
           singular > plural  
       c Degree of egocentricity  
           1st person > 2nd Person > 3rd person

The historical evidence adduced by Havers (1911) and the topicality scale suggested by Givón (1984) point to the same conclusion. The dative is more referential and topical, more individuated and more egocentric than the possessive determiner or a genitive NP. This explains why the possessive dative is usually a pronoun and why it is used more frequently with body parts, kinship terms, parts of clothes, etc. The fact that languages differ with respect to lexical classes of nouns with which the dative is used seems to be due to the degree to which the speakers of individual languages can empathize with the referent of the dative, that is, present the state of affairs expressed by the predication from the point of view of the referent of the dative. In German and Polish, for example, the so-called Trägerdativ can be used only if the person has a part of clothes on them, but Croatian does not impose such restrictions, as is evident from (31) and (32):

- (31) Ostavila si mi cipele na kiši i sada su mokre.  
       left be me–Dat shoes–Acc on rain and now are wet  
       ‘You’ve left my shoes in the rain and they are now wet.’
- (32) Pregorila si mi košulju glačalom.  
       scorch be me–Dat shirt–Acc iron  
       ‘You have scorched my shirt with the iron.’

Similarly, German does not allow constructions like **\*Das Kind ist ihr gesund geworden** but allows similar constructions with a verb of negative meaning, as in **Ihr ist ein Kind gestorben**. The Croatian example (11) and the Polish examples (20) and (21), whose translations would also contain a dative in Croatian, show that in both these languages the range of dative constructions is much wider than in German. In fact, all of the 31 different Polish dative constructions suggested by Wierzbicka (1988) can be translated with a dative construction into Croatian. Here are a few examples:

- (33) a Mleko wylało mi się na sukienkę!  
       milk spilled me–Dat itself on dress  
       ‘Milk got spilled on my dress!’  
       b Prolilo mi se mlijeko na haljinu.  
       spilled me–Dat refl milk on dress

- (34) a Ciasto ładnie mi się upiekło  
 cake nicely me-Dat itself baked  
 'My cake came out nicely.'  
 b Kolač mi se dobro ispekao.  
 cake me-Dat refl good baked
- (35) a Ciasto mi się przypaliło.  
 cake me-Dat itself burnt  
 'My cake got burnt.'  
 b Izgorio mi je kolač.  
 burnt me-Dat is cake

Given the different ranges of dative constructions in German, Polish and Croatian, one might be tempted to agree with the following statement made by Wierzbicka (1988:393): "If we want to be able to predict the entire range of uses that the dative has in a particular language, we have to establish a full list of semantic constructions permitting the use of dative in this language. When such lists are compared, the overlap between different languages will often be considerable; nonetheless each SET of uses is language-specific and has to be stated, explicitly, as such."

On the other hand, a detailed description of dative constructions in individual languages disguises what these constructions have in common. As the examples adduced in this paper, and the examples quoted in the relevant literature show, the dative is more frequently than not an optional syntactic constituent of the clause structure. Its semantic contribution is very varied, as Wierzbicka (1988) has shown for Polish, but it is frequently not the dative but the verb that forces a particular semantic interpretation of the sentence, as for example in (20) and (21), where the feature emergence is part of the lexical meaning of the verbs **bear** and **calve**. This is not to say that the datives illustrated above do not have a common semantic feature. In all the cases quoted in this paper and the relevant literature, the dative can be assigned the semantic function Affected or Experiencer although it is not a part of the semantic valency of the verb, that is, the state of affairs expressed by the predication is presented as affecting or being experienced by the referent of the dative irrespective of additional semantic features such as advantage, disadvantage, possession, etc. Where languages differ is the degree to which the speakers of individual languages can treat a person as affected or personally involved in a state of affairs. For the speakers of German, Polish and Dutch, a person is affected only if something happens to their clothes while they are wearing them, whereas the speakers of Croatian treat the person as affected even if something happens to their clothes while they are drying or being ironed. Similarly, the Croatian equivalent of the ungrammatical Dutch sentence (cf. Note 4) is grammatical since Croatian can treat things as inherently relating to a person even if the person does not possess them, as in (36):

- (36) Ukraden mi je auto koji sam posudio od susjeda.  
stolen me-Dat is car which am borrowed from neighbour  
'The car I borrowed from my neighbour has been stolen.'<sup>5</sup>

These differences among the languages discussed in this paper are not erratic; they are, in fact, fairly systematic and conform to the following implicational hierarchy:

- (37) The Empathy Hierachy  
body parts > kinship terms > other relations among human  
beings > parts of clothes > things that a person is interested in  
> etc.

This implicational hierarchy has been called empathy hierarchy because it expresses different degrees of the speakers empathy with the referent of the dative. It is meant to imply that if a language can use the dative with any item lower in the scale, it can also use it with the items higher in the scale. Some languages, like German, Polish and Dutch, make also finer semantic distinctions within particular categories, as for example, parts of clothes, whereas in a language like Croatian dative can be used with an almost unlimited set of items as long as the speaker can empathize with the referent of the dative.

### 3. Conclusions

This paper has argued that the distinction between several subsets of the free dative is quite unnecessary because there is no conclusive syntactic and/or semantic evidence to support such a division. The interpretation of the free dative depends on the semantics of the verb and the meanings such as advantage, disadvantage and possession are additional layers of semantic interpretation. All the various uses of the free dative can be subsumed under the name dative of empathy, which is a syntactic/semantic/pragmatic device that enables the speaker to present the state of affairs from the point of view of the refer-

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5 English translations of Croatian, German and Polish examples adduced in this paper would seem to suggest that the only equivalent of the dative in these languages is the possessive determiner/genitive NP in English, and English would thus appear to lack a syntactic/semantic/pragmatic device which enables the speaker to present the state of affairs expressed by the predication from the point of view of a person that is affected or experiences this state of affairs. It is indeed true that the majority of examples in this paper have to be translated as a possessive construction in English, but as Baly (1926) has pointed out, languages like English have invented special constructions with **have** to enable *personne intéressée* to become subject/topic of the sentence, as in (i) and (ii):

- (i) I have a tooth missing.  
(ii) I have an aunt coming on Sunday.

As I have argued elsewhere (Kučanda, to appear), the subject of **have** has the same pragmatic function as the dative of empathy: it enables the speaker to empathize with the referent of the subject which has the semantic role Experiencer or Patient. It should also be noted that the closest translation equivalent of the subject of **have** is the dative of empathy.

ent of the dative. Historical evidence adduced by Havers (1911) shows that the dative of empathy first developed as the 1st person pronoun because it is easiest for the speaker to present a state of affairs from his own point of view. The differences in the range of lexical classes of nouns with which the dative of empathy is used show that languages classify differently subsets of nouns their speakers can empathize with. Despite these differences, the dative of empathy is most frequently used with nouns denoting body parts, kinship terms and parts of clothes, that is classes of nouns closest to the personal sphere.

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### *Što je posvojni dativ?*

U radu se iznose argumenti protiv podjele slobodnog dativa, tj. dativa koji nije zavisn od predikata na sintaktičko/semantičke podskupove kao što su dativ commodi, dativ incommodi, posvojni dativ, dativ nosioca odjeće, itd. Razlika između dativa commodi i incommodi nije semantičko svojstvo dativa već proizlazi iz značenja glagola i ta se razlika može proširiti i na druge vrste dativa (posvojni dativ, indirektni objekt, tzv. subjekt u dativu) zavisno od toga da li glagol izriče nešto povoljno ili nepovoljno. Isto tako, posvojni dativ često ne izriče posjedovanje u užem smislu nego govornikov odnos prema onome što je izrečeno predikatom. Zajednička je karakteristika slobodnih dativa da omogućavaju opis radnje ili stanja izrečenih predikatom iz perspektive referenta dativa i stoga se predlaže pojam dativ empatije umjesto gore navedenih pojmova. Sa stanovišta semantike ovaj dativ označava osobu koja doživljava ili je pogođena onime što izriče predikat. Povijesni razvoj dativa empatije u indoeuropskim jezicima (Havers 1991) pokazuje da se on prvo javio kao zamjenica prvoga lica, što se može objasniti činjenicom da je govorniku najlakše prikazati neku izvanjezičnu situaciju iz njegove perspektive. Razlike u leksičkim klasama imenica uz koje se javlja dativ empatije pokazuju da govornici različitih jezika različito grupiraju pojmove uz koje mogu upotrijebiti takav dativ.