

Building Blocks of Russian Dative Modal Constructions

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This paper addresses the structure of Russian Dative modal constructions with non-agreeing deontic modal elements of the type *nužno* ‘need’, *možno* ‘may’, *pora* ‘it’s time’ (‘DMCs’). Example (1a) includes an overt modal element; (1b) does not.

- 1) a. Borisu možno uxodit’ b. Soldatam Ø umirat’ za rodinu
Boris-Dat may[-agr] to leave soldiers-Dat Ø to die for motherland
‘Boris is allowed leave.’ ‘The soldiers must die for the motherland’

In what follows, I provide empirical evidence for bi-clausality of DMCs, for structural case and raising, and for the existence of covert modal heads for (1b).

A bi-clausal raising analysis has been previously proposed by Jung (2009) for constructions as in (2):

- 2) Gde nam Ø/bylo spat’
where us-Dat be[pres/past.[-agr] to-sleep
‘Where do/did we have to sleep?’

Drawing the parallel between possessive and obligation constructions, Jung claims that (2) has a bi-clausal, raising structure with the matrix verb *BE* that takes a CP complement. The lower subject receives Dative from the null prepositional C and moves to SPEC of the matrix TP for the EPP.

I argue that a bi-clausal raising analysis it is not limited to obligation constructions, but can be extended to DMCs with overt and covert modals that denote external permission/obligation. I also argue for the existence of a ModP layer with a modal head. Mod^o carries deontic modality, selects a vP, and assigns Dative to the subject of the embedded clause (1a). The equivalent modal heads exist in (1b) and in (2), but they are phonologically null.

• **Arguments for bi-clausality in DMCs:** I provide the following arguments for bi-clausality: (i) existence of distinct temporal and frequency adverbials modifying both the modal clause and the embedded infinitive clause (Larson 2002); (ii) the ability of such clauses to contain Accusative objects (typically disallowed with non-nominative subjects (Imanishi 2008: 40)).

(i) Distinct adverbials are typically not allowed in monoclausal sentences (3a), but they are permissible in bi-clausal structures, where one of the adverbials modifies the upper predicate and the other one modifies the lower verb (such non-agreeing elements are grammatical in both obligation and permission DMCs (3b):

- 3) a. *Segodnja Boris uletit čerez dve nedeli *monoclausal*
today Boris-Nom will fly in two weeks
‘Today Boris will fly away in two weeks.’
b. Segodnja Borisu **nužno/možno** uletat’ čerez dve nedeli *DMC*
today Boris-Dat need/may[-agr] to-fly in two weeks
‘Today Boris needs/is allowed to fly away in two weeks.’

(ii) Examples from Icelandic and Japanese show that non-nominative subjects (e.g., experiencers) are incompatible with accusative objects. Such configuration is grammatical in both obligation and permission DMCs.

- 4) a. ***Kare-ni eigo-o** jyoozu-ni hanas-e-ru. *Japanese*
he-Dat English-Acc well speak-can-PRES
‘He can speak English well.’ (ex. from Imanishi 2008)
b. **Vove** nužno/možno sigaretu *Russian*
vova-Dat need[-agr] cigarette-Acc
‘Vova needs/is allowed (to have) a cigarette.’

I argue that in (4b), the dative DP is the non-experiencer subject of a lower clause with a null transitive predicate ‘have’, which assigns Accusative to the direct object.

• **Arguments for raising and structural case**

(i) **Argument structure: control vs. raising.** In English, raising verbs can have expletive subjects, whereas control verbs cannot, since only control and not raising verbs assign a θ -role to the subject (*It seems to rain* - raising vs. **It tries to rain* - control). I show that similar to raising *seem*-constructions (Davies and Dubinsky 2004), DMCs have only one θ -role. In (5b), the Spec TP subject position may remain open, since *nužno* does not assign any θ -role to the subject.

- 5) a. Vova nužno kupit' knigu.
 Vova-Dat need[-agr] to-buy book- Acc
 ‘Vova has to buy a book.’
 b. Nužno, čtoby Vova kupil knigu.
 need[-arg] that vova-Nom buy-Pst book-Acc
 ‘It is necessary for Vova to buy a book.’

(ii) **Idioms.** Jung’s arguments for raising, such as passivization of the lower verb and the narrow scope reading, can be easily applied to DMCs. Additional evidence for raising comes from idioms. In DMC (6a), idiomatic meaning is preserved, since the modal predicate of the matrix clause does not assign any θ -role to the lower DP that was raised from the idiom chunk, which is not the case in control structures (6b):

- 6) a. Čertu nužno bylo dernut' ego za jazyk **DMC/Raising**
 devil-Dat need[-agr] be-Past[-agr] to-pull him by tongue
 ‘Did he have to reveal a secret?’
 b. *Čert staralsja dernut' ego za jazyk **Control**
 devil-Nom tried to-pull him by tongue

• **Source of modality and dative case assignment**

Following Bhatt (1997), I propose that neither *BE*, nor infinitives are responsible for the modal interpretation of (2). First, the same *BE* appears in possessive constructions without contributing any modality to it (e.g., *U men'ja byla sobaka*. ‘I had a dog’). Second, modality cannot come from infinitival clauses, since there are cases when infinitives do not have modal interpretation: (*Veselo bylo igrat' v parke*. ‘It was fun to play in the park’).

I argue for the existence of a ModP layer headed by overt/covert impersonal modal elements, and *BE* is a tense marker that can be hosted by overt modal elements only (null modals are incompatible with *BE*). Modal elements select the lower TP complement and structurally assign dative to the lower subject, which moves to the matrix clause for the EPP:

- 7) [TP T [ModP ModE] [TP T [vP Subj] [v VP]]]]

The crucial difference between overt and covert modals is that the latter are semantically deficient and, thus, have to be licensed by non-veridical operators: imperfective infinitives, negation, questions, subjunctive, an adverb *tol'ko* ‘only’, and imperatives.

Selected References

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