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*u* + Genitive

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*Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society: General Session and Parasession on Semantic Typology and Semantic Universals* (1993), pp. 76-89

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*The Annual Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* is published online via [eLanguage](#), the Linguistic Society of America's digital publishing platform.

## Experiencers, Possessors, and Overlap Between Russian Dative and *u* + Genitive\*

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As in many languages, the dative case (DAT) in Russian can indicate several semantic and syntactic roles, such as that of an experiencer,

- (1) **Mne** kholodno.  
1-SG-DAT cold  
'I'm cold.'

a prepositional object of motion or direction,

- (2) My ezdili k **babuške**.  
2-PL-NOM went to grandma-DAT  
'We went to grandma's.'

and even a possessor in certain contexts. This is especially true of inalienable possession, as in (3).

- (3) V drake **emu** slomali rebro. (Levine 1984: 496)  
in fight-LOC 3-SG-Masc-DAT they-broke rib-ACC  
'His rib was broken in a fight.' ('They broke his rib in a fight.')

But such usage is not exclusive to inalienable possession, as seen in (4).

- (4) Sobaka porvala **emu** brjuki. (Levine 1990: 14)  
dog-NOM ripped 3-SG-Masc-DAT pants-ACC  
'The dog ripped his pants.'

In Russian, as in some other languages, possession by people is normally indicated with a construction that can, in other contexts, indicate a spatial location. This construction, the preposition *u* followed by the genitive case (GEN), can indicate: location near an inanimate object;

- (5) Stol **u** okna.  
table-NOM stands by/near window-GEN  
'The table is by the window.'

a location associated with some person (e.g., 'at someone's place');

- (6) Včera my byli **u babuški**.  
yesterday 1-PL-NOM were at grandma-GEN  
'Yesterday we were at grandma's.'

as well as inalienable possession (without an explicit copula);

- (7) **U nego** bol'soj nos.  
at 1-SG-GEN big-NOM nose-NOM  
'He has a big nose.'

and alienable possession, usually with an explicit copula.<sup>1</sup>

- (8) **U Tani** est' novaja kniga.  
at Tanya-GEN be-INF new-NOM book-NOM  
'Tanya has a new book.'

In Russian, a phenomenon not found among other Slavic or Indo-European languages is the possible use of a possessive construction, namely *u* + GEN, to mark an animate being not just as a possessor, but also as an experiencer, as in (9).

- (9) *Vrač osmotrel u bol'nogo ruku.*  
 doctor-NOM examined at patient-GEN hand-ACC  
 'The doctor examined the patient's hand.'

Overlap is, therefore, sometimes possible in the usage of DAT and *u* + GEN, namely in reference to the result of an action, often perceived by the speaker as negative, affecting something belonging to a person or even an animal, as in (10) and (11).

- (10) *Emu / U nego minoj otorvalo nogu.*  
 3-SG-Masc-DAT / at 3-SG-Masc-GEN mine-INSTRL tore-off leg-ACC  
 'His leg was blown off by a mine.'
- (11) *Nado sostrič sobake / u sobaki šerst'.*  
 necessary cut-off-INF dog-DAT / at dog-GEN hair-ACC  
 '(We) have to cut the dog's hair.'

Similar uses of the DAT case in other Indo-European languages were first discussed by Havers (1911). He introduced the term 'dativus sympatheticus', or sympathetic dative, for those instances when the dative case could be replaced by the genitive case. Garde (1985) followed through with the term, claiming that Russian actually has three 'sympathetic cases', that is three constructions which can be replaced by the genitive in certain circumstances, and which connote intimate participation of the individual affected by the verbal action, which was the criteria upon which Havers determined 'sympathetic' usage. The three constructions cited by Garde (for Russian) are DAT, *k* + DAT, and *u* + GEN. In this paper, I will focus on the question of overlap in the usage of DAT and *u* + GEN, and will analyze why these constructions are accepted by some native speakers as interchangeable in their 'sympathetic' usage, and yet are felt by other Russian speakers to express very different connotations.

Some previous analyses (Chvany 1975; Fowler 1987) based on syntactic principles have noted the difficulty of explaining when DAT or *u* + GEN is properly used in such sentences. In some sentences, either the DAT or *u* + GEN may be used 'sympathetically', without being able to replace one another, as in (12) and (13):

- (12) *On byl mne otcom.* (Levine 1990: 11)  
 3-SG-Masc-NOM was 1-SG-DAT father-INSTRL  
 'He was like a father to me.'
- (13) *Smešnoj ty u menja.* (Gustavsson 1976: 345)  
 funny 2-SG-NOM at 1-SG-GEN  
 'You're a real funny one! [...and that affects me.]'

Vácha's (1974-5) and Garde's (1985) analyses, however, shed light on some of the syntactic restrictions, and narrow down the syntactic environment in which there is truly overlap in the use of DAT and *u* + GEN. I will be limiting my discussion specifically to this context. This is namely in what I will call the 'indirect object' position in the sentence type shown in (14):

(14) Subject + Verb + 'Indirect Object' + Direct Object

E.g.: Kto-to ispačkal **u nejo** / **ej** plat'e. (Garde 1985: 194)  
someone-NOM stained at 3-SG-Fem-GEN / 3-SG-Fem-DAT dress-ACC  
'Someone stained her dress (on her).'

Garde (1985) identifies some of the characteristics of the verb, 'indirect object,' and direct object in these sentences. The verb must be transitive, and it must be a verb of action having an effect on the direct object. The direct object will be in the accusative case. The 'indirect object' is normally an animate being, most often a human being. The 'indirect object' possesses the direct object, with possession understood in its broadest sense. As shown in (15), Garde (1985) notes that in sentences where the DAT and *u* + GEN overlap, the direct object usually concerns either:

(15) a) a body part or a close possession

Odin človek može isportit' žizn' **stol'kim ljudjam!**  
one-NOM person-NOM can spoil-INF life-ACC so-many-DAT people-DAT  
'One person can destroy so many people's lives!' (Panova, in Garde p. 187)  
Traube khotel osmotret' **u Bestuževa** pravuju ruku.  
Traube wanted examine-INF at Bestuzhev-GEN right-ACC hand-ACC  
'Traube wanted to examine Bestuzhev's right hand.' (Paustovskij, in Garde p. 187)

or b) some personal relation to the 'indirect object,' usually a family member, e.g.,

Ona isportit **tebe** vsekh devčonok v brigade.  
3-SG-Fem-NOM spoil 2-Sg-DAT all-ACC girls-ACC in brigade-LOC  
'She'll spoil all the girls in your brigade (on you).' (Belov, in Garde p. 191)

A vot ub'jut ego (syna)  
and DEMONSTR-PARTICLE they-will-kill 3-SG-Masc-ACC (son-ACC)  
**u tebja** pri pervoj že vojne.  
at 2-SG-GEN during first-LOC EMPHAT-PARTICLE war-LOC  
'And they'll kill him (your son) on you in the first war.' (Saltykov, in Garde p. 191)

Pete (1979) focusses on the fact that *u* + GEN rather than DAT tends to appear often with verbs indicating removal, loss, or some kind of distancing, and cites (p. 424) the following tendencies which characterize the use of one or the other construction:

(16)

a) tendency towards the use of *u* + GEN with alienable possession versus DAT with inalienable possession:

**U nego** vyrvali sumku iz ruk.  
at 3-SG-Masc-GEN tore bag-ACC out-of hands-GEN  
'They tore the bag out of his hands.'

**Emu** vyrvali zub.  
 3-SG-Masc-DAT they-pulled tooth-ACC  
 'They pulled his tooth.'

- b) contrast between a 'patient' being cured (or punished [!]) and a non-patient:

Vrač vyrval **mne** zub.  
 doctor pulled 1-SG-DAT tooth-ACC  
 'The doctor pulled my tooth.'

Vrač vyrval **u menja** po ošibke zdravovj zub.  
 doctor pulled at 1-SG-GEN by mistake-DAT health-ACC tooth-ACC  
 'The doctor pulled a healthy tooth on me by mistake.'

- c) contrast between a product and a living possessor:

Os'ka otrezal **u treski** golovu. (Kubanskij)  
 Os'ka cut-off at codfish-GEN head-ACC  
 'Os'ka cut off the codfish's head.'

**Emu** otrezali pravuju ruku.  
 3-SG-Masc-DAT cut-off right-ACC hand-ACC  
 'His right hand was cut off.' ('They cut off his right hand.')

- d) contrast between an individual versus generalized possessor:

Otrubit' **emu** golovu!  
 cut-off-INF 3-SG-Masc-DAT head-ACC  
 'Cut off his head!'

Esli otrubit' **u salamandry** khvost, to čerez dve nedeli  
 if cut-off-INF at salamander-GEN tail-ACC then after two week-GEN  
 u nejo otrastjot novyj. (Čapek)  
 at 3-SG-Fem-GEN will-grow new-NOM  
 'If you cut off a salamander's tail, it will grow a new one in two weeks.'

However, even these tendencies are a little unsatisfying in that the descriptive listing does not capture any broader underlying principle. They also do not address the issue that, while some native speakers accept both constructions in a variety of different contexts, others have strong intuitions as to when either DAT or *u* + GEN are appropriate. Furthermore, the issue of stylistic differences between the two constructions remains unaddressed: whereas *u* + GEN in many of these sentences is neutral in tone or is sometimes perceived as more proper, the DAT can lend a more informal feeling or more emotional tone.

I would like to present some findings from research I conducted with native speakers of Russian in Moscow during the summer of 1992, based partly on interviews with them and partly on questionnaires filled out by them. My research looks to a solution in the semantics of the dative case and in the various factors determining one's degree of 'empathy' with the narrated situation. My conclusion is that the tendency in Russian is towards use of the DAT in this sentence type with reference to humans as well as with animals with which the speaker feels empathy, and toward the use of *u* + GEN with inanimate entities and animals afforded less or

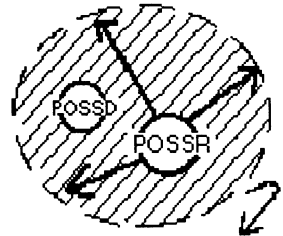
no empathy by the speaker. I also conclude that the probability that the speaker will extend the expression of empathy with the DAT is determined by a number of interacting factors, which I will discuss. First, however, I would like to discuss some aspects of the semantics of the dative case, and the genitive case with the preposition *u* in Russian.

While I will not be able to present anything approaching a complete picture of the semantic structures these grammatical forms can express, I can at least focus on some significant points which differentiate *u* + GEN and the DAT. For my purposes, cognitive grammar provides a good framework to explicate the relevant ideas. I will work on the assumption, for example, that every linguistic expression singles out some aspect or substructure of a domain for maximal salience, a process which I will refer to as HIGHLIGHTING. Prepositions and cases highlight relationships between entities. One of the entities in the relationship is identified as more prominent by being marked with a case form, by occurring with a preposition, or both. As I discuss in Cienki (in preparation), *u* + [animate entity]-GEN highlights a sphere of control or ownership about a possessor within which a possession is 'located', with location being understood in a concrete or abstract sense. For example, the sentence in (17),

- (17) **U Tani** est' novaja kniga.  
 at Tanya-GEN be-INF new-NOM book-NOM  
 'Tanya has a new book.'

Tanya = POSSR

kniga ('book')= POSSD

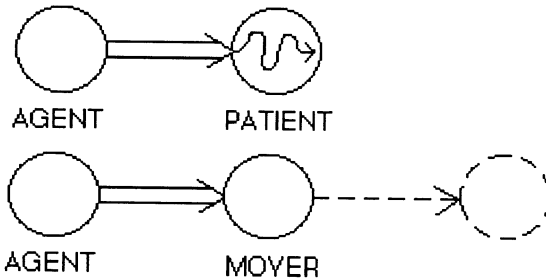


Abstract region of control

The figure in (17) gives a graphic representation of how to conceive of the relationship involved. (Langacker 1991b: 172 presents a similar model.) As Taylor (1989: 679-680) summarizes, the relation of possession is typically an asymmetric one, like that depicted here, whereby an animate participant has control over an inanimate one by virtue of its status as an energy source, with the potential for independent action. Possession, the relation highlighted by *u* + GEN when the object of the preposition is animate, is essentially a relationship in one direction, from possessor to possessed.

Now I would like to compare some aspects of the semantics of the dative case -- in general, and in Russian in particular. Unlike the genitive, the Russian dative, nominative, accusative, and instrumental can be grouped together as cases which primarily involve the roles of participants in processes normally expressed on the clausal level. A typical process or event, which results in a transfer of energy from one participant to another, forms what Langacker calls an action chain. This can be depicted as in (18).

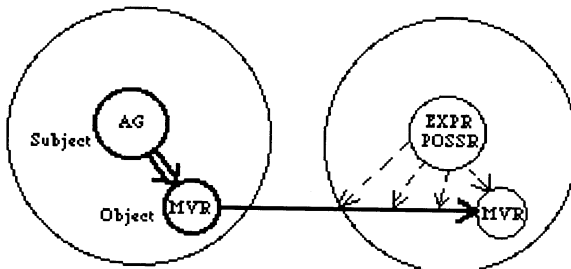
- (18) Possible action chains of an event (adapted from Langacker 1991b)



The participants in the event are indicated by circles; the double arrow indicates the transmission of energy from the first participant to the second; and the single arrow indicates the resultant change of state of the second participant (in the case of the Patient), or its movement (for something that doesn't itself change, but does change its location: a Mover). Langacker characterizes the semantics of cases such as the nominative, accusative, dative, and instrumental in terms of ROLE ARCHETYPES which they can represent. The archetypal AGENT is "a person who volitionally carries out physical activity resulting in contact with some external object and the transmission of energy to that object" (Langacker 1988: 59); the archetypal PATIENT is an inanimate object which absorbs this energy and thereby undergoes some change of state. The role archetypes are proposed as categories by which we organize our conception of participant interactions, conceptual categories, and not just linguistic constructs.

Recent research (such as that by Smith 1987 on German; Langacker 1991a on Newari, a language of Nepal; and Janda, forthcoming, on Czech) has pointed to the dual role of DAT-marked entities. As Smith (1987: 355-356) notes, they have the "potential for simultaneous active and passive participation in the action in the clause." DAT entities typically mark the role archetype of EXPERIENCER. Like the Agent role, an Experiencer can exert physical and mental energy (that is, it can act as an energy source); but like a Patient, it is affected in some way by the flow of energy along the action chain (it can act as an energy sink). In a typical event of giving, where the DAT-marked entity is the indirect object, it also becomes the new possessor of what was given, and actually reflects a DUAL role of Experiencer-Possessor (EXPR-POSSR). I have depicted Langacker's illustration of the transaction of giving in (19).

- (19) Langacker's (1991a: 227) illustration of the transaction of *giving*



The dashed-line circles stand for entities over which the Agent (AG) and EXPR-POSSR exercise some dominion (a region of control). The double bold arrow stands for the transmission of energy to what is marked as a Mover (MVR), the thing which is given. The single bold arrow depicts the motion or transfer that results. The dashed-line arrows from the EXPR-POSSR indicate the complex ways it interacts with its new acquisition, something which it now has some control over (as the new POSSR), but which also affects it (creating a new experience for it).

Bearing in mind what we have seen of the semantics of *u* + GEN and of the DAT case, I would like to put a third issue on the table, that of the animacy hierarchy. The animacy hierarchy was originally developed by Silverstein (1976) to explain case marking in so-called split-ergative languages. It has since been found to have relevance in other areas of grammar, such as in explaining the use of English possessives with *of* versus those with the suffix *-s* or a possessive pronoun (Deane, 1987)<sup>2</sup>. In (20) I present a simplified version of the animacy hierarchy. At the top of the hierarchy are highly context-dependent forms. Next come NPs with salient, human referents. At the bottom of the hierarchy are inanimate physical and abstract entities.

(20) A simplified version of the animacy hierarchy

Pronouns (1<sup>st</sup> person > 2<sup>nd</sup> > 3<sup>rd</sup>) > proper names > kin-terms >  
 other humans > other animals > physical objects > abstract entities

The connection between animacy and empathy is, I believe, intuitively clear, in that empathy is based upon seeing a similarity with oneself, including shared, common concerns. In this regard, I will sometimes refer to the Russian word *sočuvstvie* (literally ‘with-feeling’, like German *Mitgefühl*) which, I believe, expresses the concept more transparently to Russian speakers than ‘empathy’ or ‘sympathy’ do to English speakers.

The present data illustrate the importance of the animacy hierarchy in determining whether a speaker will more likely assume the ‘inner’ perspective of the affected animate being, and thereby have empathy with it (*sočuvstvie*), or retain the outside perspective, the more objective viewpoint of the observer of the situation. Considering the examples in (21), most of my informants preferred the DAT in examples such as those in the first half of the list more often than they did for the examples further down the list. I have therefore written the DAT form first in the sentences at the top, and *u* + GEN first for the sentences further down.

(21) Ty razbudil mne / u menja rebjonka.  
 2-SG-NOM woke-up 1-SG-DAT / at 1-SG-GEN baby  
 ‘You woke up my baby on me.’

Emu / U nego minoj otorvalo nogu.  
 3-SG-Masc-DAT / at 3-SG-Masc-GEN mine-INSTRL tore-off leg-ACC  
 ‘His leg was blown off by a mine.’

Sobake / U sobaki obrezali uši.  
 dog-DAT / at dog-GEN they-clipped ears-ACC  
 ‘The dog’s ears were clipped.’ (‘They clipped the dog’s ears.’)

**U lošadi** / **Lošadi** udalili pulju.  
 at horse-GEN / horse-DAT they-removed bullet-ACC  
 'They removed a bullet from the horse.'

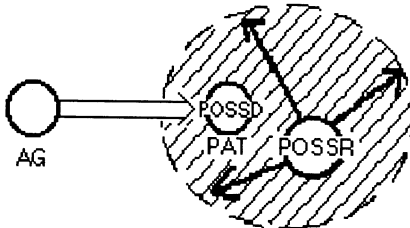
**U krokodila** / **Krokodilu** vyrvali bol'noj zub.  
 at crocodile-GEN / crocodile-DAT they-pulled sore/sick-ACC tooth-ACC  
 'They pulled the crocodile's sore tooth.'

On otrezal **u treski** / **treske** golovu.  
 3-SG-Masc-NOM cut-off at codfish-GEN / codfish-DAT head-ACC  
 'He cut off the codfish's head.' ('He cut the head off the codfish.')

Admittedly, some of the examples are rather gruesome in nature, but it is precisely in these malefactive contexts that competition between the variants can appear.

When the affected animate being<sup>3</sup> is lower on the animacy hierarchy, I propose that the speaker is more likely to focus only on the single relation of possession, expressed with *u* + GEN. This is depicted by the bold arrows in (22) extending from the highlighted Possessor. As in (18), the double arrow indicates the transmission of energy from the Agent to the Patient.

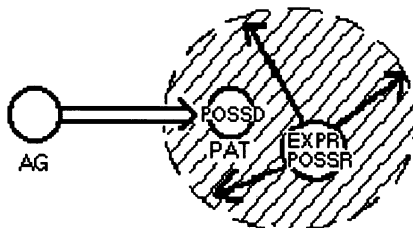
(22) [AG-NOM] + [verb] + [*u* + **POSSR-GEN**] + [PAT-ACC]



The relation of possession may have some observable manifestations -- the animate being exerting its control over the entity possessed, especially in the case of inalienable possession, as with a body part.

When the speaker can have empathy with the person or animal affected, he or she is more liable to focus not only on the fact that the possessor is exerting its force outward over its possession, but may also focus on how the possessor is affected by an outside force acting on its possession. Assuming empathy with the Possessor, the speaker can relate to its dual role as an Experiencer/Possessor, which is reflected by using the dative case. This is depicted in (23) by the bold arrows extending both outwards and inwards: out from the Possessor, exerting its sphere of control; and inwards, as the effect on the Patient (the entity possessed) is experienced by the Possessor (i.e. the EXPR-POSSR).<sup>4</sup> Janda (forthcoming), therefore, describes this construction as the 'dative of affectedness via possession'.

(23) [AG-NOM] + [verb] + [EXPR-POSSR-DAT] + [PAT-ACC]



The above analysis is supported by some of the informants' own comments as they tried to explain their intuitions: several cited the factor of *sočuvstvie* as what set apart the sentences using the DAT as opposed to *u* + GEN. This becomes even clearer when the sentences are put into a more detailed context. One informant suggested the scenarios given in (24) and (25) (the informant's comments are in parentheses; mine are in brackets):

- (24) a) Nado sostrič **sobake** šerst'.  
 necessary cut-off-INF dog-DAT hair-ACC  
 '(We) have to cut the dog's hair.'  
 (It's hot out. The dog needs it.) [You feel for the dog.]
- b) Nado sostrič **u sobaki** šerst'.  
 necessary cut-off-INF at dog-GEN hair-ACC  
 '(We) have to cut the dog's hair.'  
 (The dog looks bad as it is.) [Judgment based on speaker's perspective.]
- (25) a) **Krokodilu** vyrvali bol'noj zub.  
 crocodile-DAT they-pulled sore/sick-ACC tooth-ACC  
 'They pulled the crocodile's sore tooth.'  
 (We see that it's suffering.) [*sočuvstvie*]
- b) **U krokodila** vyrvali bol'noj zub.  
 at crocodile-GEN they-pulled sore/sick-ACC tooth-ACC  
 'They pulled the crocodile's sore tooth.'  
 (... and now they can feed it normally.) [objective observation]

Animacy, however, is not the only criterion that appears to factor into one's expression of empathy. Another factor to be considered is the degree of the animal's familiarity to the speaker.<sup>5</sup> Any hierarchy based on degree of familiarity will vary from person to person, based on their experience (e.g., whether they work with animals or have pets, whether they live in a city or are surrounded by woods, etc.). For the last example in (21), most of my informants felt the DAT sounded funny unless in fact the fish was someone's very dear pet. (This sentence more likely describes food preparation.)

Another factor is whether the possessor referred to is singular or plural. One is more likely to relate to, and empathize with, an individual rather than with a large group. This would concur with the tendency listed under (16d).

The level of formality of the speech situation also plays a role in which construction is used. Most native speakers consulted felt a stylistic difference in these sentences, with *u* + GEN being more formal, and the DAT as more colloquial. For example, most informants accepted both versions of a sentence given by Garde (1985: 187), reproduced here as (26), but several noted that the second variant (*u bol'nogo*) sounded more formal.

- (26) Vrač            osmotrel **bol'nomu** / **u bol'nogo** ruku.  
 doctor-NOM examined patient-DAT / at patient-GEN hand-ACC  
 'The doctor examined the patient's hand.'

Levine (1986: 445) also notes that in selecting the DAT in sentences such as (27),

- (27) **Emu**            urezali zarplatu.  
 3-SG-Masc-DAT they-cut salary-ACC  
 'His salary was cut.' ('They cut his salary on him.')

"[...] the speaker is expressing a certain empathy with the possessor, who is felt to be 'upset' by what has happened to his property." These findings concur with the semantic analysis discussed above: with *u* + GEN, the situation is being viewed more objectively from outside, whereas with the more 'emotional' DAT, the speaker expresses *sočuvstvie* and assumes the inner point of view of the Experiencer/Possessor.

I also observed a tendency away from the *u* + GEN variant with human referents since, as several informants commented, it could be ambiguous with the locative reading mentioned in (6) ('at someone's place'). One native speaker observed that in (28) the DAT (a) is preferable,

- (28) (a) Kto-to            ispačkal **Nine**            plat'e.  
 someone-NOM stained Nina-DAT dress-ACC  
 'Someone stained Nina's dress.'
- (b) Kto-to            ispačkal **u Niny**            plat'e.  
 someone-NOM stained at Nina-GEN dress-ACC  
 'Someone stained Nina's dress.'

because with (28b) the listener could suppose that some woman stained her OWN dress while at Nina's place, i.e., it would be short for (29).

- (29) Kto-to    ispačkal **sebe**    u Niny            plat'e.  
 Someone stained self-DAT at Nina-GEN dress-ACC  
 Someone stained her [own] dress at Nina's.

However, this factor against the use of *u* + GEN is overridden if the verb concerns a state rather than a process; in (30) (a) and (b) (from Chvany 1975: 101), *u* + GEN and the DAT cannot replace each other.

(30) (a) **U Ivana** svjazany ruki.  
 at Ivan-GEN tied-Past-Passive-Ppl hands-NOM  
 'Ivan's hands are tied.'

(b) **Ivanu** svjazali ruki.  
 Ivan-DAT they-tied hands-ACC  
 'They tied Ivan's hands.'

The use of *u* + GEN is also favored if there is a verb indicating co-location with the Possessor in conjunction with a prepositional phrase qualifying the location (versus motion toward the Possessor). Note the contrast in (31) (a) and (b) between location and motion, respectively (from Pete 1979: 423).

(31) (a) On deržal rebjonka **u sebja** na kolenjakh.  
 3-SG-Masc-NOM held baby-ACC at self-GEN on knees-LOC  
 'He held the baby on his knees.'

(b) On posadil rebjonka **sebe** na koleni.  
 3-SG-Masc-NOM sat baby-ACC self-DAT on knees-ACC  
 'He sat the baby on his knees.'

Another factor, unrelated to the issue of empathy, is discussed by Vácha (1974-5) and Pete (1979), namely that *u* in some contexts reflects an ablative meaning,<sup>6</sup> as shown in (16) and in (32):

(32) brat' den' gi **u kogo-to**  
 take-INF money-ACC from/at someone-GEN  
 'to take money from someone'

Unlike other Slavic languages such as Czech (Zajčková 1972; Janda forthcoming) and Polish (Wierzbicka 1988), Russian does not employ the DAT to express removal or loss. Therefore, in sentences such as (32) where the concept of removal predominates, *u* + GEN is the sole possibility.

In conclusion, the complexities of the usage of DAT versus *u* + GEN represent a more general linguistic principle: a number of semantic and syntactic factors interact to determine the speaker's choice of a linguistic expression, and this process can be viewed as a competition among what Jackendoff (1983) has called differently weighted 'preference conditions'. Different factors weight the balance towards which grammatical construction a speaker will use. For example, an informal speech situation, a speaker's high degree of empathy with the possessor, and his/her construal of a strong effect on it would weight the use of the DAT. But a more formal setting and reference to, say, an unfamiliar reptile would weight the use of *u* + GEN. There is clearly an interrelation between some of the relevant factors. Several factors that favor the use of either DAT or *u* + GEN commonly occur together, and can reinforce each other.

While there may be other conditions relevant in determining the use of DAT versus *u* + GEN, the chart in (33) summarizes those discussed here.

(33) Factors influencing the use of DAT versus *u* + GEN in this sentence typefavors DATfavors *u* + GENFactors determining 'empathy value':

high on animacy hierarchy

low on animacy hierarchy

familiar referent

unfamiliar referent

informal, emotional speech situation

formal speech situation

verb of action/motion toward referent

stative verb

singular (individual possessor)

plural (generalized)

Factor independent of empathyavoids ambiguity with locative  
interpretationablative interpretation  
(removal or loss)

Note that most of the factors determining the 'empathy value' are SUBJECTIVELY weighted by the speaker. Past studies have shown the futility of attempting to state specific syntactic criteria to explain and predict the usage discussed here.<sup>7</sup> The factors in (33), however, do help make sense of the tendencies observed by Pete (1979), listed here in (16).

This semantic analysis also helps explain the variation in usage from one native speaker to another that I and researchers before me have observed. Previous studies have not focussed on any pattern of usage by INDIVIDUAL informants. The working assumption was, apparently, that usage would be consistent across native speakers. I conclude, though, that although each speaker may, in effect, draw the empathy dividing line in a different place according to the various factors mentioned, there is a fair amount of consistency in a given speaker's usage. My observation is that some speakers, as expected, prefer the DAT with humans and animals with a high 'empathy value', and accept *u* + GEN for animals with a lower 'empathy value'; others, however, who prefer *u* + GEN despite a high 'empathy value' rating for the possessors, tend to follow through with the tendency to use *u* + GEN with possessors of 'medium' and 'lower' 'empathy values'.

**Notes**

\* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages, Dec. 28-30, 1992, New York, NY. I would like to thank my native speaker informants; Vladimir Sedov and Benjamin Hary for assistance in obtaining some of the data; and Paul Deane, Joe Grady, and Mary Ellen Ryder for their helpful comments. I am also grateful to Judge William Hill of the Fulton County Courthouse in Atlanta for allowing me to attend BLS 19 by releasing me from the jury I had been serving on for three long weeks.

<sup>1</sup>I will gloss Russian *u* with English 'at', lacking a more convenient expression for the concept it represents.

<sup>2</sup>The relevance of a similar 'empathy hierarchy' in Russian syntax is discussed in Yokoyama (1982) and elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup>Animacy, as a grammatical category in Russian, does not extend to plants. However, animals, and even insects, are identified in Russian by the question *Kto èto?* ('Who is that?') as opposed to *Čto èto?* ('What is that?').

<sup>4</sup>See Janda (1990; forthcoming) for a similar depiction of the 'free dative' in Czech, in which "a nominative acts on an accusative in a dative's sphere of control in a setting."

<sup>5</sup>I am grateful to Oscar Swan for this observation.

<sup>6</sup>Note that historically, the original meaning of *u* was ablative, as in the related prefix *u-* with Russian verbs of motion today (e.g., *ujti* 'to go away') (Vasmer 1958: 168).

<sup>7</sup>Even Fowler (1987) who states (p. 5), "I contend that there is no direct mapping of semantics onto case morphology -- rather, syntax serves as the interface, and has the last word in determining case," also observes (p. 404), "Clearly the Dative case and the preposition *u* do not alternate at the level of syntax. [...] the choice between the competing constructions lies outside the realm of syntax [...]."

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