

# THE DATIVE IN MODERN ICELANDIC: EXPLORATION OF THE SEMANTIC GENOTYPE OF THE DATIVE IN NATURAL LANGUAGES\*

Mariko Saiki and Yasutaka Kaneko

Kanazawa University, Kakuma, Kanazawa, 920-1192 JAPAN  
Email: {saiki, isl1991}@kenroku.kanazawa-u.ac.jp

## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses distribution of the dative in Modern Icelandic. Similar to Latin, Modern Icelandic exhibits occurrences of the possessive dative, i.e., the dative which marks the possessor of a noun. However, although Latin shows free occurrences of possessive datives, there is a syntactic restriction imposed on the distribution of possessive datives in Modern Icelandic. The possessive dative in Modern Icelandic is limited within a PP which denotes the static position of an entity participating in the semantics of the sentence. This difference between Latin and Modern Icelandic follows from the fact that the dative in Latin inherently possesses the locative semantics, while that in Modern Icelandic does not.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Studies in many languages have revealed that nominals in the overt dative case are carriers of tremendously differing kinds of semantics [1-9]. Languages also vary according to the kinds of semantic information their dative nominals encode [8-9]. Why is the dative semantically so variable? What is the factor that determines the semantics underlying this overt case? We believe the answers to these questions can be found through exploration of the semantic *genotype* of the dative, i.e., the semantic origin of the dative case, a term borrowed from genetics. We also believe that the nature of the dative can be seen through investigation of the semantics of the dative in many individual languages.

In section 2 of this paper, we assume the set of *semantic roles* and hypothesize that the dative in Modern Icelandic (henceforth Icelandic) cannot project the *locative* role within the argument structure of the verb. In section 3, we discuss the distribution of the possessive datives in Icelandic, i.e., the dative nouns which occur as possessors attributively modifying nouns. Yip et al. [10] mention the following two conditions on the occurrence of possessive datives in Icelandic: (i) Icelandic possessive datives occur as the possessors of the objects of prepositions within PPs, and (ii) they occur as possessors of the inalienable possessor-possessed relation. Section 3 of this paper proposes modification to the first condition above. Finally, in section 4, we claim that the modified condition follows from our hypothesis from section 2 that the sentential dative NPs in Icelandic do not encode the locative role. This claim is further supported in the same section, in reference to the data from Latin.

## 2. SYNTACTIC REALIZATION OF THE LOCATIVE IN ICELANDIC

In this section, we examine the possibility for the sentential dative NPs in Icelandic to encode the locative role within the argument structure of a verb. For this purpose, we follow Blake [1] and others, and assume that the locative designates the position of an entity participating in the semantics of a sentence. In addition, we identify the *possessors* inside the so-called possessive constructions with the locative role. This is because possessors indeed designate a position (abstract or non-abstract) to which a given entity within the sentence is attributed. Thus, in what follows, we discuss data including both the 'bare' (= non-possessor) locatives and possessor locatives which occur at the sentential level.

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## 2.1 'Bare' Locatives in Icelandic

### 2.1.1 *búa* 'live', *setja* 'put', and *halda* 'keep'

In Icelandic, 'bare' locatives in the PP form are abundant. Three of them are given in (1).<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. Hún býr í sveitinni.  
she(N) live in the country(D)  
'She lives in the country.'
- b. Marikka setti bókina á borðjõ.  
Marikka(N) put the book(A) on the desk(A)  
'Marikka put the book on the desk.'
- c. Hann hélt boltanum í hendi sér.  
he(N) kept the ball(D) in his hand(D)  
'He kept the ball in his hand.'

However, as illustrated in (2), the underlined locative PPs in (1) cannot be replaced by dative NPs.

- (2) a. \*Hún býr sveitinni.  
she(N) live the country(D)  
'She lives in the country.'
- b. \*Marikka setti bókina borðjnu.  
Marikka(N) put the book(A) the desk(D)  
'Marikka put the book on the desk.'
- c. \*Hann hélt boltanum hendi sér.  
he(N) kept the ball(D) his hand(D)  
'He kept the ball in his hand.'

In addition, (3a) and (3b) show that even after the permutation of the first and the second objects in (2b) and (2c), the resulting sentences are still ungrammatical.

- (3) a. \*Marikka setti borðjnu bókina.  
Marikka(N) put the desk(D) the book(A)  
'Marikka put the book on the desk.'
- b. \*Hann hélt hendi sér boltanum.  
he(N) kept his hand(D) the ball(D)  
'He kept the ball in his hand.'

### 2.1.2 *ríða* 'ride'

One dative NP was found as a sentential constituent that might be at first glance considered as an instance of 'bare' locative in Icelandic. Consider the example in (4).

- (4) Hún reið hestinum.  
she(N) rode the horse(D)  
'She rode the horse.'

The sentence in (4) denotes the event where the referent of the subject *hún* 'she' not only got on a horse, but also exerted control over the horse. Thus, this sentence expresses a series of activities done by a female individual, such as getting on a horse, running the horse, whipping the horse and stopping the horse. However, the semantics of the verb *reið* 'rode' is focused on the control activities over a horse. In fact, our native informants read in (4) that getting on a horse is just an inevitable activity for the realization of the control activities over the horse.

It follows then that the subject of (4) is semantically *agent*, since so much agentivity is read on the part of this argument. It also follows that the dative object *hesti* 'a horse' is a *theme*, in that it is controlled by the agent subject and accordingly its change of state is described within the sentence.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the dative NP in (4) is not a locative, but a theme. This point is supported by the data in (5), which show that the Icelandic dative encodes the theme role within the argument structure of a verb.

- (5) a. Skipstjórinn sökkti skipinu.  
The captain(N) sank the ship(D)  
'The captain sank the ship.' [11]
- b. Ferðunum fækkaði um þriðjung.  
The trips(D) decreased by one-third(A)  
'The trips decreased by one-third.' [11]

Notice that the verb *ríða* 'ride' has the usage for expressing only the event where someone got on a horse. This usage is available when the dative object in (4) is replaced by a PP, as in (6).

- (6) Hún reið á hestinum.  
she(N) rode on the horse(D)  
'She rode on the horse.'

1. The abbreviations used throughout this paper are read as follows: N(ominative), A(ccusative), D(ative), G(enitive), S(in)G(ular), PL(ural), PART(iciple), INF(itive), PERF(ective), and IMPERF(ective).

2. We assume that *agent* designates an entity within a sentence that controls an activity or brings about a change of state or location. We also assume that *theme* refers to an entity whose state or location, or whose change of state or location is described within the sentence.

## 2.2 Possessor Locatives within the Icelandic Possessive Constructions

### 2.2.1 *vanta* 'lack' and *skorta* 'lack'

Consider the sentence in (7).

- (7) *Mér vantar hnif.*  
 me(D) lack knife(A)  
 'I lack a knife. / I don't have a knife.' [10]

At first glance, it appears that (7) only denotes the state which is effectively described by Yip et al.'s [10] English gloss reading. However, the usage of the dative possessor with the verb *vanta* 'lack' is a recent development, and this verb is normally used with an accusative possessor, as in (8).<sup>3</sup>

- (8) *Mig vantar hnif.*  
 me(A) lack knife(A)  
 'I lack a knife. / I don't have a knife.'

Moreover, in comparison with the sentence in (9), where *vantar* 'lack' in (7) is replaced with the verb *skortir* 'lack', (7) has the connotation that the referent of the subject does not have a knife, and so s/he needs/wants a knife. In contrast, (9) means simply that the referent of the subject does not have a knife.<sup>4</sup> This observation suggests the possibility to semantically identify the accusative subject in (8) as an *experiencer*, since this argument denotes the emotion of an individual.

- (9) *Mig skortir hnif.*  
 me(A) lack knife(A)  
 'I lack a knife. / I don't have a knife.'

We claim that the subject of *vanta* 'lack' semantically has a dual status. In other words, it is simultaneously an experiencer and a locative. We further claim that it is not the locative semantics, but the experiencer semantics that makes the realization of the dative possessor possible in (7). Indeed, a number of dative NPs are observed in Icelandic, as exemplified in (10), projecting the experiencers within the argument structures of verbs.

- (10) a. *Mér er kalt.*  
 me(D) am cold  
 'I am cold.' [12]
- b. *Mér býður við setningafræði.*  
 me(D) be nauseated by syntax(D)  
 'I loathe syntax.' [12]

Incidentally, as we mentioned above, if the speaker intends to express the situation where one simply does not have something only descriptively, the verb *skorta* 'to lack' is used. However, when this verb occurs within a sentence, the possessor subject must be in accusative, as shown in (9), and the use of the dative subject is impossible, as illustrated in (11).

- (11) \**Mér skortir hnif.*  
 me(D) lack knife(A)  
 'I lack a knife. / I don't have a knife.'

### 2.2.2 *eiga* 'own,' *hafa* 'have,' and *vera (með)* 'be (with)'

There are possessive constructions in Icelandic employing the verbs *eiga* 'own,' *hafa* 'have' and the copula *vera (með)* 'be (with)'.<sup>5</sup> Consider the following sentences for the usage of these verbs.

- (12) a. *Ég á hund.*  
 I(N) own dog(A)  
 'I own a dog.'
- b. *Ég hef góðan tíma núna.*  
 I(N) have good time(A) now  
 'I am having a good time now.'
- c. *Hann er með hatt.*  
 he(N) is with hat(A)  
 'He is with a hat. (lit.) / He has a hat. / He is wearing a hat.'

In (12), possessor locatives are expressed by the nominative NPs in the subject position. Notice that da-

3. We owe this point to Yoshihiko Iura. In addition, Koji Irie informed us that the usage of the dative subject in place of the nominative or accusative subject is called *þágufallssýki* 'dative sickness' in the prescriptive grammar.

4. This observation is due to Koji Irie.

5. *Eiga* 'own,' *hafa* 'have' and *vera* 'be' inflect according to the person and number of the subject as shown in the following table.

	singular			plural		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
<i>eiga</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>átt</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>eigum</i>	<i>eigið</i>	<i>eiga</i>
<i>hafa</i>	<i>hef</i>	<i>hefur</i>	<i>hefur</i>	<i>höfum</i>	<i>hafið</i>	<i>hafa</i>
<i>vera</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>ert</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>erum</i>	<i>eruð</i>	<i>eru</i>

tive NPs cannot replace the subjects of (12a) and (12b), as illustrated in (13a) and (13b), respectively.

- (13) a. \**Mér á hund.*  
 me(D) own dog(A)  
 'I own a dog.'  
 b. \**Mér hef góðan tíma núna.*  
 me(D) have good time(A) now  
 'I am having a good time now.'

Moreover, with the possessive sentence utilizing *vera (með)* 'be (with)', the possessor cannot be realized as an NP in the dative case in the syntactic subject position, as in (14a) and (14b), nor in the complement position, as in (14c).<sup>6</sup>

- (14) a. \**Honum er með hatt.*  
 him(D) is with hat(A)  
 'He is with a hat.(lit.) / He has a hat. / He is wearing a hat.'  
 b. \**Henni er hnífurinn.*  
 her(D) is the knife(N)  
 'The knife is at her (lit.)'  
 c. \**Hnífurinn er henni.*  
 the knife(N) is her(D)  
 'The knife is at her (lit.)'

### 2.2.3 *tilheyra* 'belong to'

At first sight, it appears that the dative NP in (15) is characterized as locative.<sup>7</sup>

- (15) *Það tilheyrir mér.*  
 it(N) belong to me(D)  
 'It belongs to me.'

However, a piece of historical evidence suggests that this dative is not a locative but a *goal*.<sup>8</sup> Fritzner [13] states that the verb form *tilheyra* 'belong to' originated from *heyra* 'hear/listen'. In Icelandic, the verb *heyra* requires what is heard or listened to to be usually expressed by a PP headed by the preposition *til* 'to' within a sentence, as in (16). Hence, it is possible to imagine that the form *tilheyra* emerged through the process of preposition incorporation similar to what is termed as the *trennbare Verb* in German.

- (16) *Marrikka heyrði til mín.*  
 Marikka(N) listened to me(G)  
 'Marikka listened to me.'

Moreover, the German counterpart of *tilheyra* 'belong to' is *gehören* 'belong to'. Shimomiya [14] mentions that this verb was derived from *hören* 'hear/listen', with the semantic extension from the original meaning of the verb 'hear/listen', to 'do as what one was told', then to 'obey', and finally to 'belong to'. Thus, it seems also possible to imagine that *tilheyra* 'belong to' in Icelandic also underwent the similar semantic extension starting from the original meaning of *heyra* 'hear/listen'.

We assume that both the form and the meaning of *tilheyra* 'belong to' have their origin in *heyra* 'hear/listen'. As illustrated in (16), a PP headed by *til* 'to' follows this verb within the sentence. In addition, incorporation of this preposition into *heyra* 'hear/listen' derived this verb. Then, given the semantics of *til* 'to' which marks the destination towards which something moves, it follows that the dative NP in (15) is a goal, but not a locative argument.

Furthermore, notice that the Icelandic dative can encode the goal role, as shown in (17). Hence, it is well supported that the object dative for *tilheyra* 'belong to' is associated with the goal role.

- (17) a. *Ég sagði þér söguna.*  
 I(N) told you(D) story(A)  
 'I told you a story.' [15]  
 b. *Ég gaf konungi ambáttina sína.*  
 I(N) gave king(D) his maidservant(A)  
 'I gave the king his maidservant.' [15]

Based on the above discussions, we hypothesize that the locative role in the argument structure of a verb cannot be projected onto a dative NP in Icelandic.

## 3. POSSESSIVE DATIVES IN ICELANDIC

In the preceding section, we pointed out that the sentential dative NPs in Icelandic do not encode the locative role. However, there is a position in Icelandic where locative datives are found. It is within PPs,

6. We owe the data in (14) to Koji Irie.

7. We thank one of the anonymous reviewers of the earlier version of this paper who pointed out to us the usage of German *gehören* 'belong to'.

8. We assume that *goal* designates the destination towards which a given entity moves.

in the modifier position of the object of the preposition. In this position, Icelandic datives denote possessors. In what follows, we shall call the dative which is used attributively to a noun as a possessor, the *possessive dative*. Occurrences of possessive datives have been reported in the studies of many languages [8-9].

### 3.1 Existing Analysis of the Possessive Datives in Icelandic

Yip et al. [10] briefly note in their footnote (footnote 11, p. 233) two conditions on the occurrence of possessive datives in Icelandic. One is that the Icelandic possessive datives are semantically limited to the inalienable possession. The other is that the occurrence of possessive datives in Icelandic is syntactically limited to the possessor position within the object NP of a preposition. For our current purposes, let us call the former condition the *I(nalienable) P(ossessor) Condition*, and the latter the *PP Condition*. In order to see how the IP Condition and the PP Condition account for the distribution of Icelandic possessive datives, consider (18) and (19). In the example sentences hereafter, PPs relevant to the discussion are designated by a pair of square brackets ([ ]).

- (18) a. *Ég setti húfuna [ á höfuð hans/honum ].*  
 I(N) put the cap(A) on head(A) his(G)/him(D)  
 'I put the cap on his head.' [10]
- b. *Ég tók stafinn [ í hönd mér ].*  
 I(N) took the stick(A) in hand(A) me(D)  
 'I took the stick in my hand.' [16]
- (19) a. *Ég sá höfuð hans/\*honum.*  
 I(N) saw head(A) his(G)/him(D)  
 'I saw his head.' [10]
- b. *Marikka setti bókina [ á borð \*honum ].*  
 Marikka(N) put the book(A) on desk(A) him(D)  
 'Marikka put the book on his desk.'
- c. *Bók \*honum er skemmtileg.*  
 book(N) him(D) is interesting  
 'His book is interesting.'

The IP Condition and the PP Condition together explain the acceptability and unacceptability of the possessive datives in (18) and (19), respectively. The use of possessive datives in (18) is permitted, since it satisfies both of the above conditions. Contrarily, the occurrence of the possessive dative in (19a) is not allowed, because it does not fulfill the PP Condition, although it does fulfill the IP Condition. The possessive dative in (19b) is not possible in that it satisfies the IP Condition but violates the PP Condition. Moreover, the possessive dative in (19c) is not possible, either. This is because it meets neither the IP Condition nor the PP Condition mentioned above.

Thus, the environment where Icelandic possessive datives occur so far appears to be successfully captured by the IP Condition and the PP Condition. However, a set of data suggests that the PP Condition needs modification.

### 3.2 Modification of the PP Condition

Consider the examples in (20).

- (20) a. *Marikka var blekkt [af tungumýkt \*honum].*  
 Marikka(N) was deceived by tongue(D) him(D)  
 'Marikka was deceived by his tongue.'
- b. *Marikka var blekkt [af (vingjarnlegu) andliti \*honum].*  
 Marikka(N) was deceived by (friendly) face(D) him(D)  
 'Marikka was deceived by his (friendly) face.'

In both (20a) and (20b), a dative noun is placed inside the PP as an attempt to actualize the possessor of the noun denoting a body-part, which in turn is an example of inalienably possessed nouns. In addition, the possessor-possessed relation occurs within a PP. Hence, the datives in (20) satisfy both the IP Condition and the PP Condition. However, the occurrences of possessive datives are not permitted in (20).

Let us assume that the factor which disallows the possessive datives in (20) lies in the semantic characterization of the PPs in which they occur. Observe again the data in (18), as well as those in (21), and notice that the PPs which contain acceptable instances of possessive datives carry the locative role within the sentences. In contrast, unacceptable ones in (20) are found within agent PPs.

- (21) a. *Hún settist [ á kné honum ].*  
 she(N) sat on knee(A) him(D)  
 'She sat on his lap.' [16]
- b. *Hún sá ekki [ í augu honum ].*  
 she(N) saw not in eyes(A) him(D)  
 'She didn't look in his eyes.' [16]
- c. *Hún steig [ á bak hestinum ].*  
 she(N) got on back(A) the horse(D)  
 'She got on the back of the horse.' [17]

Therefore, it is possible to hypothesize that the occurrence of possessive datives in Icelandic is limited inside the PP which carries the locative role within the sentence. This hypothesis is stated as the Modified PP Condition in (22).

- (22) Modified PP Condition:  
Icelandic possessive datives occur within a locative PP.

In order to testify (22), consider the data in (23) and (24).<sup>9</sup>

- (23) a. Hún bjó til næringarrikan mat *ben*[ fyrir hinn þreytta líkama \*mér ]*ben.*  
she(N) prepared nutritious meal(A) for tired body(A) me(D)  
'She prepared a nutritious meal for my weary body.'
- b. Fuglinn kom baka *goal*[ til handa \*mér ]*goal.*  
the bird(N) came back to hands(G) me(D)  
'The bird came back to my hands.'
- c. Þetta verkefni virðist vera of erfitt *exp*[ fyrir heila \*mér ]*exp.*  
this problem(N) seem be too difficult for brain(A) me(D)  
'This problem seems too difficult for my brain.'
- d. Marikka braut gluggarúðuna *inst*[ með höfði \*sér ]*inst.*  
Marikka(N) broke the glass(A) with head(D) self(D)  
'Marikka broke the glass with her (own) head.'
- (24) a. Fuglinn flaug burt *source*[ úr höndum mér ]*source.*  
the bird(N) flew away out of hands(D) me(D)  
'The bird flew away out of my hands.'
- b. Marikka tók húfunu *source*[ af höfði sér ]*source.*  
Marikka(N) took the cap(A) off head(D) self(D)  
'Marikka took the cap off her (own) head.'

The data in (23) illustrate that the occurrences of Icelandic possessive datives are impossible within *benefactor*, *goal*, *experiencer*, and *instrument* PPs, even with the fulfillment of the IP Condition.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, it is shown in (24) that possessive datives are possible within PPs which are usually identified as *source*.<sup>11</sup>

We claim that there are two kinds of semantic information contained in the PPs in (24a) and (24b). For one, the prepositions *úr* 'out of' and *af* 'off' heading these PPs specify that a certain entity participating in the semantics of the sentence changes its position *from inside to outside* of the place denoted by their objects. In this sense, the PPs under consideration have the *directional semantics*, which in turn offers the reason why these PPs are in general semantically characterized by the source role.

For the other, we argue that the prepositions *úr* 'out of' and *af* 'off' also specify the static position of an entity. More precisely, these prepositions mark the 'end' positions of the referents of *fuglinn* 'the bird(N)' in (24a) and *húfunu* 'the cap(A)' in (24b), which are brought about as the result of the activity denoted by the verb. In addition, these prepositions specify such positions to be *outside* or *off* of the places which are referred to by their objects.

If so, then, it should be possible to embed the PPs in (24) as they are in the complement position of the copulative sentences, so that the derived sentences state where 'the bird' and 'the cap' are located when the activities denoted by the verbs in (24) are done. This prediction is borne out by the data in (25).

- (25) a. Fuglinn er [ úr höndum mér ] núna.  
the bird(N) is out of hands(D) me(D) now  
'The bird is out of my hands now.'
- b. Húfan er [ af höfði Möríkku ] núna.  
the cap(N) is off head(D) Marikka(D) now  
'The cap is off Marikka's head now.'

Hence, in addition to the directional semantics, the PPs in (24) as a whole are associated with the semantic information which explicitly reflects the static position of an entity at some point in the course of the event or the state denoted by the sentence. Let us call this kind of semantics contained in the PPs in (24) the *positional semantics*.

We further claim that it is the positional semantics, but not the directional semantics, of the PPs in (24), that makes these PPs possible bearers of possessive datives in Icelandic. This explains the unacceptability of the possessive dative in (23b), where the PP carries the goal role. In (23b), by virtue of the semantics carried by the preposition *til* 'to', the object of this preposition designates the place towards which the referent of *fuglinn* 'the bird(N)' moves. However, this preposition does not offer the PP the part of marking the position of 'the bird' at any point in the course of the activity denoted by the verb. The latter point is supported by the sentence in (26) which, when embedded in the context of (23b),

9. We thank Höskuldur Thráinsson for leading us to the data in (24).

10. We assume that *benefactor* is an entity on whose behalf an event or a change of state is carried out, and that *instrument* is an entity in terms of which the activity denoted by a verb is performed.

11. We assume that *source* designates a point from which an entity moves.

describes neither the initial nor the end position attributed to the referent of the subject. Thus, the PP in (23b) carries the directional semantics, but not the positional semantics, and this is what disallows an occurrence of a possessive dative within this PP.

- (26) Fuglinn er [ til handa \*mér/ mín ].  
 the bird(N) is to hands(G) me(D)/ my(G)  
 #'The bird is in my hands.'

Moreover, consider again the data in (18) and (21) above, which contain acceptable occurrences of possessive datives inside their locative PPs. Recall also our definition of the locative role in section 2 that locative designates the position of an entity. Hence, it follows that the PPs in (18) and (21) carry the positional semantics. In other words, on behalf of the denotation of the prepositions *á* 'on' or *í* 'in', the PPs as a whole explicitly specify the position of a given entity (explicit or implicit) participating in the semantics of the sentences. However, notice that these prepositions do not give the directional semantics to the PPs which they head. This point is evidenced by the sentences in (27), which illustrate that the PPs headed by *á* 'on' and *í* 'in' cannot project the goal role. Only with the presence of directional adverbials, can the activities denoted by the verbs proceed towards the places designated by the objects of the prepositions.

- (27) a. Marikka stökk \*(upp) [ á borðið ].  
 Marikka(N) jumped up on the desk(A)  
 'Marikka jumped onto the desk.'  
 b. Marikka kom \*(inn) [ í húsið ].  
 Marikka(N) came into in the house(A)  
 'Marikka came into the house.'

Based on the discussions above, it is possible to revise the Modified PP Condition in (22) as follows:

- (28) Modified PP Condition (revised):  
 Icelandic possessive datives occur within a PP which carries the positional semantics.

## 4. INHERITANCE OF THE POSITIONAL SEMANTICS

### 4.1 Transmission of the Positional Semantics

Let us recall the hypothesis we arrived at in section 2 that the dative in Icelandic does not encode the locative role participating in the valency of the verb. In addition, we pointed out in section 3 that the locative carries the positional semantics, but not the directional semantics. It follows then that the dative in Icelandic inherently lacks the positional semantics.<sup>12</sup>

Note that this hypothesis offers a key to explain why the dative occurs as a possessive dative only within the positional PPs (locative PPs and source PPs). It is obvious that the possessive datives contain positional semantics, in that they specify the abstract or non-abstract static location of an entity which they modify. Given that the dative in Icelandic is an inherent non-carrier of the positional semantics, in order to serve as a possessive dative, the dative has to receive the positional semantics from somewhere. We assume that this is done from the preposition. In other words, we picture the situation in which a preposition transmits the relevant semantics to the dative, when it is embedded within the positional PPs. However, when embedded within a non-positional PP or an NP, the dative has no way to receive the positional semantics. Therefore, the possessive dative is not available in this case.

### 4.2 Prediction

Given the discussion above, the following prediction can be made: If there is a language where the locative argument of a verb is syntactically expressible in terms of a dative NP, it is predicted in such a language that the occurrence of possessive datives should be quite free. This prediction is borne out by the following data in Latin.

- (29) a. induere vestem sibi  
 put-INF jacket(A) self(D)  
 'to put a jacket on oneself (lit.) / to put on a jacket' [4]  
 b. diadema capiti reponere  
 diadem(A) head(D) put back-INF  
 'to put the diadem back on one's head' [7]  
 c. Domus meo patri est.  
 house(N) my father(D) be-3SG  
 'A house is at my father (lit.) / My father has a house.' [18]

12. The source and goal roles can be projected onto a dative NP, as in (a) below and (17) in section 2, respectively. Given these data, it seems possible to claim that it is the directional semantics, but not the positional semantics, of the role that makes the projection onto the dative possible at the sentential level.

(a) Eg fékk bókina honum  
 I(N) got the book(A) him(D)  
 'I got the book from him.'

- d. Est mihi filius.  
 be-3SG me(D) son(N)  
 'A son is at me (lit.) / I have a son.' [18]

We interpret that the underlined NPs in (29a-b) are instances of 'bare' locative (see section 2) syntactically realized in the dative. Moreover, (29c-d) show the Latin possessive construction which employs the copulative verb *sum* 'be'. In this construction, the underlined possessor (locative) argument is expressed in terms of a dative NP. Thus, it is obvious that Latin is one of the languages in which the dative projects the locative role in the argument structure of the verb.

Notice in Latin the occurrence of possessive datives is not limited within the PPs of the positional characteristic. Free occurrences of possessive datives are observed in this language, as shown in the following data.

- (30) a. Nescio qua vox ad aures mihi advolavit.  
 not know what voice(N) to ears(A) me(D) fly-3SG PERF  
 'I do not know what voice flew to my ear.' [6]
- b. Sese omnes flentes Caesari ad pedes proiecerunt.  
 themselves(A) all(N) crying(N)-PART Caesar(D) at foot(A) throw-3PL PERF  
 'They all threw themselves crying at the foot of Caesar.' [6]
- c. Animus mihi dolet.  
 heart(N) me(D) suffer  
 'My heart suffers.' [19]
- d. Matri oculi si valent  
 mother(D) eyes(N) if safe  
 'If Mother's eyes do not have any problem' [19]

Hence, we claim that unlike the dative in Icelandic, the dative in Latin is inherently associated with the positional semantics; it is this reason why the Modified PP Condition in (28) is not applicable to the possessive datives in Latin.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This paper explored the nature of the dative case as shared by natural languages. In addition, it suggested a linguistic supra-categorization of the three locational concepts, i.e. goal, source and locative. In Icelandic, the goal and the source can be syntactically realized by the dative, whereas the locative cannot. Moreover, PPs with the source and the locative roles are possible bearers of Icelandic possessive datives, while the goal PPs are not. It is hoped that additional synchronic and diachronic studies will lead to increased understanding of variability in the dative across languages.

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