Russian Datives Again: on the (im)possibility of the small clause analysis

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In this talk I would like to show how scope effects of adverbs like “again” can serve as a diagnostic for determining argument structure of some constructions with dative arguments in Russian. I will argue that ditransitive verbs in Russian do not have the same structure as the double object construction in English, for which analyses with small clause and low applicative structures (1) have been proposed ((Kayne 1984), (Pesetsky 1995), (Harley 2002), (Beck & Johnson 2004), (Pylkkänen 2008) among others). English double object construction permits the restitutive reading of “again” (Beck & Johnson 2004), while Russian ditransitives lack such a reading:

(1) Thilo gave Satoshi the map again.

(2) a. Thilo gave Satoshi the map, and that had happened before. repetitive
b. Thilo gave Satoshi the map, and Satoshi had had the map before. restitutive

Following ((von Stechow 1996), (Beck & Johnson 2004), (Beck 2005), (Lechner et al. 2015)), I assume the syntactic approach to the ambiguity of “again”: “again” always has the same semantics (4), and its different readings arise from its different attachments in the syntactic structure.

(4) \[ \text{[again]}(P_{<i,t>})(e) = 1 \text{ iff } P(e) \& \exists e' [e'<e \& P(e')] \]

Under such approach the two readings of “again” in (2) are expected if the two sites of attachment are present in the syntactic structure: vP and HaveP (1). I claim that Russian ditransitives are different from the English double object construction and lack the restitutive reading of “again” because the target state (Kratzer 2000) of such verbs in Russian is not present in the syntactic structure.

My argument consists of three parts. I will show that the restriction on the restitutive reading in (3) cannot come from the properties of Russian “again” (“opjat’’): this adverb occupies the highest position with respect to the Visibility Parameter (Beck 2005), being able to modify any phrase (and not only syntactically independent phrases or only phrases with overt heads). Then I will present evidence that the unavailability of the restitutive reading cannot be due to the lack of the Interpretation Principle R ((Beck 2005), (Beck & Snyder 2001), (Beck & Johnson 2004)) which is a semantic principle that combines a verb and a small clause by inserting CAUSE and BECOME components in the lexical representation. It turns out that some version of this interpretational principle is independently needed for other Russian constructions. Finally, I will show that Russian ditransitives like (3) do have a target state in the semantics of their predicates, because this state can be detected by the restitutive adverb ‘obratno’, which involves a return to a state in which an entity had been before (Tatevosov 2016):
Masha gave Vasja the book, and Vasja had had the book before.

While ‘obratno’ can detect states that are part of the lexical representation of a predicate, ‘opjat’ needs to attach to a syntactic constituent corresponding to a state in order to scope over that state. The fact that (3) doesn’t have the restitutive reading shows that there is no constituent \[\text{Have}_{\text{Vasja}} \ldots \text{knigu}\] in this sentence.

Furthermore, I will show that despite the impossibility of the small clause analysis for Russian ditransitives, there is a construction in Russian where the dative argument originates inside a small clause: the construction with a dative and a locative PP (6).

Vasja put book.ACC Masha.DAT book on table

lit. ‘Vasja put the book for Masha on the table’

In sentences like (6) the restitutive reading of ‘opjat’ is available (7), which indicates that there is a syntactic constituent which corresponds to the state ‘Masha has the book on the table’. The semantic argument is further verified by syntactic evidence: constituency tests indicate that the dative forms a constituent with the PP; for example, the wh-dative can pied pipe the PP with it (8) (Pshekhotskaya 2012).

Vasja put the book for Masha on the table, and he had done that before. repetitive

Vasja put the book for Masha on the table, and Masha had had the book on the table before. restitutive

Finally, readings of ‘opjat’ with non-subcategorized dative arguments with predicates such as ‘open the window’ or ‘pump up a tyre’ (to be presented in the full version of the paper) introduce evidence that target states described by these verbs are present in syntax, but do not include dative arguments as their part. This makes them different from both ditransitive predicates and predicates with locative small clauses.

References