

From Lexical to Dependent: the Case of the Greek Dative

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1. Summary. This paper provides evidence that morphological dative and genitive qualify as either lexical/prepositional or structural/dependent cases within and across languages, and in different stages of the same language. Specifically, we compare Classical Greek (CG) to Standard Modern Greek (SMG) and argue that CG datives and genitives bear lexical case assigned by overt or covert prepositions, while the SMG genitive, which has replaced the CG dative in ditransitives, is a dependent case in the VP-domain assigned by the configurational rule (1b) in opposition to a lower DP with dependent accusative or with nominative, a subcase of the general dependent case schema (1a) (Baker 2015: 111, 131):

(1) **a.** If XP bears c-command relationship Y to ZP in local domain WP, then assign case V to XP.

b. If XP c-commands ZP in VP, then assign U (dative) to XP.

Moreover, we provide an overview of the loss of Greek morphological dative, as well as the diachrony of prepositions in order to give a diachronic story on how inherent/lexical dative/genitive PPs are reanalysed as depended genitive DPs. We argue that the loss of case-assigning features of Greek prepositions is the crucial ingredient of the observed change; while the loss of morphological dative had more of a facilitator role.

2. Background. Baker & Vinokurova (B&V 2010) and Baker (2015) argue that structural morphological case is assigned either by a functional head to the closest NP via AGREE, as in Chomsky (2000, 2001), or by configurational rules that result from a calculation of whether there are case competitors in the same local domain as in (1a), adapting Marantz's (1991) *dependent case* proposal. An innovation of this theory is that it extends the scope of structural Case to dative, the status of which is notoriously controversial and has been treated as lexical or inherent (Woolford 2006), quirky (Zaenen et al. 1985), structural (Svenonius 2002, 2004) or as a mixed, structural or lexical/inherent/quirky, Case (Harley 1995, Rezac 2008, Alexiadou et al. 2014). Baker (2015) argues for the mixed case approach by investigating a sample of languages where some qualify as having lexical dative (Amharic, Burushaski, Shipibo and Diyari) while others have structural/dependent dative (Tamil, Greenlandic, Ingush and Chuckchi).

3. Datives and Genitives in CG. There is ample evidence that dative and genitive in CG are lexical: a) *Simple active dyadic predicates* take objects in all three cases. Accusative is the most common one surfacing on themes undergoing a change of state or location and on non-affected themes. Traditional grammars list the verb-classes taking dative and genitive objects because they seem idiosyncratic, even though there are some semantic generalizations to be made (Luraghi 2010: 64-67). b) *Active ditransitive predicates* have four case arrays: *Acc – Acc*; *Dat – Acc*; *Gen – Acc*; and *Dat – Gen*. The Acc-Acc construction is found with verbs of *asking*, *teaching*, *reporting* among others. The Dat-Acc class is formed with verbs of *saying*, *ordering*, *giving*, *bringing* and with complex verbs prefixed with the prepositions *epi-* 'on', *en-* 'in', *sun-* 'with'. The Gen-Acc class includes verbs of *feeding*, *emptying*, *preventing*, *seizing*, *receiving* and *informing*. Finally, the rarest Dat-Gen class is found with *envy*, *transmit* and *concede*. Overall, *goals* surface as dative, while *sources* and *possessors* are genitive. Thus, dative and genitive are associated with specific semantic roles and are lexically determined by the selecting verbs. Following McFadden (2004) and Baker (2015) we propose that dative and genitive in CG are lexically governed cases assigned by overt or covert prepositions. The prepositional analysis receives strong support from the fact that complex verbs formed with the prepositions *en-* 'in', *sun-* 'with', *epi-* 'on', inherit from them their dative assigning capacity yielding Dat-Acc ditransitives (Anagnostopoulou & Sevdali 2015). While with prefixal verbs dative is assigned by overt incorporated Ps, dative and genitive with monomorphemic verbs like *dido:mi* 'give', *lamvano* 'receive' are assigned by zero Ps.

4. Genitives in SMG. With the gradual loss of morphological dative from Greek (Humbert, 1930, Luraghi, 2003, Horrocks, 2007, Michelioudakis, 2012, Stolk, 2015) ditransitives either

generalized the Acc-Acc pattern in Northern Greek or generalized the Gen-Acc pattern in SMG, along with a prepositional construction. We will be concerned here with the SMG pattern shown in (2).

(2) O Jiánis édose/eklepse/agorase tis Mariás/ s-ti Maria ena vivlio
 The John.nom gave/stole/bought.3.sg.act the Mary.gen//to-the Mary a book.acc

We argue that there are several reasons to treat the genitive in (2) as dependent case assigned in opposition to the structurally lower accusative, in accordance with (1b): **I**) As shown in (2), IOs are assigned genitive regardless of their semantic role, i.e. whether they are goals (with ‘give’), sources (with ‘steal’) or beneficiaries (with ‘bought’). The genitive is neither idiosyncratically assigned nor linked to particular semantic roles in SMG, in contrast to CG.

II) As expected from the dependent case approach, truly monadic predicates never take genitive arguments in SMG. When they are intransitive, experiencer verbs have nominative subjects:

(3) I Maria pinai/ krioni The Mary.nom hunger.3sg.act/cold.3sg.act ‘Mary is hungry/cold’.

In contrast, dyadic unaccusative verbs have a genitive experiencer (4a) or possessor (4b) in opposition to a lower nominative theme, falling under (1b):

(4) a. Tu Petru tu aresi to vivlio
 The Peter.gen cl.gen please.3sg the book.nom ‘Peter likes the book’
 b. Tu Petru tu xriazete/lipi ena aftokinito
 The Peter.gen cl.gen need.3sg/lack.3sg a car.nom ‘Peter needs/lacks a car’

III) Virtually all monotransitive verbs that took genitive and dative objects in CG now have accusative objects, a fact suggesting that lexical dative and genitive almost disappeared from Greek. Very few active dyadic predicates take genitive objects in SMG (the verbs *milao* ‘talk’, *iper-ixio* ‘prevail’ *enantionome* ‘fight/object’), but all ditransitives do, an asymmetry that is easily explained under the dependent case approach and is mysterious otherwise.

5. Diachrony of Greek prepositions and the loss of morphological dative. The three uses of the CG dative (instrumental, locative, argumental) have three very different diachronic paths: in particular datives are replaced by a) *Accusatives* (as objects of transitive verbs, as IOs of ditransitive verbs in Northern Greek); b) *Genitives* as IOs in SMG; c) *PPs* (for locative, instrumental and other adverbial uses of CG datives). The change lasted from the 3rd to the 9th/10th century AD (Humbert, 1930, Horrocks 2007 a.o.) and was facilitated by morphophonological developments, especially in the pronominal paradigm. Prepositions on the other hand survived in Greek but crucially with one major difference: SMG prepositions can only assign the accusative case (bar very few exceptions, cf. *metaksi* ‘between’, *enandion* and *kata* ‘against’ that take genitive complements, Bortone, 2010) while CG prepositions assign all three oblique cases. We adopt Pesetsky’s (2013) proposal on prepositions, whereby an element qualifies as a preposition *iff* it assigns oblique case to its complement. We argue that the path of change in the Greek prepositional system is as follows: (a) *CG*: prepositions assign oblique → learners acquire them as prepositions; dative/genitive IOs and DOs involve a covert preposition → learners acquire them as PPs exactly because they bear overt oblique case morphology; (b) *Hellenistic Greek /Koiné*: prepositions start losing their case assigning capacity → learners cannot straightforwardly acquire them as such (grammars in competition); (c) *Medieval Greek*: Prepositions have lost their case assigning capacity → they cannot be acquired as prepositions anymore; → learners *reanalyse* DOs and IOs as DPs; → These DPs cannot be licensed by anything phrase internal anymore, they look outside for a licenser; → Greek IOs and DOs get reanalysed as DPs receiving dependent case, configurationally from inside the VP.