

# Factors influencing the dative/genitive variation in Croatian

Mateusz-Milan Stanojević ([mmstanoje@ffzg.hr](mailto:mmstanoje@ffzg.hr))

Lidija Cvikić ([lcvikic@ffzg.hr](mailto:lcvikic@ffzg.hr))

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Zagreb

The Tenth Annual Conference of the Slavic Cognitive  
Linguistics Association,  
Providence, RI, 9-11 October 2010

# Overview

1. The problem, aim
2. Background: the dative (in Croatian)
3. Results and discussion
4. Implications and future research

# 1. Introduction: the problem

(1) *palač[a] koja se nalazi nasuprot crkvi* (across from **church-DAT**) *sv. Mateja...*

‘... the palace which is across from **St. Matthew’s church...**’

(2) *...žuta zgrada ... koja se smjestila nasuprot župne crkve* (across from **parish church-GEN**) *sv. Ćirila i Metoda*

‘...the yellow building ... across from **the parish church** of Saints Cyril and Methodius’

# 1. Introduction: the problem

(3) *koji bi usprkos dokazane krivnje* (despite proven guilt-GEN) ... *mogao izaći iz zatvora*

‘... who might, despite being proven guilty, get out of jail...’

(4) *Ova osoba ... skrivala se u Bosni godinama usprkos dokazanim vezama* (despite proven connections-DAT) *s ... Osamom bin Ladenom...*

‘This person was hiding in Bosnia for years, despite proven connections with Osama bin Laden’

# 1. Introduction: the problem

- Similar variation in:
  - *nasuprot* ‘across from, as opposed to’,
  - *nadomak* ‘close to’,
  - *nadohvat* ‘within reach’,
  - *usuprot* ‘in opposition to’,
  - *unatoč* ‘despite’,
  - *usprkos/uprkos* ‘despite’
  - *naprama* ‘to’
- But only dative in:
  - *prema* ‘towards’
  - *k* ‘towards, to’

# 1. Introduction: the aim

- The variation between the dative and the genitive is the result of the interplay between semantic, ecological, and structural factors:
  - mental contact?
  - influence of current prototype?
  - influence of number inflection?
  - structural influence?
- the big picture?

# Background

- vast literature on the dative in Slavic and non-Slavic languages...
- e.g. Janda 1993, Cienki 1993, 1995; Dąbrowska 1997; Divjak and Janda 2008; Fortuin 2006; Kučanda 1996; Šarić 1999, 2002; Mikaelian & Roudet 1999; Rudzka-Ostyn 1996; Topolinjska 2000; Wierzbicka 1986; Mitkovska 2007
- e.g. Smith 1987; Maldonado 2002; Lee-Schoenfeld 2006; van Belle and van Langendonck 1996;...

# 1. Introduction: the dative

- synchronic prototype: transfer

(1) *Također je data potpora **novoj Vladi*** (new Government-DAT)

‘Support was also given *to the new government.*’

- assessment of an entity

(2) *Važno je to **stranim vladama*** (foreign governments-DAT) *i **javnosti*** (the public-DAT)...

‘This is important *to foreign governments and the public...*’



MS

IS

Th

R

Dat

cf. ex. (1)

cf. ex. (2)

Ag  
Tr

Th  
Lm  
1

Dat  
Lm2

Lm  
1

### 3. Introduction: characteristics of the transfer and assessment patterns

- movement of a thematic element (physical, abstract, energy, communication...)
- dominion/personal sphere/sphere of control –
- dative = conscious non-initiative participant establishing mental contact with the thematic element
- potential affectedness of the dative
- potential activity of the dative
- nouns and pronouns (transfer) and pronouns (assessment)

cf. Janda 1993; Maldonado 2002; Dąbrowska 1997;  
Stanojević and Geld 2008; Stanojević and Tuđman, forthcoming

# 1. Introduction: the dative

- “dative of possession”

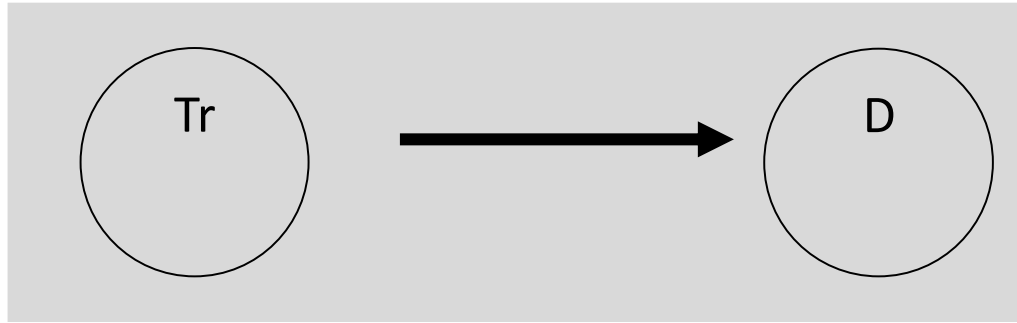
(3) *Da smo izgubili, srce bi mi (me-DAT) puklo*

‘If we had lost, that would have broken **my heart**’ (lit.  
“(my) **heart** would have broken **on me**”)

- diachronically oldest: allative senses

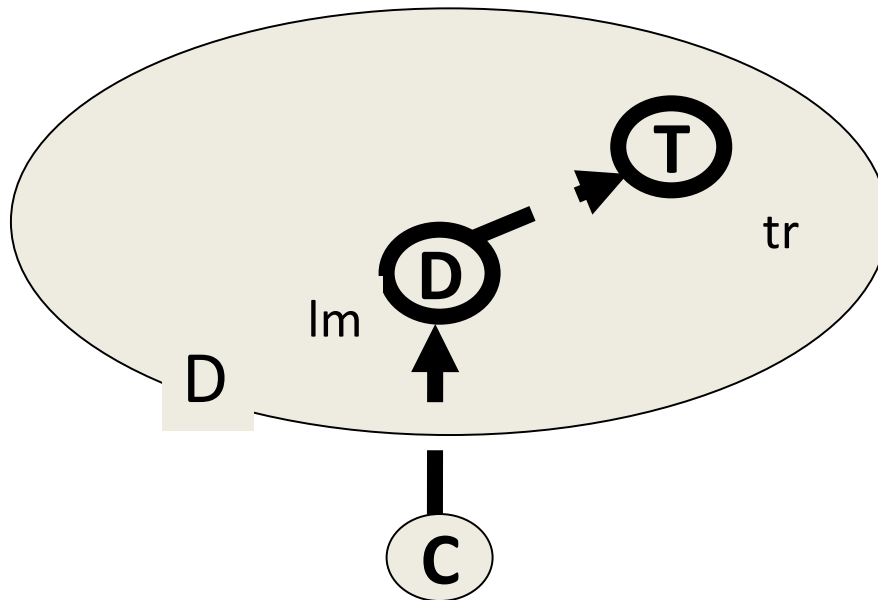
(4) *Čamac se primače obali (shore-DAT)*

‘The boat has moved **towards the shore**’



cf. ex. (3)

cf. ex. (4)

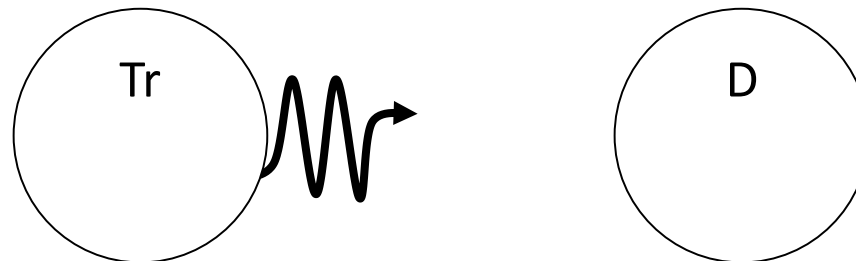


# 1. Introduction: the dative

- diachronically oldest: competitor senses

(5) *Hrvatski šumari oštro se protive proglašenju*  
(*declaration-DAT*) *novih zaštićenih područja*

‘Croatian foresters are adamantly opposed **to new protected areas being declared**’ (lit. **to the declaration of new protected areas**)



# 1. Introduction: characteristics of competitor and allative

- no dominion
  - the element is not available for interaction (the dative need not be aware of the trajector's movement/energy)
- no conscious participant necessary; no mental contact
- may be a non-affected reference point
- diachronically oldest
- self movement (may be marked by *se* = refl.)
- only 2 participants – no thematic item
- primarily nouns!

cf. Kuryłowicz 1964, 1977; Kučanda 1982; Dąbrowska 1997; Šarić 1999; Rišner 2003; Stanojević and Geld 2008; Stanojević and Kryžan Stanojević 2009  
Stanojević and Tuđman forthcoming

## 2. Results and discussion

- corpus studies:
  - Croatian National Corpus (<http://www.hnk.ffzg.hr/>)
  - Croatian Language Corpus (<http://riznica.ihjj.hr/>)

## 2. Results and discussion

	<b>unatoč</b> n=499	<b>usprkos</b> n=1688	<b>uprkos</b> n=41	<b>usuprot</b> n=29	<b>nasuprot</b> n= 931	<b>naprama</b> n=229	<b>nadomak</b> n=512	<b>nadohvat</b> n=93
<b>dative</b>	96.79	93.31	92.68	89.66	73.68	69.00	22.66	10.99
<b>genitive</b>	1.80	5.21	7.32	6.90	21.37	0	76.95	89.01
<b>other</b>	1.40	1.48	0	3.45	4.94	31.00	0.39	0



A div

na + ...  
= genitive

	<b>unatoč</b> n=499	<b>usprkos</b> n=1688	<b>uprkos</b> n=41	<b>usuprot</b> n=29	<b>nasuprot</b> n= 931	<b>naprama</b> n=229	<b>nadomak</b> n=517	<b>nadohvat</b> n=93
<b>dative</b>	96.79	93.31	92.68	89.66	73.68	69.00	22.66	10.99
<b>genitive</b>	1.80	5.21	7.32	6.90	21.37	0	76.95	89.01
<b>other</b>					4.94	31.00	0.39	0

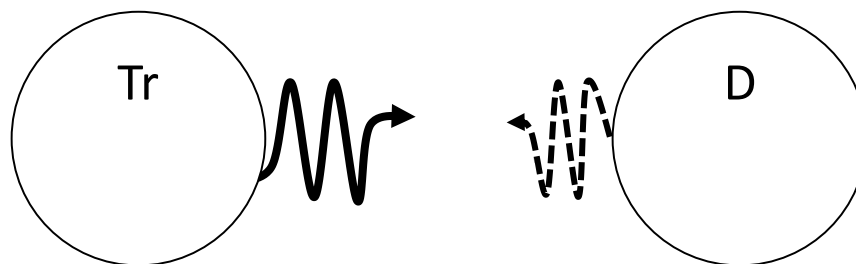
u + ...  
= dative

# A divide?

	<b>unatoč</b> n=499	<b>usprkos</b> n=1688	<b>uprkos</b> n=41	<b>usuprot</b> n=29	<b>nasuprot</b> n= 931	<b>naprama</b> n=229	<b>nadomak</b> n=512	<b>nadohvat</b> n=93
<b>dative</b>	96.79	93.31	92.68	89.66	73.68	69.00	22.66	10.99
<b>genitive</b>	1.80	5.21	7.32	6.90	21.37	0	76.95	89.01
<b>other</b>	1.40	1.48	0	3.45	4.94	31.00	0.39	0

(8) *jer je ponovno otišla mužu u Zagreb, unatoč njegovim prijetnjama (his threats-DAT)*

‘because she went to (live with) her husband in Zagreb, in spite of his threats’



# A divide?

	<b>unatoč</b> n=499	<b>usprkos</b> n=1688	<b>uprkos</b> n=41	<b>usuprot</b> n=29
<b>dative</b>	96.79	93.31	92.68	89.66
<b>genitive</b>	1.80	5.21	7.32	6.90
<b>other</b>	1.40	1.48	0	3.45

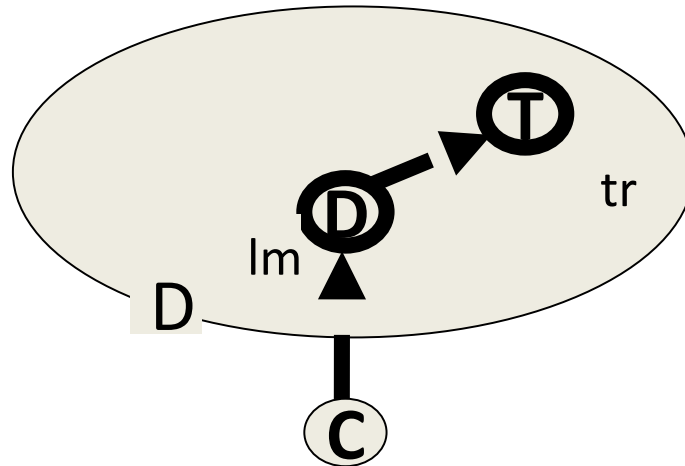
- clear competitor meaning = dative
- *u+...*
- *unatoč* – which is more frequent in recent texts – allows less variation, others allow more variation
- genitives appearing only recently in journalistic texts
- genitives appearing with numbers

# A divide?

<b>nadomak n=512</b>	<b>nadohvat n=93</b>
<b>22.66</b>	10.99
<b>76.95</b>	89.01
<b>0.39</b>	0

(9) *Cibona nadomak finala* (finals-GEN)

‘Cibona a step away from the finals’



# A divide?

- clear reference point  
meaning = genitive
- *na+...*
- 20th century texts
- genitives appearing  
only recently in  
journalistic texts
- genitives appearing  
with numbers

nadomak n=512	nadohvat n=93
22.66	10.99
76.95	89.01
0.39	0

# Variation

## When/why dative?

- Competitor meanings = still clearly present overall\*
- Require activity in the target domain – more frequent with persons, relations = similar with the transfer prototype
- older use, literary style and journalistic use
- use with singular nouns

## When/why genitive?

- reference-point patterns = similar to the genitive meaning (non-affected reference point); possible “taking away from” patterns being lost in the dative (Janda 1993b: 546)
- more recent use
- mainly journalistic use
- use with plural nouns and numbers (inflection)

\*roughly 25% of examples in CNC; Stanojević and Tuđman forthcoming)



# A divide: problem

	<b>unatoč</b> n=499	<b>usprkos</b> n=1688	<b>uprkos</b> n=41	<b>usuprot</b> n=29	<b>nasuprot</b> n= 931	<b>naprama</b> n=229	<b>nadomak</b> n=512	<b>nadohvat</b> n=93
<b>dative</b>	96.79	93.31	92.68	89.66	73.68	69.00	22.66	10.99
<b>genitive</b>	1.80	5.21	7.32	6.90	21.37	0	76.95	89.01
<b>other</b>	1.40	1.48	0	3.45	4.94	31.00	0.39	0

# A divide: problem

	unatoč n=499	usprkos n=1688	uprkos n=41	usuprot n=29	nasuprot n= 931	<b>naprama n=229</b>	nadomak n=512	nadohvat n=93
dative	96.79	93.31	92.68	89.66	73.68	<b>69.00</b>	22.66	10.99
genitive	1.80	5.21	7.32	6.90	21.37	0	76.95	89.01
other	1.40	1.48	0	3.45	4.94	<b>31.00</b>	0.39	0

# *naprama* 'to'

(9) *Takav odnos, šest  
naprama tri* (three), ...

'this relation, six to three'

- numbers = loss of inflection
- examples with numbers = journalistic texts
- frequency: 0.02-0.04 per 10000 (CNR) 1950-2010

➤ change in meaning to include only numbers

➤ taken over by *prema* (only dative) with other referents

(10)...*vazda galantan  
naprama gospođama*

(ladies-DAT)...

'always generous to the ladies'

- examples with other referents: only in literary or older texts
- frequency: around 0.2 per 10000 (CNR) 1850-1950

# A divide: problem

	<b>unatoč</b> n=499	<b>usprkos</b> n=1688	<b>uprkos</b> n=41	<b>usuprot</b> n=29	<b>nasuprot</b> n= 931	<b>nadomak</b> n=512	<b>nadohvat</b> n=93
<b>dative</b>	96.79	93.31	92.68	89.66	73.68	22.66	10.99
<b>genitive</b>	1.80	5.21	7.32	6.90	21.37	76.95	89.01
<b>other</b>	1.40	1.48	0	3.45	4.94	0.39	0

# *Nasuprot* ‘across from, as opposed to’

(11) ...*žuta zgrada ...*  
*koja se smjestila*  
*nasuprot župne crkve*  
(parish church-GEN)  
*sv. Ćirila i Metoda*

‘...the yellow building ...  
across from the  
parish church of  
Saints Cyril and  
Methodius’

(12) ...*nikada nije*  
*mogao sakriti da ,*  
*nasuprot prvoj dami*  
(first lady-DAT),  
*preferira Hercegovce*

‘he could never hide  
that, unlike the first  
lady, he didn’t mind  
people from  
Hercegovina’

# *Nasuprot* 'across from, as opposed to'

## Genitive

- meaning: mostly 'across from'
- goes with numbers in the plural

significant difference  
(t-test):  
 $t=-3.349; p<.01$

## Dative

- meaning: mostly 'as opposed to'
- goes with singular

significant difference  
between groups  
(ANOVA):  
 $F(5,925)=87.672;$   
 $p<.01$

# *Nasuprot* ‘across from, as opposed to’

## Genitive

- meaning: mostly ‘across from’
- goes with numbers in the plural
- more recent reference-point meaning
- similar to other genitive prepositions (*na+...*)

## Dative

- meaning: mostly ‘as opposed to’
- goes with singular
- older competitor meaning
- similar to other dative

frequency: 0.57-0.60 per  
10000 in 1950-2010

frequency: 0.26 per  
10000 in 1900-1949

# A divide

	<b>unatoč</b> n=499	<b>usprkos</b> n=1688	<b>uprkos</b> n=41	<b>usuprot</b> n=29	<b>nasuprot</b> n= 931	<b>nadomak</b> n=512	<b>nadohvat</b> n=93
<b>dative</b>	96.79	93.31	92.68	89.66	73.68	22.66	10.99
<b>genitive</b>	1.80	5.21	7.32	6.90	21.37	76.95	89.01
<b>other</b>	1.40	1.48	0	3.45	4.94	0.39	0



# Factors

- meaning (competitor or allative)
  - closer to the dative (competitor = implies activity) or genitive prototype (allative = only reference point)
- form (clear relation to adverb), incomplete grammaticalization; postpositions require dative
- numbers prefer genitive or no inflection; person/metonymies prefer dative
- influence of other constructions: idiomatized (*nadohvat ruke*-GEN); competition of *naprama* with *prema*
- general loss of prepositions with the dative for meanings closer to the prototype (Šarić 2008)

# Why are *prema/k* dative only?

- older = they grammaticalized
- not divisible – not coming from adverbs (because similar variation in adverbs, e.g. *blizu*)
- *k* coming closer to the contemporary prototype – used with people (Šarić 2008)
- *prema* may be subjectified to mean dative assessor (*prema autorima* ‘according to the authors’)

# Implications, future work: the bigger picture

- Split between patterns – evident in other Slavic languages?
- hierarchy of factors – speakers' judgments?
- L1/L2?

# Thank you!

Mateusz-Milan Stanojević (mmstanoje@ffzg.hr)  
Lidija Cvikić (lcvikic@ffzg.hr)

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Zagreb