

CLS 24

Papers from the
24th Annual Regional Meeting of the
Chicago Linguistic Society

Part One: The General Session

Chicago Linguistic Society
1988

edited by

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Pragmatic vs Semantic Uses of Case

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0.0 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the efficacy of cognitive grammar (as conceived by Lakoff [1987, 1986] and Langacker [1987]) in accounting for relationships between pragmatic and semantic uses of a grammatical category such as case. Instead of treating pragmatic uses as idiomatic or exceptional, cognitive grammarians view pragmatic uses as logical and motivated extensions¹ of members of the given semantic category. This recognition of pragmatics and semantics as parts of a continuum rather than separate phenomena is consonant with the writings of researchers beyond the fold of cognitive linguistics (cf. Kates 1980 and van Schooneveld 1978). The Czech dative provides a rich array of pragmatic uses, all of which result from the willful manipulation by the speaker of the boundaries of a dative sphere in order to project relationships which connect himself, the hearer, and the narrated event.

1.0 Semantics of the Czech dative

A rigorous analysis (cf. Janda forthcoming) of the cognitive category associated with the dative case in Czech has yielded a radially-structured network of image schemas similar to those suggested by Smith (1985), plus two related sub-networks of reflexive and reciprocal meanings. A schematic representation of this category is found in figures 1 and 2 (the reciprocal sub-network has been omitted because it is not relevant to the present paper). All of the uses of the dative which are traditionally recognized as pragmatic are found to be associated with the image schemas (in the main network and in the reflexive sub-network) which caption meanings of possession and of beneficiary. These schemas are distinguished from the remaining members of the dative's network by the invocation of a "personal sphere," indicating the scope of possession or affectedness. As will be shown below, it is no accident that these schemas have been exploited for pragmatic purposes, for the presence of this personal sphere makes them uniquely adapted for encoding pragmatic messages.

Let us begin by examining the semantic uses associated with image schemas in which the dative controls a personal sphere. These uses can be broadly characterized as expressing affectedness of the dative entity, as in (1) - (3):

Figure 1: Czech Dative Network

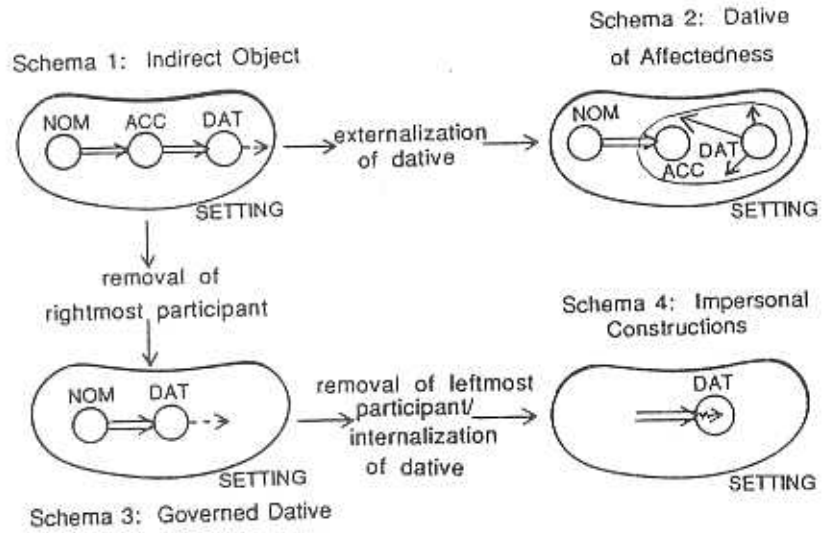


Figure 2: Dative Reflexive Subnetwork

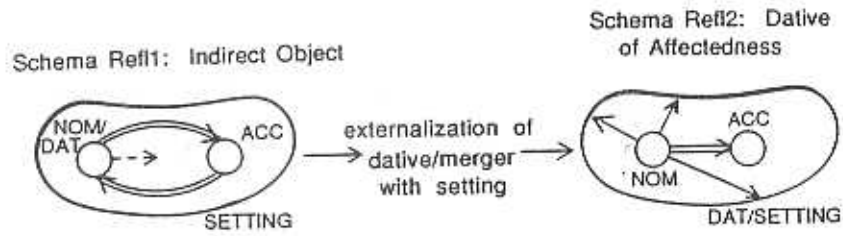
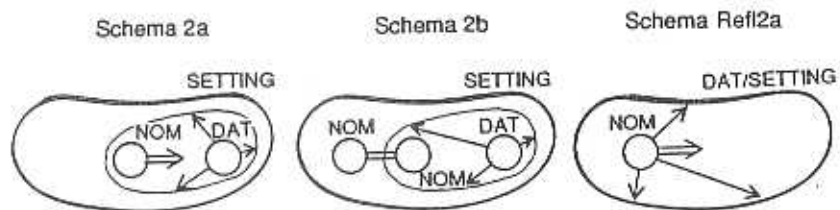


Figure 3: Syntactic Variants of Schemas 2 and Ref2



- (1) Děvče natrhlo mamince květiny.
 Girl-NOM picked mother-DAT flowers-ACC
 'The girl picked some flowers for her mother.'²
- (2) Ludmila mu uvařila kaši.
 Ludmila-NOM him-DAT cooked kasha-ACC
 'Ludmila cooked some kasha for him.'
- (3) Miminko nám pláče v noci.
 Baby-NOM us-DAT cries in night-LOC
 'The baby cries at night (and we are affected by this).'

Examples (1) and (2) are captioned by schema 2 in figure 1 and example (3) is captioned by the schema 2a in figure 3. In example (1), the girl is the nominative entity which has effected the movement of the flowers (the accusative entity) into the dative sphere of the mother, by making them available to her. In example 2, the nominative entity (Ludmila) effects a more metaphorical transfer of the accusative entity (kasha); Ludmila makes the kasha available to the dative's sphere by rendering it in an edible form. Example (3) illustrates a syntactic variant of the central construction, here with an intransitive verb. The syntactic structure of the action chain is not constrained; all that is required is that at least one participant in the action chain be within the compass of the dative sphere. Here, the baby and its actions are contained in the speaker's dative sphere. Further examples of syntactic variants will be encountered below.

When the dative indicates possession, it does so via reference to affectedness, and thus its meaning is distinct from meanings of possession marked by the genitive case or possessives. This claim is upheld by a comparison of the distribution of dative and genitive or possessive forms. With objects which are inalienably possessed the dative is preferred, and with parts of the body it is required.

- (4a) Jeho matka zemřela.
 His-possessive mother-NOM died
 'His mother died.'
- (4b) Zemřela mu matka.
 Died him-DAT mother-NOM
 'His mother died.'
- (5a) *Lítost sevřela hrdlo Petra.
 Regret-NOM tightened throat-ACC Peter-GEN
 'Regret tightened Peter's throat.'
- (5b) Lítost sevřela Petrovi hrdlo. (Grepl & Karlík 1986)
 Regret-NOM tightened Peter-DAT throat-ACC
 'Regret tightened Peter's throat.'

Because (4a) fails to make reference to the fact that the man in question was affected by his mother's death, its use outside of a context supporting this sort of interpretation is strange. (5a) is altogether unacceptable, for it is impossible to imagine a context in which Peter could be sufficiently detached from his throat while still feeling regret.

That the dative of possession can co-occur with possessives further confirms the fact that the so-called dative of possession expresses affectedness rather than possession *sensu stricto* :

(6) Když se vrátil, viděl, že mu shořel jeho dům.
 When refl-ACC returned, saw, that him-DAT burned-down
 his-possessive house-NOM
 'When he returned, he saw that his house had burned down (and he was affected).'³

1.1 Pragmatic uses of the Czech dative

The use of the dative in (6) indicates that the narrated event has some effect on the dative referent (in some cases due to the fact that the dative is the possessor of one of the participants), and the dative is applied in a fairly straightforward manner by the speaker to indicate an objective observation of the relationship between the dative entity and the narrated event. When a speaker uses this dative where such relationships do not already exist, pragmatic meanings result. The effect may be one of intimacy (commonly known as ethical dative) or of solidarity with the hearer, or it may indicate a threatening, authoritative tone:

Intimacy

(7) "Jo, a na universitě," pokračoval potichu pán Kéval, "tam se vám dnes seprala přírodovědecká fakulta s historickou." (Čapek)
 Yes, and on university-LOC, continued quietly Mr. Kéval-NOM, there refl-ACC you-DAT today fought natural sciences department-NOM with history-INST

"Yes, and at the university," continued Mr. Kéval quietly, "(hey, you know what?) the natural sciences department had a fight with the history department today."

(8) Ten čaj ti mě zvedl.

That tea-NOM you-DAT me-ACC raised

'(Hey, you know what?) That tea picked me up.'

(9) Neboj se, ten luks je ti tak hodný!

Don't be-afraid refl-ACC, that vacuum cleaner-NOM is you-DAT so nice-NOM

'Don't be afraid, (hey, you know what?) the vacuum cleaner is so nice!' (uttered by a woman talking to a toddler who was afraid of the vacuum cleaner)⁴

Solidarity

(10) Ty zlé děti nám rozbily hračky, vid'?

Those mean children-NOM us-DAT broke toys-ACC, see

'Those mean children broke our toys, did they?'

(11) Rostou nám zoubky.

Grow us-DAT teeth-NOM

'Our teeth are growing.' (both utterances attributable to a mother comforting her child)

Authority

(12) Co jste nám tu ukradli?

What-ACC (you)are(AUX) us-DAT here stole

'What did you steal here (on us)?' (said by a policeman catching thieves)

(13) Jak nám tu jezdíte?

How us-DAT here drive

'How are you driving here (on us)?' (said by a policeman chastising a motorist)

In examples of pragmatic usage, the dative is marked on a first- or second-person pronoun, and the speaker uses the sphere invoked by the dative to establish novel relationships between himself, the hearer, and the narrated event. In examples (7) and (8), the hearer (who is the dative entity) has clearly not witnessed the narrated event, and was probably not aware of it prior to the speaker's utterance. Prior lack of awareness of the narrated event is also attributable to the hearer in (9). Likewise, the speaker in (10) through (13) cannot be said to have any objective relationship to the narrated event: the mother does not possess or suffer on account of the broken toys or the sore gums, and the policeman is not the owner of the stolen goods, nor is he affected by the motorist's driving. Furthermore, the policeman's use of the plural to refer to himself enhances the interpretation that he represents some greater authority.

The speaker in effect wields the dative like a lasso to put his interlocutors into a desired relationship with him. Storytellers often address listeners with a second-person dative pronoun in order to draw them into their narration, as in (7). The use of a dative pronoun to address the hearer can also lend a convincing tone to the speaker's statements, as in (8) and (9). The pragmatic insertion of a first-person plural pronoun constitutes an expression of sympathy when it indicates the sharing of the hearer's already extant sphere with the speaker, as in (10) and (11), but an act of aggression when the speaker claims to be the representative of a governing body which possesses that sphere, as

in (12) and (13). The pragmatic messages of these uses of the dative can be paraphrased as follows:

Intimacy

Speaker claims that narrated event is in hearer's sphere.

"The narrated event is in your sphere -- take notice of it!"

Solidarity

Speaker claims to share the hearer's sphere.

"I share your sphere and your experience of the narrated event."

Authority

Speaker claims that the hearer and his actions are in the speaker's sphere.

"You and your actions are in our sphere, so behave! I represent others and speak with authority."

There are some examples in which we see a combination of semantic and pragmatic uses of the dative. Witness the possessive reading of the dative in this complaint:

(14) To je mi pěkný pořádek! (Grepš & Karlík 1986)

That-NOM is me-DAT nice order-NOM

'That is a nice mess (for me)!'

The use of the dative both indicates possession and gives the expression a markedly sarcastic tone. This instantiation of the dative is a transitional example, motivated by both semantic and pragmatic purposes. The pragmatic message of (14) can be paraphrased as follows:

Complaint

Speaker claims that narrated event is in speaker's sphere.

"The narrated event is in my sphere and I'm stuck with it!"

2.0 The reflexive dative

The prevalent pragmatic insertion of the reflexive dative particle *si* is a striking, but heretofore unexplained feature of spoken Czech.⁵ When the semantics of the dative and the reflexive are combined, the personal sphere and the setting merge as seen in schema Refl2 of figure 2, producing a situation in which the dative's referent is placed in its own private universe. The meaning of this feature of the dative reflexive image schema can best be captured in English by the phrase *for one's own sake*.⁶

2.1 Semantics of *si*

Like the schemas for non-reflexive dative, schema Refl2 and syntactic variants are associated with meanings of affectedness and possession via affectedness, illustrated in examples (15) and (16).

(15) Tibet'ané ve Lhase *si* rozkládají krámky přímo na ulici.
Tibetans-NOM in Lhasa-LOC refl-DAT undo shops-ACC right on street-LOC

'Tibetans in Lhasa set up shop (for themselves) right on the street.'

(16) Umyj *si* ruce a pak *si* je hezky utři!
Wash refl-DAT hands-ACC and then refl-DAT them-ACC nicely wipe-off

'Wash your hands and then dry them off (for yourself) nicely!'

2.2 Pragmatic uses of *si*

In (15) and (16), the dative reflexive particle serves an objective purpose, for it describes observed relationships between participants and the narrated event. Pragmatic uses of *si*, however, set up relationships imposed by the speaker. This pragmatic insertion of *si* is most frequently encountered when the speaker wishes to imply that the dative referent does something exclusively for his or her own enjoyment, good, or comfort. If an inanimate subject is used, personification is invoked.

Self-indulgence

(17) Dej *si* mu přes hubu jak chceš, je mi to jedno.
Give refl-DAT him-DAT across lip-ACC how (you)want, is me-DAT that-NOM one

'Give him a sock in the jaw (for your own enjoyment) if you like, I don't care.'

(18) My se tu dřeme a on *si* sedí v hospodě! (Grepš & Karlík 1986)
We-NOM refl-ACC here toil and he-NOM refl-DAT sits in pub-LOC
'We're toiling away here and he's sitting in a pub (enjoying himself)!'

(19) Žili *si* tam jako bohové.
Lived refl-DAT there like gods-NOM
'They lived it up there like gods.'

Pragmatic message:

Speaker claims that the subject is engaging in the narrated event exclusively in his own personal sphere.

"The subject is acting out of his own selfish interests."

Personification(20) Hodinky *si* šly, jak chtěly.

Watch-NOM refl-DAT walked, how wanted

'The watch ran however it wanted to (to suit itself).'

Pragmatic message:

Speaker claims that the subject, which is inanimate, is engaging in the narrated event in its own personal sphere.

"The subject has a personal sphere, and therefore human properties."

2.2.1 The status of pragmatic uses of *si* in Czech

The pragmatic use of the dative reflexive to indicate selfish indulgence has attained some grammatical and even lexical status in Czech. The use of *si* is conventional⁷ with verbs which denote self-indulgent actions. The following context sets up an example of this conventionalized use of *si*. A woman who was working nights while her husband was in medical school prepared dinners for him in advance so that he could heat them up. Invariably she would return to find his meal burned beyond recognition, and when she asked what had happened, he would reply:

(21) Četl jsem *si*!

Read am(AUX) refl-DAT

'I was reading (for my own enjoyment, not noticing anything beyond the small universe thus created)!'

Conventional insertion of *si* is also observed with the following verbs: *hrát* 'play' when it describes the kind of play that children engage in; *myslet* 'think' when its meaning approximates 'have an opinion'; and *řici* 'say' when the message is uttered on the speaker's own initiative, as in (22):

(22) Mámo, neměj starosti! Jestli budu mít hlad, tak *si* řeknu.

Mom-VOC, don't-have worries-ACC If (I)will have hunger-ACC, then refl-DAT (I)will-say

'Don't worry, mom! If I'm hungry, I'll say so (according to my own desires).'

In some environments, this use of the dative reflexive has become grammaticized and therefore obligatory. This is true of certain verbs expressing intransitive actions which are performed for the agent's comfort or convenience, actions performed for his own enjoyment, or actions which are strictly limited to the agent's sphere of mental awareness. Table 1 summarizes the obligatory uses of *si* in these

meanings.

Table 1

comfort/convenience:	
sednout si	sit down
lehnout si	lie down
dřepnout si	squat
stoupnout si ⁸	take a standing position
odpočinout si	rest
hovět si ⁹	rest
oddechnout si	be relieved
odskočit si	relieve oneself (by going to the restroom; lit: 'leap away')
vymýšlet si	make things up
enjoyment:	
zatančit si	do some dancing
popovídat si ¹⁰	have a chat
přihnout si	get drunk (lit: 'bend towards self'; describes motion of drinking)
awareness:	
pamatovat si	remember
všimát si	notice
uvědomit si	become aware
stěžovat si	complain
připouštět si ¹¹	accept (a distressing fact)

The present explanation of the use of *si* with these verbs as resulting from grammaticization of a pragmatic extension of the dative category is particularly valuable given the fact that a similar use of the dative reflexive is attested neither in Old Church Slavic nor in other Slavic languages,¹² and thus it cannot be motivated on historical grounds. Unless we recognize the connection between the semantics of these verbs and the pragmatics of the Czech dative reflexive, such examples can only be classed as exceptions resulting from the capriciousness of language.

The pragmatic use of the dative reflexive to indicate self-indulgent behavior has also been fixed in the Czech lexicon via the word *sobec* 'egotist, selfish person,' which is formed from the long-form dative reflexive pronoun (*sobě*) with a suffix used for nouns denoting human agents (*-ec*).

2.2.2 Other pragmatic uses of *si*

In the remaining pragmatic uses of the dative reflexive, *si* refers to the hearer, and the speaker projects a closed sphere on the hearer in order to locate himself without that sphere. The speaker is literally putting the hearer in his place by reminding the hearer that he has his own private universe which the speaker has no part in. Since the speaker thus asserts his desire to be separate from the hearer, it comes as no surprise that the pragmatic message of such utterances is alienating and threatening:

(23) Hled' *si* sám sebe!

Look refl-DAT refl-NOM refl-ACC

'Mind your own business (for your own sake)!'

Pragmatic message:

Speaker claims that hearer has his own sphere exclusive of the speaker.

"You and your actions are in your sphere; I'm not part of it."

This use of the dative is especially well-suited to the anonymous commands that blare out over loudspeakers in the Prague metro, which carry with them the further implication that since the speaker defines the hearer's sphere, he knows what is good for the hearer, and consequently is delivering the message for the hearer's own good.

(24) Vystupte *si* z bezpečnostního pásu!

Step-out refl-DAT from safe zone-GEN

'Step out of the danger zone (for your own good)!'

(25) Urychlete *si* nástup do soupravy!¹³

Speed-up refl-DAT boarding to rolling-stock-GEN

'Board the train faster (for your own good)!'

3.0 Conclusion

The foregoing is an overview of the pragmatic uses of the Czech dative, all of which are captioned by schema 2 and syntactic variations on that schema (Refl 2 and variants given in figure 3). When one considers what makes pragmatic utterances pragmatic, it becomes clear that the association of pragmatic uses with schema 2 is anything but incidental. We recognize an utterance as pragmatic when the speaker uses it to establish a relationship between speech event or action chain participants and the narrated event. The personal sphere of the dative present in schema 2 sets up boundaries which can serve to group participants with respect to each other and the narrated event, and thus it can perform just the sort of operations which we associate with pragmatics. In every one of the examples presented above, the speaker

has manipulated the dative sphere to point out to the hearer significant groupings which he feels that the hearer is not sufficiently aware of.

In the present framework it is evident that pragmatic uses of case are the result of the application of appropriate schemas to the speech event domain. Appropriate schemas are those which contain a boundary-marking device, such as the personal sphere present in schema two of the Czech dative. This explanation is consistent with structuralist claims that features can be deictic and thereby refer to the speech event itself.¹⁴ Cognitive grammar highlights the relationship between semantic and pragmatic uses of case, and views pragmatic uses as logical extensions of the semantics of case. This view is supported by the existence of transitional examples, such as (14), and by the fact that pragmatic uses of case can be grammaticized and even lexicalized, as evidenced above in the discussion of the reflexive dative of self-indulgence. Cognitive grammar thus facilitates a coherent account of case, in which both semantic and pragmatic uses are systematically motivated.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Greg Carlson, Charles Carlton and Ron Harrington for reading drafts of this paper. I am, of course, responsible for any errors that remain.

Footnotes

¹"Extension" refers to the application of an image schema to a different domain. This paper discusses the application of schemas which usually function in the domain of the narrated event to the domain of the speech event. "Projection" refers to a creative act on the part of the speaker, who thus establishes boundaries relevant to the speech event.

²Underlined words indicate the presence of dative marking in Czech, as well as their translation into English.

³This sentence was judged marginally acceptable by three out of five native speakers of Czech.

⁴This example does not mean 'the vacuum cleaner is nice to you.' This idea is expressed with the prepositional phrase *na tebe*.

⁵Grammars (cf. Sova 1962, 139 & 439; Heim 1982, 56; and Naughton 1987, 20) usually do no more than list certain verbs which are commonly accompanied by *si*, leaving other uses unexplained. Occasionally some commentary is offered, but it is too brief to have any explanatory value. Cf. Townsend (1981, 166), who mentions the use of *si* as a "stylistic feature" of spoken Czech, and tells us that it "may ... lend an expressive or modal meaning," and Šmilauer (1972, 286), who

dative of beneficiary is observed with *si* with the meaning of enjoyment and comfort."

⁶The notion that reflexivization might involve something more than merely identifying the subject and object with the same participant is neither new nor unique to the present work. Cf. Maldonado (1987, 9) who concludes that "a different strategy from the classical subject/object identification is necessary to explain the formation of reflexives in Spanish."

⁷I recognize the use of *si* as conventional when its use with a given verb is not grammatically obligatory, but nonetheless the verb is rarely used intransitively without an accompanying *si*.

⁸*Stoupnout si* is not on a par with *sednout si* and *lehnout si*, for it is not the ordinary verb for 'stand up' (*vstát*); its use is limited to situations in which a standing posture is most convenient. Many of the verbs in table 1 have been culled from Těšitelová *et al.* 1986; information given therein on obligatoriness of *si* was checked against the intuitions of native speakers.

⁹*Si* is now required when this verb is used in its original meaning of 'rest,' although *hovět* also appears without *si* in the meaning 'give in to'; however this meaning is listed in etymological dictionaries as an innovation.

¹⁰Both *zatančit si* and *popovídat si* represent productive types of verbs. The prefix *za-* combines with *si* and simplex verbs which denote physical exercise, and the prefix *po-* combines with *si* and verbs which denote talking. This participation of *si* in word-formation gives further evidence of its grammaticization.

¹¹Both *stěžovat si* and *pripouštět si* indicate evaluation and acceptance within the subject's sphere of awareness.

¹²This generalization requires the following qualification. The dative reflexive appears in Slovak in both *lahnúť si* 'lie down' and *sadnúť si* 'sit down,' and in Bulgarian it appears only with the verb *legna si* 'lie down'; in the remaining Slavic languages it is not associated with these verbs. The use of *si* with verbs of comfort is more sporadic and isolated in Slovak and Bulgarian than in Czech, where, as we have seen, it is systematically applied. The obligatory use of *si* with the verbs in table 1 is a very recent innovation in Czech. Gebauer (1958) gives attestations of *odpočinout si* from the last quarter of the nineteenth century; at the same time, *lehnout* still appeared without *si*. As late as 1900, a grammar of Czech (Schulz & Vorovka) appeared which listed *sednout* and *lehnout* both with (p. 207) and without (pp. 176 & 205) *si*.

¹³These examples were given to me by linguists at Charles University in Prague who complained that the proliferation of *si* in metro announcements is an unseemly abuse of the Czech dative. Note that overtones of authority and alienation are enhanced by the choice of

technical terms such as *bezpečnostní pás* 'danger zone' and *souprava* 'rolling-stock,' rather than more familiar words like *kraj* 'edge' and *vlak* 'train.'

¹⁴Cf. van Schooneveld (1978, 11), who terms this phenomenon "transmissional deixis," and attributes the notion to Jakobson. Cognitive grammar does not employ distinctive features, but shares with structuralism recognition of the translatability of case roles from the narrated-event to the speech-event domain.

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