

## Licensing Modality In Infinitival Structures

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Dative-Infinitive Constructions (1a-c) are known to have a modal component to their interpretation. Although these structures have spawned a lot of recent work (Babby 1999, Komar 1999, Moore & Perlmutter 2000, Perlmutter & Moore 2002, Sigurdsson 2002, Fleisher 2006, to name just a few), most researchers have been concerned with the puzzles of their syntactic organization, i.e. their thematic structure and the Dative case of their thematic subjects. The modal meaning has either been descriptively acknowledged but not investigated, or posited as an ad hoc solution. The latter category includes Kondrashova's (1993) analysis where the modal meaning is introduced by a null modal operator, and a recent proposal by Fleisher (2006) that makes it part of the lexical meaning of the Russian copula.

In this paper I argue that the modal component of the Dative-Infinitive Construction is generated by the infinitive per se, infinitives cross-linguistically having unrealized Tense and Modality (Stowell 1982, Bhatt 1999). The current proposal relies on Stowell's idea that the unrealized (quasi-future) tense can only be interpreted if the Tense operator moves to C, presumably to take scope over the proposition. A similar proposal by Bhatt (1999) has been made for the Modal operator in embedded infinitival clauses. Crucially, the modal meaning of infinitivals is not specified in the lexicon, but is realized derivationally through operator raising to C, the actual modal force being determined by a combination of pragmatic and contextual factors (see Bhatt 1999 for details). Both researchers present substantial evidence from English that semantic realization of either tense or modality correlates with the availability of the C position in the structure.

I assume that Dative-Infinitive structures of the type in (1) contain a CP embedding as in (2) (from Sigurdsson 2002). On the proposed analysis, the Modal operator carried by the infinitive raises to C, thus triggering the modal reading of the event. The specific modal realization of the operator is derived contextually, as in Bhatt (1999). Therefore, the modal interpretation of (1a-c) follows naturally from the syntactic structure independently proposed for this construction, paired with the inherent modality of the infinitive, again, independently suggested for English infinitivals.

The next step is to find out whether modality is available in those structures that are known to have no CP in them. If our proposal is right, then IP-infinitives will have no modal component to their interpretation, in contrast to CP-infinitives, e.g., in (1). There are two cases of IP-infinitivals in Russian where this prediction can be tested: infinitival imperatives (3) and infinitival clausal subjects (4). Both these structures can have overt Dative thematic subjects, but, importantly, they lack the deontic modal reading of the CP-infinitives (compare translations in (1a-c) with those in (3-4)). In addition, Russian IP-infinitives contrast with the CP-infinitives with respect to expressing overt Tense. Whereas canonical Dative-Infinitivals can use an overt tense auxiliary (e.g., (1a, 1c)), neither imperative nor clausal subject infinitivals can (5a,b).

These data support the generalizations about the interpretational contrasts between IP- and CP-infinitives observed in English. Based on Russian facts, cross-linguistic claims can be made, namely, that 1) infinitives carry both unrealized Tense and Modality as part of their semantics; 2) semantic interpretation of "unrealized" Tense and Modality is licensed by an operator movement to C.

- (1) a. Kogo bylo pro ljubit'?
- who-Acc be-Pst ( -Dat) love-Inf
- “Who could one love?”
- b. Kole zavtra rabotat'.
- Kolja-Dat tomorrow work-Inf
- “Kolja has to work tomorrow.”
- c. Gruzoviku zdes' budet ne proexat'.
- truck-Dat here be-Fut NEG pass-Inf
- “A truck won't be able to pass through here.”
- (2) DAT<sub>i</sub> [is] ...<sub>CP</sub>[PRO<sub>i</sub> Inf.]
- (3) a. Ocepit' zdanie!
- surround-Inf building-Acc
- “Surround the building!”
- (4) a. [(Nam) rabotat' vmeste] stanovilos' problemoj.
- we-Dat work-Inf together become-Pst problem
- “For us to work together was becoming a problem.”
- (5) a. \*Bylo ocepit' zdanie!
- be-Pst surround-Inf building-Acc
- b. \*[(Nam) bylo rabotat' vmeste] stanovilos' problemoj.
- we-Dat be-Pst work-Inf together become-Pst problem

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