

Title: Semantic Factors of Case Restructuring in Heritage Russian: Evidence from the Russian Learner Corpus  
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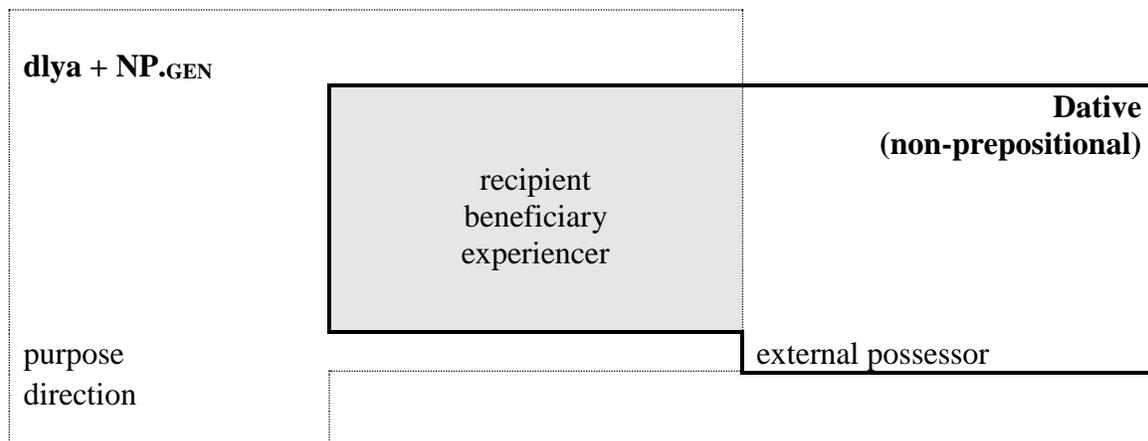
Abstract:

This paper provides a corpus-based analysis of the case acquisition in heritage Russian. The corpus data comes from second-generation bilingual students with Finnish as a dominant language. Although the students' proficiency is highly advanced and they regularly attended Russian classes at the University of Helsinki, their written production demonstrates a few regular patterns of case reorganization concerning the non-prepositional Dative and the Genitive noun phrases *dlya* + NP.GEN ('for NP.GEN):

- i. Contamination of forms \**dlya* + NP.DAT instead of *dlya* + NP.GEN  
\**dlya komu-to drugomu eto mozhet byt' vsya zhizn'*
- ii. Variation in the case assignment:  
\**dlya malenkogo rebenka mne etot vid pokazalsya slozhnym*

The studies on heritage Russian (Polinsky, Kagan 2007: 380-381) suggest that contaminated forms and variation in the case assignment are a by-product of formal restructuring of the case system and overgeneralization of syntactic conditions. However, the corpus data from highly advanced heritage speakers reveals underlying semantic factors that induce grammatical innovations. The semantic map analysis (Haspelmath 2003: 11) of the competing NPs reveals two trends in the Russian heritage data (Figure 1). First, *dlya* + NP.GEN is a productive pattern for coding multifunctional semantic gram recipient–purpose–direction. Second, the variation of the Dative-Genitive NPs has semantic restrictions: non-prepositional Dative NPs only alternate with *dlya* + NPs while marking the role of recipient-beneficiary-experiencer and never occur in contexts of purpose–destination. The analysis excluded transfers from the dominant Finnish language.

Figure 1



## References

Haspelmath, M. (2003). The geometry of grammatical meaning: Semantic maps and cross-linguistic comparison. *The new psychology of language*, 2(1976), 1-30.

Polinsky, M., & Kagan, O. (2007). Heritage languages: In the 'wild' and in the classroom. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 1(5), 368-395.