

Title: Semipredicative Case in a Bottom-up Syntax

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In Russian, dative case arises on forms of *sam* ‘alone’ and *odin* ‘one’ (“semipredicatives”) in infinitival clause contexts where the semipredicative either has no obvious antecedent (1) or it does have an antecedent, but that antecedent is inaccessible for case-agreement purposes (2). Otherwise there is agreement with the antecedent (3).

- (1) Nevozmožno [perejti ètot most *samomu*/\**odin*].  
‘It is impossible to cross this bridge by oneself (dat).’
- (2) Ivan ne znaet kak [tuda dobrat’sja *odnomu*/\**odin*].  
‘Ivan doesn’t know how to get there by himself (dat).’
- (3) On xočet [vse sdelat’ *sam*/\**samomu*].  
‘He (nom) wants to do everything himself (nom).’

An underappreciated puzzle is why, once a mechanism is postulated for assigning the dative case, that mechanism is not also available even when there is an accessible antecedent, as in (3). The traditional source for dative, stemming from Comrie (1974), is to posit a covert dative subject (PRO). If so, dative PRO should be present only in (1) and (2), but not in (3), where dative *samomu* is impossible. The question which this talk addresses is why.

Several approaches are considered. Babby (1998) treats (1) and (2) as S (with PRO) and (3) as VP (without); Babby (2009) treats them all as Inf(initive)Ps but distinguishes two subtypes, one with PRO the other without. Landau (2008) treats them all as CPs with PRO and distinguishes them in terms of the features on C. This talk defends a version of Babby’s earlier approach and shows how it can be implemented in a bottom-up syntax without look-ahead.

References:

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