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## DATIVE TRANSITIVE REFLEXIVE VERBS IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE: THE ORIGINE

### *М. Я. ОЛЕНЯК. ДАТИВНІ ТРАНЗИТИВНІ РЕФЛЕКСИВНІ ДІЄСЛОВА В РОСІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ: ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПОХОДЖЕННЯ*

Пропонована робота розглядає статус рефлексивів в російській мові і доводить наявність у ній дативних транзитивних рефлексивних дієслів. В статті окреслено основні підходи до трактування рефлексивів, визначено місце дативних транзитивних рефлексивних дієслів у системі рефлексивів, охарактеризовано функцію показника зворотності *-ся* та описано історію утворення дативних транзитивних рефлексивних дієслів у російській мові.

*Ключові слова:* рефлексив, показник рефлексивності, транзитивне рефлексивне дієслово, відмінок, прямий додаток, непрямий додаток.

### *М. Я. ОЛЕНЯК. ДАТИВНЫЕ ТРАНЗИТИВНЫЕ РЕФЛЕКСИВНЫЕ ГЛАГОЛЫ В РУССКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ: ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПРОИСХОЖДЕНИЯ*

Данная работа рассматривает статус рефлексивов в русском языке и доказывает наличие в нем дативных транзитивных рефлексивных глаголов. В статье указаны основные подходы к трактованию рефлексивов, определено место дативных транзитивных рефлексивных глаголов в системе рефлексивов, охарактеризована функция показателя возвратности *-ся* и описана история образования дативных транзитивных рефлексивных глаголов в русском языке.

*Ключевые слова:* рефлексив, показатель рефлексивности, транзитивный рефлексивный глагол, падеж, прямое дополнение, косвенное дополнение.

Using the terminology of A. Bondarko, the conceptual category of reflexivity can be displayed in the language as a semantic feature of mono-reference of actants, the material basis of which are reflexives. The term reflexives or reflexive verbs (RV) denotes verbs with a marker of reflexivity (MR), regardless of their meaning. In the Russian language those are synthetic units singled out according to their form.

The purpose of this article is to prove the existence of dative transitive reflexive verbs in Russian, describing the historical process of their formation.

**1. From the history of the problem research.** The category of reflexivity has attracted much attention (Henyushene, 1983; Nedyalkov, Henyushene, 1985; Janko Trinituskaya, 1962; Norman, 1972, 2004; Hrakovskyy, 1978, and

Dolinina, 1991 etc.). There has been a large number of attempts to classify reflexives, highlighting the factors that affect the meaning of RV. The main factor in this respect is thought to be a lexical meaning of a non-reflexive verb from which a corresponding RV can be derived.

There have been some serious attempts to find a common, invariant meaning of all RVs. The latter is considered to be the meaning of a subject's sphere-oriented action, that is

intransitivity (Yanko-Trinitetskaya, 1962: 60-61; Norman 1972:101-102). However, recently this invariant meaning has been questioned or sometimes even completely refuted (Bondarko, 1991: 245-246).

Reflexive verbs system is developed in various languages differently. The presence of transitive reflexive verbs has traditionally been denied in Russian and other Eastern Slavonic languages.

**2. Dative transitive reflexive verbs in the system of RV.** Dative transitive reflexive verbs (DTRV) occupy a special place in the RV system, due to their transitivity. DTRV can take a direct object.

The term DTRV was introduced by E. Henyushene to refer to the class of RV, which is characterized by the monoreferential relationship between the subject and the dative object. This is the construction which requires a beneficiary recipient (in the broadest sense of the word) for which the action is performed. The presence of this actant (dative) and its coreferential character with the subject determines the choice of the term DTRV. Another argument in favor of the term DTRV is the elimination of the dative object while derivation non-reflexive verb → reflexive verb (NV → RV) eg.: (lith.) *Petras nupirko man knyga* 'Peter bought me a book' → *Petras nusipirko knyga* 'Peter bought a book for himself' (Henyushene, 1981: 178). So, in terms of semantics this is a referential identity of the subject and the dative, and in terms of syntax it is its blocking by the elimination of dative object. E. Henyushene studied RVs in a

large number of languages and stated the presence or absence of DTRV in them. There are not DTRVs in the Russian language according to the researcher.

Our viewpoint is somewhat different from the one stated above, but in no case does it question an extremely authoritative opinion. The author hopes that this research will be able to complement the existing ones.

**3. Reflexives in the Russian language.** Reflexive verbs in Russian are considered to be the class of derivatives formed by adding the morpheme *-ся* to the verb. This postfix is polysemantic: it is the means of expression of reflexives, reciprocal relations and passive voice. Though it is not the only MR in Russian. The referential identity can also be marked by reflexive constructions “Verb+Reflexive Pronoun in accusative case” (“V+RP<sub>accusative</sub>”). Thus, one can say *упражняться* (synthetic form with postfix *-ся*) or *упражнять себя* (analytical form with a reflexive pronoun in accusative case) to render the idea of getting trained. Both synthetic and analytical forms, express reflexivity of the action. In most cases they do not show any serious differences in semantics as they describe one and the same referent, though we should speak about closeness and not identity of meaning.

**3.1. The origin and function of the auxiliary morpheme *-ся*.** The auxiliary morpheme *-ся* is the consequence of diachronic changes in the correlation between the form and content of grammatical categories. The oldest reflexive form is considered to be the form of a verb in colligation of a subject and an object. Its material basis is a construction consisting of a subject, predicate and an object in accusative or dative case. The MR *-ся* as a pronoun was a separate word in Church Slavonic and Old Russian languages displaying a free positioning as for its verb colligation. Eventually a homonymic particle developed from it, not strictly positioned as well. For some time both verb constructions coexisted. Now it is a postpositive auxiliary morpheme, which is genetically connected with the aforementioned particle (Dankov, 1981: 62-65).

The process of the transition of the pronoun into an affix and further into a morpheme could be quite active because of the regularity of V+RP colligation. It was quite typical that a part of the subject was simultaneously its object in some situations, which described regular activities (for example everyday ones: *одеть себя* = *одеться* ‘to get dressed’; *причесать себе волосы* = *причесаться* ‘to brush one’s hair’ and so on), thus, the construction was regularly used becoming a set phrase. The process of generalization took place: the verb absorbed the meaning of reflexivity. A syntactical construction turned into a verb form, showing a semantic-syntactic transformation: an object (a separate actant) entered the semantics of a newly formed verb and in so doing lost its case meaning and blocked the syntax.

It is traditionally assumed that MR *-ся* performs a formal function of the intransitivity of a verb, in other words, it is the general invariant meaning of RVs in Russian of which a vast majority of scholars studying reflexives speak. Such consideration of MR *-ся* leads to the standpoint that the RV cannot take a direct object since the latter is already inherited in its form. It was first mentioned in 19<sup>th</sup> century (Nekrasov, 1865:74) and supported later (F. I Buslaev, V. N. Dankov, N. A. Yanko-Trinititskaya and others). This point of view is disclosed from the paper according to the aim of the article. Lately there can be seen a tendency to deny the existence of a single invariant function of MR *-ся* (Norman B. Yu.). The very existence of TRV (for example *бояться врага* ‘to be afraid of an enemy’; *слушаться учителя* ‘to listen to the teacher’) gives the grounds to assume that the functional potential of semantic-syntactic category of reflexives is not homogeneous. We are trying not only to state, but also to explain the reasons of this functionally non-homogeneous nature. It seems that the functional heterogeneity of RV is directly connected with the case heterogeneity of the reflexive element in the constructions which are considered to have been the source constructions for the modern RVs development.

**3.2. The process of DTRV formation.** The process of RVs formation in Russian is fully agreed. There is a unanimous standpoint as for the construction that became a source construction for their development, which is a NV+RP. It has often been pointed out that in most cases this reflexive element was a pronoun in accusative case, though sometimes it could be used in other cases, dative including: “An indicative verb with the pronoun *-ся* loses the meaning of reflexive case when it does not show the direct transition of the action onto this pronoun...on such grounds *-си* [a MR in dative case] is used instead of *-ся* in Church Slavonic manuscripts...as in proverb *как постлался так и выспался*” [‘your sleep depends on how you made the bed’], that is, how you made the bed *for yourself*’(Buslayev, 1959: 348).

So, it is well known what caused this fact but its consequences stayed beyond the linguists focus. The case of the reflexive element of the source structure appears to be crucial for the establishment of the reasons leading to the DTRVs formation in Russian. The author’s standpoint is the following. If the reflexive pronoun was used in dative case to denote the subject-oriented reference of the action, it was the recipient of the action; if there is a recipient of the action within a NV colligation it is but logical that there must also be an object intended for this recipient with a relevant necessity to be expressed in the sentence. If the meaning of the verb presupposes the only possible object, its verbalization is by all means optional: *как постлался так и выспался* ‘your sleep depends on how you made the bed’, – it is only the bed that one can talk about in this context that is why in this Russian proverb the word “bed” is not explicated. But if the meaning of the verb does not include (even potentially) the meaning of an object directed by it, the morphological expression of the latter is compulsory, for example “*Он раздобыл себе лошадей*” ‘He got for himself horses’. One can get anything: money, food, clothes etc., that is why the explication of the object *лошадей* ‘horses’ is compulsory. These are the

constructions we are interested in as the subject of our research is dative **transitive** reflexive verbs and transitivity demands the presence of an object affected by the action expressed by a verb. In such constructions, the object specifies the meaning of the verb and directly depends on the performing of the action expressed by it: “*Он раздобыл (for whom?) себе (what?) лошадей*”, moreover the connection between the verb and the object is much stronger than between the verb and the recipient. So, the object (the presence of which was a necessary condition for the constructions NV+RP<sub>dative</sub>, which also were the source structures for the development of modern RVs) performed the function of a direct object and the reflexive element performed the function of an indirect object correspondingly.

**3.3. DTRVs in the Russian language.** Since the reflexive pronoun which developed into modern clitic *-ся* was used in different cases (accusative and dative), its predicative connections were different too. In the constructions where the RP was used in accusative case, it was a direct object but in the constructions where it was used in dative case it was an indirect object. This viewpoint is supported in a traditional grammar. S. Katsnelson quotes V. De Groot concerning the positional functions of cases “In a phrase containing nouns in different cases, the governed accusative case is the first one in respect to a verb, the governed dative case is the second and the governed ablative case is the third. Thus, three positions are singled out for objective functions, the first of which is taken by the object in accusative case, the second – in dative case, the third – in ablative case” (Katsnelson, 1972: 49).

To explain the direct object after a RV we should consider the syntactical functions of the source construction elements. For this reason, numbers 1 and 2 are assigned to the positions of objective functions in the sentence *Он задает себе вопрос* ‘He asks himself a question’. Since accusative case is the first most relevant to the verb and dative case is the second relevant one, N<sub>1</sub> (*вопрос* ‘a

question’) is a direct object while  $N_2$  (*себе* ‘himself’) is an indirect one. The following scheme can be drawn up:  $SVN_2N_1$ , where S is a subject, V is a predicate,  $N_2$  is a dative object,  $N_1$  is an accusative object. Eventually, in a derived construction, after the reflexive pronoun merged with the non-reflexive verb, *задает себе* ‘asks himself’ becomes a verb form *задается*; consequently, the position of one of the objects (an indirect one) eliminates, so the sentence *Он задается вопросом* can schematically be presented as follows:  $SVN_1$ . –*Ся* in this case does not perform the role of accusative case but of dative: the reflexive clitic did not and does not occupy the position of a direct object.

“–*Ся* seems to be the sign of the fact that the position of a direct object is occupied, thus, the noun which is going to be an object, must take the position of an indirect one” (Yanko-Trinitetskaya, 1962: 202). On the one hand, this statement rightfully points out that a RV cannot take a direct object (RVs that derived from the construction  $NV+RP_{accusative}$ ), but on the other hand it justifies our assumption that some RVs (genetically connected to the construction  $NV+RP_{dative}$ ) can be transitive. If, in the first case, there stays a potentially vacant position only of an indirect object, in the second case the syntactic position of a direct object did not undergo any changes: it stays occupied just like it was before, in the source structure, since it is an indirect object that merged with a NV. Thus, the author qualifies dative RVs such as *обзавестись семьей* ‘to find oneself a family’, *задаваться вопросом* ‘to ask oneself a question’ as transitive ones. It is a dative origin of a RP that makes these verbs transitive for dativity (indirect object) is a category of a lower rank in comparison to thingness (direct object).

If to stick to the traditional standpoint that the invariant meaning of all the reflexives in Russian is their being intransitive, it is but natural that they should be characterized not only by a syntactic but also by a semantic fullness in that case; that is, if used without a direct object, no semantic insufficiency should

arise. It is not true for DRV. If one said «они запаслись» or «я раздобылся» the first thing that would strike our ear is semantic imperfection, unintelligibility caused by the absence of one actant. The semantics of such verbs demands that the position of a direct object should be occupied. Thus, “traditionally intransitive” verb (“запаслись”, “раздобылся”) displays the quality of an opposing class of verbs. This contradiction demands that the invariant meaning of intransitivity of Russian RVs has to be reconsidered as the DRVs are semantically incomplete without a direct object.

The scope of DTRVs in Russian includes the following verbs: *задаваться* (*вопросом, целью*) ‘to ask oneself a question, to define for oneself an objective’, *раздобыться* (*лошадьми, деньгами*) ‘to get for oneself (horses, money)’, *запаслись* (*бельем, товаром*) ‘to stock up for oneself (linen, goods)’, *понабраться* (*премудрости*) ‘to gain for oneself (wisdom)’, etc.

There is no consensus in Russian linguistics as for the qualification of this group of RVs. N. Yanko-Trinitetskaya qualifies them as de-subject RVs of a switched object: “Reflexive verbs of this type partially retain a part of the generative verb meaning, the one that is connected with the direct transitivity of the latter since the direct object of the generative transitive verb transforms into the indirect one in colligation with a reflexive verb, though the general meaning of the derivatives can noticeably divert from the meaning of generative transitive verbs.” The scholar exemplifies the phenomenon with the verb „запаслись” ‘to stock up for oneself’: “запаслись ‘to stock up’ (can be both for oneself and for somebody else) while *запаслись* can only be for oneself (Yanko-Trinitetskaya, 1962: 202). I. Muchnyk organizes this class of verbs into a separate group, which is characterized by the shift of connection between the subject and the object. Analyzing the example *Они запаслись прутьями* ‘They stocked up for themselves some rods’ the linguists cannot achieve the consensus as for the status of the object: “the object *прутьями* ‘rods’ definitely has the



meaning of thingness, though the object is not direct here but an indirect one.” (Yanko-Trinititskaya, 1962: 203).

As a result of the derivation NV→RV, the form of the object changes from accusative to ablative or genitive. But the difference in a case form does not play here such a great role as in passive, for example, where nominative case is opposed to accusative and ablative, since it changes the focus of the sentence. In the constructions with DTRVs the object is viewed from the same perspective as with NVs. The author fully agrees with the theory, according to which indirect objective cases can perform the function of a direct object: “The position of the only object in colligation with a verb is the position of a direct object. If one of the indirect cases takes this position, we have the right to say that notwithstanding its main positional function, it performs the function of a direct object.” (Katsnelson, 1972: 49).

There is no doubt that the question of a direct object is the question of predicate connections and subject-object relationships. The analysis of some examples can be illustrative: “я раздобылся деньгами” ‘I got for myself money’ or “они запаслись прутьями” ‘they stocked up for themselves rods’, for instance. Since the direct object is immediately connected with the predicate, it is involved in the action, expressed by the verb. Both „деньгами” ‘money’ and „путьями” ‘rods’ are governed by the verb, being the results of the actions expressed by it. Moreover, the state of the verb does not change the quality of predicate relations, the object is as “close” to the predicate as in the constructions with NVs („они запасли прутья бабушке” ‘they stocked up rods for the granny’, „я раздобыл сестре деньги” ‘I got money for my sister’), what changes is the subject-object relationships because of the decrease of the valency of the verb, which is understood as the amount of positions corresponding to the subject-object relationships involved in this or that meaning of the verb. We are talking about a potential amount of positions as

some of them can exist on semantic level which is known not to be always expressed syntactically. Thus, trivalent verb becomes bivalent as a result of NV→RV derivation, though this kind of recession does not make the position of the direct object with a NV more distant in DTRV construction. Either it is a NV construction or a RV one, the obtaining of the object depends on the performance of the action expressed by the verb; this action affects the object in both constructions identically. Either “*деньги*” in accusative case or „*деньгами*” in ablative case, the object was identically governed by the verb, expressing the result of physical or mental activity aimed at getting money in both cases. Likewise, it would be wrong to say that „*прутьями*” in ablative case is semantically more remote from the verb than „*прутья*” in accusative case: the process of collecting rods, realized by the subject is identical in both cases, notwithstanding the beneficiary of the action. Thus, an analogical focus of an analogical action over an analogical object gives us the grounds to classify the latter as a direct one being used either in accusative or ablative or genitive case since the frames of the action are preserved, the only parameter that changes is the number of participants.

It goes without saying that every case form is a marker of syntactic dependence from the verb, though in case of NVs and DTRVs the dependence is identical because of the absence of other object and, thus, absence of the hierarchy, and because of elimination of namely indirect object. The transitivity of DTRVs does not demand a particular case, it demands a generalized structural-semantic meaning of thingness of the object, which compensates the semantic insufficiency of the transitive verb. Moreover, the fact that DTRs govern the object in some particular case cannot be sufficient enough to state the intransitivity of these constructions at least for the reason that in the languages, containing DTRVs, the case systems may not coincide (say German and Russian) or it can be not developed at all (Spanish, for instance).

**3.4. Conclusion.** There are DTRVs in the Russian language which historically originated from the construction NV+RP<sub>dative</sub>. The dative reflexive pronoun, being an independent syntactical unit performing the function of an indirect object, merged with the non-reflexive verb, becoming its morpheme and leaving vacant this very position. The position of the direct object was and stayed occupied. The transitivity of these reflexives is proved by the following: 1) unchanged syntactic position of a direct object; 2) absence of other objects; 3) semantic insufficiency of the verb without an object.

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