

Nominative object parameter in Russian dialects

In the literature on the typology described the phenomenon of differential object marking. In some languages the direct object may be marked in several ways [Aissen 2003, Bossong 1985]. The assignment of case of the direct object can be determined by strict grammatical rules or by a combination of grammatical and discourse factors. Our presentation is dedicated to a famous phenomenon in Russian linguistics known at least from the 19th century, namely, the nominative case of the noun in the direct object position. We analyze it as differential object marking.

- (1) Пойти корова (Nom) поглядеть.
- (2) Некогда мне сегодня баня(Nom) топить.

In Old Russian these constructions are found in Novgorod birch bark letters dating from the 12th century and other texts that originate in Northern and North-Western dialectal areas, see [Ronko 2016]). In the literature about "nominative objects" there is a perception that these constructions survive only in Northern Russian dialects. However, Kotkov in his article [Kotkov 1959] provided examples from a number of Southern Russian dialect texts of the 17 and 18 century, which contain these structures. Also this phenomenon is up to our day observed in some modern Southern Russian dialects, although rarely.

The aim of the paper is to analyze the case from the viewpoint of differential object marking. In the analysis of DOM I consider all standard features of DOM, but the main accent in our paper will be made on information structure issues associated with this phenomenon. I follow the genesis of these structures from the 12th century and show their expansion from the use of those constructions in infinitive/infinite clauses to finite verbal clauses and structures with the modal operator надо 'must' without a verb.

- (3) Ведь надо-то вода (Nom).
- (4) корова (Nom) раньше держали.

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