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On the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of some subject–like NPs in Croatian

This paper analyzes the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties of datives in sentences like *Iskliznuo mi je tanjur iz ruke* (lit. 'Slipped to me is plate from hand') and *Vruće mi je* (lit. 'To me is hot'). The first sentence contains two possible candidates for the subject function: the dative *mi*, which has some semantic and pragmatic subject properties, and the nominative NP *tanjur*, which controls agreement. The second sentence contains only the dative pronoun, which has the semantic and pragmatic but no syntactic subject properties. At first blush it seems that the first sentence has two subjects none of which, to paraphrase Keenan (1976), has a clear preponderance of subject–like properties. In this paper we shall argue that such non–canonical subject–like NPs are best described as quasi subjects, i. e., as NPs which have some morphosyntactic or semantic/pragmatic properties of subjects, but not sufficient properties to qualify as the subject of the sentence.

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1. Introduction

It has become common practice to begin most discussions of functional syntax with a comparison of a formalist and a functionalist approach to language. When formalism is mentioned, the first name that comes to mind is Chomsky. Functionalism, on the other hand, does not have one leading school of thought; several functional theories, or individuals, can be easily mentioned: the Prague School, Functional Grammar (Dik, 1978, 1989), Role and Reference Grammar (Foley and Van Valin, 1984, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, Van Valin, 2005), Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday, 1985), Givón (1984, 1990, 2001). What most functional approaches to subjecthood have in common, despite the differences in details, is the emphasis on the functional rather than the formal properties of grammatical relations. Chomsky has often defined language as a set of structural descriptions of sentences (e. g. Chomsky, 1977) and

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stressed that "The study of generative grammar in the modern sense [...] was marked by a significant shift in focus in the study of language. To put it briefly, the focus of attention was shifted from "language" to "grammar"" (Chomsky, 1981: 4). Functionalists, on the other hand, put emphasis on language as a means of social interaction, i. e. on its communicative functions. This difference in approach to the object of linguistic inquiry is reflected, among other things, in the priority given to syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Within the Chomskyan framework syntax is an autonomous component largely independent of semantics and pragmatics. In most functional frameworks (at least in those mentioned in this paper) priority is given to pragmatics and semantics, whereas syntax, and grammatical relations in particular, are relegated to a peripheral status or their relevance completely denied: Role and Reference Grammar (further in the text RRG) has a very different view of grammatical relations from the other theories. Because of the phenomena discussed in section 2.3 (Philippine systems, syntactic ergativity), the theory does not attribute cross–linguistic validity to the traditional grammatical relations of subject, direct object and indirect object, and therefore does not employ them as theoretical analytical constructs. Rather, it adopts a construction–specific conception of grammatical relations and postulates only a single one, which is called the 'privileged syntactic argument' (Van Valin, 2001: 212).

Another common feature to many functional approaches to language is the implicit or explicit adoption of the prototype theory as developed by Rosch (1977) and Rosch and Mervis (1975; see also Taylor, 1995). This point of view has been most explicitly expressed by Givón: "Membership in a natural category, unlike that in a logical category, is not determined by a single either/or criterion, but rather by a potentially large basket of features. And some of those features may be "more criterial", so that more members will display them. The most prototypical member of a category is the one displaying the largest number of criterial features. But other members may display fewer features and still be members." (Givón, 2001: 32). The fourth common point relevant for the purposes of this paper is prior assignment of semantic roles (also called semantic functions, theta–roles, thematic roles, case roles) to the arguments of a predicate; grammatical relations subject, object or indirect object are assigned only subsequently and play a rather marginal role. This dependence of grammatical relations on the prior assignment of the semantic roles is known in the various functional frameworks as the Semantic Function Hierarchy (Dik, 1978, 1989), Topic Accession Hierarchy (Givón, 1984), Actor – Undergoer Hierarchy (Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997).
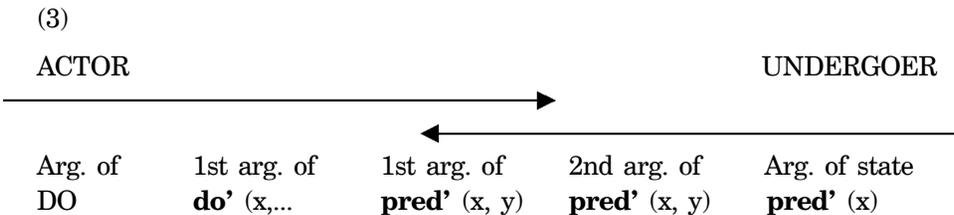
Topic Accession Hierarchy (Givón, 1984)

(1)   Agent > Dative / Benefactive > Patient > Locative > Instrument / Associative > Manner adverbs

Givón (1984) calls the subject *primary clausal topic* and the object *secondary clausal topic*. This partly explains why Dative/Benefactive is positioned so high in the hierarchy: they are generally more topical than Patients. Another scale

that will be relevant for our discussion of some subject–like NPs in Croatian is the one suggested by Bayer (2004)[1]:

(2) Animacy   animate < inanimate
    Humanness   human < non–human
    Theta hierarchy   agent < experiencer < theme <...
    Definiteness   definite < indefinite
    Phonological weight clitic < non–clitics
    Information packaging old information < new information

Van Valin and LaPolla (1997) propose a similar unidirectional scale, which they call *Actor – Undergoer Hierarchy,* and which shows which arguments are more likely to be assigned the macroroles of actor or undergoer or the grammatical relations subject and direct object:

(3)

ACTOR   UNDERGOER

| Arg. of | 1st arg. of | 1st arg. of | 2nd arg. of | Arg. of state |
| DO | **do'** (x,... | **pred'** (x, y) | **pred'** (x, y) | **pred'** (x) |

This can be also stated as (4):

(4) *Privileged syntactic argument selection hierarchy*
    arg. of DO > 1st arg. of **do'** > 1st arg. of **pred'** (x, y) > 2nd arg. of **pred'** (x, y) > arg. of **pred'** (x)

All these hierarchies suggest that the assignment of grammatical relations 'subject' and 'object' becomes more difficult as we move from left to right, until a cut–off point is reached after which the assignment of a particular grammatical relation to a semantic function becomes impossible. To put it briefly, there are no problems in the clear cases, that is, when there is no overlap of two, in our mind deeply rooted properties of subject and object. On the one hand, subject is tacitly assumed to be in the nominative case, which determines agreement and is the entity in the source domain of the action chain[2],

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1   It should be pointed out that Bayer is a representative of formal approaches what suggests that there are some issues and assumptions on which functional and formal frameworks agree.

2   The notions of action chain, source and target domain are discussed in detail in Langacker (1991).
    As the issue of dative complements with semantic and pragmatic features is very complex, and primarily the matter of semantics, in this paper we will apply the recent developments of both functional syntax (primarily RRG), and Cognitive Grammar. This methodological approach should not be taken as a blend of terminologies from two different theories, but this methodological eclecticism is rather an attempt to shed more light on the problem discussed in this paper, which, in our opinion, can hardly be fully accounted for within a methodological framework of a single theory.

and, on the other hand, direct object in an oblique case and the entity in the target domain of the action chain, i. e., the entity to which the energy is transferred.

This paper is structured as follows: part 2 gives some coding and behavioural properties of prototypical subjects in Croatian and shows that the NPs under discussion have none of them. In part 3 we discuss some semantic and pragmatic properties of some subject–like NPs with the aim to show that subject properties are split. Finally, we propose a tentative analysis.

2. Prototypical subjects in Croatian

A prototypical subject in Croatian is in the nominative case and determines agreement in person, gender (in the past tense) and tense. All these features are coded by the verb and the nominative NP need not be expressed, as in (5):[3]

(5) Došao   je.
    come–3. m. sg. past aux
    'He came.'

A prototypical subject in Croatian has the following behavioural and control properties:

a.   The subject is the addressee in imperatives provided it is the agent or someone pragmatically conceived of as acting as an agent:
     Otvori   prozor!
     open–2. sg. imper. window–acc. m.
     'Open the window'.

The sentence *Budi mrtav (*'Be dead') does not make much sense unless it is understood as an instruction to an actor how to behave for the next few minutes. It is almost impossible to invent a sentence in which a non–subject would be the addressee, although some dative and accusative NPs are claimed to be 'logical subjects'.

b.   The so–called logical subjects cannot generally antecede the possessive–reflexive pronoun
     svoj:
     Petar   je   jeo   svoj   sendvič
     Peter–nom   aux   eat–3.m.past his own   sandwich–acc
     'Peter ate his own sandwich.'
     *Petru   se   jeo   svoj   sendvič
     Peter. dat   refl eat–3.m.past his own   sandwich–nom

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3   It should be noted that neither nominative case marking nor agreeement are defining properties of subject in all languages: "When investigating the syntactic status of subject–like obliques in the Obl – V – (XP) construction in Icelandic, the property of being subject as case marked as nominative has been excluded [...]. Furthermore, properties that can be shown to correlate with nominative, such as verb agreement [...] have not been regarded as subject properties either since they, a priori, exclude everything but nominative." (Barðdal, 2006: 53).

c. The omission of the so–called Equi–subjects (PRO–drop) is even wor-se[4]:

Petar i	je	došao	kući	i	legao (je) i	spavati.
Peter	aux	come–3.m.past	home–dat	and	lie–3.m.aux	sleep–inf.

Peter came home and went to bed.

*Petar i	je	došao	kući	i	spavalo j	PRO (mu)i	se.
Peter	aux	come–3.m.past	home–dat	and	sleep–3.sg	(he–dat)	refl

In the remaining part of the paper we shall discuss the syntactic value of dative complements which have semantic and pragmatic subject properties but lack morphosyntactic properties, i. e., they are not coded as prototypical subjects by the nominative case and do not control agreement.

3. Some subject–like NPs in Croatian

This section discusses the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties of the sentences exemplified by (6), (7) and (8):

(6)
Iskliznuo	*mi*	je	tanjur	iz	ruke.
out–slip–past.3.m	I–dat	aux	plate–nom.sg.m	from	hand–gen.sg.f

'A plate slipped out of my hand.'

(6')
Ispala	*mi*	je	žlica	na	pod.
out–fall–past.3.f	I–dat	aux	spoon–nom.sg.f	on	floor

'I accidentally dropped a spoon on the floor'

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5 Although ellipsis of a coreferential subject is one of the most reliable subjecthood tests in conjoined sentences, it does not give the same results even in closely related languages like German and Icelandic. In Icelandic, the coreferential NP can be ellided irrespective of its case marking identity with the subject of the matrix clause:

(i)
Við	vorum	svangir	og	(okkur)	vantaði	peninga.
we. Nom	were	hungry	and	us.Dat.	lacked	money–Acc.

'We were hungry and didn't have any money.'

In German, such coreferential deletion is not allowed irrespective of whether the nominative subject preceeds or follows the oblique subject–like NP (see Bayer, 2004 for more details):

(ii)
Ich	war	hungrig	und	*(mich)	hat	gefroren.
I.Nom	was	hungry	and	me.Acc	has	frozen

'I was hungry and was cold.'

(iii)
*Mich	hat	gefroren	und	ich	war	hungrig.
me.Acc	has	frozen	and	I. Nom	was	hungry

'I was cold and was hungry.'

In Croatian, the omission of the personal pronoun *mu* in the dative, gives the resultant sentence *Petar je došao kući i spavalo se,* which turns the second coordinated clause into another type of impersonal clause that in Croatian generally topicalizes the action itself, but not the actor, and the neuter (–*o*) of the predicate suggests more unidentified actors, thus disabling the coreference with the subject of the first clause (*Petar*). The first sentence *Petar je došao kući i legao spavati* is attested due to the personal verb form in the second clause (*legao*), which is morphosyntactically coreferrential with the subject of the first clause *Petar je došao*.

(7) Hladno   *mi*   je.
    cold–3.sg   I–dat   aux
    'I am cold.'

(7') Vruće   *mi*   je.
    hot–3.sg   I–dat   aux
    'I am hot.'

(8) Spava   *mi*   se
    sleep–3.sg present   I–dat   refl.
    'I feel like sleeping.'

(8') Kiše   *mi*   se
    sneeze–3.sg present   I–dat   refl.
    'I feel like sneezing.'

Most Croatian grammars (e. g. Katičić, 1991, Barić et al., 1995, Raguž, 1997, Silić and Pranjković, 2005) do not go into detail about the syntactic function of the dative in the sentences above or sometimes offer rather confusing analyses. For example, Barić *et al*. (1995: 427) first say that a sentence like (7) is subjectless, and then go on and say that it has a logical subject in the dative, which is not only terminologically confusing but also rather senseless. This example and similar examples show that in some cases the definition of some arguments using the traditional notions of subject and object should be given up because they are confusing and misleading. Similarly, it would not make much sense to talk about a dative–marked external argument in generative grammar. In other words, the problems arise when syntactic constituents which are not instantiations of prototypes have to be dealt with. These constituents have many semantic and pragmatic properties of prototypical subjects in Croatian, but lack the assignment of the nominative case as the case which prototypically encodes subjects. If we look at the above sentences (6–8) as non–prototypical instantiations of subjects we can easily talk about non–nominative subjects ("logical subjects" in some frameworks), but it would not make much sense to refer to them as non–nominative privileged syntactic arguments.[5]

Let us first pay attention to dative complements following verbs like *iskliznuti* ('slip') and *ispasti* ('fall'):

(9) Iskliznuo   mi   je   tanjur   iz   ruke.
    out–slip–past.3.sg.m   me–dat   aux   plate–nom.sg.m from hand–gen.sg.f
    'The plate slipped out of my hand'

(10) Ispala   mi   je   žlica   na pod.
    out–fall–past.3.sg.f   me–dat   aux   spoon–nom.sg.f on floor–acc.3.sg.m
    'The spoon fell on the floor'. (I accidentally dropped the spoon on the floor.')

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5   Although there are privileged syntactic arguments in different languages that don't show coding, but the necessary behaviour properties (see Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997), here the notion refers to prototypical instances that show coding – namely the nominative case as the case which prototypically encodes subjects.

The above constructions and similar constructions are problematic for two reasons. On the one hand, what seems to be some sort of the doer of the action, although involuntary, is coded as the dative and it is difficult to assign to it a specific semantic role (it seems to fall within the wider field of agent role); on the other hand, we have a sentence like *Ispale su **mi** stvari na pod* ('I accidentally dropped some things on the floor.'), which also contains a nominative NP which determines agreement. To put it briefly, subject properties are split between two NPs, one with the semantic/pragmatic subject properties and the other with the coding properties. This is a rather complex case and the question arises which syntactic function to assign to the dative and which to the nominative, because neither of them, to paraphrase Keenan (1976), shows a clear preponderance of subject–like properties. The above dative can neither be described as the dative of possession, because this dative has nothing in common with attribution. Compare

(11) Ispale su mi stvari. – Ispale su mi moje stvari. – Ispale su mi tvoje stvari.
out–fall–past aux me–dat thing–nom.pl – out–fall–past aux me–dat my things–nom – out–fallpast aux me–dat your thing–nom.pl
'I accidentally dropped some things.'–' I accidentally dropped some of my things.' – I accidentally dropped some of your things.'

vs.

(12) Ispala mi je kosa. –??? Ispala mi je moja kosa. – *Ispala mi je tvoja kosa.
Out– fall–past me–dat aux hair–nom – ???Out– fall–past me–dat aux my hair–nom – *Out–fallpast me–dat aux your hair. nom

To analyze the datives in (9)–(11) as indirect objects is even less acceptable, because the object is the entitity to which energy is transferred in the action chain, not the entity from which energy emanates (compare *Dao **mi** je novce* 'He gave me the money', where the dative *mi* ('me') is indirect object in the dative). For this reason, in terms of their semantics, the above datives are much closer to the grammatical relation subject than to object. On the other hand, if it is considered some kind of subject, the question arises how a single sentence could contain two subjects at different ends of the action chain, one in the source domain (*mi* 'me') and the other in the target domain (*stvari* 'things'). Furthermore, the NP *stvari* ('things') has the coding properties of morphosyntactic subjects because it is in the nominative case and determines agreement, but has none of the semantic subject properties because it is assigned the semantic role theme or patient, i. e., the semantic role immanent to the grammatical relation direct object (note that this is not a passive sentence).

The argumentation in Buljan and Kučanda (2004) that such constructions contain two NPs with subject properties seems quite reasonable. The first NP (*mi* 'me') is a nonprototypical subject from the point of view of its coding / morphosyntactic properties (it is case–marked by the dative), but on the other hand it has the semantic and pragmatic properties of the subject: at the semantic level it is assigned the macrorole actor and at the pragmatic level it

functions as topic. The nominative NP (*stvari* 'things') has the prototypical subject coding/morphosyntactic properties (it controls agreement), but at the semantic level it is assigned the macrorole undergoer and does not function pragmatically as topic.[6] Buljan and Kučanda (2004) note well that such sentence types contain two syntactic constituents both of which have some subject properties, but do not tackle the question why it is possible for the same active sentence to have at the different ends of the action chain two putative subjects: one with the coding properties and the other one with the semantic / pragmatic properties, and this seems to be the crucial question.

There seem to be two possible solutions of this issue. Firstly, we could argue that sentences like (9)–(11) contain two quasi–subjects, that is, two NPs, both of which have some subject properties, but not a sufficient number to qualify as the subject of the sentence. The other approach would be a cognitive analysis, which leads to the conclusion that the sentence *Ispale su mi stvari na pod* ('I (accidentally) dropped some things on the floor') in fact has two subjects, because it could be analyzed as a kind of pragmatically motivated and cognitively more economical reduced[7] complex sentence of the following type:

(13) Svojom nepažnjom   prouzročio sam   da   stvari   padnu na pod.
     my   carelessness cause–past be–1.sg. that things–nom fall   on floor
     'Through my carelessness I brought it about that things fell on the floor.'

The simple sentence *Ispale su mi stvari na pod* would retain the subject of the object clause *stvari* ('things') with all its coding properties, because verbs like *ispasti* and *iskliznuti* cannot have an agent–like NP in the nominative as its subject, as is the case with *ispustiti* ('drop') (deliberately). This would mean that cognitively more economical reduced clause contains the main clause subject as a dative NP, which in the main clause had its prototypical case – the nominative *ja* ('I').[8] Given this analysis, the simple sentence *Ispale su mi stvari na pod* would in fact be a reduced complex sentence which would make easier the explanation of an anomalous situation with two subject–like NPs at different sides of the action chain: the NP *stvari* ('things') has been assigned the macrorole undergoer from the dependent clause, and the dative NP *mi* ('me') has been assigned the macrorole actor as the causer of the action chain. Thus, the subject of the main clause (the implicit *ja* 'I') would be more prototypical in terms of its semantics, since it is an animate entity causing a chain of events, and at the pragmatic level it functions as topic. According to the same criteria of larger or smaller agentivity of the subject, the subject of the dependent clause *stvari* ('things') would be more peripheral. These meaning relations

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6   See the papers in Bhaskararao and Subbarao (2004) for arguments that nominative case marking and control of agreement are not essential coding properties of subjects cross–linguistically.

7   The notion of *reduction* has nothing to do with transformations in generative sense.

8   To be more precise, Croatian is a so–called pro–drop language and subject properties such as person, number and gender are often coded on the verb.

are transferred from the paraphrased complex sentence into the simple sentence, but their distribution is different because of the different syntactic properties of verbs like *ispasti* 'fall' and *iskliznuti* 'fall out' which, as it was already said, can not have an agent–like NP in the nominative as its subject.

That the simple sentence is a semantic paraphrase of the complex sentence could be shown using the following test, which shows that a similar example cannot be analyzed in the same way. Namely, if we look at an approximately synonymous sentence with the verb *ispustiti* ('drop') which governs a prototypical subject and object as, for example, *Ispustio sam stvari na pod (kako bih pomogao djetetu u nevolji)* ('I dropped the things on the floor to help the child in danger'), and if we paraphrase the sentence expanding it with a causal segment *??Namjerno sam prouzročio da stvari padnu na pod (kako bih pomogao djetetu u nevolji)* ('??I deliberately brought it about that things fell to the floor (to help the child in danger'), there is a sense of incongruity there. Namely, the semantic field of causation is not so intimately linked to the deliberate causation of things falling to the ground, as it is in the case where such falling is brought about unintentionally (as a possible reading of ex. 13). In other words, although the semantic field of causation does exist here (ex. 13) as well, in the case of a deliberate dropping of things (as with *sam prouzročio*) it is only secondarily linked to the action designated by the verb. We may say that causation has been detopicalized and thus made redundant in the paraphrase. So, this anomalous paraphrase shows that semantic field of causation is not necessarily related to a deliberate causing of the things to fall on the floor since it is understood and neutralized by the semantic field of intention. Or, to put it differently, intention is explicitly expressed in both the main and second subordinate clause of the semantic paraphrase *??Namjerno sam prouzročio da stvari padnu na pod (kako bih pomogao djetetu u nevolji)* ('??I deliberately brought it about that things fell to the floor (to help the child in danger').

This further implies that there is no need to code the subject properties on two elements, and this has repercussions on the structural description of the sentence, i. e. on the verb agreement and government properties of the verb *ispustiti*. Therefore, an appropriate paraphrase of the sentence *Ispustio sam stvari na pod (kako bih pomogao djetetu u nevolji)* ('I've dropped the things on the floor (to help the child in danger)' could perhaps be *Bacio sam stvari na pod (kako bih pomogao djetetu u nevolji)* ('I threw my things on the floor (to help the child in danger.)', where intention has been put into focus (and is coded as a subordinate clause).

By introducing the element of causation in the paraphrase, we may also explain why the verbs *iskliznuti* ('slip out') and *ispasti* ('fall out') take a non–prototypical participant as action initiator, namely, one that has some features of an effector (+ non–volitional) and some of an agent (+ animate, + human). Moreover, its non–prototypical morphosyntactic coding (dative) is triggered by the fact that the direct manipulation scenario is not initiated by a prototypical agent.

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Consider next the following sentences:

(14) Jedu   mi se   trešnje.
   eat–3.pl.present me–dat refl cherries–nom.f.pl
   'I feel like eating cherries.'

(15) Spava   mi   se.
   sleep–3.sg.present me–dat refl
   'I feel like sleeping.'

(16) Vruće mi   je.
   hot me–dat be–sg.present
   'I'm hot.'

As was the case in the previous examples containing verbs like *iskliznuti* ('slip out') and *ispasti* ('fall'), these examples also open the question of the syntactic status of the dative NP. In our analysis of sentences like *Ispala mi je žlica na pod* we attempted to show that the datively–marked pronoun *mi* ('me') could be analyzed as a complement with semantic subject properties, or alternatively, the entity in the source domain of the action chain which belongs to the broader semantic field of agent (broader because it lacks features like volition and intention). On the one hand, the NP *žlica* could in RRG be considered the privileged syntactic argument because of its coding properties, but on the other hand it has the semantic properties of an object, since it is the entity in the target domain of the energy chain, that is, some kind of 'logical object.'

Similarly, the dative in examples like *Jedu **mi** se trešnje* ('I feel like eating cherries') could be assigned the experiencer semantic role[9]. Examples like *Spava **mi** se* ('I feel like sleeping') do not contain a nominative NP, which could be described as the privileged syntactic argument in RRG; they only have a dative complement with semantic and pragmatic subject properties. Sentences like *Vruće **mi** je* ('I am hot'), *Hladno **mi** je* ('I am cold') etc. are not identical with sentences like *Spava **mi** se* ('I feel like sleeping'), although both sentence types contain a dative complement with experiencer semantic role: a construction like *Spava **mi** se* is semantically different, since the dative pronoun is actually in the target domain of the action chain, that is, the feeling felt by the experiencer is caused by some external factor (effector). In sentences like *Spava **mi** se* ('I'm sleepy'), *Jede **mi** se voće / povrće* ('I feel like eating fruit / vegetables') the physiological need is not caused by some external phenomenon; it emanates from the experiencer which is therefore in the source domain of the action chain and has semantic subject properties. Because of the same fact, the datives in examples like *Vruće **mi** je* ('I am hot.') or *Hladno **mi** je* ('I am cold.') could be argued to be some kind of traditional indirect object, because the dative has both formal and semantic properties of an object. This would, of course, be a non–prototypical indirect object.

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9 At a verb–specific level it would be assigned the semantic role feeler (see Van Valin and Wilkins, 1996 for more details on verb–specific roles). Such sentences are essentially modal in character.

To sum up, the above sentences show that the dative NP does not have a clear syntactic function, that is, it is not clear which grammatical relation to assign to it. It has the coding properties of an indirect object, but it has the semantic and pragmatic properties of prototypical subjects. Since most definitions of subject include also the semantic and pragmatic elements, the notion 'subject' is often confusing and its morphosyntactic properties should be terminologically distinguished from its semantic and pragmatic properties.

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Sintaktički, semantički i pragmatički aspekti nekih kvazisubjektnih imenskih skupina u hrvatskom jeziku

Predmet je ovoga rada sintaktička vrijednost dativnih dopuna koje imaju semantička i pragmatička svojstva subjekta, ali nemaju formalna, odnosno nema sročnosti s predikatom preko prototipnoga padeža subjekta – nominativa. Naime, hrvatske gramatike vrlo vješto izbjegavaju ući dublje u raspravu kada su u pitanju sintaktičke funkcije dativa u hrvatskom jeziku tipa *Hladno **mi** je*, *Vruće **mi** je...* s jedne strane; *Spava **mi** se, Kiše **mi** se...* s druge... i recimo *Iskliznuo **mi** je tanjur iz ruke, Ispala **mi** je žlica na pod* s treće strane, a što je na neki način i razumljivo jer je rješenje u nekim slučajevima nemoguće pronaći ako se ne želi odstupiti od analize preko tradicijskih pojmova subjekta i objekta. Naime, tradicijski pojmovi subjekta i objekta u većini su suvremenih lingvističkih teorija, pa tako i u hrvatskim gramatikama (npr. Katičić, 1991, Barić et al., 1995, Silić, Pranjković, 2005) općeprihvaćeni termini koji se upotrebljavaju pri analizi sintaktičkoga pola rečenice, no pri tome uvijek treba imati na umu da su oni usto i puno širi filozofsko–logički pojmovi koji onda po samoj naravi stvari u svoju definiciju odnosno, bolje rečeno, u svoj iskonski koncept uključuju i određene značenjske komponente. Stoga se, primjerice, vrlo često, posebno u znanstvenim raspravama, može vidjeti da se govori o semantičkim i pragmatičkim svojstvima subjekta što se u prototipnim slučajevima odnosi na agens i *topic*, a u pojedinim se funkcionalnosintaktičkim teorijama oni i promatraju kroz prizmu semantičkih funkcija (Dik, 1978, 1989) ili se čak i definiraju kao gramatikalizirane pragmatičke padežne uloge (Givón, 1984, 1990), pri čemu je subjekt primarni, a objekt sekundarni klauzalni *topic*). U analiziranim rečenicama sintaktička funkcija imenskog izraza u dativu nije posve jasna; s jedne strane, dativ je kodiran kao indirektni objekt, a s druge strane, dativ ima semantička i pragmatička svojstva prototipnog subjekta. U rečenicama s imenskim izrazom u dativu i imenskim izrazom u nominativu, prvi ima semantička i pragmatička svojstva subjekta, a drugi ima svojstva kodiranja (nominativ i kontrola sročnosti). Budući da većina definicija subjekta sadržava mješavinu morfosintaktičkih, semantičkih i pragmatičkih kriterija, bilo bi potrebno te kriterije i terminološki razlikovati.

Key words: subject, quasi subject, syntactic functions of datives, morphosyntax, semantics, pragmatics, Croatian

Ključne riječi: subjekt, kvazisubjekt, sintaktičke funkcije dativa, morfosintaksa, semantika, pragmatika, hrvatski jezik