Deriving desiderative object control verbs: hidden modals and raising

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Overview. The paper proposes a novel analysis for desiderative object control verbs (OCVs) in Russian. Following Jackendoff and Culicover (2003), Landau (2015), a.o., we assume that object control verbs do not form a homogeneous class and suggest a desiderative vs. implicative sub-categorization that corresponds to the selection of a dative vs. an accusative argument. We argue that, while implicative accusative verbs are ‘ordinary’ transitive predicates, establishing control relations between the matrix object and the embedded PRO subject, desiderativity is derived if a verb selects a single constituent, headed by a silent deontic modal element, that includes a non-finite clause and a dative DP. In Russian, this modal belongs to the class of deontic modal predicatives; it is responsible for such properties of desiderative dative constructions as semantic ambiguity and the unexpected ability to pass raising tests at least in some contexts.

Desiderative OCVs properties. (i) For desiderative OCVs (velet ‘order’, razresit ‘allow’, etc.), a dative argument is obligatory. Unlike constructions with accusative OCVs, sentences with desiderative verbs, at least in some contexts, pass the raising diagnostics, for example, idiom chunk (1) and passivization tests (similar properties have been reported for English desideratives by Barrie and Pittman (2010)).

(1) a. Ja zastavil černu košku probežat' meždu nimi.
   I.NOM force,PST black cat.ACC run.INF between them
   ‘I forced a black cat to run between them.’ Intended idiomatic (not available) ‘I forced them to quarrel.’
   b. Ja ne velel černoj košce probegat' meždu nimi.
   I.NOM not order,PST black cat.DAT run.INF between them
   Idiomatic available: ‘I did not order them to quarrel.’

(ii) According to the constituency tests results, the dative DP forms a single constituent with the embedded clause, unlike the accusative object which belongs to the matrix predicate (2).

(2) Čto ja razrešil, tak eto [Pete pojti v kino].
   what I allow,PST so that Peter.DAT go.INF to cinema
   ‘What I allowed is that Peter would go to the cinema.’

(iii) Only accusative OCVs allow split coreference between an embedded subject and matrix elements (3a). Verbs like razojtis’ ‘disperse’, which require a plural or a collective subject, are prohibited with desiderative dative OCVs (3b). This contradicts the attitude vs. non-attitude distinction suggested in the Two-Tiered theory of control (Landau 2015), which predicts that it is attitude desiderative predicates that should allow partial control.

(3) a. Ivan ubedil’ direktora razojtis' v sem'.
   Ivan.NOM persuaded director.ACC disperse.INF at seven
   ‘Ivan persuaded the director that they should disperse at seven.’
   b. *Direktor razrešil Ivanu razojtis' v sem'.
   Director.NOM allowed Ivan.DAT disperse.INF at seven
   Intended ‘The director allowed Ivan to disperse at seven.’

Analysis. ♦ We assume that the dative argument and an infinitive clause form a single constituent. We further argue that the embedded clause is fully saturated and cannot function as a predicate of the dative argument. This is supported by the availability of embedded finite clauses and (partially) the results of raising diagnostics. The clause is embedded into a predicate headed by a lexical modal element. This corresponds to the general intuition that semantically desiderative OCVs imply deontic modality. Our claim is that this modality is added structurally. Support for this comes, first, from the possibility of ambiguous scope interpretation of the sentential negation. In (4) there have to be two separate predicates for a negation to interact with each of them. Importantly, the negation cannot scope just above the infinitival clause, and our analysis can account for this: the hidden modal does not support Neg-Raising (typically for modals of permission (Iatridou and Zeijlstra, 2013)). Second, almost all predicates of information transfer can be ‘transformed’ into desideratives, at least in colloquial Russian (5). We argue that desiderativity is derived exactly when a verb selects a constituent with an embedded modal instead of, for example, a finite-indicative clause.

(4) Petja ne razrešal Maše ostat'sja.
   Peter.NOM not allow,PST Mary.DAT stay.INF
   ‘Peter didn’t say that for Mary it is possible to stay.’, ‘Peter said that for Mary it is not possible to stay.’
(5) a. Petja skazal Maše Ø pomyt’ posudu.
   Peter.NOM say.PST Mary.DAT necessary wash.INF dishes
   ‘Peter said that Mary should wash the dishes.’

b. Petja skazal Maše, čto Vanja pomyl posudu.
   Peter.NOM say.PST Mary.DAT that Vanja.NOM wash.PST dishes
   ‘Peter told Mary that John had washed the dishes.’

♦ The embedded modal element belongs to the existing class of deontic modal predicatives (možno ‘allowed’, nužno ‘necessary’, etc.). Modal predicatives prohibit a nominative subject and require a dative DP argument. They select either a non-finite clause or a finite subjunctive clause as a complement and exhibit default agreement. Deontic modal predicatives allow directed and non-directed interpretations. (6a) has a specific obligation-bearer and an ‘ought-to-do’ directed reading, while in (6b) a modal property is assigned to the whole proposition leading to an ‘ought-to-be’ non-directed reading (Feldman 1986). In sentences with directed interpretation control relations are established between a dative DP and an embedded subject, while the constructions with a non-directed reading pass raising diagnostics.

(6) a. Detjam nužno ostav’sja v etoj komnate.
   children.DAT necessary.3SG stay.INF in this room  ‘The children must stay in this room.’
   ← deontic directed

b. Detjam nužno slušat’sja vzroslyx.
   children.DAT necessary.3SG listen_to.INF adults  ‘(All) Children must listen to adults.’
   ← deontic non-directed

We propose that a dative DP is an argument in the Spec of a deontic directed / non-directed ModalP, and a Mod head assigns inherent dative case. When a modal head selects a non-finite clause as its complement the latter can contain a PRO, which becomes controlled by the DP in the Spec, ModP. These constructions get deontic directed interpretations. The non-finite clause may also contain an overt subject, which moves out of an embedded clause. This structure gets the deontic non-directed reading. In the full version of this paper we provide the results of raising and constituency tests.

♦ A ModP with a dative DP is a fully saturated proposition and can serve as complement of a lexical verb transforming it into a desiderative OCV.

The contrast between deontic directed and deontic non-directed interpretations is preserved leading to ambiguous interpretations (9) and the ability of at least some sentences with desiderative verbs to pass raising tests (1).

(9) Petja velel dvum mal’čikam ubrat’sja v klasse.
   Peter.NOM order.PST two boys.DAT clean.ING in classroom
   ‘There were two boys and Peter ordered them to clean the classroom.’ ← directed

   ‘Peter said that any two boys from a group must clean the classroom.’ ← non-directed

Finally, the proposed analysis accounts for the unavailability of split coreference in case of a desiderative predicate (and a directed interpretation). We adopt a referential approach to control and suggest that semantically reference of the embedded PRO may include other arguments from the same proposition as the controller (i.e. its co-arguments). Since the ModP selected by dative desiderative OCVs is fully saturated and does not contain other arguments except for the dative DP and the embedded clause itself, the coreference is established strictly. The accusative DP controller has the matrix subject as its co-argument and, therefore, PRO can exhibit semantic plurality.

**Conclusion.** The analysis suggests that the desiderativity can be syntactically derived when a verb of information transfer selects a proposition headed by a silent modal. This accounts for the ability of desiderative so-called ‘object control’ verbs to allow raising and the non-directed interpretation at least in some contexts.