

## Expletive Datives are situational Datives

Aleksandra Milosavljević & Stefan Milosavljević  
(The SASA Institute for the Serbian language & University of Graz)

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We investigate an inanimate non-core Dative pronominal in Serbian (1), which behaves as a typical expletive pronoun in not having an antecedent in the previous discourse or available for deictic reference. It is always realized as the 3<sup>rd</sup> singular clitic syncretic between neuter and masculine, with ‘objectivization’ as its pragmatic contribution (cf. Miloradović 2007, Jovanović 2020) – it implies that the truth value of a given proposition is not to be seen as a subjective ‘judgment’ of the evaluator (the speaker by default). This type of Dative is theoretically challenging since non-core Datives are cross-linguistically usually animate and sentient (e.g. Janda 1993, Aristar 1996, Dabrowska 1997, Palić 2010, Boneh & Nash 2011, 2017, Horn 2013, Arsenijević 2013; see Kagan 2020 for an overview).

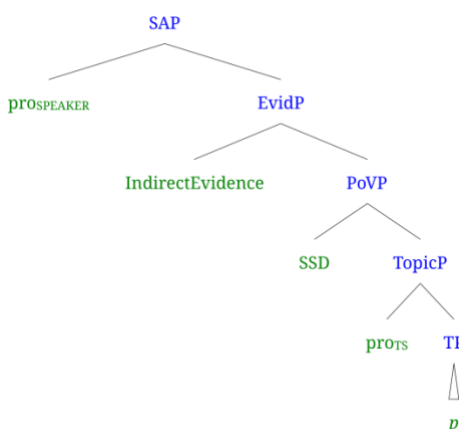
(1) To nemoj da te čudi. To **mu** je tako.  
that don't COMP you.ACC.CL surprises that SSD COP so  
'Don't let that surprises you. That simply functions like that.'

We argue that this ‘expletive’ Dative pronominal is actually a situational pronoun referring to an (arbitrary) situation ‘switched’ from both the Topic Situation (TS) of a given clause and the Speech Act Situation (SAS); we accordingly label it ‘Switched-Situation Dative’ (SSD). We propose that SSD is generated in a point-of-view projection (PoVP in Guéron & Haegeman 2012, EpisP in Cinque 1999, Speas 2004, PerspP in Sundaresan 2018) – see Figure 1. Our analysis explains the objectivization effect of SSD straightforwardly: by switching the evaluation domain from TS, it is indicated that the proposition is not evaluated by any of the referents to whom TS is relevant, most prominently the speaker as default evaluator and source of information (who, consequently, has only indirect evidence for the reported situation). The following arguments support the proposed analysis: (i) SSD is in *complementary distribution with other perspectival Datives*, e.g. the one expressing the Speaker’s perspective, see (2); (ii) The very nature of SSD as a *domain restricting pronoun* relates it to typical situation pronouns, which have been amply used in explaining various areas of the domain restriction cross-linguistically (Schwarz 2009, Kratzer 2021); (iii) The featural configuration [3rd[sing[neut[pron]]]] is the morphologically least marked set of features (Harley & Ritter 2002) and is characteristic of situation-referring pronouns (e.g. Klein 2006, 2008, Hinterhölz 2022, Langacker 2011, Milosavljević & Milosavljević 2022). (iv) Non-core Datives, if inanimate, are (virtually) always situational (e.g. Berman 1982, Al-Zahre & Boneh 2010, 2016, Haddad 2018a, b, Milosavljević 2019).

(2) To **mi** / **mu** (\***mi+mu** / \***mu+mi**) dođe na isto.  
that I.DAT.CL SSD comes on same  
'That turns out to be the same (from my perspective / from the perspective of SSD).'

Expletive pronouns have recently been argued to be either situational (Klein 2006, 2008, Langacker 2011, Borer 2010, Hinterhölz 2019, 2022), or PoV pronouns (Hinzelin & Kaiser 2007, Guéron & Haegeman 2012, Gupton & Lowman 2013, Greco et al. 2018). The analysis of SSD as a *situational PoV* pronoun provides further support for eliminating the notion of ‘expletiveness’ as relevant for pronouns and grammar more broadly (cf. Tsiakmakis & Espinal 2022).

Figure 1



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