

Concurrence of Case Forms – Lapse or Norm in Standard Latvian

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Abstract. The grammatical and semantic systems of noun categories are undergoing obvious changes in modern Latvian. The most vivid example of such change is in the category of case and its semantic structure. There is a concurrence between case forms for different syntactic functions, e.g., for negation **G//N** ‘*makā nav naudas/nauda*’/‘there is no money in the wallet’; in debitive construction (these constructions express necessity in Latvian, e.g., *Man ir jālasa grāmata* ‘I must read a book’. Debitive belongs to the system of moods in Latvian) **N//A** ‘*man ir jālasa grāmata/grāmatu*’/‘I must read a book’; and for a negated direct object **G//A** ‘*neteikšu neviena vārda/vārdu*’/‘I’ll not say a word’.

These grammatical processes are handled inconsistently in Latvian grammar-books. The concurrence of the accusative and the genitive is treated as an allowable variant, while the concurrence of the nominative and the genitive or the nominative and the accusative are considered as a lapse in Standard Latvian. This paper deals with the reasons for the concurrence of case forms and tries to ascertain why there are ambiguous grammatical descriptives in Latvian.

The language material in this paper has been sourced from “*Mūsdienu latviešu literārās valodas gramatika*” (1959:388-408) and Alfrēds Gāters “*Lettische Syntax/Die Dainas*” (1993:70-205). Insofar as Latvian linguistics lacks extensive research into the semantics of the case system, the theoretical basis of this paper has been derived from the monographs and scholarly researches of Lithuanian as well as other linguists – Jonas Šukys “*Lietuvių kalbos linksniai ir prielinksniai*” (1998), Elena Valiulytė “*Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos sintaksiniai sinonimai*” (1998), Aldona Paulauskienė “*Lietuvių kalbos morfologija*” (1994) and “*Lietuvių kalbos kultūra*” (2000), Barry J. Blake “*Case*” (1997), Jerzy Kurilowicz “*The Inflectional Categories of Indo-European*” (1964), Sturla Berg-Olsen “*A syntactic change in progress: The decline in the use of the non-prepositional genitive in Latvian, with a comparative view on Lithuanian*” (1999).