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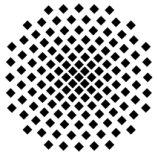


The use of dative case by heritage speakers of Russian in the US and Germany

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- Research questions and hypotheses

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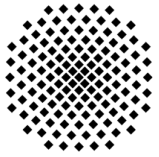
- Materials: RUEG corpus

- Participants

- Data Basis

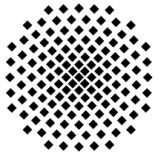
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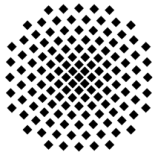
Introduction

- **Russian-speaking community: in Germany** ~ 4.7 million people (Federal Statistical Office 2024) and **in the US** ~ 1 million members (U.S. Census Bureau 2023).
- In both communities, **Russian is a heritage language** (HL).
- **Heritage speakers** (HSs): early bilinguals who acquire a minority or HL at home while also learning the dominant or the majority language of the broader society (ML) (Montrul 2023).
- As HSs reach adolescence or early adulthood, their HL often diverges from the language of monolingual speakers, with **notable differences** appearing especially **in nominal and verbal morphology** (Montrul 2015).



Case system in Standard Russian and German

- **Russian** features a **six-case** system: *nominative*, *genitive*, *dative*, *accusative*, *instrumental*, and *locative*, with nearly all pronouns, nouns, adjectives, numerals, and wh-words requiring case marking. Noun endings vary depending on case, gender, number, and animacy.
- **German** has a **four-case** system: *nominative*, *genitive*, *dative*, and *accusative* cases. The homophony in the declension of German nouns, adjectives, and pronouns is even higher than in Russian.
- In both languages, **the dative case** is used to refer to the indirect object that is not directly affected (Böttger 2008)



Case system in Heritage Russian

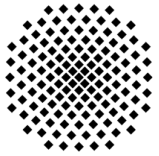
- Given the **complexity of the Russian case system**, morphology is considered to be “an area of vulnerability for HSs” of Russian in the US (Nagy & Petrosov 2024).

Different findings regarding heritage Russian in the US:

- Massive simplification of cases: retention of **simplified two-case system**, consisting of an unmarked case and the accusative case (Polinsky 2006).
- No dramatic simplification: variations are **not a breakdown of the system** but a **reanalysis** of case functions such as direction or location (Isurin & Ivanova-Sullivan 2008).

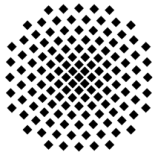
Heritage Russian in Germany

- Tendency toward a weakening of formal congruence in case forms for nouns and pronouns (Warditz, 2019).



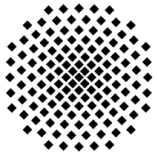
Research questions and hypotheses

- **RQ1:** How do three speaker groups of Russian (i.e., HSs in the US, Germany, and monolingual speakers) use dative case in a corpus of semi-spontaneous speech?
- **H1.1:** If monolinguals produce non-canonical forms of dative case, such instances will be very rare (i.e., a few instances).
- **H1.2:** HSs in Germany may outperform those in the US, since German has a system of cases and a dative case marker while in English overt case marking is only observed with pronouns (Fridman et al., 2024). Thus, HSs in Germany but not the US may pattern with monolinguals.



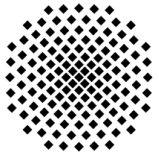
Research questions and hypotheses

- **RQ1:** How do three speaker groups of Russian (i.e., HSs in the US, Germany, and monolingual speakers) use dative case in a corpus of semi-spontaneous speech?
- **H1.3:** The facilitative influence of German is not guaranteed, since German and Russian mark the dative case with different surface cues, and German dative forms do not always correspond to Russian ones. Because of these differences, HSs in the US and Germany may perform similarly (Fridman et al., 2024). Thus, both groups of HSs will differ from monolinguals by producing significantly more non-canonical dative case marking.



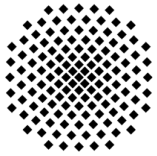
Research questions and hypotheses

- **RQ2:** How is the use of non-canonical forms of dative case influenced by mode (i.e., spoken vs., written) in narrations of HSs and monolingual speakers?
- **H2:** The use of dative case will not be influenced by mode in productions of monolingual speakers, but HSs will show less target-like use of dative case in the written mode due to their general lack of formal education in Russian and different alphabets in their ML and HL (Minkov et al., 2019; Polinsky, 2018).



Methodological framework: Materials of RUEG corpus

- Research Unit "Emerging Grammars in Language Contact Situations: A Comparative Approach" (RUEG) examines:
 - linguistic resources and repertoires of HSs in both their HL and ML.
 - HSs from various age groups (adults and adolescents) and linguistic backgrounds (Russian, Turkish, Greek, and German) residing in the US, as well as Russian, Turkish, and Greek HSs in Germany.
 - monolingual speakers of both the MLs and HLs.



formal

written witness
report

written

text message
to a friend



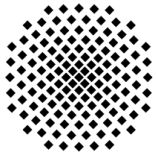
informal

voice
message to
the police

spoke
n

voice
message
to a friend

- Controlled, comparable, semi-spontaneous productions across four situations, Language Situations (Wiese, 2020)
- An online linguistic corpus: https://korpling.german.hu-berlin.de/annis/#_c=UIVFRy1SVV8xLjAtU05BUFNIT1Q (Lüdeling et al., 2024)



Participants

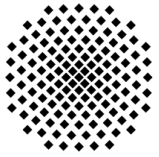
	N	Mean age, range	N, females	Data collection
HSs_US	31	27.6 (23-26)	20 (64.5%)	Washington Metropolitan Area, NYC
HSs_Germany	29	25.5 (22-33)	20 (69.0%)	Berlin
Monolinguals	32	26.8, (24-35)	23 (71.9%)	Saint Petersburg

All HSs were:

born in the US or Germany or came there before age 5 and were exposed to Russian from birth at home.

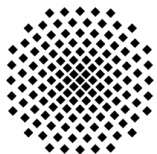
HSs in general:

- felt as native speakers of their HL and ML
- did not learn Russian in a formal setting
- had high involvement with Russian as indicated by self-reports (e. g, they sometimes watch TV programs in Russian, can write and read Russian Cyrillic script).

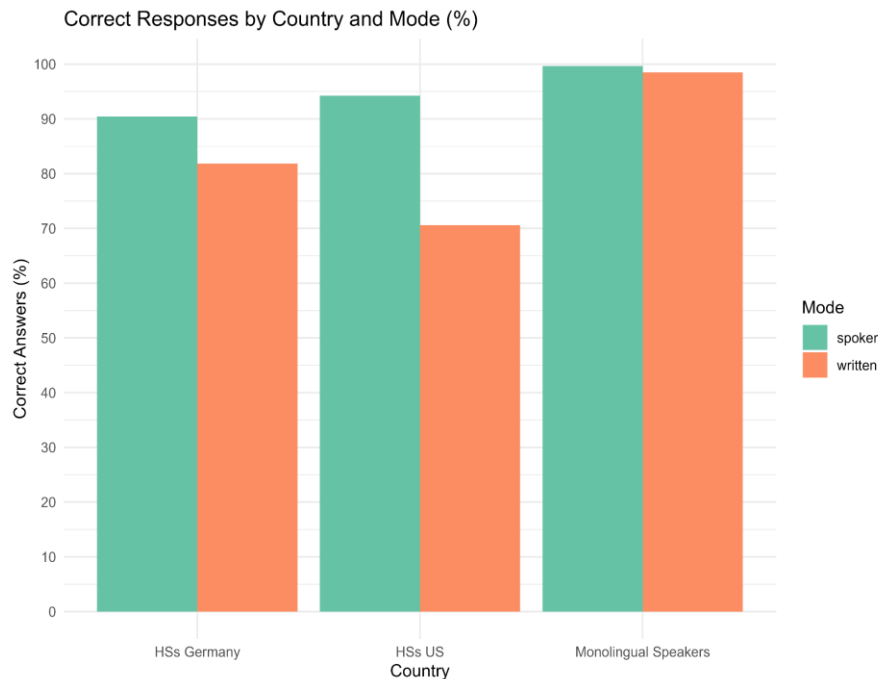


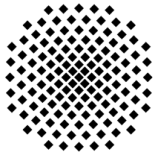
Data basis

- The processed data were anonymized and incorporated into the multimodal, multi-layer RUEG corpus (Lüdeling et al., 2024).
- Spoken data were transcribed orthographically by native or fluent speakers of Russian in Praat (Boersma, 2013).
- Spoken and written texts were manually segmented into words on the so-called diplomatic layer (dipl) that does not take the standard orthography of Russian into account.
- Data were manually segmented into communication units (CUs) (Topaj, 2020, p. 114).



Results: Descriptive analysis





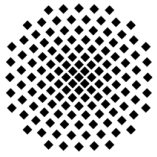
Results: Statistical analysis

Bayesian mixed-effects regression model in R (R Core Team, 2024):
accuracy of dative case use ~ elicitation_country + mode + (1|Speaker). Reference level:
monolingual speakers

Bayesian regression model estimates for target-like use of dative case

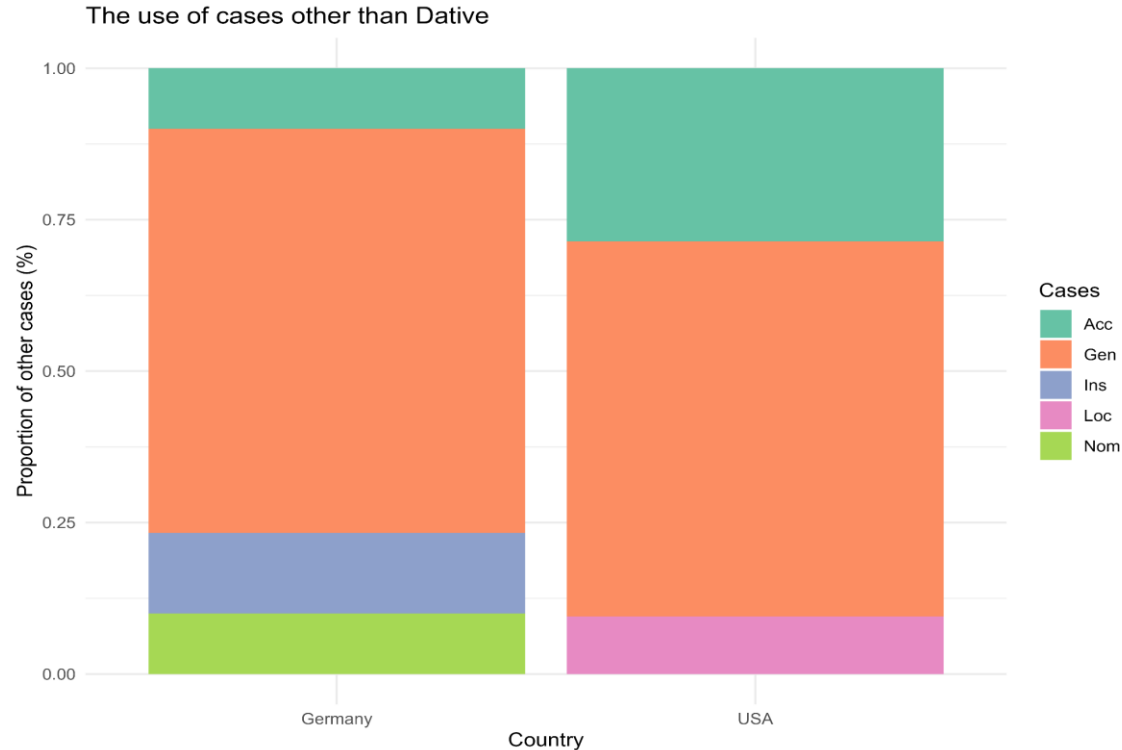
Predictors	Estimates	CI (95%)
Intercept	4.78	3.90, 5.72
HSs_Germany	-1.41	-2.39, -0.40
HSs_US	-1.54	-2.56, -0.50
mode_written	-1.28	-1.88, -0.67

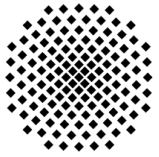
- HSs of both groups have lower accuracy of the dative case usage than monolinguals.
- All three groups were less accurate in their use of dative case in the written mode compared to the spoken mode



Results: Qualitative analysis

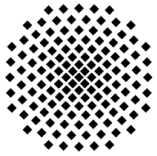
- 54 cases of non-target dative case use across all speaker groups: HSs_US (N=21), HSs_Germany (N=30), monolinguals (N=3).
- Dative case was used most frequently in the instances that required the genitive case or accusative case (HSs_US).





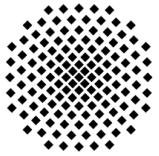
Linking results and hypotheses

- **RQ1:** How do three speaker groups of Russian (i.e., HSs in the US, Germany, and monolingual speakers) use dative case in a corpus of semi-spontaneous speech?
- **H1.1:** If monolinguals produce non-canonical forms of dative case, such instances will be very rare (i.e., a few instances).
- **Confirmed:** monolinguals performed target-like reaching almost 100%.
- **H1.2:** HSs in Germany may outperform those in the US. Thus, HSs in Germany but not the US may pattern with monolinguals.
- **Rejected:** HSs of both groups performed similarly to each other showing lower accuracy of dative case use than monolinguals.



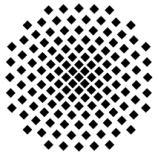
Linking results and hypotheses

- **RQ1:** How do three speaker groups of Russian (i.e., HSs in the US, Germany, and monolingual speakers) use dative case in a corpus of semi-spontaneous speech?
- **H1.3:** Both groups of HSs will differ from monolinguals by producing more non-canonical dative case marking.
- **Confirmed:**



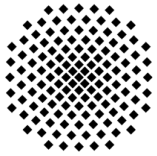
Linking results and hypotheses

- **RQ2:** How is the use of non-canonical forms of dative case influenced by mode (i.e., spoken vs., written) in narrations of HSs and monolingual speakers?
- **H2:** The use of dative case will not be influenced by mode in productions of monolingual speakers, but HSs will show less target-like use of dative case in the written mode (Minkov et al., 2019; Polinsky, 2018).
- **Generally confirmed:** HSs of both groups more non-canonical instances in written texts than in spoken narrations. Although monolinguals showed a similar pattern since they only produced 3 non-canonical usages of dative case their results should be interpreted with caution.



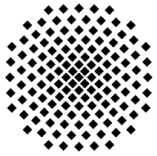
Discussion and Conclusions

- When dative case was used non-canonically, genitive or accusative cases were used instead.
- Although HSs use more non-canonical forms of the dative case than monolinguals, but we do not confirm earlier research, which suggests that heritage Russian has largely retained a simplified two-case system, consisting of an unmarked case and the accusative case.



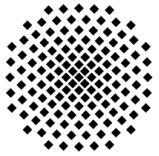
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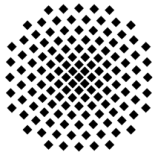
Coming soon:

- Title: The use of dative case by heritage speakers of Russian in the US and Germany
- Authors: Yulia Zuban & Anna Ritter
- Journal: Research on Language (<https://researchonlanguage.de/en/>)

Thank you!

Спасибо!

Danke!



Results: Qualitative analysis

Example

na odnoj storone parkovk-e stojala ženščina s sobakoj
on one side parking lot-F.SG.DAT stood woman with dog
'A woman with a dog was standing on one side of the parking lot.'

written mode, male HS in Germany