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A survey of the case paradigm in Latvian

Abstract

The paper applies a formal approach to the description of the Latvian case system. Different ways of optimizing the presentation are considered in the second part of the paper. The third part deals with some problematic items of delimiting cases. The category of prepositional case forms is introduced. A general survey of the case paradigm reveals some phenomena to which no attention has been paid in earlier studies.

0. Preliminary remarks

In the present article I would like to examine the case paradigm of Latvian in the framework of the universal approach to the description of case systems proposed by A. A. ZALIZNJAK (ЗАЛИЗНЯК 1967, 36 ff.; ЗАЛИЗНЯК 1973).

Case is treated here as a grammatical category based on the unity of grammatical form and grammatical content¹. Thus we do not accept the possibility of distinguishing between two cases when there is no distinction between two forms. Let us note here that there seems to be, in principle, no reason for an a priori restriction of the case paradigm to synthetic forms only, to the exclusion of analytical forms (say, those consisting of a noun and a preposition). One should check whether the forms under consideration are opposed to each other regularly, thus forming a paradigm, and whether the relations between them create a homogeneous system, but the way in which distinctions between them are formally marked is not essential (КАСЕВИЧ 1977: 85–86).

1. Maximal table of declension

In determining the set of cases in Latvian I follow the formal procedure established by A. A. ZALIZNJAK (op. cit., cf. COMRIE 1986: 91). An ideal representation of a case system is a table of declension where the different rows show the distribution and the columns contain

¹ There exists another, less traditional approach to case as an element of content alone, i.e. as some semantic relation or semantic role, – irrespective of the way of formal expression. This approach presupposes preliminary segmentation of the semantic continuum into some finite number of elements. This task, however, does not seem yet to be satisfactorily solved in contemporary linguistic theory (ВОЛОДИН 1974; ЯХОНТОВ 1978: 102; ВЕЖБИЦКА 1985: 311; etc.; concerning Latvian see FENNEL 1975: 44–46).

nr	context	X						etc.
		'man' Sg.masc.	'men' Pl.masc	'brother' Sg.masc.	'sister' Sg.fem.	'sisters' Pl.fem.	'cockatoo' Sg.masc.	
1.	<i>X guļ</i> 'X is lying'	<i>cilvēks</i>	<i>cilvēki</i>	<i>brālis</i>	<i>māsa</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
2.	<i>tas ir X</i> 'this (Sg.m.) is X'	<i>cilvēks</i>	–	<i>brālis</i>	–	–	<i>kakadu</i>	...
3.	<i>mana X tiek cienīta</i> 'my (Sg.f.) X is respected'	–	–	–	<i>māsa</i>	–	–	...
4.	<i>tas ir X draugs</i> 'this is a friend of X'	<i>cilvēka</i>	<i>cilvēku</i>	<i>brāļa</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>māsu</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
5.	<i>man nav labu X</i> 'I have no good (Pl.) X'	–	<i>cilvēku</i>	–	–	<i>māsu</i>	–	...
6.	<i>es eju pie X</i> 'I am going to X's place'	<i>cilvēka</i>	<i>cilvēkiem</i>	<i>brāļa</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>māsām</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
7.	<i>es dodu naudu X</i> 'I give money to X'	<i>cilvēkam</i>	<i>cilvēkiem</i>	<i>brālim</i>	<i>māsai</i>	<i>māsām</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
8.	<i>līdz X nonāca ziņa</i> 'the news reached X'	<i>cilvēkam</i>	<i>cilvēkiem</i>	<i>brālim</i>	<i>māsai</i>	<i>māsām</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
9.	<i>es zīmēju X</i> 'I am drawing for X'	<i>cilvēkam</i>	<i>cilvēkiem</i>	<i>brālim</i>	<i>māsai</i>	<i>māsām</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
10.	<i>es zīmēju X</i> 'I am drawing X'	<i>cilvēku</i>	<i>cilvēkus</i>	<i>brāli</i>	<i>māsu</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
11.	<i>es eju ar X</i> 'I am going with X'	<i>cilvēku</i>	<i>cilvēkiem</i>	<i>brāli</i>	<i>māsu</i>	<i>māsām</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
12.	<i>es skatos X</i> 'I am looking at X'	<i>cilvēkā</i>	<i>cilvēkos</i>	<i>brāli</i>	<i>māsā</i>	<i>māsās</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
13.	<i>labdien, X!</i> 'good day, X!'	<i>cilvēk</i>	<i>cilvēki</i>	<i>brāli</i>	<i>mās</i> <i>māsā</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
14.	<i>sveiks, X!</i> 'hallo (Sg.m.), X!'	<i>cilvēk</i>	–	<i>brāli</i>	–	–	<i>kakadu</i>	...
15.	<i>X nav mājās</i> 'X is/are not at home' or 'there is no X at home'	<i>cilvēks</i> <i>cilvēka</i>	<i>cilvēki</i> <i>cilvēku</i>	<i>brālis</i> <i>brāļa</i>	<i>māsa</i> <i>māsas</i>	<i>māsas</i> <i>māsu</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
16.	<i>es gaidu X</i> 'I am waiting for X'	<i>cilvēku</i> <i>cilvēka</i> ²	<i>cilvēkus</i> <i>cilvēku</i>	<i>brāļu</i> <i>brāļa</i>	<i>māsu</i> <i>māsas</i>	<i>māsas</i> <i>māsu</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
etc.	

Table 1

² The Genitive (examples in the second line) is obsolete in this construction in modern Latvian.

the corresponding case forms of the nouns³. Let us produce as an example a fragment of such a table for Latvian nouns (see Table 1).

As one can see, most of the cells contain one form. Some cells, however, are empty, whereas some other cells contain more than one form. In order to optimize the presentation and to determine the number of cases the table should be shrunk according to the following rules:

- 1) all identical rows are treated as one row ($7 = 8 = 9$)
- 2) every row with blank cells which coincides in other cells with some other row is eliminated ($2, 3 \subset 1$; $5 \subset 4$; $14 \subset 13$)
- 3) every row containing several forms in one cell is eliminated if it can be represented as a sum of some other rows, i.e. optional use of several case forms in one context is not treated as a separate case ($15 = 4 \cup 10$; $16 = 10 \cup 4$)

The results of these operations are shown in the Table 2a.

traditional case names	context nr.	'man' Sg.masc.	'men' Pl.masc	'brother' Sg.masc.	'sister' Sg.fem.	'sisters' Pl.fem.	'cockatoo' Sg.masc.	etc.
N	1, 2, 3, 15	<i>cilvēks</i>	<i>cilvēki</i>	<i>brālis</i>	<i>māsa</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
G	4, 5, 15, 16	<i>cilvēka</i>	<i>cilvēku</i>	<i>brāļa</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>māsu</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
"G ₂ "	6	<i>cilvēka</i>	<i>cilvēkiem</i>	<i>brāļa</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>māsām</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
D	7, 8, 9	<i>cilvēkam</i>	<i>cilvēkiem</i>	<i>brālim</i>	<i>māsai</i>	<i>māsām</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
A	10, 16	<i>cilvēku</i>	<i>cilvēkus</i>	<i>brāli</i>	<i>māsu</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
I	11	<i>cilvēku</i>	<i>cilvēkiem</i>	<i>brāli</i>	<i>māsu</i>	<i>māsām</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
L	12	<i>cilvēkā</i>	<i>cilvēkos</i>	<i>brāli</i>	<i>māsā</i>	<i>māsās</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...
V	13, 14	<i>cilvēk</i>	<i>cilvēki</i>	<i>brāli</i>	<i>mās māsa</i>	<i>māsas</i>	<i>kakadu</i>	...

Table 2a

This system is arrived at on the basis of an analysis of nouns only. A similar analysis of all the declinable words requires one more case (D₂). The maximal system of cases is presented in Table 2b, with relevant examples appended.

³ To define distribution precisely ZALIZNJAK operates with the notions of context and status, because one and the same context may allow different interpretations, cf. the context "I write X" where one can substitute for X 1) an object "a letter", 2) an addressee "my friend", 3) an instrument "by hand" and so on. In the present article the right interpretation will be indicated by means of an English translation.

nr.	traditional case names	'I'	'young man' Sg.masc.	'the young man' Sg.masc.def.	'the young friend' Sg.masc.def.	'meeting' Sg.fem.
I.	N	<i>es</i>	<i>jauns cilvēks</i>	<i>jaunais cilvēks</i>	<i>jaunais draugs</i>	<i>tikšanās</i>
II.	G	<i>manis</i>	<i>jauna cilvēka</i>	<i>jaunā cilvēka</i>	<i>jaunā drauga</i>	<i>tikšanās</i>
III.	"G ₂ "	<i>manis</i>	<i>jauna cilvēka</i>	<i>jaunā cilvēka</i>	<i>jaunā drauga</i>	<i>tikšanās</i>
IV.	D ₁	<i>man</i>	<i>jaunam cilvēkam</i>	<i>jaunajam cilvēkam</i>	<i>jaunajam draugam</i>	–
V.	"D ₂ "	<i>manim</i>	<i>jaunam cilvēkam</i>	<i>jaunajam cilvēkam</i>	<i>jaunajam draugam</i>	–
VI.	A	<i>mani</i>	<i>jaunu cilvēku</i>	<i>jauno cilvēku</i>	<i>jauno draugu</i>	<i>tikšanos</i>
VII.	I	<i>mani</i>	<i>jaunu cilvēku</i>	<i>jauno cilvēku</i>	<i>jauno draugu</i>	<i>tikšanos</i>
VIII.	L	<i>manī</i>	<i>jaunā cilvēkā</i>	<i>jaunajā cilvēkā</i>	<i>jaunajā draugā</i>	–
IX.	V	–	–	<i>jaunais cilvēk jauno cilvēk</i>	<i>jaunais draugs</i>	<i>tikšanās</i>

Table 2b

2. Optimizing the presentation

This maximal system may appear too large and not convenient for further description. That is why one should consider possible ways of optimizing the presentation of the case system. Practically, this is the point where grammars choose different, mutually contradictory solutions. According to A. A. ZALIZNJAK the situations that most often lead to divergent descriptions are the following:

- 1) morphologically non-distinctive (морфологически несамостоятельные) cases
- 2) cases coming close to morphological non-distinctiveness (близкие к морфологической несамостоятельности)
- 3) weakly differentiated (слабо дифференцированные) cases
- 4) optional (факультативные) cases
- 5) incomplete (неполные) cases

2.1. Morphologically non-distinctive cases

A case is called morphologically non-distinctive if the corresponding line of the table of declension contains not a single inflectional segment that is not identical with a segment of some other line of the same column (ЗАЛИЗНЯК, 1973, 69). Morphologically non-distinctive cases in Latvian are illustrated by cases III and VII in Table 2b. Morphologically non-distinctive cases may be excluded from the description by reformulating the rules of government so as to make them distributionally distinctive: one set of columns takes case X and the other set of columns takes case Y. The simpler the criterion for distinguishing the sets of columns is, the more natural the omission of the morphologically non-distinctive cases seems.

Traditional grammar intuitively proceeds in a similar way when it distinguishes 7 cases in modern Latvian: Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Instrumental, Locative and Vocative (MLLVGI: 388). The rule of distinct government of prepositions is introduced here. All prepositions are assumed to govern the Dative case of the noun in the Plural irre-

spective of their government in the Singular. Thus, no distinction is made between cases II (Gen.) and III (Gen₂ = Gen.Sg. + Dat.Pl.) and the case paradigm is shrunk by one element.

It seems, however, that traditional grammar stops half-way: it would be possible to merge cases VI (Acc.) and VII (Ins. = Acc.Sg. + Dat.Pl.) on the same grounds (ЗАЛИЗНЯК 1973: 70–71). This reduced system lacking Instrumental case is suggested by T. G. FENNELL (1975) and other (mostly non-native) linguists: LÖTZSCH 1978; MATHIASSEN 1997: 41, 176; NĪTIŅA 1997: 201–203; HOLVOET 2000: 215; etc. We shall return to the problem of the Instrumental in section 3.

2.2. Cases close to morphological non-distinctiveness

Such cases could be considered morphologically non-distinctive but for a few columns containing unique segments (ЗАЛИЗНЯК 1973: 74). Such is the situation of the Latvian Vocative (case IX)⁴. It usually coincides with the Nominative, sometimes with the Accusative, but for some nouns it consists of the bare stem (with zero ending), which prevents it from being morphologically non-distinctive⁵ and substantiates its status as a separate case.

On the Latvian Vocative see also sections 2.4 and 2.5.

2.3. Poorly differentiated cases

Two cases, which differ from each other only in a few columns (for a few entries) are called weakly differentiated (ЗАЛИЗНЯК 1973: 76). In Latvian the two Datives (case IV and case V) should be considered as such. This opposition is relevant only for three pronouns: *es* ‘I’, *tu* ‘you (Sg.)’, *sevis* ‘oneself’: in most of the contexts requiring Dative the forms *man*, *tev*, *sev* are used, whereas prepositions governing Dative case (*līdz* ‘to; till’) require the forms *manim*, *tevim*, *sevīm*⁶. Because of this narrow scope of the words involved and due to the rare occurrence of the prepositional phrase the opposition was paid no attention to in existing grammars of Standard Latvian and the forms *manim*, *tevim*, *sevīm* are simply ignored.

Pronouns sometimes present a larger array of case forms than other declinable words (cf., e.g., English or French), and that is why one may posit different case systems for these classes. Two Dative cases may be postulated in Latvian only for (personal) pronouns⁷ leaving the rest of the declinable words with one Dative. Thus, the correct description should either recognize homonymous forms of the two Datives for the majority of declinable words, or split all the declinable words into two classes: those having only one Dative and those (the three pronouns) having two Datives.

On the alternative approach see section 3.1.

⁴ There are some functional objections to analyzing the Vocative form as a member of the case system (cf. N. NAU’s remarks on the Vocative in Latvian in the present volume), but I assume that the Vocative form can be viewed as an element of the paradigm of case and will concentrate on the formal side of the problem of the Latvian Vocative.

⁵ One noun has a special Vocative form but not with zero ending: *biedrs* ‘comrade’ – *biedri* with an ending borrowed from the masculine *i*-declension.

⁶ This rule was formulated by Prof. P. VANAGS in his comment on N. NAU’s report at the III Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe (Stockholm, June 19, 1999). I have not found it in the normative sources, but it was accepted by my informants who were native speakers of Latvian.

⁷ In the dialects the same distinction holds for the Plural personal pronouns: *mēs* ‘we’, *jūs* ‘you (Pl.)’: *mums* : *mumsim*, *jums* : *jumsim* (ENDZELĪNS, 1951, 514 (§ 351)).

2.4. Optional cases

An optional case is a case whose forms can be always replaced by the forms of some other case without any change in meaning (ЗАЛИЗНЯК 1973: 80). The Latvian Vocative is close to such a situation. First, for some nouns, the distinctive Vocative form (with zero ending) is optional: a form homonymous with the Nominative (but not with the Accusative) can be used instead (*tēvs // tēv* 'father', *akmens // akmen* 'stone', *sieva // siev* 'wife', *Kristīne // Kristīn* 'Kristīne – name'). In other words, a Vocative form homonymous with the Nominative may have an optional variant with zero ending, whereas that homonymous with the Accusative has no variants⁸. Zero ending is characteristic mostly of diminutives and personal names, as well as of some isolated nouns. Closeness of the Vocative and Nominative is rather trivial, but in Latvian there seems to be an equally strong association between Accusative and Vocative forms as between Nominative and Vocative forms. The choice between Vocative forms homonymous with the Nominative and the Accusative is determined by the declension class⁹.

Adjectives have no special form for the Vocative: it always coincides with that of the Nominative or (in the singular only) of the Accusative (only definite forms of the adjectives are used in Vocative function¹⁰). Thus, the situation with regard to adjectives can be interpreted as an example of an optional case – the Vocative form homonymous with the Nominative can always replace the form homonymous with the Accusative. The choice of the Vocative form of the adjective is based on the following rule: the form homonymous with the Nominative is always possible, whereas the form homonymous with the Accusative may be used only if the corresponding noun has a Vocative form different from the Nominative (see Table 2b).

In colloquial speech one can probably find Nominative instead of Vocative. This shift is explained by the influence of the Russian language and is strongly criticized by the linguistic authorities (РАЕГЛЕ 1994: 138–139).

2.5. Incomplete cases

For some cases the correspondent line of the Table of declension contains blank cells. Such a case is called incomplete (ЗАЛИЗНЯК 1973: 84). Blank cells can appear either because of the defectiveness of concrete lexemes or due to some inner restrictions on the use of the corresponding case (we then have a so-called essentially incomplete case). The existence of defective lexemes is not important for the system of cases¹¹. In Latvian, apart from the lack of a Nominative for the reflexive pronoun, which is observed in other languages as well (*sevis* 'oneself'), it can be exemplified by the pronoun *kas* 'who; what', which lacks a Locative in

⁸ Personal names, however, are said to show a tendency to take zero endings in the Vocative regardless of the declension type: *Pēteris – Pēteri* (Voc. = Acc.) // *Pēter*. This tendency to use truncated forms of the Vocative is rather strong and some authors consider it the general strategy of formation of the Vocative (see N. NAU's article in the present volume). This, however, does not fit the formation of the Vocative for definite adjectives (*mīļais // mīļo* 'dear'), truncation is not used with adjectives at all.

⁹ For feminine *a*-stem nouns the Vocative, if not with the zero ending, is homonymous with the Nominative but in colloquial speech the noun *mamma* 'mummy' often has the Vocative *mammu* which is identical with the Accusative.

¹⁰ Possessive pronouns, however, do not take definite endings, and their Vocative coincides with the Nominative (cf. *muns draugs!* 'my friend').

¹¹ Similarly the existence of indeclinable words (see *kakadu* 'cockatoo' in the Table 1) is insignificant for the case paradigm.

the Standard language (the pronominal adverb *kur* 'where' is used instead), or by the reflexive nouns and participles which lack Dative and Locative forms for both numbers (see Table 2b; sometimes the corresponding non-reflexive noun forms are used in these cases). An example of an essentially incomplete case in Latvian is once again the Vocative, which, in the Standard language, is lacking for indefinite adjectives. Vocative forms may seem strange also with some nouns due to their meaning, but grammatically they are not restricted. The second Dative can appear essentially incomplete if the second possible approach is chosen (see section 2.3). For another possible example of an essentially incomplete case see section 3.2.

2.6. Interim results

Now every case from the maximal system can be characterized in the described terms.

- I. Nominative – fully fledged (sometimes used in the Vocative function).
- II. Genitive – fully fledged (coincides with Genitive₂ in the Singular).
- III. "Genitive₂" – morphologically non-distinctive, coincides with Genitive in the Singular and with Dative in the Plural; appears after prepositions.
- IV. Dative – fully fledged (coincides with Dative₂ for most declinable words and with Genitive₂ and Instrumental in the Plural).
- V. "Dative₂" – poorly differentiated from case IV (Dative): has distinct forms for certain pronouns; appears after prepositions.
- VI. Accusative – fully fledged (coincides with Instrumental in the Singular).
- VII. Instrumental – morphologically non-distinctive, coincides with Accusative in the Singular and with Dative in the Plural; appears after prepositions.
- VIII. Locative – fully fledged.
- IX. Vocative – close to morphologically non-distinctive: has special forms for some nouns; incomplete (impossible for indefinite adjectives). May be treated as optional for adjectives (can always be replaced by the Nominative).

One can notice that the Vocative is the only Latvian case having variant forms: for some nouns it can coincide with the Nominative or be unique in having a zero ending (*tēvs* // *tēv* 'father', *māsa* // *mās* 'sister'), for the other nouns it can coincide with Accusative or take zero ending (*Pēteri* // *Pēter* 'Pēteris – name'), for adjectives it can, in certain circumstances, coincide with Nominative or Accusative (*jaunais cilvēks* // *jauno cilvēks* 'young man').

As for the Locative, it is unique in that it stands completely apart and is not connected to other cases by any kind of relationship.

Exclusion of the morphologically non-distinctive cases (by introducing the rule of distinct government of prepositions) yields a system of seven cases: Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Dative₂, Accusative, Locative, Vocative. This is the system arrived at by straightforward application of the approach described above. Actually, however, the situation is not so simple as that.

3. Problematic items

3.1. Prepositional forms

One can note that the opposition of prepositional and self-dependent forms is rather important for Latvian declension. First of all, it is vital for formulating the rule of distinct government and eliminating morphologically non-distinctive Genitive₂ and Instrumental. The same opposition, however, is responsible for the two poorly differentiated Datives. In Latvian dialects, as has already been pointed out (footnote 7), this tendency is even more expansive (see ENDZELĪNS 1951, 629–632 (§ 491–495); cf. MLLVGI: 725). In High Latvian dialects, prepositional forms are distinguished from self-dependent ones by the broken syllable accent of the ending (see section 3.2). The Academy grammar allows generalized use of the special forms *manim*, *tevim*, *sevim* after all prepositions even in the standard language (MLLVGI: 504, 509, 725). Prepositional government in general is usually stronger than non-prepositional government: usually indeclinable numerals show a tendency to acquire case endings after prepositions (cf. *nodzīvot pusotra* (indecl.) *gada* // *pusotru* (Acc.Sg.) *gadu* ‘live a year and a half’, but *aizbraukt uz* ‘pusotra gada’ → *aizbraukt uz pusotru* (Acc.Sg.) *gadu* ‘leave for a year and a half’)¹².

In view of the facts mentioned, it seems inadequate not to take into account this opposition of prepositional and self-dependent forms in the grammatical description of Latvian.

Introducing the category of prepositional forms has some other advantages. No rule of distinct government is necessary, because morphologically non-distinctive cases simply disappear: instead, we have two forms for every case – self-dependent and prepositional. For some cases these forms are different, for other cases they coincide, and there are also instances where prepositional forms are lacking because the relevant cases (Nom., Voc., Loc.) are not used with prepositions. The fourth possible situation would be the lack of self-dependent forms but this is not observed in Latvian¹³.

The intersection of the category of case and prepositional forms is shown in Table 3.

Special prepositional forms are distinguished also, e.g., in Russian (*ему* ‘him (Dat.)’: (*κ*) *нему* ‘to him (Prepositional Dat.)’). In Russian, however, this opposition is relevant only for some pronouns, whereas in Latvian it runs through a large part of the system of declension: all declinable words in the Plural and some pronouns in the Singular.

Table 3 illustrates another interesting tendency of prepositional forms: in the Plural, the prepositional forms of all cases coincide (the same is true for the prepositional forms of certain pronouns in the singular if forms like *manim* are really acceptable in Modern Standard Latvian after all prepositions). Thus, one can oppose one single prepositional form to a whole series of self-dependent forms. In fact, there is a tendency to indicate just “prepositionality” by using one and the same marker irrespective of case. In other words, prepositions show a tendency to govern specific forms rather than forms of specific cases. (This is in contradiction, however, with the difference in the meaning of the prepositions *pa* and *uz* according to the case form of the noun in the singular with which they combine).

¹² The Locative case, being mostly adverbial in function, has the same effect (*paveikt pusotra* (indecl.) *gada* → *pusotrā* (Loc.Sg.) *gadā* ‘to get (something) ready in a year and a half’). By the way, historically, it has a preposition already incorporated.

¹³ This is the situation with the Russian Prepositional case, which cannot be used without a preposition (see footnote 15).

	'I'		'we'	
	self-dep.	prepositional	self-dep.	prepositional
N	<i>es</i>	—	<i>mēs</i>	—
G	<i>manis</i>	<i>manis (manim)</i>	<i>mūsu</i>	<i>mums</i> (dial. <i>mumsim</i>)
D	<i>man</i>	<i>manim</i>	<i>mums</i>	<i>mums</i> (dial. <i>mumsim</i>)
A	<i>mani</i>	<i>mani (manim)</i>	<i>mūs</i>	<i>mums</i> (dial. <i>mumsim</i>)
L	<i>manī</i>	—	<i>mūsos</i>	—
V	—	—	—	—

Table 3

3.2. Instrumental

The exclusion of the Instrumental from the case system was criticized by adherents of the traditional point of view, and their arguments should be discussed separately.

First of all, the idea of assuming an analytical form of the Instrumental (preposition *ar* 'with' + noun) should be rejected¹⁴. This prepositional phrase differs in no respect from other prepositional phrases in Latvian: no formal distinctions between *ar draugu* 'with a friend' and *par draugu* (Acc.) 'about a friend', *bez drauga* (Gen.) 'without a friend', *līdz draugam* (Dat.) 'to a friend', etc. can be found. Thus, postulating analytical form status for *ar draugu* would presuppose the same status for the other prepositional phrases. Neither could all prepositional phrases be classified as analytical forms as they do not constitute a closed paradigm. Prepositions can be replaced with adverbs and the case system would absolutely lose its borders¹⁵.

Thus, the question is whether synthetic forms proper (*draugu* (Sg.), *draugiem* (Pl.)) should be considered as a separate Instrumental case. The question is put in this way by the classics of Latvian linguistics K. MÜHLENBACHS and J. ENDZELĪNS as well as in the Academy grammar; the preposition *ar* merely "often supports" ("balsta") the form of the Instrumental (MLLVGI: 401).

For certain dialects, these forms are described as differing from those of Accusative (Sg.) and Dative (Pl.) by the broken syllable accent of the ending. This difference is observed mostly in High Latvian dialects and is limited to the following cases:

- pronouns *tas* 'that', *šis* 'this', *kas* 'who, what': Ins.Sg. *tuô*, *šuô*, *kuô* : Acc.Sg. *tùo²*, *šùo²*, *kùo²* (ENDZELĪNS 1951: 526 (§ 363));
- nouns: (Standard Latvian *meita* 'girl') Ins.Pl. *māituôm* : Dat.Pl. *māitùom²* (ĀBELE 1928: 25; ENDZELĪNS 1951: 417 (§ 255));
- definite adjectives: (Standard Latvian *balts* 'white') Ins.Sg.def. *boltû* : Acc.Sg.def. *boltû*; Ins.Pl.fem.def. *boltôm* : Dat.Pl.fem.def. *boltôm* (ZEPS 1995: 169).

¹⁴ This approach seems to underlie school grammar and is theoretically approved of in KALNAČA 1999.

¹⁵ According to A. P. VOLODIN, the Russian Prepositional case should be regarded as an analytical form including a preposition because such forms as (*о*) *снеге* 'about snow' or (*в, на*) *снегу* 'in, on snow' are unique and make no sense without preposition (ВОЛОДИН 1974: 265). It seems that this consideration is not correct: preposition is one of the types of context and it may require a particular form of the noun just as any other governing word.

This opposition in syllable accents is not ascribed to the Standard language, where these forms are characterized by even accent (LVPPV: 27). However, even in the dialects, the opposition, as it seems, is not between case forms, but between forms used with or without preposition (see section 3.1.): “While the old instrumental survives here in form, it no longer survives in function, as other prepositions that call for the accusative demand the broken tone as well” (ZEPS 1995: 169). Indeed, most of the examples of the “Instrumental” with broken tone (as opposed to Accusative/Dative with the even tone) cited in the literature show Instrumentals after prepositions. So far I have found only one pure case attested:

beī *lils* *pòurs,* *ka* *maītuôm* *dzeīvā*
 be:prt:3 large:nom.sg.m dowry:nom.sg. when girl:“ins”.pl live:prt:3
 ‘there was a large dowry when I (one) was a girl’ (ĀBELE 1928: 25)¹⁶.

The most important difficulty for the Instrumental-less approach is the interpretation of such cases as *iet lēnu gaitu* ‘walk at a slow pace’: *iet lēniem soļiem* ‘walk with slow steps’, where, in one and the same function, different case forms appear depending on the number of the noun (Acc.Sg. or Dat.Pl.) – without a preposition being used. Several solutions were suggested for this problem.

Most of the scholars denying the existence of an Instrumental recommend considering such phrases idiomatic (FENNELL 1975: 43; MATHIASSEN 1997: 41, 176). This hardly agrees, however, with their obvious internal divisibility and the relative freedom to exchange the components of these word combinations. Let us note, however, that either the phrases with the noun in the Singular or those with the noun in the Plural should be regarded as adverbialized – the opposite instances would be included in the semantic sphere of the corresponding case (Dat. or Acc.). Obviously it is the Singular forms that are to be considered adverbialized as they are much rarer in this function (MÜHLENBACHS 1893: 83–86). An estimation should be made of the number of idiomatic units that would have to be introduced in the grammar within this approach.

T. G. FENNELL considers also the possibility of a generative interpretation introducing the rule of optional or obligatory deletion of the underlying preposition *ar* in surface structure (FENNELL 1975: 43). A. HOLVOET suggests that the preposition *ar* has a variety with zero realization in phonetic structure (HOLVOET 2000: 215).

Non-prepositional use can be described also by modifying the government rule: the condition of the distinction remains the same (Sg. : Pl.), but the Dative in the Plural is used not only with prepositions, but also to denote the instrument. Thus, the use of the “Instrumental” is determined not only by prepositions, but in some rare cases by the function only. Similarly, prepositions determine special forms not only in the plural, but also in the singular of some words (see section 3.1).

If no one of the variants listed here seems acceptable, the Instrumental should be retained in the case paradigm. It will appear to be an incomplete case because it is possible only for a rather limited number of words. With Instrumental function proper it is used mainly in the plural *turēt abām rokām* ‘to hold with both hands’ (rare: *skatīties piemiegtu aci* ‘to look with screwed-up eye’). As a Sociative, both Singular and Plural forms are used, but only with

¹⁶ Prof. A. BREIDAKS (personal communication) mentioned an accent difference between Accusative and Instrumental both in prepositional use of the pronoun *kas* ‘what, who’: *par kû* ‘why? what for?’ : *par kû?* ‘for what?’.

attributes: *vīrs sarkanu bārdu* ‘a man with red beard’, *meitene zilām acīm* ‘a girl with blue eyes’ (cf. the Latin ablativus qualitatis).

A thorough investigation of the cases of non-prepositional use is necessary (see NĪTIŅA 1973; 1978: 60–67) to enable a choice between the possible solutions.

3.3. Vocative

The Latvian Vocative is in many respects different from other cases. One of the main peculiarities is its great variability, which allows of several interpretations. The problem is as follows: should we restrict the term “Vocative” to specific forms (mostly with zero ending), and speak of Nominative and Accusative forms in Vocative function in other cases?

Additional evidence in favor of a separate Vocative case in all situations could be the fact that the case form of the adjectival modifier may not coincide with that of the noun in Vocative function: not only are *mīļais* (=N.) *draugs* (=N.) ‘dear friend’ and *mīļo* (=A.) *brāli* (=A.) ‘dear brother’ possible, but also *mīļais* (=N.) *brāli* (=A.) and *jauno* (A.) *cilvēk* (V.) ‘young man’ are by no means wrong. Thus, if we abandon Vocative, we arrive at a situation in which different case forms are used in one noun phrase where case agreement is normally obligatory.

4. Concluding remarks

Latvian is a language with a rich case system. Based on its material many complicated instances of case distinctions can be illustrated. Some facts call for special interpretation¹⁷ being of particular interest for typological studies.

I admit that some peripheral items of the case system may have escaped my attention in this work. Thus, just by chance, my students drew my attention to the surprising use of the Nominative in *dalīt pieci* (Nom.) *ar divi* (Nom.) ‘divide five by two’ (cf. Accusative in *dalīt miljoni* (Acc.) *ar tūkstoti* (Acc.) ‘divide million by thousand’). The case system of modern Latvian still requires an all-round investigation.

Abbreviations

A/Acc	accusative	I/Ins	instrumental
D/Dat	dative	L/Loc	locative
D ₁	dative ₁	m	masculine
D ₂	dative ₂	N/Nom	nominative
Def	definite	Pl	plural
F/fem	feminine	prt	preterite
G/Gen	genitive	Sg	singular
G ₂ /Gen ₂	genitive ₂	V/Voc	vocative

¹⁷ A peculiar phenomenon in Latvian close to the problem of case is that of indeclinable noun modifiers, which resemble fossilized Genitive forms of nouns: *vienstāva* ‘one-storeyed’ (*stāva* G.Sg. ‘storey’), *divsējumu* ‘two volume’ (*sējumu* G.Pl. ‘volume’), *bezmaksas* ‘free of charge’ (*maksas* G.Sg. ‘charge’), *vācu* ‘German’ (*vāciešu* G.Pl. ‘the German’). N. NAU (1998: 26) suggested the English term “genitivelings” for these words called “ģenitīveņi” in Latvian. Attributive Genitive is very popular in Latvian, but the absence of other case forms is an obstacle to treating genitivelings as Genitive forms. On the basis of their function they could probably be considered indeclinable adjectives (FENNEL 1980: 322, 519) – cf. Latvian *rozā* (indecl.) ‘pink’.

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