

Motoki Nomachi

Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, Hokkaido University

(Japan, Sapporo)

mnomachi@slav.hokudai.ac.jp

**HOW DO RUSSIANS VERBALIZE THE ART OF KISSING?
AN APPENDIX TO JURIJ D. APRESJAN'S ANALYSIS OF THE VERB
CELOVAT' 'TO KISS'***

This article analyzes the syntax and semantics of the verb *celovat'* 'to kiss' in Russian from three perspectives with special attention to the lexical semantic approach advanced by Jurij D. Apresjan. First, the lexical collocation of the target construction is analyzed, and it is demonstrated that this construction can be used outside of the typical meaning of an established gesture for expressing politeness or greetings. It is ascertained, furthermore, that the use of the preposition *u* in the *u+gen.* construction is motivated by the need to express non-affectedness and non-cooperation of the recipient of the action initiated by the agent, by comparing with the competing construction with the dative argument *celovat' komu čto*. Second, the corpus analysis has shown that the preposition *u+gen* began to appear in the 18th century in literary works which reflect colloquial varieties of Russian. In addition, a statistical analysis has indicated that the preference of the prepositional construction *u+gen* was overwhelming in the 19th century and sharply declined in the 20th century. Lastly, in terms of the areal distribution of the target construction, it is characteristic particularly for Russian, while in Ukrainian and Belarusian, the equivalent construction with the prepositional construction *u+gen* can be regarded as a calque from Russian. In those two languages it began to appear in the 19th century, but it is almost out of use today.

Keywords: lexical semantics, syntax, verbal government, dative.

* I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the help and suggestions of the following scholars and colleagues: Dr Yaroslav Gorbachov, Dr Daniel Weiss, Dr Svetlana Tolstaja, Dr Anton Zimmerling, Dr Boris Norman, Dr Henadz' Cyxun, Dr Aleksandr Stroev, Dr Andrej Toporkov, Dr Irina Sedakova, Dr Maxim Makartsev, Dr Predrag Piper, Dr Maryja Kanjuškevič, Dr Taccjana Valodzina, Dr Anatolij Zahnitko, Dr Andrii Danylenko, Dr Ljudmila Popović, and Dr Romuald Huszcza. All the mistakes belong to the author of the article. I would also like to thank all native speakers of Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian who provided the author with examples, some of which are used in this paper. In addition, I am indebted to G. S. my old friend for the inspiration to work on this topic.

1. Introduction

In his numerous works on lexical semantics, including his capital works such as *Èksperimental'noe issledovanie semantiki russkogo glagola* (*Experimental Research on the Semantics of the Russian Verb*) and *Leksičeskaja semantika* (*Lexical Semantics*) [Apresyan 1974; 1995], and the collective monograph entitled *Teoretičeskie problemy russkogo sintaksisa. Vzaimodejstvie grammatiki i slovarja* (*The Theoretical Problems of Russian Syntax. Interaction between Grammar and Lexicon*) [Apresyan et al. 2010], the honoree has paid special attention to the question of argument split (*rasščeplenie valentnostej / aktantov*). Comparing the syntactic structures *davat' komu-libo knigu* 'to give somebody a book' and *gladit' komu-libo golovu* 'to stroke somebody's head (lit. to stroke somebody the head),' Apresjan concludes: In the former structures, the verb has three semantic arguments (*semantičeskie valentnosti*) — the subject, the object and the recipient, whereas in the latter it has only two — the subject and the object. The accusative noun denotes the directly affected part of an object, whereas the dative noun, rather than denoting a recipient, refers to the object in its entirety (*ob'ekt v celom*), whose noun in the underlying structure (*isxodnaja struktura*) is controlled not by the verb *gladit'*, but by the noun *golova* [Apresyan 1995: 153–154; see also Apresyan 1967: 159–160; 1983: 4–6; Apresyan et al. 2010: 348–355]. There are various kinds of transformations of this type in Russian and one of them, Apresjan gives also as *gladit' kogo-libo po pleču* 'to stroke somebody on his/her shoulder' as opposed to *gladit' č'ë-libo plečo* 'to stroke someone's shoulder' [Apresyan 1995: 156]. Today some linguists label these phenomena cross-linguistically as “possessor raising” or “possessor ascension,” while others prefer to use a different term, namely, “external possessor construction” [cf. König and Haspelmath 1997; Payne and Barshi 1999 among others]. Today this term is widely applied in Russian linguistics [cf. Weiss and Raxilina 2002; Kibrik 2000; 2005; Kibrik et al 2006, etc.]. Though the terminology itself is different, one can easily see that Apresjan's theoretical claims were pioneering in Russian and Slavic linguistics, as has been confirmed by various scholars, including Kibrik [2000] and Weiss [Vais 2004].

It goes without saying that the transformation of the above-mentioned patterns does not automatically become possible. It is worth mentioning that Apresjan notices a subtle, but important semantic difference between two constructions, and points out that the difference is based on a communicative motivation, taking the verb *celovat'* 'to kiss' as an example.¹ According to Apresjan [Apresyan 1983: 7] on the one hand, *Pëtr celoval eë_{acc.} v ruku* 'Peter kissed her hand (lit. Peter kissed her into the hand)' is probably awkward, while *Pëtr celoval ej_{dat.} ruku* 'Peter kissed her hand (lit. Peter kissed the hand for/to her)' sounds normal. On the other hand, *Pëtr celoval ej_{dat.} guby* 'Peter kissed her lips (lit. Peter kissed the lips for/to her)' may be unnatural compared to *Pëtr celoval eë_{acc.} v guby* 'Peter kissed her on

¹ In this article, the imperfective verb *celovat'* and the perfective one *pocelovat'*, which constitute an aspectual pair, will be used interchangeably. In addition, I have found a few examples with the verb *rascelovat'* 'smother with kisses' such as *ja rasceloval ruki u svoego generala* 'I smothered my general's hand with kisses' (Zotov, 1850), but it does not change the representation of this problem, therefore, I will not analyze this verb in this article.

the lips.’ Apresjan points out that the naturalness/unnaturalness of the above-mentioned expressions with the verb *celovat’* derives from the following difference: “kissing someone’s hand” means, by and large, a depersonalized and ritual form of secular greeting which does not require an emotional background, whereas “kissing someone’s lips” is regarded as a far more intimate and personal action that expresses affection and is possible in relation to the person who provokes warm feelings in the agent. To the best of my knowledge, none of this has yet been described in any monolingual dictionary of the Russian language.

In this context, one recalls the fact that the verb *celovat’* has another type of “argument split” with the preposition *u* + the noun in the genitive case, that is, *Pětr celoval u neě/nej_{gen.} ruku* ‘Peter kissed her hand (lit. Peter kissed the hand at her),’ which could be analyzed together with the above-mentioned two competing constructions. In what follows, I will analyze the syntax and semantics of the construction *celovat’ u kogo čto*² from the synchronic (Section 2), the diachronic and the areal-typological perspectives with special attention to other East Slavic languages (Section 3). Following this we will move onto the conclusion.

2. Synchronic aspects of *celovat’ u kogo čto*

2.1. Does it mean just a ritual act? Semantic feature of the syntactic construction

As has been pointed out by Apresjan [Apresyan 1967: 160], there are three types of relations between elements involved in the above-mentioned syntactic construction: 1) possessor — possessum, 2) whole — part, and 3) a thing and one of its features.³ With regard to the target construction *celovat’ u kogo čto*, we are particularly concerned with the relations 1. and 2. To be more precise, the most typical relation that can be found in the construction in question seems to be whole as possessor — body part as possessum.

As an idiomatic expression [cf. Garde 1985: 187] which seems to be becoming rather rare [cf. Prokopovich 1966: 139 and Section 3 in this article], this construction is collocated with the noun *ruka* ‘hand’ (and synonyms⁴) in the vast majority of cases for expressing an act of greeting or showing the agent’s respect as in (1) and (2)⁵:

- (1) *On molča poceloval u nej ruku i*
 he silently kiss.app.sg.m at her.gen.sg hand.acc.sg.f and
prostilsja s nej do voskresen’ja.
 part.app.sg.m with her.ins.sg until Sunday
 He silently kissed her hand and parted with her until Sunday⁶ (Gončarov, 1869).

² The verb *celovat’* takes an object in the accusative case in the affirmative construction. When the verb *celovat’* is negated, then an object in the genitive case can also appear.

³ For details, see also Weiss’s discussion in his recent article [Weiss forthcoming].

⁴ For instance, *dlan’* in the following sentence: *ja objasnilsja, poceloval u neě dlan’* ‘I explained myself and kissed her hand’ (Čukovskij, 1927).

⁵ Examples that have been taken from the *Russian National Corpus* [RNC] [<http://www.ruscorpora.ru/new/en/>] are shown with the names of authors and year. I have cited examples without correcting spelling mistakes. Other examples without authors’ name and year are taken from consultants who are native speakers of Russian and who are also professional linguists.

- (2) *On* *uvidal,* *kak* *na* *ulice* *ego* *syn*
 he see.app.sg.m how on street his son.nom.sg.m
podošël *k* *katoličeskomu* *svjaščenniku,*
 approach. to Catholic.dat.sg.m priest.dat.sg.m
 app.sg.m
poceloval *u* *nego* *ruku*
 kiss. at him.gen.sg hand.acc.sg.f
 app.sg.m
i *polučil* *blagoslovenie.*
 and receive. blessing.acc.sg.n
 app.sg.m

‘He saw how his son approached a Catholic priest on the street, kissed his hand and received a blessing’ (Izgoev, 1909).

It is, however, important to notice that, unlike the above-mentioned two potentially competing constructions — *celovat’ kogo vo čto*⁶ and *celovat’ komu čto* — this construction is more flexible in terms of collocation of lexemes, even in the meaning of greetings and rituals, including historical ones, as in (3)–(7): *noga* ‘leg, foot,’ *lico* ‘face,’ *plečo* ‘shoulder,’ *lob* ‘forehead,’ and *ščeka* ‘cheek,’ respectively.

- (3) *No* *v* *to* *vremja,* *kak* *Potej* *i* *Terleckij*
 but in that time how Potei.NOM and Terletskii.NOM
celovali *nogi* *u* *papy* *v* *Rime...*
 kiss.APP.PL leg.ACC.PL at Pope.GEN.SG in Rome.LOC
 ‘And yet, while Potei and Terletskii were kissing the Pope’s feet in Rome...’ (Solov’ëv, 1860).

- (4) *Pribavil* *on* *počti* *nežnym* *golosom* *Pavlu,*
 add.app.sg.m he almost tender.ins.sg.m voice.ins.sg.m Pavel.dat
celuja *ego* *v* *lico.* *Pavel* *celoval*
 kiss.ger him.acc in face.acc.sg.n Pavel.nom kiss.app.sg.m
u *djadi* *lico,* *ruki.*
 at uncle.gen.sg.m face. hand.acc.pl.f
 acc.sg.n

‘He added in an almost tender voice, addressing Pavel (and) kissing his face. Pavel kissed (his) uncle’s face (and) hands’ (Pisemskij 1896)

- (5) *Pri* *etom* *celuet* *u* *arxiereja* *oba* *pleča*
 at this kiss.prs.3sg at bishop.gen.sg.m both shoulder.acc.pl.n
i *ruku* *i* *kljanjaetsja* *v* *zemlju.*
 and hand. and bow.prs.3sg into ground.
 acc.sg.f acc.sg.f

‘While kissing the bishop’s both shoulders and his hand, and bowing to the ground’ (Diomidov, 1915).

- (6) *Teper’* *ja* *budu* *často* *priezžat’* *govoril*
 now I be.fut.1sg often come.inf say.app.sg.m
on, *celuja* *u* *Vera* *lob*
 he kiss.ger at Vera.gen forehead.acc.sg.m
i *ruki.*
 and hand.acc.pl.f

‘From now on, I will visit often,’ he said, kissing Vera’s forehead and hands’ (Kuprin, 1911).

⁶ It is interesting to note that in this construction the argument split can be far beyond the above-mentioned relations as the following example shows: *Tol’ko staruxi-šestidesjatnicy celovali ego v televizor, kogda byvsëgo “Robertinu” po etomu televizoru vse že pokazali, požilogo mužika.* ‘Only old female sixtiers kissed him on the TV screen, when they finally did show the former ‘Robertino’ by now an old dude’. This example has been provided by Dr Boris Norman.

- (7) *Varja* *ponjala,* *čto* *bol'se* *ničego* *ne*
 Varya.nom realize.app.sg.f that more nothing.gen not
dostigneš, *sdelala* *opjat'* *krotkoe* *lico,*
 reach.npst.2sg do.app.sg.f again meek.acc.sg.n face.acc.sg.n
pocelovala *u* *otca* *ščěku,*
 kiss.app.sg.f at father.gen cheek.acc.sg.f
vyrazitel'no *ulybnulas'* *Nikolaju.*
 expressively smile.app.sg.f Nikolai.dat

'Varya realized that it was pointless to ask for more, put on a meek face again, kissed her father's cheek, and smiled expressively at Nikolai' (Ertel', 1889).

It comes as no surprise that some nouns that mean non-body parts such as a garment as in (8) and (9) that a given possessor wears, and a contextually unique item as in (10) that is held by the possessor in the described situation can appear in this construction:

- (8) *Videl* *ty,* *kak ja* *u* *pana* *v* *nogax*
 see.app.sg.m you how I at master.gen.sg.m in leg.loc.pl.f

valjalsja, *sapogi* *u* *nego* *celoval.*
 throw.app.sg.m boot.acc.pl at he.gen kiss.
 app.sg.m

'Did you see how I threw myself prostrate at the master's feet (and) kissed his boots?' (Korolenko, 1886).

- (9) *Kogda* *Šarlotta* *priblizilas'* *k* *nej,* *ona*
 when Charlotte.nom approach.app.sg.f to her.dat she
xotela, *soglasno* *s* *ètiketom,*
 want.app.sg.f according with etiquette.ins.sg.m
pocelovat' *u* *neja* *plat'e.*
 kiss.inf at her.gen dress.acc.sg.n

'When Charlotte approached her, she wanted to kiss her dress according to the etiquette' (Moroxin, 2011).

- (10) *On* *stal* *na* *koleni,* *poceloval*
 he stand.app.sg.m on nee.acc.pl kiss.app.sg.m
krest *u* *svjaščennika.*
 cross.acc.sg.m at priest.gen.sg.m

'He kneeled (and) kissed the priest's cross' (Fillipov, 2019).

All these examples show a natural extension of the inalienable possession [cf. Haspelmath 1999: 113].

In this context, it is important to note that the target construction *celovat' u kogo čto* does not always mean greetings or express respect to the person to be kissed as the following examples show:

- (11) *Serdcem* *govorju:* *prosti!* *Ruki,*
 heart.ins.sg.n say.prs.1sg forgive.impr.2sg hand.acc.pl.f
grud', *usta* *i*
 breast.acc.sg.f lip.acc.pl and
oči *ja* *celuju* *u* *tebja.*
 eye.acc.pl.n I kiss.prs.1sg at you.gen

'I am saying with my heart: forgive (me)! I am kissing your breast, lips and eyes' (Xodasevič, 1929–1931).

(12) <i>On</i>	<i>pristal</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>eĕ</i>	<i>pleĉu</i>	<i>i</i>
he	come.app.sg.m	to	her	shoulder.dat.sg.n	and
<i>dolgo-dolgo</i>	<i>celoval</i>	<i>ego,</i>	<i>uryvkami</i>	<i>šepĉa:</i>	
long	kiss.app.sg.m	it.acc	intermittently	whisper.ger	
<i>Ax</i>	<i>ty,</i>	<i>balovnica!..</i>	<i>Paxom</i>	<i>celoval</i>	
ah	you	naughty girl	Pakhom	kiss.app.sg.m	
<i>pleĉo</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>baby!</i>			
shoulder.acc.	at	woman.			
sg.n		gen.sg.f			

‘He fell on her shoulder and kissed it for a long, long time, whispering intermittently: ‘You, naughty girl!..’ Pakhom was kissing the woman’s shoulder!’ (Vol’nov, 1912).

(13) <i>Celoval</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>Ortrudoĉki</i>	<i>nežno</i>
kiss.app.sg.m	I	at	Ortruda.gen	tenderly
<i>trepetye</i>	<i>grudoĉki,</i>	<i>kak</i>	<i>koťĕnok.</i>	
tremulous.acc.pl.f	breat.acc.pl.f	how	kitten.nom.sg.m	

‘Like a kitten, I was tenderly kissing little Ortruda’s little tremulous breasts’ (Ĉudakov, 1987–2000).

(11) means the action that could be motivated by the agent’s strong affection directed toward the person (e.g., *ty* ‘you’) to be kissed and the action itself can overlap with that of *celovat’ kogo vo ĉto*. (12) and (13) go further, that is, they express agents’ carnal desire communicated by the verb *celovat’*.

To sum up, at least at this stage, one could say that the target construction *celovat’ u kogo ĉto* can include a very wide range of lexemes that mean body parts (and contextual extensions), and the meaning of kissing can be beyond ritual acts, including greetings.⁷

2.1. Why the preposition *u+gen* in the syntactic construction?

A number of scholars have pointed out that the verb *celovat’* takes the *u+gen* construction [cf. Prokopovich 1966: 139; Zaichkova 1972: 37; Golovacheva 1995: 204; Terzić 1995: 114; Weiss and Raxilina 2002; Kibrik 2005: 307, etc.], however, they do not explain why this verb requires the preposition *u+gen*.

According to Luraghi, Naccarato and Pinelli [2020], in contemporary Russian, three semantically characterized groups of verbs take the *u+gen* construction: 1) verbs of asking and requesting (originally constructed with *u+gen* in Common Slavic), 2) verbs of buying (extended from locative), and 3) verbs of removing (extended from possessive). None of the groups of verbs seem, at least at first glance, to include the verb *celovat’*.⁸

Thus, we still need an explanation that justifies the use of the preposition *u+gen* in this syntactic construction from a different perspective. In this context, it is important to pay attention not only to the action of kissing itself and its meaning, but also to its manner, that is, how one kisses somebody’s body part, including action(s) leading to kissing. The following examples (14), (15) and (16) illustrate this idea:

⁷ According to Norman [2017], body-part lexemes can be divided into typical and atypical lexemes. Judging from what we have observed, the *u+gen* construction can include both types of lexemes.

⁸ Also, one notes that there are no syntactic-semantic categories that might include the *celovat’ u kogo ĉto* in Zolotova’s *Syntactic dictionary* [Zolotova 1988].

- (14) *Vot* *tak*, – *skazala* *ona*, *vzjav* *ruku*
 here so say.app.sg.f she take ger hand.acc.sg.f
muža, *podnošja* *eë* *ko* *rtu*
 husband.gen.sg.m lift ger her to mouth.dat.sg.m
i *dotragivajas'* *do* *neë* *neraskrytymi* *gubami*.
 and touch ger to it.gen closed.ins.pl.f lip.ins.pl.f
 – *Kak* *u* *arxiereja* *ruku* *celujut*.
 how at bishop hand kiss.prs.3pl
 gen.sg.m acc.sg.f

'Here's how,' she said, taking her husband's hand, lifting it to her mouth, and barely touching it with closed lips. 'How one kisses a bishop's hand' (Tolstoj, 1878).

- (15) *Lizaveta:* *molča* *berët* *i*
 Lizaveta silently take.prs.3sg and
celuet *u* *muža* *ruku*.
 kiss.prs.3sg at husband.gen.sg.m hand.acc.sg.f
 'Lizaveta: silently takes and kisses on her husband's hand' (Pisemskij, 1859).

- (16) *Krečinskij:* (*berët* *u* *Lidočki* *ruku*
 Krechinskii take.prs.3sg at Lida.gen hand.acc.sg.f
i *celuet*) *Za to,* *čto* *vy* *revnivy*,
 and kiss.prs.3sg as that you jealous
celuju *vašu* *ručku*.
 kiss.prs.1sg your.acc.sg.f little hand.
 acc.sg.f

'Krechinskii: (takes Lidočka's hand and kisses (it)) 'I am kissing your dear little hand on account of your being jealous'' (Suxovo-Kobylin, 1855).

(14) shows a series of actions before kissing the husband's hand. Among them, one can observe that indeed she took his hand and brought it to her lips. In this context, one should also keep in mind that these actions are conducted by the agent of the action and the person to be kissed has no active role (neither a positive nor a negative attitude is implied, unlike the competing dative case, see 2.3) in the accomplishment of the action of kissing. All this suggests that the construction of all these actions is verbalized in the sentence *kak u arxiereja ruku celujut* 'how one kisses a bishop's hand.'

The idea that the existence of the proceeding non-verbalized action can appear on the surface, is confirmed grammatically in (15) where the verb *brat'* 'to take' explicitly shows the action before kissing and proceeding to kissing, and furthermore, both the verbs *brat'* and *celovat'* take common arguments, that is, *u muža* 'at husband' and *ruku* 'hand.' This is confirmed in (16) in which common arguments appear after the first verb, namely, *brat'* 'to take.'

This parallel can also be found in other verbs. To illustrate, let us take a look at the following slightly archaic syntagma *požat' ruku u kogo* 'to shake someone's hands (lit: to shake hand at someone)' in (17)⁹:

⁹ According to my consultants, the syntactic construction *požat' ruku u kogo* is not acceptable. Indeed, Krejdlin and Raxilina [Krejdlin, Raxilina 1983: 58] regard this construction as ungrammatical. However, the *Russian National Corpus* confirms the existence of this pattern, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries.

(17) <i>Zabyta?</i>	<i>O,</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>gotov</i>	<i>požat'</i>	<i>ruku</i>	
forgotten	oh	I	ready	shake.inf	hand.acc.sg.f	
<i>u</i>	<i>togo</i>	<i>ili</i>	<i>pocelovat'</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>toj,</i>	<i>kto</i>
at	he.gen	or	kiss.inf	at	her.gen	who
<i>nazovět</i>	<i>etu</i>	<i>letopis'</i>				
call.npst.3sg	this.acc.sg.f	chronicle.				
		acc.sg.f				
<i>serdca</i>	<i>skučnoju</i>	<i>skazkoju...</i>				
heart.gen.sg.n	boring.ins.sg.f	tale.ins.sg.f				

‘[Her fate has been] forgotten? Whoever calls this chronicle of the heart a boring tale, oh, I am ready to shake his hand or kiss her hand’ (Bestužev-Marlinskij, 1833).

(17) can be interpreted as the agent of the action being ready to shake hands, for example, ready to take the hand of the recipient of the action in advance and then shaking hands being independent of the recipient’s will to cooperate with the agent in realizing the action of “shaking hands.”

To sum up, the use of the preposition *u*+gen in the target construction seems to be a result of the contamination of two verbs, that is, “to take” and “to kiss.” This contamination is motivated by the fact that the action of kissing includes the precondition of “taking hands” as part of the main action.

The meaning described above could be the original meaning of the target construction (and likely spread into other lexical items than *ruka* with a weak implication of the above-mentioned precondition or even without it), which is not the case with other syntactic constructions of the verb *celovat'*. However, as the cited examples above may show, the existence of the preconditioned action is not always clear. Moreover, there are cases in which, indeed, the subtle difference between the target construction and competing constructions becomes less visible.

2.3. Competition with *celovat' komu čto*

Scholars who point out the existence of the target construction often mention *celovat' komu čto* (henceforth, the dative construction) as a competing synonymic construction. According to Zaičkova [Zaichkova 1972: 37], the selection of the dative construction and the *u*+gen construction is not contextually conditioned, and these constructions are interchangeable.¹⁰ However, this is not always the case. Compare (18) with the dative case and (19) with the *u*+gen¹¹:

(18) <i>Ženščina</i>	<i>protjanula</i>	<i>emu</i>	<i>ruku,</i>		
woman.nom.sg.f	extend.app.sg.f	this.acc.sg.f	hand.acc.sg.f		
<i>i</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>ej</i>	<i>ětu</i>	<i>ruku</i>	<i>poceloval.</i>
and	he	her.dat	this.acc.sg.f	hand.	kiss.app.sg.m
				acc.sg.f	

‘The woman extended her hand to him, and he kissed that hand for her.’

¹⁰ According to Mikaelian [2002: 214–215], this alternation is possible in verbs which denote physical contact (or “minimal action”).

¹¹ Examples (18) and (20) have been provided by Dr Yaroslav Gorbachov. Incidentally, according to one opinion, the awkwardness of the phrase *ětu ruku* may contribute to the strangeness of (19).

(19) ?*Ženščina protjanula emu ruku, i on u neě ètu ruku poceloval.*

Grammatically, the second parts of both (18) and (19) are correct, but within the context indicated by the first parts of these examples, according to my consultants (19) sounds strange, while (18) is natural. This difference is due to the fact that the first parts of the examples imply that *ženščina* ‘woman’ is ready to be kissed and she is cooperative in this respect by stretching out (offering) her hand. As has been mentioned above, the *u*+gen construction indicates a non-active commitment of the recipient to realize the action of kissing that contradicts the action made by the woman in the first part of (19).¹² Compare (19) with (14)–(16).

Also, it is important to note the fact that the dative case signals affectedness, thus the dative construction would sound strange in a case where no affectedness is observed, unlike the *u*+gen construction.¹³ Compare (20) with the *u*+gen and (21) with dative case:

(20) <i>Ležaščij</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>polu</i>	<i>alkogolik</i>	<i>sp'janu</i>	
lying.nom.sg.m	on	floor.loc.sg.m	alcoholic.nom.sg.m	drunken	
<i>načal</i>	<i>celovat'</i>	<i>nožki</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>stola,</i>	<i>dumaja</i>
begin.app.sg.m	kiss.inf	leg.acc.pl.f	at	table.gen.sg.m	think ger
<i>čto</i>	<i>eto</i>	<i>nogi</i>	<i>ženy.</i>		
that	this.	leg.nom.pl.f	wife.gen.sg.f		
	nom				

‘The alcoholic lying on the floor, for the reason of being drunk, began kissing the table’s legs, having decided that they were his wife’s feet.’

(21) **Ležaščij na polu alkogolik sp'janu načal celovat' nožki stolu, dumaja čto eto nogi ženy.*

According to my consultants, (21) is impossible because the table, being inanimate, is not affected, while (20) is rather acceptable, as no affectedness can be observed and there is no active involvement by the table in realizing the action of kissing.

3. Diachronic aspects of *celovat' u kogo čto*

3.1. Analytism? History of the usage

The analytic tendency is one of the salient features in the evolution of the Russian morphosyntax [cf. Shvedova 1966; Valgina 2001]. According to Pravdin [1957: 117], the earliest cases of the replacement of the dative case with the *u*+gen can be found in the 15th century. It seems that this process was completed in the 18th century [cf. Logunova

¹² This notion can be identified with what Mel'čuk [Mel'chuk 1995: 161] calls ‘passivity’ of the possessor, which is characteristic of the *u*+gen construction. According to Mikaelian [2002: 215], the *u*+gen construction is used when the possessor is only weakly affected and the *u*+gen construction is more neutral than the dative, because the former construction, unlike the latter, signals that the action takes place in the personal sphere of the individual (expressed by the preposition *u*) without affecting the person.

¹³ Thus, Mrázek and Brym [1962: 101] define the general meaning of the preposition as follows: *vz-tah velmi blíské učasti, velmi blíského posílení se něčeho na něčem* ‘a very close reinforcement // bolstering of something upon something.’

1984]. Furthermore, by illustrating the above-mentioned dative and the *u*+gen constructions, Glovinskaja [Glovinskaya 2000: 242] supposes that the latter construction is a result of analytism. All this suggests that the frequency of the *u*+gen construction with the verb *celovat'* might have been growing. However, Prokopovič [Prokopovich 1966: 139] pointed out that the *u*+gen construction with the verb *celovat'* became increasingly rare during the 20th century. To clarify this controversial situation, whether the *u*+gen construction is a result of the analytic tendency in Russian or not, one should pay attention to the diachronic change of the target construction.

It is difficult to point out the exact time when a given construction started to emerge. In our case, for the sake of simplicity, in what follows, I will limit myself to analysis of the dative and only the *u*+gen construction that includes the noun *ruka* 'hand.' in the syntactic construction, as it appears most often throughout the corpus. With regard to the dative construction, the earliest instance that can be found in the *Russian National Corpus* is the following example from the end of the 17th century, (22):

- (22) *Po nakazanii tom veljat emu est'*
 after punishing.dat.sg.n him.dat order.prs.3sg him.dat eat.inf
jako obez'jane i načalniku celovat' ruku.
 how monkey.dat.sg.f and master.dat.sg.m kiss.inf hand.acc.sg.f
 'After punishing him like that, they order him to eat like a monkey and kiss the master's hand'
 (Lyzlov, 1692).

The *u*+gen construction seems to have started appearing in the mid-18th century among writers such as Sumarokov, Čulkov, Fonvizin, Karamzin and others whose language in literary works was oriented to a colloquial variety of the Russian language. Here are some examples:

- (23) *Ty pered neju francuzskie pesenki popevaeš,*
 you before her.ins French.acc.pl.f song.acc.pl.f sing.prs.2sg
a drugoj u neě
 while another.nom.sg.m at her.gen
ruki celuet.
 hand.acc.pl.f kiss.prs.3sg
 'You leisurely sing French songs in front of her, while another kisses her hand' (Sumarokov, 1750).
- (24) *Uslyšav stuk... poceloval u menja*
 hear.ger knock.acc.sg.m kiss.app.sg.m at me.gen
ruku i ušěl v kaplicu.
 hand.acc.sg.f and leave.app.sg.m into chapel.acc.sg.f
 'Having heard a knock, he kissed my hand and retired into the chapel' (Čulkov, 1766)
- (25) *Bog budet eě pomoščnikom, poceluj*
 god.nom.sg.m be.fut.3sg her helper.ins.sg.m kiss.impr.2sg
u neě ruku tak, kak ja
 at her.gen hand.acc.sg.f so how I
teper' tvoju celuju.
 now your kiss.prs.1sg
 'God will be her helper, kiss her hand in the same way as I am now kissing yours' (Karamzin, 1792).

Although it is difficult to conclude which of the two competing constructions appeared first, it would be rational to suppose that a typologically more regularly attested construction appears first; in our case, the dative construction. The following table summarizes the tendency to choose either the *u*+gen construction or the dative constructions, starting from the 17th century up until today:

Table

Tokens (%) of the *u*+gen and dative constructions in diachrony

	<i>u</i> +gen construction		dative construction	
	<i>celovat'</i>	<i>pocelovat'</i>	<i>celovat'</i>	<i>pocelovat'</i>
1601–1700	0	0	1	0
1701–1800	5 (83%)	5 (83%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)
1801–1900	115 (73%)	229 (82%)	41 (27%)	48 (18%)
1901–2000	31 (20%)	55 (14%)	121 (80%)	337 (86%)
2000–	5 (0.8%)	4 (0.6%)	54 (99.2%)	55 (99.4%)

It can be seen now that *u*+gen was widespread in the 19th century, but the usage dropped radically in the 20th century, while the diachrony of the dative construction shows the opposite tendency. In the end, the analytic *u*+gen construction is replaced by the synthetic dative construction.¹⁴

From this result of the quantitative analysis, one could say that it is difficult to consider that the *u*+gen construction is a result of an analytic tendency in Russian — both either a continuation of the analytic tendency which started in the 15th century, or an analytic tendency in the later period (the 20th and 21st centuries).

3.2. The origin of *celovat' u kogo čto*

The chronology of appearance and spread of the target construction could remind us of the intensive contact of Russia with Western European and Polish culture in the 18th and 19th centuries, when hand kissing as a behavior of high culture eventually became widespread among Russians, particularly aristocrats. However, neither French, German, nor Polish had the structural equivalent to the target construction in Russian. Furthermore, according to Toporkov [2012: 484], hand kissing as a custom did exist among East Slavs, thus it is difficult to place the origin of this construction in the context of cultural contacts, including linguistic contact.

¹⁴ It is noteworthy to mention that this situation has a parallel to the syntactic construction including other verbs, for example, *požat'/požimat' u kogo_{gen} ruku* vs. *požat'/požimat' komu_{dat} ruku* 'to shake someone's hands.' According to data taken from the *Russian National Corpus*, the *u*+gen construction appeared in the 18th century (8 tokens) and was used only in the 19th century (29 tokens). The latest attested example is in Pisemskij (1869). The dative construction is not competitive and rather rare in the 18th century (4 tokens), while in the 19th century, from 1801 to 1869, it is overwhelmingly the more frequent of the two competing constructions (287 tokens).

Belarusian

- (30) *Nixto* *ũ* *žyci* *ne*
 nobody.nom in life.loc.sg.n not
calavaũ *ěj* *ruki!*
 kiss.app.sg.m her.dat hand.gen.sg.f
 ‘Nobody had kissed her hand ever in her life’ (Šamjakin, 1983).
- (31) *Andrej* *padyšoũ* *da* *matki,*
 Andrei.nom approach.app.sg.m to mother.gen.sg.f
pacalavaũ *jae* *ũ* *ruku.*
 kiss.app.sg.m her.acc into hand.acc.sg.f
 ‘Andrej approached his mother (and) kissed her hand’ (Kolas, 1956).

According to my consultants, the dative and the accusative constructions are far more natural than the *u*+gen construction, but there are also consultants who deny the *u*+gen construction in contemporary Ukrainian.

It would be difficult to believe that the *u*+gen construction with the verb of kissing is of common East Slavic origin, as, to the best of my knowledge, not a single example of the target construction being shared by all the East Slavic languages earlier than the 18th century has been attested. Rather, it would be more natural to conclude that in this case the *u*+gen construction is a calque from Russian which spread into the other two East Slavic languages in the 19th century.¹⁶

4. Conclusion

Starting with the notion of “argument split” advanced by Jurij Apresjan, what we have discussed above can be summarized as follows:

1. Although the *u*+gen construction with the verb *celovat’* has been regarded as a fossilized idiomatic phrase and treated as a synonym of the dative construction for expressing the agent’s greetings or respect toward the recipient of the action of kissing, the *u*+gen construction can be collocated with lexemes other than *ruka* ‘hand’ and its meaning does not remain in the sphere of greetings or respect directed at the person to be kissed.
2. The *u*+gen construction, in collocation with the verb *celovat’*, means an action where an agent takes the initiative and plays an active role in realizing the action, implying the existence of preceding actions initiated by the agent which, unlike the dative construction, is not the case with the recipient of the action. Moreover, unlike the dative construction, the *u*+gen construction does not mean any affectedness — which is one of

¹⁶ It is interesting to note that all Belarusian examples with the *u*+gen construction found at the *National Russian Corpus* are translations from Russian into Belarusian. Moreover, in some cases the Russian sentence with the *u*+gen construction is translated into Belarusian with the dative construction. Compare the following sentence taken from Puškin’s *Captain’s Daughter* (1836): *Poceluj u nego_{gen} ručku, i pust’ on tebjja blagoslovit* vs. *Pacaluj jamu_{dat} ručku, i xaj ěn cjabe blaslavic’* ‘Kiss his hand and let him bless you’ (translated into Belarusian by Čorny in 1936). It is worth mentioning the fact that in Ukrainian the same sentence is translated literally: *Pociluj u n’oho_{gen} ručku, i xaj vin tebe blahoslivit’* (translated by Senčenko in 1981).

the features of the dative construction — which justifies coexistence of those two constructions.

3. Diachronically, it is difficult to treat the *u*+gen construction as a result of the analytic tendency observed in the history of Russian morphosyntax. On the contrary, the data taken from the *Russian National Corpus* have proved that the *u*+gen construction has been replaced by the synthetic dative construction. The same tendency can be found in other verbal complexes (such as the verb *požat'* 'to shake (one's hand)'). The reason is unclear. However, one could guess that the reason is that as time went by those verbs tended not to imply a series of preceding actions that lead to the action expressed by the verbs themselves. This change has led the preposition *u*+gen to be more difficult to collocate because the action of kissing itself does not require the ablativeness originally accompanied with the implied action of the verb *brat'* 'take' in the construction *celovat' u kogo čto*.

4. The *u*+gen construction probably started to emerge in the 18th century and became widespread in the 19th century, but its usage declined in the 20th century. All this explains that this is a syntactic construction originally developed in Russian. Although it is shared with other East Slavic languages and not with other Slavic languages, including Polish, it seems that the equivalents in Ukrainian and Belarusian are calque from Russian because, prior to the 18th century, the structural equivalents cannot be found in those languages.

Abbreviations

acc — accusative	loc — locative
app — active past participle	m — masculine
dat — dative	n — neuter
f — feminine	nom — nominative
fut — future	npst — non-past tense
ger — gerund	pl — plural
impr — imperative	prs — present
inf — infinitive	rel — relativizer
ins — instrumental	sg — singular

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