A Far North Perspective on the “New” Vocative in Russian

Laura A. Janda

Note change in perspective: I will argue that vocative is a case
Overview

PART ONE: What is a vocative? Is it a form of a noun or of a verb or something else?

PART TWO: Russian “new” vocative
мам! ‘mama!’, Саш! ‘Sasha!’

PART THREE: North Saami “new” vocative
Gula, mánážan.
listen.IMPER.2S child.DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S
‘Listen, my little child.’
PART ONE: What is a vocative?

A call for attention that hasn’t gotten much attention
Vocatives have been largely ignored

“even though they are amongst the most basic and earliest acquired structures of language, vocatives have hardly ever been discussed in all their facets from a linguistic point of view” Sonnenhauser & Hanna 2013: 3


However, this situation seems to be changing:
   Sonnenhauser & Hanna 2013, Hill 2014, Julien 2014
Is a vocative a case form of a **noun**?

YES, the vocative:
- Can have distinct morphological form (Kiparsky 1967)
- Can often be replaced by nominative, which is a case
- Can show agreement within the NP (Hill 2014, Julien 2014)
- Can be syntactically integrated via a Vocative Phrase (Hill 2014)

NO, the vocative:
- Is not syntactically integrated into a clause (Isačenko 1962)
- Has peculiar restrictions that do not apply to other cases (functional, lexical, morphological, phonological, cf. Andersen 2012)
- Diachronically behaves differently (cf. Bulgarian & Macedonian lost all cases but kept vocative)
Is a vocative a form of a verb?

YES, the vocative:

– Marks 2nd person (Fink 1972)
– Shares features with imperatives (Jakobson 1971, Greenberg 1996)

NO, the vocative would be a mighty defective verb...
Is a vocative a form of a verb?

YES, the vocative:
- Marks – 2nd person (Fink 1972)
- Shares features with imperatives (Jakobson 1971, Greenberg)
- Possessive predicational vocatives (Din idiot! ‘You idiot! [lit. Your idiot]’ ≈ Du er en idiot ‘You are an idiot’, cf. Julien 2014)

NO, the vocative would be a mighty defective verb...

From the perspective of Russian and North Saami, interpretation as a verb is unlikely, so we won’t pursue that avenue here.

NOTE: association with possessive
Is a vocative another part of speech?

Andersen (2012) argues that the vocative is a separate part of speech, based on evidence from the Russian “new” vocative.
PART TWO: Russian “new” vocative

(1) Dissyllabic hypocoristics. (Костя! ⇒) Кость!, (Надя! ⇒) Нады!;
(2) Dissyllabic diminutives. (Ванька! ⇒) Ваньк!, (Машка! ⇒) Машк!;
(3) Hypocoristics of three or more syllables. (Наташа! ⇒) Наташ!, (Сережка! ⇒) Сережк!, ...;
(4) Kinship terms. (дядя! ⇒) дядь!, (мама! ⇒) мам!, ...;
(5) Patronymics. (Андреевна! ⇒) Андреевн!, (Николаевна! ⇒) Николавн!, ...;
(6) Name + patronymic. (Анна Ивановна! ⇒ Анн Ванна! ⇒) Анн Ванн!, (Марья Александровна! ⇒ Марь Санна! ⇒) Марь Санн!, ...;
(7) Common nouns. (девушка! ‘Miss’ ⇒) девушк!, (хозяйка! ‘hostess, landlady’ ⇒) хозяййк!, (ребята! ‘boys, guys’ ⇒) ребят!, (девчата! ‘girls’ ⇒) девчат!, ...

**BOLDFACE** marks items that conflict with Russian phonotactics
(Examples from Andersen 2012)
PART TWO: Russian "new" vocatives

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**BOLDFACE** marks items that conflict with Russian phonotactics
(Examples from Andersen 2012)

Final voicing seems to be on its way out, and not all speakers accept vocatives with consonant clusters that are unusual for Russian (Daniel’ 2009)
PART TWO: Russian “new” vocative

Old Church Slavonic (≈ Proto-Slavic) had a vocative case (singular only) that has been lost in modern Russian, surviving in only a few interjections: Boże (moj)! ‘(my) God!’ [cf. Bog ‘God.NOM.SG’], Gospodi! ‘Lord!’ [cf. Gospod’ ‘Lord.NOM.SG’]

Russian “new” vocative has appeared since the mid-1800s: 

*mam*! ‘mama!’, *Saš*! ‘Sasha!’

**NOTE:** association with **possessive**
Features of Russian “new” vocative that Andersen uses to argue that vocative is not a case

• **Pragmatic restrictions:** Function is primarily pragmatic, not syntactic
• **Lexical restrictions:** Only with forms of address
• **Syntactic restrictions:** Syntactically independent of sentence
• **Morphophonological restrictions:** Limited to words ending in –α with penultimate or prepenultimate stress
• **Phonological peculiarities:** Formed by truncation, resulting in word-final consonant clusters (lacking vowel insertion) and voiced final consonants not otherwise tolerated in Russian
• Strong association with **diminutives** (themselves peculiar)
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But do these (and other) arguments against calling vocative a case really hold?
Pragmatic restrictions

Other examples of cases used to express pragmatic functions:
• Virile vs. deprecatory endings for Npl in Polish (Janda 1996)

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<td>‘professors’ [wow, I respect those men!]</td>
<td>‘professors’ [they are men]</td>
<td>‘professors’ [they are wimps, not men]</td>
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• Ethical dative (Janda 1993, Janda & Clancy 2006)
Cz: Pustila jsem dceru na hory a ona ti si mi zlomila nohu!
‘I let my daughter go to the mountains and she you-DAT self-DAT me-DAT broke leg!’
[you-DAT: I’m telling you, can you believe it?!]
[self-DAT: It’s her leg, she did it to herself.]  
[me-DAT: Just imagine what this means for me, I’m going to suffer for this!!]
Pragmatic restrictions

Other examples of cases used to express pragmatic functions:

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• Ethical dative (Janda 1983, Janda & Clancy 2006)

\textit{Cz:} \textit{Pustila jsem dceru na hory a ona \texttt{ti si mi} zlomila nohu!}

‘I let my daughter go to the mountains and she \texttt{you-DAT} self-DAT \texttt{me-DAT} broke leg!’

[\texttt{you-DAT}: I’m telling you, can you believe it?!!]
[\texttt{self-DAT}: It’s her leg, she did it to herself.]
[\texttt{me-DAT}: Just imagine what this means for me, I’m going to suffer for this!!]

Notice that the ethical datives are also not syntactically integrated into the sentence.
Lexical restrictions

There is plenty of evidence of lexical restrictions on case forms:

• Loc 2 in Russian, as in в снегу ‘in the snow’:
  – this case ending is largely restricted to nouns designating concrete locations (“жесткая локализация”, Plungjan 2002)
  – an alternate ending for 148 nouns, primarily monosyllabic masculine animate nouns with mobile stem stress (Janda 1996)

• Gen 2 in Russian, as in выпить чай ‘drink (some) tea’:
  – used with only about 1% of masculine inanimate nouns
  – used with nouns referring to quantifiable substances (Worth 1984; Janda 1996)
  – currently productive, cf. абрикотин ‘apricot liquor’, анилин ‘aniline’, асBEST ‘asbestos’…
Morphophonological restrictions

There is plenty of evidence of morphophonological restrictions on case forms:

• Loc 2 in Russian, as in в снегу́ ‘in the snow’:
  – primarily monosyllabic masculine animate nouns with mobile stem stress
  – there are ten nouns with polysyllabic Nsg forms, but most of these derive from monosyllabic stems via pleophony (бергъ > берег, берегу́), diminutive formation (бок, боку́ ‘side’ has diminutive бочок, бочку́), or prefixation (cf. порт, порту́ ‘port’ and аэропорт, аэропорту́ ‘airport’) (Janda 1996)

• NPI –á, as in берег, берега́ ‘bank’
  – possible only for nouns with accentual patterns that permit end stress in the N(A)pl as opposed to stem stress in the singular (only two exceptions to this rule – two nouns with fixed end stress: рукав, рукава́ ‘sleeve’; обшлаг, обшлага́ ‘cuff’)
  – also restricted largely to words that result from pleophony or partially imitate the segmental phonology of pleophonic forms (потрох, потроха́ ‘entrail’; соболь, соболя́ ‘sable’) (Janda 1996, Worth 1983)
Phonological peculiarities

There is plenty of evidence of phonological peculiarities in case forms:

- Bethin 2012 “Reduction of unstressed /o/ and /a/ to [ɐ] or [ɐ] after non-palatalized consonants and to [ɪ] after palatalized ones in Contemporary Standard Russian (CSR) is systematic. But in certain inflectional suffixes [ɐ] occurs instead of the expected [ɪ] after palatalized consonants.”
  - For example, the last vowel in дядя ‘uncle’ should be [ɪ], but it is [ɐ], despite the fact that this runs counter to prevailing иканье in Contemporary Standard Russian
Diachronic peculiarities

Cases are lost in different orders, and it is not really true that vocative was preserved while all other cases were lost in Bulgarian & Macedonian

- The vocative is marginal and optional in both Bulgarian (Girvin 2013) and Macedonian (Friedman 1993)
- The original Slavic vocative was lost in some Slavic languages where all other cases were preserved (Russian, for example)
- There is just a lot of variation that doesn’t tell us anything about whether or not vocative is a case
5 = North Saami

A Finno-Ugric language with about 20,000 speakers in contiguous regions of northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland.
5 = North Saami

A Finno-Ugric language with about 20,000 speakers in contiguous regions of northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland

This portion of the talk is based on collaboration with Lene Antonsen
PART THREE: North Saami “new” vocative?

The possessive suffix (NPx) is being replaced by an analytic construction (ReflN) in anaphoric contexts:

Noun + Possessive Suffix
Lásse stoahká ustibiinnis
[Lásse.NOM plays friend.COM.SG.PX.3S]
‘Lásse is playing with his friend’

Reflexive Pronoun in Genitive Case
Lásse stoahká iežas ustibiin
[Lásse.NOM plays REFL.GEN.PX.3S friend.COM.SG]
‘Lásse is playing with his friend’

The one use where the NPx is strongest is arguably a vocative:

Gula, mánážan.
listen.IMPER.2S child.DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S
‘Listen, my little child.’
Development of a vocative from a possessive is not unprecedented

Michael (2013: 157) documents the use of the First Person Singular possessive construction with close kinship terms, as in *ina* “my mother” in Nanti (spoken in Peruvian Amazonia) as vocatives.
The replacement of North Saami NPx by ReflN

Data: 2272 examples from literary texts (0.53M words)

NPx with NOM used as a vocative survives well even among younger authors
Refl + N, which is replacing NPx (but NOT used as vocative)

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guoibmi
NPx expands noun paradigm from 13 slots to 130, adding these 81 unique forms for *guoibmi* “partner”

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Boldfaced forms are NOM.PX first person, can be used as vocative; nearly all other PX forms are rather rare

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Rare/biblical

Becoming a vocative case?
Data: Literary texts (.53M words) + New Testament (.13M words)

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<th>CASE.NUMBER form of possessum</th>
<th>PERSON.NUMBER of possessor</th>
<th># examples of vocative use</th>
<th># examples of other exophoric use</th>
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1P and NOM.PL vocative uses are very stylized, found primarily in Biblical texts:

Mánážiiddán [child.DIM.NOM.PL.PX.1s] “My dear/little children”

Áhččámet [father.NOM.SG.PX.1p] ‘Our Father’
A paradigm for North Saami in the future?

guoibmi “partner”
NOM.SG          guoibmi
GEN.SG=ACC.SG    guoimmi
ILL.SG           guoibmái
LOC.SG           guoimmis
COM.SG=LOC.PL    guimmiin
NOM.PL           guoimmit
GEN.PL=ACC.PL    guimmiid
ILL.PL           guimmiide
COM.PL           guimmiiguin
ESS              guoibmin
VOC.SG           guoibmán

Here we go from a paradigm with 130 slots and 91 unique forms to a paradigm with 14 slots and 11 unique forms by dropping the NPX and adding a vocative (with lexical restrictions)
NOM.SG.PX examples from a novel for young adults

Viimmat lea guhkes, guhkes dálvi nohkan, Linážan!
‘The long, long winter is finally over, *my little Lina [DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S]!*’

Ean eaisege, nieiddažan, gos bat don leat dakkár jurdagiid roggan?
‘No, we’re not, *my little daughter [DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S], where did you dig up such ideas?*’

Girdil dál lottážan!
‘Now fly away, *my little bird [DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S]!*’

Maid don dál leat, láikkes bussážan?
‘How are you now, *my lazy little kitty [DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S]!*’
NOM.SG.PX.1S examples from a novel for young adults

Viimmat lea guhkes, guhkes dálvi nohkan, Linážan!
‘The long, long winter is finally over, my little Lina [DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S]!’

Ean eaisege, nieiddažan, gos bat don leat?
‘No, we’re not, my little daughter [DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S], where did you dig up such ideas?’

Girdil dál lottážan!
‘Now fly away, my little bird [DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S]!’

Maid don dál leat, láikkes bussážan?
‘How are you now, my lazy little kitty [DIM.NOM.SG.PX.1S]?’

88% of 1S vocative uses in literary texts involve the diminutive suffix –š (-ž intervocalically), all end in -žan
The “new” vocative in North Saami

• –n [PX.1S] is possibly undergoing morphological reinterpretation as a vocative case form in North Saami
• The “new” vocative can be defended as an emerging case form in North Saami
• This is part of an overall trend in North Saami to go from agglutinating to synthetic morphology
• There is a tendency for inflectional forms to get “recycled” into new roles when paradigms are under pressure (Lass 1990, Janda 1996)
Conclusion

• The “new” vocative in both Russian and North Saami can be defended as a case form
• Both “new” vocatives show lexical restriction to words that can be used as forms of address and association with diminutives
• Yes, the Russian “new” vocative has some additional quirks, but we can find pragmatic, syntactic, and morphophonological peculiarities elsewhere in Slavic case forms
References, p. 1


References, p. 2

Janda, Laura A. and Steven J. Clancy. 2006. The Case Book for Czech, a coherent description of all the uses of all the cases with examples for linguists and learners. Bloomington, IN: Slavica.


Now it’s CLEAR

Cognitive Linguistics: Empirical Approaches to Russian