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## HETERONYMY “VOCATIVE VS. NOMINATIVE” AS A GRAMMATICAL CATEGORY IN LATVIAN

0. My aim is to give a (synchronical) structuralist account of the distribution of adjectival variants in the vocative case in contemporary literary Latvian.

### 1. Morphology of nouns.

In the singular a noun can exhibit one or more of the following three morphological types of vocative forms:

1. nominative-vocative (i.e. vocative homonymic with nominative), e.g.: *tēvs!*, *dēls!*, *māsa!*, *māte!*,
2. accusative-vocative (i.e. vocative homonymic with accusative), e.g. *brāli!*,
3. idiomorphic-vocative (i.e. vocative homonymic neither with nominative nor accusative), e.g.: *tēv!*, *tētiņ!*, *brāl! mās!*, *māt!*

In the plural all vocative forms of nouns are nominative-vocative forms.

### 2. Morphology of adjectives.

In the singular an adjective exhibits as a rule two morphological types of vocative forms:

1. nominative-vocative (i.e. vocative homonymic with nominative), e.g. *mans labais...!*, *mana labā...!*,
2. accusative-vocative (i.e. vocative homonymic with accusative), e.g. *manu labo...!*

In the plural all vocative forms of adjectives are nominative-vocative forms. Notice that there exist no idiomorphic-vocative forms for adjectives, even in the singular.

### 3. Syntax.

Let us consider sequences of the type: adjectival pronoun (AP) + adjective (A) + noun (N). As it is obvious that for morphological reasons formation of such sequences triggers no difficulty in the plural, we will focus on the case of the singular. Types 3.1., 3.2., 3.3. are possible. Types 3.4., 3.5., 3.8., 3.9., 3.10. are impossible. Types 3.6., 3.7. are not accepted by all speakers and we will treat them here as impossible.

3.1. AP(nominative-vocative) + A(nominative-vocative) + N(vocative) (N.B. “vocative” = “nominative-vocative OR accusative-vocative OR idiomorphic-vocative”, i.e. any vocative form irrespective of its surface morphology), e.g.:

- (1) *Mans labais tēvs (dēls)!*
- (2) *Mans labais brāli!*
- (3) *Mans labais tēv (tētiņ, brāl)!*
- (4) *Mana labā māsa (māte)!*
- (5) *Mana labā mās (māt)!*

3.2. AP(accusative-vocative) + A(accusative-vocative) + N(accusative-vocative), e.g.:

- (6) *Manu labo brāli!*

3.3. AP(accusative-vocative) + A(accusative-vocative) + N(idiomorphic-vocative), e.g.:

- (7) *Manu labo tēv (tētiņ)!*
- (8) *Manu labo mās (māt)!*

3.4. \*AP(accusative-vocative) + A(accusative-vocative) + N(nominative-vocative), e.g.:

- \*(9) *Manu labo tēvs (dēls)!*
- \*(10) *Manu labo māsa (māte)!*

3.5. \*AP(nominative-vocative) + A(accusative-vocative) + N(nominative-vocative), e.g.:

- \*(11) *Mans labo tēvs (dēls)!*
- \*(12) *Mana labo māsa (māte)!*

3.6. \*AP(nominative-vocative) + A(accusative-vocative) + N(accusative-vocative), e.g.:

- \*(13) *Mans labo brāli!*

3.7. \*AP(nominative-vocative) + A(accusative-vocative) + N(idiomorphic-vocative), e.g.:

- \*(14) *Mans labo tēv (tētiņ, brāl)!*
- \*(15) *Mana labo mās (māt)!*

3.8. \*AP(accusative-vocative) + A(nominative-vocative) + N(nominative-vocative), e.g.:

\*(16) *Manu labais tēvs (dēls)!*

\*(17) *Manu labā māsa (māte)!*

3.9. \*AP(accusative-vocative) + A(nominative-vocative) + N(accusative-vocative), e.g.:

\*(18) *Manu labais brāli!*

3.10. \*AP(accusative-vocative) + A(nominative-vocative) + N(idiomorphic-vocative), e.g.:

\*(19) *Manu labais tēv (tētiņ, brāl)!*

\*(20) *Manu labā mās (māt)!*

#### 4. Traditional description.

Grammars generally assume that there exist two forms which have to be labelled identically as “vocative singular” in the paradigm of a given Latvian adjective (e.g. Bergmane e.a. 1959, 432 f.; Pauliņš e.a. 1978, 65; Ceplīte & Ceplītis 1997, 41 f.; Mathiassen 1997, 58), but as these two forms are neither in free variation nor in complementary distribution an *ad hoc* description of the syntax of each of these variants must be (and generally is) added. So the facts mentioned above are usually described more or less this way: “adjectival vocative is usually homonymic with nominative, but if the noun has a special vocative form (better: if the vocative form of the noun is not homonymic with its nominative form), then it is possible to put the adjective in a vocative form homonymic with the form of the accusative” (cf. Bergmane e.a. 1959, 434; Pauliņš e.a. 1978, 66; Mathiassen 1997, 62). Regardless of its low degree of formalization it is noticeable that such a description is unsatisfactory, at least because it does not exclude the possibility of sequences of the types 3.6., 3.7., 3.9., 3.10.

#### 5. Proposed (formalized) description.

There co-exist two systems (A and B) in contemporary literary Latvian.

According to system A, the vocative form of adjectives is always homonymic with the nominative form (cf. 1–5).

According to system B, there exists in Latvian an inflectional category of adjectives and nouns which we can call “heteronymy” (as an abbreviation for “heteronymy ‘vocative vs. nominative’ ”). The nominative-vocative forms of nouns will be labelled “non-heteronymic vocative” forms. The accusative-vocative and idiomorphic-vocative forms of nouns will be labelled “heteronymic vocative” forms. The nominative-vocative and accusative-vocative forms of a given adjective will be labelled respectively “non-

heteronymic vocative” and “heteronymic vocative” forms. In vocative (singular) some nouns have both an heteronymic form (e.g. *tēv!*) and a non-heteronymic form (*tēvs!*). Some are defective and have only an heteronymic form (e.g. *tētiņ!*) (N.B. *brāli!* and *brāl!* are variants of the heteronymic form of BRĀLIS) or a non-heteronymic form (e.g. *dēls!*). Adjectives always have both heteronymic forms (homonymic with accusative) and non-heteronymic forms (homonymic with nominative by definition). Dependent adjectives (including adjectival pronouns) agree in heteronymy with governing nouns (cf. 1, 4, 6–8, 9–20).

## 6. Concluding remarks.

Typologically heteronymy is a very odd grammatical category:

It is a “partial category” since it is relevant (“morphologized”) only in vocative.

It has no functional connection either with semantics (as has, for instance, category of number for nouns) or with (more or less arbitrary) lexical classes (as has, for instance, category of gender). Its only functional connection is with the relational properties of the “signifiant” of the governing noun in vocative: is this “signifiant” identical with the one of the nominative or not?\*

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