

### 12.6: On the dative of possession

The dative of possession is a particular use of the indirect object. It accompanies the verb “to be” with the meaning “exist” or “there is, are.” Needless to say, “to be” in this application is not a linking verb.

I will use the dative of possession to express in (bad) English the following sentence:

Students have books. (οἱ μαθηταὶ ἔχουσι βιβλία.)  
S V DO

To imitate the Greek dative of possession, I use the DO, books, as Subject, and I say “Books exist for students,” or, in more tolerable English, “There are books for students.” This would be in Greek, using the dative of possession:

τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἐστὶ βιβλία.  
dative of possession V S

Now suppose you find a sentence which in Greek says, literally: “Beautiful eyes exist for that girl:”

καλοὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ εἰσὶν ταύτῃ τῇ κόρῃ.  
S V dat possession

In English you start by the girl, who possesses the beautiful eyes, and make the eyes the D O:

“That girl has beautiful eyes.”