

## On Licensing NCIs in Russian

Russian is a strict Negative Concord language. Negative expressions such as bare pronouns *ničego* ‘nothing’, *nikogo* ‘nobody’ as in (1) or negative adverbs, like *nikogda* ‘never’ as in (2) are always licensed by clause mate negation marker *ne* irrespectively of their position inside the clause. A general assumption is that negative concord items (NCI) require a sentential NEG(ation) OP to be licensed which is presumably in Spec, NegP. OP must c-command NCIs and be sufficiently local. Hence non-local negative concord is not acceptable (3). In more recent work, Rozhnova (2009) and Baykov (2022) have identified additional restrictions on typical clause-level locality for NC licensing. That is “NCIs may be licensed by verbal negation *ne* across a DP or an AP boundary iff this constituent (a DP or an AdjP respectively) is an argument; such licensing is impossible if the DP or the AdjP in question is an adjunct”. (Rozhnova, 2009, p.63). This generalization is exemplified by a minimal pair of sentences (4) taken from Rozhnova (2009). However, the example (4b) contains two factors that are not teased apart in either of their discussions: it involves an attributive and not a predicate adjective which is their factor but also it contains a post-nominal vs. pre-nominal AP which is my factor. Adjectives usually precede nouns in Russian, even if such AP is heavy, i.e. has a complement (5). In this paper I show that the pre-nominal vs. post-nominal piece of (4b) is just as important a factor as its Predicative vs. Attributive status (6). This is true for both pre-nominal and post-nominal APs with argument direct objects (7) as well as cases in (4). A survey of 45 native speakers supports these contrasts. Although some speakers resist allowing NC licensing into any kind of attributive AP (just like the Rozhnova’s speakers), there are also other native speakers who only find this unacceptable when the entire attributive AP is post-nominal. The same speakers have less difficulty with pre-nominal APs within the nominal (though they are still not perfect).

There are several possibilities for why the sentence (4b) is unacceptable. The first one is that they are not c-commanded by OP. It could be that c-command fails at the relevant point in the derivation depending on the timing of NCI-licensing. That is, NCIs are not c-commanded by Neg OP once APs are moved out to the right. This would imply that APs are moved much higher, out of OP’s domain, possibly attached to TP. If that is the case, we need a theory according to which NCI-licensing follows extraposition. The second one is that the APs are c-commanded by OP but attached after NCI-licensing applies. It is possible that these APs are introduced too late into the structure. If so, we need to explain why then NCIs are licensed in other adjuncts, e.g., pre-nominal APs. Third possibility is that NCI is c-commanded by OP but inaccessible due to distance. This would make such APs similar to reduced relative clauses. Of course, post-nominal APs are not CPs on the surface, but it is possible that they are CPs when NCI-licensing takes place, and then “reduced”. Here, we should ask then what is it about certain CPs that block syntactic processes? One could argue that it is because there is an intervening OP in their specifier, e.g. relativizing OP in the spec of post-nominal APs, and it is this that blocks the NEG OP from looking into them. This would be then similar to the REL in SpecCP of full RCs, which is needed in order to put the AP together with the nominal, in LF.

- (1) Marija ne videla ničego.  
Mary NEG saw nothing  
'Mary didn't see anything.'
- (2) On nikogda ne kuril.  
he never NEG smoked  
'He never smoked.'
- (3) \*Ivan ne skazala, čto ty kupila ničego.  
Ivan not said that you bought no-what  
[to mean: Ivan didn't say that you bought anything'.] [Brown (2005): p. 100, ex. (59)]
- (4) a. Zadanie ne budet legkim ni dlja kogo.  
task NEG be.FUT.3SG easy for no-one  
'The task will not be easy for anyone.' [Rozhnova (2009): p. 63, ex. (42a)]  
b. \*Èto ne budet zadaniem, legkim ni dlja kogo.  
this NEG be.FUT.3SG task easy for no-one  
'This will not be an easy task for anyone (lit. an easy-for-anyone task).' [ibid.: p.63, ex. (42b)]
- (5) a. legkoe dlja vsech zadanie. (unmarked)  
easy for everyone task  
'a task easy for everyone'  
b. zadanie legkoe dlja vsech. (marked)  
task easy for everyone  
'a task easy for everyone'
- (6) a. \*Èto ne budet [zadaniem, legkim ni dlja kogo].  
this NEG be.FUT.3SG task easy for no-one  
'This will not be an easy task for anyone (lit. an easy-for-anyone task).'  
b. ?Èto ne budet [legkim ni dlja kogo zadaniem].  
this NEG be.FUT.3SG easy for no-one task  
'This will not be an easy task for anyone.'
- (7) a. \*Ja ne kupil knigi, napisannye nikakimi iz ètix avtorov.  
I NEG bought book, written not-by-any from these authors  
intended: 'I didn't buy the book, written by any of these authors.'  
b. ?Ja ne udaljaj raspoložennye ni na odnom iz žestkih diskov fajly.  
I NEG deleted located not on one from hard drives files  
intended: 'I didn't delete the files, located on any of the hard drives'.

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