

The Genitive of Negation in Russian: Blocking of Case-licensing by Negation

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1. Introduction

The genitive of negation (GenNeg) in Russian is a phenomenon in which an argument or an adjunct DP that bears structural Case in an affirmative sentence can surface bearing Genitive case in the corresponding negative sentence, as illustrated in (1):¹

- (1) a. Saša pokupaet žurnaly
 Sasha:NOM buys magazines:ACC
 ‘Sasha buys magazines’
- b. Saša **ne** pokupaet **žurnaly/žurnalov**
 Sasha:NOM **NEG** buys **magazines:ACC/GEN**
 ‘Sasha does not buy magazines’ (from Bailyn 1997:85)

This phenomenon has received considerable attention from various perspectives, ranging from descriptive approaches to formal accounts (e.g., Jakobson 1936/1971, Dahl 1969, Padučeva, 1974, Gundel 1978/1988, Babby 1980, Pesetsky 1982, Timberlake 1975, 1986, Neidle 1988, Bailyn 1997, Pereltsvaig 1998, Brown 1999, and Borshev and Partee 2001).

In this paper, I offer a syntactic account of the Case-alternation facts of the GenNeg in Russian, by drawing on insights from the previous research that there is a correlation between Case on DPs and their (non-)presuppositional interpretations (see Timberlake 1975, Babby 1980, Babyonyshev 1996, Bailyn 1997, Brown 1999, and Borshev and Partee 2001, among others). I show that an elegant treatment of the GenNeg is possible by utilizing tools such as Relativized Minimality (Rizzi 1990) and the Mapping Hypothesis (Diesing 1992) (see Babyonyshev 1996, Bailyn 1997, and Brown 1999 for accounts utilizing the Mapping Hypothesis). I argue that the GenNeg arises as a result of the head of the Negation Phrase blocking Case-licensing from above.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents some of the important properties of the GenNeg reported in the literature. Section 3 offers a new analysis of these facts within the framework of the Minimalist Program. I propose that functional heads can block the feature-checking of other functional heads when they intervene between these heads and their target DPs. This section also shows that the proposed analysis can readily account for the properties of the GenNeg presented in Section 2. Section 4 reviews some of the previous analyses of the GenNeg in comparison with the proposed analysis. Section 5 presents an additional welcome result of the new account: it sheds light on the obligatory

occurrence of the GenNeg in existential sentences. Section 6 touches upon two remaining problems of the GenNeg. Finally, Section 7 concludes the paper.

2. Some properties of the genitive of negation in Russian

This section presents six important properties of the GenNeg in Russian by outlining what has been reported in the literature.

First of all, the GenNeg occurs only in the presence of clausemate sentential negation, as shown in (2) and (3) (see Timberlake 1986, Bailyn 1997, and Pereltsvaig 1998, among others):

- (2) a. Ja **ne** nashel **tsvetov**
 I NEG found **flowers:GEN**
 ‘I didn’t find (the) flowers’ (from Pereltsvaig 1998:2)
- b. Ja **ne** obeščaju pisat’ ***stixov**
 I NEG promise to-write **verse: GEN**
 (from Timberlake 1986:347)
- (3) U nego v rukax **ne slovar’/*slovarja**
 at him in hands NEG **dictionary:NOM/*GEN**
 ‘It isn’t a dictionary that he has in his hands (it is something else)’

In (2b), the GEN-case marking on the object of the verb *pisat’* is ungrammatical, because it is in a different clause than the negation. On the other hand, the GEN-case marking on the nominal ‘dictionary’ is not possible, because it is under constituent negation rather than sentential negation.

The second property of the GenNeg is that, when the “subject” of a negated sentence is a GEN-case marked DP, the predicate bears the default or “impersonal” agreement morphology, namely, third person, singular, neuter, as shown in (4c). Notice that when the subject has a Nominative (NOM) case, the agreement is kept intact, as shown in (4b) (see Babby 1980, Pesetsky 1982, Gundel 1974/1988, and Babyonyshev 1996, among others):

- (4) a. Zdes’ rastut griby
 here grow:**3rd, PL** mushrooms:**NOM, 3rd, PL**
 ‘Mushrooms grow here’ (from Babby 1980)
- b. Zdes’ griby **ne rastut**
 here mushrooms:**NOM, 3rd, PL** NEG **grow:**3rd, PL****
 ‘Mushrooms do not grow here’ (from Babby 1980)
- c. Zdes’ **ne rastët** gribov
 here NEG **grow:**3rd, SG**** mushrooms:**GEN, 3rd, PL**
 ‘No mushrooms grow here’ (from Babby 1980)

Third, the GenNeg seems to apply optionally when the sentence has an unaccusative verb, as shown in (1). However, in the existential copula

construction, it seems to apply obligatorily, as shown in (5) (see Dahl 1969, Timberlake 1975, Babby 1980, Gundel 1974/1988, Babyonyshev 1996, and Bailyn 1997):

- (5) a. Na stole est' žurnaly.
on table be magazines:NOM
'There are magazines on the table'
b. Na stole **net** žurnalov/*žurnaly.
on table **NEG-be** **magazines:GEN/*NOM**
'There are no magazines on the table' (from Bailyn 1997:86)

The fourth property of the GenNeg is that it targets the THEME argument of the verb, as shown in (6-8) (see Pesetsky 1982, Babyonyshev 1996, Bailyn 1997, and Brown 1999, among others).²

- (6) Ja ne **čitaju** **žurnalov**
I NEG **read** **magazine:GEN**
'I don't read (any) magazines' (from Brown 1999:46)
(7) **Otveta** ne **prišlo**
answer:GEN NEG **came**
'No answer came' (from Brown 1999:46)
(8) **Studenty/*studentov** ne **spjat**
students:NOM/*GEN NEG **sleep**
'Students don't sleep' (from Brown 1999:46)

The above sentences show that the GenNeg applies to the object of a transitive or an unaccusative verb but does not apply to the subject of an intransitive (or transitive) verb.

According to Babby (2000), however, in existential sentences, which characteristically have a locative element in sentence-initial position, GenNeg can also appear on "the subject" of unergative verbs, as shown in (9):

- (9) V xorovode **ne pljasalo ni odnoj devuški** (odni parni).
in round-dance NEG **dance** NI **one:GEN girl:GEN** (only guy:NOM).
'There wasn't a single girl dancing in the round dance (only guys)'
(from Babby 2000:50)

The fifth property of the GenNeg is that it never applies to nominals that bear oblique case in an affirmative sentence, as shown in (10) (see Babby 1980, Pesetsky 1982):³

- (10) a. On upravljaj **fabrikoj/*fabriki**
 he managed **factory:INST/*GEN**
 'He managed a/the factory'
- b. On **ne** upravljaj **fabrikoj/*fabriki**
 he **NEG** managed **factory:INST/*GEN**
 'He didn't manage a/the factory' (from Pereltsvaig 1998:2)

Last but not least, DPs bearing GenNeg tend to denote indefinite, non-specific, unindividuated, non-presupposed entities, as shown in (11a), whereas their structural Case-marked counterparts tend to denote definite, specific, individuated, presupposed things, as shown in (11b) (Jakobson 1936/1971, Timberlake 1975, Babby 1980, and Gundel 1974/1988) (see Section 4 for apparent exceptions):

- (11) a. Ne čuvstovoalos **Moroza**
 NEG felt:N, SG **frost:GEN**
 'No frost was felt' (there was no frost) (adapted from Babby 1980)
- b. **Moroz** ne čuvstvovalsja
Frost:NOM NEG felt:M, SG
 'The frost was not felt' (we were wearing warm clothes)
 (from Babby 1980)

To summarize, in this section, I have presented the following properties of the GenNeg in Russian:

- It occurs only in the presence of clausemate sentential negation.
- When the “subject” of the sentence is GenNeg-marked, the predicate bears “impersonal” agreement morphology.
- The GenNeg only occurs on DPs that can receive structural case in affirmative sentences.
- Normally, the GenNeg targets underlying objects, but in the existential copula construction, it can target the subject of a seemingly unergative verb as well.
- It seems to apply optionally in non-existential sentences but obligatorily in the existential copular construction.
- GenNeg-marked DPs tend to refer to non-presupposed entities, while structural case-marked DPs tend to refer to presupposed entities.

3. A new analysis

In this section, I offer a new analysis of the GenNeg in Russian within the framework of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995, 2000). In the framework that I am adopting in this paper, syntactic elements are base-generated with lexical features which need to be checked off by agreement between the relevant licensers and licensees.

3.1 The proposal

I argue that the GenNeg instantiates the Relativized Minimality effect (Rizzi 1990). The idea is that NEG, being a functional head, blocks the operation of Case-licensing heads when it intervenes between these heads and their target DPs. Due to this blocking effect, DPs located below NegP surface with GenNeg instead of structural case.⁴

I propose that functional heads can block the feature-checking operation by other functional heads. I claim that this blocking effect is parameterized across languages, which is attributable to different syntactic locations of certain functional heads and their features. Under this proposal, structural case can be licensed when the following condition is met:

(12) *Case-licensing under Relativized Minimality:*

A Case-licensing head X can license Case feature F on Y if and only if there is no intervening functional head Z which c-commands Y but does not c-command X.

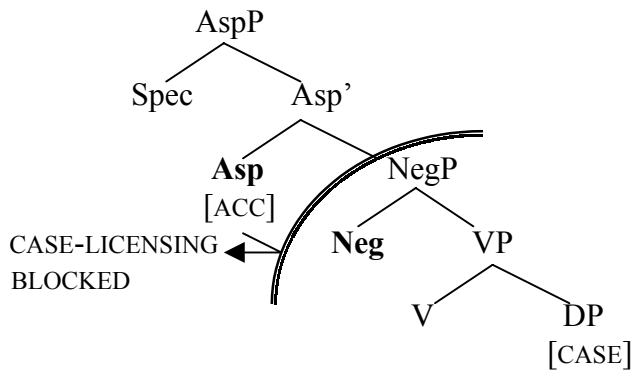
In order for this proposal to work, however, we need to make the following assumptions: First, we need to assume that, in Russian, NEG is a functional category (see Bailyn 1997 and Brown 1999). In addition, it is necessary to posit that NegP is located above VP and below the functional projection whose head licenses Accusative case (ACC). For our purposes, it does not matter what exactly this functional projection is. But for the sake of concreteness, I assume that it is Aspect Phrase (see Yadroff 1994, Bailyn 1997, and Brown 1999, for detailed discussion on the ACC licensing in Russian).

Second, in order for NEG to block Case-licensing, we need to find a way in which DPs can stay inside VP and can still get their Case licensed. To this end, I adopt Chomsky's (2000) claim that Case does not drive movement and c-command is a sufficient condition for Case-licensing. That is, ACC-case can be licensed to a DP in the c-command domain of Aspect and NOM-case is licensed to a DP in the c-command domain of Tense.

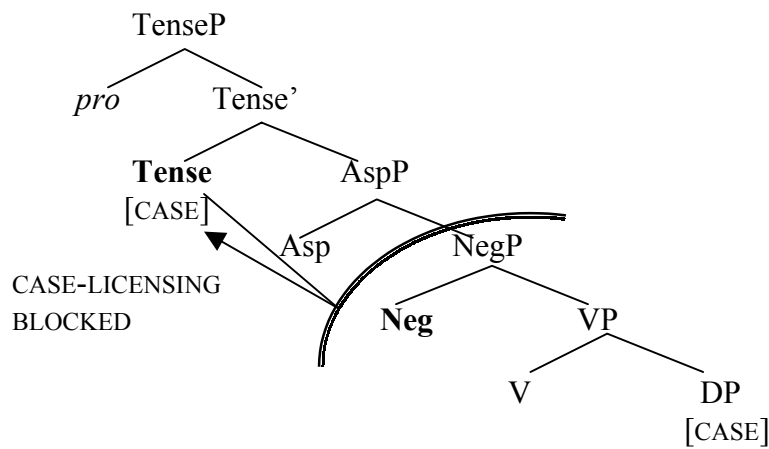
Third, I hypothesize that, in existential sentences, the sentence has either *pro* (see Perlmutter and Moore 2001) or a locative element filling the subject position, namely [Spec, TenseP] (see Babby 2000).

The new analysis developed thus far is schematically represented in (13): (13a) represents the occurrence of GenNeg on a DP which would have surfaced with ACC-case in an affirmative sentence, while (13b) represents the occurrence of GenNeg on a DP which would have surfaced with NOM-case in an affirmative existential sentence in Babby's (1980) terminology:

- (13) *Schematic representation of the new proposal:*
 a. Blocking of ACC-case licensing:



- b. Blocking of NOM-case licensing in a negative existential sentence:



The question that arises at this point is: how do structural case-marked DPs escape the blocking by NEG? I claim that some DPs raise out of VP in overt syntax, and, by moving above NegP, they escape NEG's blocking effects and surface with ACC- or NOM-case.

The next question is: what drives this movement? I claim that, in Russian, DPs with specific, individuated, presupposed interpretations raise out of VP. Arguments for this idea come from the following sources.

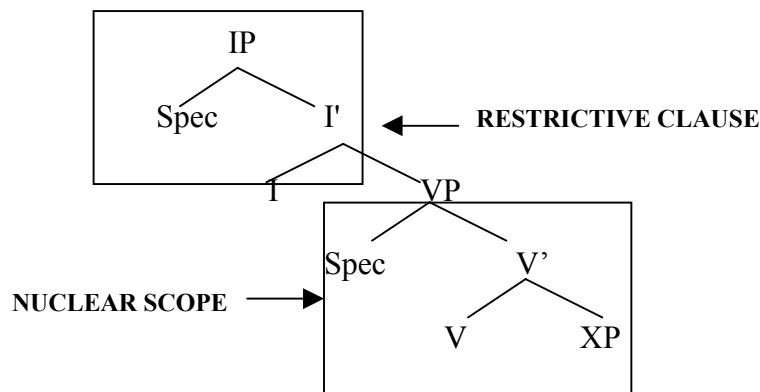
We have seen in Section 2 that there is a correlation between the Case on a DP and its interpretation: that is, when it is marked with GenNeg, it refers to a set of non-specific, unindividuated, non-presupposed entities, and, when marked with structural case, it refers to a set of specific, individuated, presupposed entities. If DPs inside VP surface with GenNeg as a result of NEG blocking the Case-licensing from above, it then follows that DPs that surface with a structural case must be outside VP (and NegP).

Recent research (e.g., Diesing 1992 and Diesing and Jelinek 1995) shows that, in many languages, DPs with strong/presupposed interpretations tend to appear outside VP (e.g., Turkish and German). Based on this fact, Diesing (1992) hypothesizes that, in those languages, there is a direct mapping between syntax and semantics, as shown (14) and (15):⁵

(14) *The Mapping Hypothesis* (Diesing 1992:10):

- Material from VP is mapped into the nuclear scope.
- Material from IP is mapped into the restrictive clause.

(15) *Tree-splitting* (Diesing 1992:9):

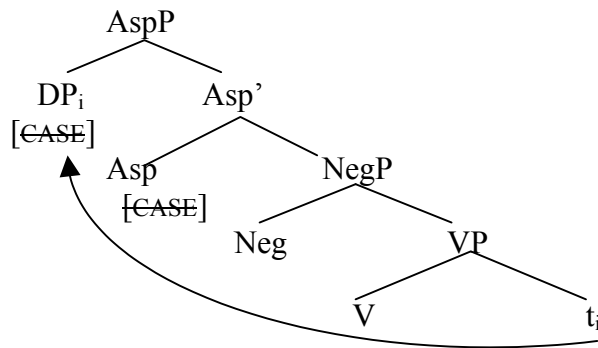


The Mapping Hypothesis makes the following predictions about DP interpretations: If a DP is inside VP when the interpretation occurs, it gets bound by existential closure and hence receives a non-specific, indefinite, or existential interpretation; if a DP is outside VP, it gets bound by the universal quantifier or generic operator and hence receives a specific, definite, or generic interpretation.

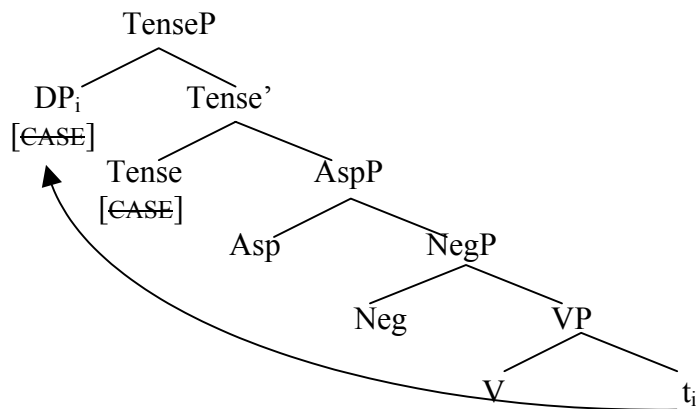
Application of the Mapping Hypothesis to the GenNeg in Russian explains the correlation between Case on a DP and its interpretation in a negative sentence (Babyonyshev 1996, Bailyn 1997 and Brown 1999 have similar lines of analysis. See Section 4). If the DP does not raise out of VP when Case-licensing occurs, then it will be marked with GenNeg, because NEG will block the Case-licensing by Aspect or Tense. Given the Mapping Hypothesis, this DP will receive a non-specific/existential interpretation. On the other hand, if a DP in a negative sentence raises out of VP, then it will receive structural case. This is because it will be outside NEG's blocking domain when Case-licensing occurs. Since the Mapping Hypothesis states that material outside VP gets mapped into the restrictive clause, it is predicted that this DP will receive a specific/generic interpretation.

The processes in which DPs in negative sentences occur with structural cases are schematically represented in (16):

- (16) *Structural Case-licensing on DPs in negative sentences*
 a. ACC-Case licensing:



- b. NOM-Case licensing:⁶



3.2 Explaining the properties of the GenNeg

Let us now return to the properties of the GenNeg in Russian outlined in Section 2 and see whether the proposed analysis can account for them.

The first property of the GenNeg was that it occurs only in the presence of clausemate sentential negation. Under the new analysis, this can be explained as follows: In order to block the Case-licensing by Aspect/Tense, NEG must intervene between these heads and their target DPs. Hence, NEG has to be in the same sentence as the DP that surfaces with GenNeg. On the other hand, the reason why constituent negation does not license GenNeg is because it is not a functional category and hence does not block the operation of other functional heads.

The second property of the GenNeg had to do with the fact that, when the “subject” of the sentence is GenNeg-marked, the predicate bears “impersonal” agreement morphology: The standard assumption is that NOM-case checking and agreement-feature checking go hand in hand. Hence, if NOM-case checking is blocked, then it follows that agreement-feature checking will also be blocked.

Alternatively, one can posit that, in an impersonal sentence, the predicate in fact agrees with the null subject *pro*, which is presumably 3rd person, SG, NEUT.

Third, we can explain the fact that the GenNeg never applies to DPs that receive oblique case in affirmative sentences: The standard assumption is that oblique cases are licensed directly by the verb. Since verbs are lexical categories and NEG is a functional one, the latter will not block the case-licensing by the former. Therefore, DPs that can potentially bear oblique case will not surface bearing GenNeg.

Next, the fact that the GenNeg targets THEME arguments except in the existential copula construction can be explained as follows: The present analysis predicts that a DP in a negative sentence will surface with GenNeg as long as it is located below NegP when Case-licensing occurs. Hence, it would not matter whether this DP is the object of an unaccusative verb or the subject of an unergative verb.

The fifth property of the GenNeg was that it seems to apply optionally in non-existential sentences but obligatorily in the existential copular construction: In non-existential sentences, the object of the verb can bear either GenNeg or structural Case, depending on its (non-)presupposed interpretation. However, in a negative existential sentence, the object always refers to a non-presupposed entity. This means that it is inside VP when Case-licensing occurs. Hence, it surfaces with GenNeg instead of a structural case (see Section 4 for more discussion of this phenomenon).

The last property of GenNeg was that DPs with GenNeg tend to refer to non-presupposed entities, while DPs with structural case tend to refer to presupposed entities: I have explained above that this follows from the Mapping Hypothesis (Diesing 1992).⁷

To summarize, in this section, I have offered a new analysis of the GenNeg in Russian. I have argued that the GenNeg arises as a result of NEG blocking the operation of Case-licensing heads. I have shown that this analysis can explain the six properties of the GenNeg presented in Section 2, particularly the correlation between the Case on a DP and its (non-)presupposed interpretations.

4. Previous analyses of the genitive of negation in Russian

In this section, I review some of the previous analyses of the GenNeg, which can be classified into the following categories: (i) discourse-pragmatic accounts, (ii) Quantifier Phrase (QP) accounts, and (iii) Minimalist accounts. I begin with Babby (1980) and Gundel (1976), who represent discourse-pragmatic accounts.

Babby and Gundel emphasize the importance of the discourse structure in the occurrence of the GenNeg. These authors divide the sentence structure into two parts: THEME/RHEME and TOPIC/COMMENT, respectively. Interestingly enough, they both arrive at a similar conclusion, namely that if a nominal is the THEME or TOPIC of the sentence, it resists GenNeg-marking. In order to engineer this idea, Babby proposes that the TOPIC must escape from the scope of

NEG via movement. On the other hand, Gundel contends that GenNeg can target any DP except TOPIC, irrespective of where it is located in the sentence.

These discourse-driven approaches have contributed greatly to our understanding of GenNeg by offering the crucial insight that pragmatic factors may play an important role in the phenomenon. But these accounts are still fairly descriptive. I would argue that the analysis proposed in this paper is much preferable, since it provides a formal account while incorporating these authors' insights at the same time.

Let us now turn to two representative QP accounts by Pesetsky (1982) and Pereltsvaig (1998). Pesetsky's analysis, considered the standard account of the GenNeg in the literature, hypothesizes that GenNeg is licensed by the implicit quantifier which heads a nominal. But this analysis does not capture the fact that the phenomenon is limited to sentential negation, nor does it capture the correlation between Case on a DP and its interpretation; it incorrectly predicts that GenNeg marked DPs will always have a partitive reading.

Departing from Pesetsky, Pereltsvaig claims that the quantifier inside a DP bearing GenNeg is a negative polarity item (NPI) with the [+Qu] feature. In so doing, she captures the connection between GEN-case marking on DPs and the presence of negation. There is little doubt that Pereltsvaig's analysis is a much improved QP account, but it is still not completely satisfactory. One problem is that it does not account for the Case-alternation facts. Another is that it posits a bijectal relationship between GenNeg-marking and NIP licensing. Consequently, it incorrectly predicts that every NPI will be marked with GEN-case; but, as Borschev and Partee (2001) point out, some NPIs in Russian can surface with structural case as well as with GEN-case, as shown in (17):

- | | | | | | |
|------|----|-----------------------------------|-------|----|-----------|
| (17) | a. | Nikto | tam | ne | byl |
| | | NI.who:NOM, M, SG | there | NE | was:M, SG |
| | | 'No one (none of them) was there' | | | |
| | b. | Nikogo | tam | ne | bylo |
| | | NI.who:GEN, M, SG | there | NE | was:N, SG |
| | | 'No one was there' | | | |
- (from Borschev and Partee 2001:6)

The correlation between the NOM-case marking on the NPI or NI-word in (17a) and its obligatory presupposed interpretation finds an explanation in the proposed system: *Nikto* in (17a) surfaces with NOM-case instead GEN-case, precisely because it has a presupposed meaning and hence raises out of VP. But the proposed system does not preclude the possibility of *Nikto* falling under the scope of NEG: Although it may seem as if *Nikto* is outside the scope of NEG, this will only be true in overt syntax, because the scopal facts are presumably determined in LF. Since NEG is an operator, it can raise in LF and take scope over the entire sentence.

Two representative minimalist accounts that I would like to discuss are those of Bailyn (1997) and Brown (1999). Bailyn analyzes NEG as a Case-

licenser. He posits that NegP is located between VP and AspP. In his system, Case-checking is done by specifier-head agreement, so the internal argument of the Verb must raise to [Spec, NegP] in order to get GEN-case. On the other hand, DPs receive structural case by moving to the specifier position of the relevant functional heads; these projections are located higher than NegP.

Bailyn's treatment of NEG as a GEN-case licenser has had a major impact on the study of the GenNeg, generating numerous subsequent studies. Yet his assumption that GEN-case licensing occurs at [Spec, NegP] creates a rather serious problem for DP interpretation: Under Bailyn's account, DPs with GenNeg are outside VP and hence cannot be interpreted existentially. As a way of solving this problem, Bailyn claims that NegP is an extended VP and therefore existential closure occurs at NegP. But this is a stipulation, which does not really solve the problem.

We can improve Bailyn's account by hypothesizing that DPs can get their Case features checked off even when they stay inside VP (see Chomsky 2000); this is in fact what the present analysis assumes.

Another important minimalist account of the GenNeg is Brown (1999). Brown adopts Baker's (1988) Government Transparency Corollary, whose central idea is that Verb moves upward, stopping at each functional head and picking up its features such as [NEG] and [Aspect]. Brown posits that Verbs are generated with features like [+/-V^{max}] and DPs are generated with [GEN] and [ACC]. Under this assumption, she proposes that the combination of [NEG] on NEG and [+V^{max}] on Verb creates a checking domain for [GEN], whereas the combination of [+V^{max}], [+ Predicate], and [Aspect] creates a checking domain for [ACC]. When Verb head-adjoins to NEG, the Verb-NEG feature-complex creates the checking domain for [GEN] feature. Hence, a DP with [GEN] can be licensed at [Spec, NegP]. On the other hand, when the Verb-NEG complex adjoins to Aspect, it creates the checking domain for [ACC], so the [ACC] on a DP can be checked off at [Spec, AspP].

Brown's approach is highly elaborate and powerful. But it is questionable whether such an intricate system would be really necessary to account for the GenNeg phenomenon: After positing all the complicated head movements and feature-complexes, Brown's account accomplishes what the proposed system does without having to do so.

Another problem with Brown's system is that, as Borchev and Partee (2001) point out, it cannot readily explain why DPs with NOM-case must receive strong, partitive, presuppositional interpretations while DPs with GenNeg need not, as illustrated above in (17). Under the new account, the interpretive differences between DPs with structural case and those with GenNeg are readily explained, as shown above.

To summarize, in this section, I have reviewed some of the previous studies of the GenNeg in comparison with the present analysis. I have shown that the new system provides a simpler and more fully explanatory account of the facts while incorporating the insights of the previous analyses.

5. An additional welcome result of the present analysis

The analysis proposed in this paper has yet another important welcome result: It sheds light on a long-standing problem of the GenNeg, namely, the obligatory occurrence of GenNeg in existential sentences (see Babyonyshev 1996, Borschev and Partee 2001).

In Section 2, we have seen that DPs with GenNeg tend to denote non-specific, indefinite, unindividuated entities, while DPs with structural case tend to denote specific, definite, individuated entities. When it comes to the THEME arguments of the existential verbs, however, this generalization does not seem to hold: the argument of the existential verb must bear GenNeg even if it refers to a unique individual like Masha, as shown in (18):

- (18) a. netu doma **Maši**
 neg-be home **Masha:GEN**
 ‘Masha is not at home’
 b. ***Maša** netu doma
 Masha:NOM neg-be home

(adapted from Babyonyshev 1996:181)

I would like to offer two possible approaches to this apparent conundrum. One possibility is to adopt the view that existential sentences instantiate *thetic* statements, whose semantic structures are mono-partite; that is, they contain only new information (except for location, which characteristically occurs sentence-initially) (see Babby 1980, Sasse 1987, and von Stechow 1989, among others, for the definition and characteristics of thetic statements). On this view, the THEME argument of the verb is part of new information and hence must stay inside VP when the mapping between syntax and semantics occurs. Recall that, under the present analysis, DPs receive GenNeg if they are located inside VP or NEG’s blocking domain when Case-licensing occurs. Hence, even highly definite and individuated DPs like proper names can receive GenNeg if they are below NegP. In existential sentences, object DPs will never raise out of VP (unless they are forced to due to discourse-pragmatic movement or scrambling). Therefore, it is predicted that the object of an existential verb will always surface bearing GenNeg.

Another possible line of analysis of this phenomenon is to implement Borschev and Partee’s (2001) idea: Borschev and Partee argue that, in existential sentences, the LOCATION argument functions as the “Perspectival Center” of the sentence, which is always presupposed to exist. Adapting Borschev and Partee’s analysis, we can assume that, from the viewpoint of the Perspectival Center, the THEME argument of the verb is not presupposed to exist. Therefore, in an existential sentence, it does not raise outside of VP. In a negative existential sentence, NEG blocks NOM-case licensing by Tense. Consequently, the THEME argument surfaces with GenNeg.

6. Remaining issues

This section touches on two remaining issues of the GenNeg in Russian: One issue has to do with the typology of the GenNeg, and the other with a prediction of the proposed analysis.

As well-documented in the literature, GenNeg patterns quite differently across Slavic languages: For example, in Polish, the GenNeg is mandatory with direct objects but not with subjects, as shown in (19); in Modern Serbo-Croatian, the GenNeg has disappeared, as shown in (20) (see Comrie and Corbett 1993 for a fuller range of facts and discussions):⁸

- (19) Polish (taken from Bailyn, 1997: (37), p.107):
- a. Jan nie lubi tych książek.
 Jan:NOM NEG likes [those books]GEN
 ‘Jan doesn’t like those books’
- b. *Jan nie lubi te książki
 Jan:NOM NEG likes [those books]ACC

- (20) Serbo-Croatian (taken from Bailyn, 1997: (38), p.107)
- a. *Jovan ne voli tih knjiga
 Jovan:NOM NEG likes [those books]GEN
- b. Jovan ne voli te knjige
 Jovan:NOM NEG likes [those books]ACC
 ‘Jan doesn’t like those books’

It seems that these heterogeneous manifestations of the GenNeg across Slavic languages call for a thorough investigation involving a diachronic as well as synchronic analysis. I leave it for future research.

I have claimed that the blocking effects created by intervening heads can be parameterized across languages. This idea makes an interesting prediction that there will be functional heads other than NEG (e.g., Aspect and Mood) interacting with other functional heads, creating blocking effects similar to those instantiated by the GenNeg. Do natural languages attest this prediction? I leave answering this question for future research.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, I have demonstrated that the apparently complicated phenomenon of the GenNeg in Russian can be explained most parsimoniously by the operation of simple mechanisms already available in the literature. I have argued that the GenNeg arises as a result of a functional head NEG blocking the Case-checking by the relevant functional heads from above. In addition, by relating this analysis to Diesing-Jelinek type semantically-driven movement and the Mapping Hypothesis, I have explained the correlation between Case on DPs and their presupposed or non-presupposed interpretations.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

¹ In this paper, I do not distinguish between NPs and DPs.

² In the literature, this property is known as the “unaccusative condition” (see Pesetsky 1982).

³ In the literature, this phenomenon is known as the “direct case condition” or the “non-obliqueness condition” (see Babby 1980 and Pesetsky 1982).

⁴ One may wonder what licenses this GEN-case. For our purposes, it does not matter where it originates. But one can assume that it comes from NEG (see Bailyn 1997 and Brown 1999). Alternatively, one can posit that it is governed by the Redundancy Rule (Babyonyshev 1996), which targets Caseless VP-internal DPs.

⁵ The underlying assumption behind the Mapping Hypothesis is that a sentence can be semantically partitioned into two parts: the *restrictive clause*, which establishes the domain of *quantification*, and the *nuclear scope*, the second argument of the *quantifier*, which takes scope over the entire sentence (see Heim 1982 for detailed exposition of these concepts).

⁶ I assume that this movement is driven by the Extended Projection Principle, which dictates that every sentence have a subject.

⁷ This fact seems to strongly suggest that, as Bailyn (1997) argues, from the semantic point of view, the GenNeg is not optional.

⁸ Bailyn (1997) notes, citing Wayles Browne (personal communication), that in both Polish and Serbo-Croatian (in fact almost every Slavic language), GenNeg is obligatory in the existential construction (p.110).

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