

Locality and constituent ordering in Russian negative concord constructions

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What the talk is about?

- About Russian negative concord structures.
- Simple sentences are not discussed (*Ja nikogo ne vstretil* 'I did not meet no one').
- We focus on control in biclausal structures ('I did not want you to say this to no one').

Problems

- Is long-distance negative concord possible in Russian?
- Are tendencies of word-order the same for long-distance concord and regular concord?
- Should we suppose that all (if there are many) concord types are syntactically organized in the same way?

Data

- Mainly colloquial Russian data is used – some examples may be strange from the point of view of strictly literary language.
- Both corpus data and elicitation (mainly elicitation).

Strict negative concord and Upwards Agree

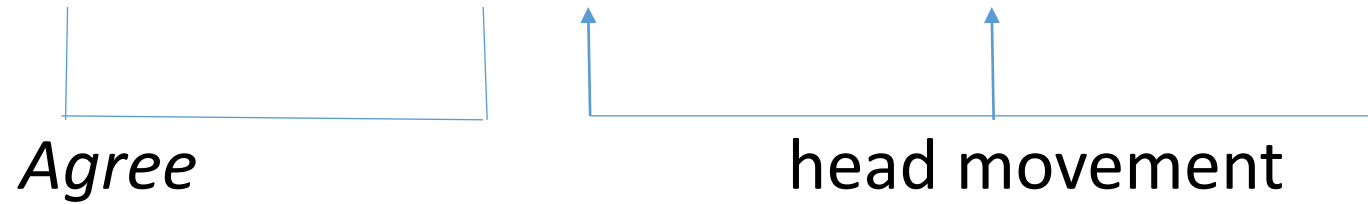
Zeijlstra (2004) et seq.

(1) Nikto *(ne) prišël.
no.one not came
'No one came.'

(2) Op-[iNeg] nikto[uNeg] ne[uNeg] prishël

Negation in the clause

(3) [NegP Op-[iNeg] Neg0 [uNeg] [vP v 0 [uNeg] [VP V[uNeg]]]]



What do we mean by locality / long-distance concord

- In Russian, the non-canonical long-distance concord is tested on biclausal constructions **with finite embedded clause**:

I NEG plan [that NOBODY will come]

In other languages, finiteness may be irrelevant / other features may be relevant.

Locality

NCI licensing cannot cross finite clause boundaries:

(4) *Op-[iNeg] ya ne[uNeg] govoril [ehto on poedet nikuda[uNeg]]
I NEG said COMP he.NOM go.FUT nowhere

Intended: 'I did not say that he would go anywhere.'

Explanation for this is normally sought and found in the locality constraints on Agree.

Long-distance scrambling in Russian

- a. Ya govoril chto on poedet v Afriku.
I said that he will.go in Africa
'I said that he would go to Africa.'
- b. Ya govoril v Afriku chto on poedet
I said in Africa that he will.go
- c. Ya v Afriku govoril chto on poedet
I in Africa said that he will.go
- d. v Afriku ya govoril chto on poedet
in Africa I said that he will.go
'I said that he would go to AFRICA.'

Long-distance scrambling eliminates concord restrictions

- a. *Ya ne govovil chto on poedet **nikuda**.
I NEG said that he go.FUT nowhere
(‘I did not say that he would go anywhere.’)
- b. *Ya ne govovil **nikuda** chto on poedet _____.
I NEG said nowhere that he go.FUT
- c. Ya **nikuda** ne govovil chto on poedet _____.
I nowhere NEG said that he go.FUT
- d. **Nikuda** ya ne govovil chto on poedet _____.
Nowhere I NEG said that he go.FUT
‘I did not say that he would go anywhere.’

Generalization (for long-distance scrambling)

Scrambling obviates an NCI violation but only if its landing site c-commands ne 'not'.

Possible approaches

Zeijlstra's (2004) abstract Agree operator?

No:

- Predicts ungrammatical orders to be grammatically correct.
- Predicts correct orders to be ungrammatical.

Agree violations

Apparent violation of structural conditions on Agree

(8) a. Ya nikuda ne govoril chto on poedet.
I nowhere NEG said that he go.FUT

b. Nikuda ya ne govoril chto on poedet.
Nowhere I NEG said that he go.FUT

'I did not say that he would go anywhere.'

Problem: [uNeg] (*nikuda* 'nowhere') higher than [iNeg] (*Op*→)

→ [uNeg] cannot be checked

yet the sentences are fine

+ additional oppositions

Constructions with a subjunctive embedded clause seem to be 'less finite' and easier allow negative concord.

Ne xoč-u čtob nikto přixodi-l-∅.
NEG want-PRS.1SG COMP.IRR nobody.NOM come-PST-SG.M

'I don't want anyone to come.'

Subjunctive complements differ from indicative finite complements also in some other syntactic respects.

Possible approaches

The same facts are fully compatible with approaches like Bošković's (2009), whereby all NCIs must move to a position above sentential negation.

So do we expect **all** negative concord items to move to the left (before the predicate negation)?

Not really – facts are more complicated!

Complications: infinitive clauses (in principle, 'regular' negative concord)

If concord is observed from the main clause to the infinitive one (**or vice versa**), NCIs do not want to move left (as in the previous case):

- Initial position is worse for NCIs than for 'regular' NPs.
- Sometimes final position is worse for NCIs than for 'regular' NPs.

Initial position is bad

Normally, for evaluation and emotion predicates the dative argument can be in the absolute beginning.

Tebe	lučše	uj-ti	/	ne	pe-t'.
you.DAT	better	leave-INF		NEG	sing-INF

'It's better for you to leave / not to sing.'

Polin-e	lučše	uj-ti	/	ne	pe-t'.
Polina-DAT	better	leave-INF		NEG	sing-INF

'It's better for Polina to leave / not to sing.'

Initial position is bad

For NCI, the position after the predicate is often better than the leftmost one
(NB: neutral topic / focus structures are considered):

Context: 'Someone is going to sing a song.'

Nikomu lučše ne pe-t'.
nobody.DAT better NEG sing-INF

'It's better for you to leave / not to sing.'

+ Lučše nikomu ne pe-t'.
better nobody.DAT NEG sing-INF

'It's better for no one not to sing.'

The same with other NCIs

Nikuda 'nowhere':

V	Peru	sejčas	lučše	ne	ezdi-t'.
to	Peru	now	better	NEG	go-INF

'It's better not to go to Peru now.'

Sejčas	nikuda	lučše	ne	ezdit'.
now	nowhere	better	NEG	go-INF

'It's better not to go anywhere now.'

Analysis

(1) In situ analysis:

NClS prefer to stay in the embedded clause, even in the non-standard NC constructions.

(2) Linear ordering analysis:

NClS prefer to be as close to the predicate *ne* as possible.

Analysis

(2) is better than (1), linear ordering is relevant:

With independent infinitives, NCI also prefer to be closer to ne.

Pete / tebe tuda ne doj-ti.

Petja.DAT you.DAT there NEG reach-INF

‘Petja / you cannot go there.’

Tuda Pete / tebe ne doj-ti.

There Petja.DAT you.DAT NEG reach-INF

‘Petja / you cannot go there.’

Analysis

With independent infinitives, NCI also prefer to be closer to *ne*.

Tuda nikomu	ne	dojti.
there nobody.DAT	NEG	reach-INF
?Nikomu tuda	ne	doj-ti.
nobody.DAT there	NEG	reach-INF

‘No one can go there.’

Final position is bad

In the embedded clause, NCIs prefer not to be in the final position:

Ja ne planiruj-u ruga-t' Petj-u / ?Petj-u ruga-t'.
I.NOM NEG plan-PRS.1SG scold-INF Petja-SG.ACC Petja-SG.ACC scold-INF

'I don't plan to scold Petja.'

Ja ne planiruj-u rugat' tebja /tebja ruga-t'.
I.NOM NEG plan-PRS.1SG scold-INF you.ACC you.ACC scold-INF

'I don't plan to scold you.'

Ja ne planiruj-u rugat' ego / ego ruga-t'.
I.NOM NEG plan-PRS.1SG scold-INF he.ACC he.ACC scold-INF

'I don't plan to scold him.'

Final position is bad

Ja ne planiruj-u nikogo ruga-t' /?ruga-t' nikogo.

I.NOM NEG plan-PRS.1SG nobody.ACC scold-INF scold-INF nobody.ACC

'I don't plan to scold anybody (lit. 'nobody').'

	Before infinitive	After infinitive
<i>Nikogo</i>	575	181
<i>Nikogo + INF / INF + nikogo</i> + full stop	164	30
<i>ego</i>	4344	6260
<i>Ego + INF / INF + ego</i> + full stop	1663	737

The same for nonverbal predicates

Glavnoe ee ne obide-t' /ne obide-t' ee.
main she.ACC NEG offend-INF NEG offend-INF she.ACC
'The main thing is not to offend her.'

Glavnoe nikogo ne obide-t'.
main nobody.ACC NEG offend-INF
'The main thing is not to offend anyone.'

Here also, the NCI prefers to be just before *ne*, while for other words (e.g., anaphoric *ee* 'her') the final position is equally good.

Roughly the same with other NCI? (preliminary)

- *Nigde* 'nowhere'

On ne xote-l-∅ gulja-t' v centr-e.
he.NOM NEG want-PST-SG.M walk-INF in center-SG.LOC

'He didn't want to walk in the center.'

On nigde ne xote-l-∅ gulja-t'.
he.NOM nowhere NEG want-PST-SG.M walk-INF

'He didn't want to walk anywhere.'

Why NCIs prefer to be near the pronoun?

- General pronoun features?

No! Anaphoric pronouns *ego* / *ee* / *ix* behave in another manner: they

- (i) Tolerate the final position.
- (ii) Tolerate the initial position.

Conclusions

- Russian negative concord tolerates various distant configurations:
 - *Ne* in the main clause, NCI in the infinitive embedded clause (described previously)
 - *Ne* in the main clause, NCI in the finite embedded clause (only mentioned sometimes as ungrammatical / highly colloquial)
 - NCI in the main clause, *ne* in the embedded clause (non-canonical negative concord, often results from raising).

Conclusions

Linear features of NCI and degree of tolerance to word order changes differs from one configuration to another.

- For the NCI in the finite clause, fronting **improves** the negative concord.
- For the NCI in the infinitive clause, fronting makes the negative concord **worse**.

Conclusions

- The behavior of NCI in long-distance concord (with finite embedded clauses) conflicts with Zeijlstra's Agree mechanism and makes us adopt Bošković's theory.
- The behavior of NCI in infinitive constructions is not explicable from general pronoun characteristics (AND not fully explicable from Boskovic's theory).

Perhaps, this tendency to linear affinity points to the similarity between negative concord and double negation or EMNE (Zeijlstra 2010, Dukes 2022, yesterday's talk).

Or, for some cases, we should argue for negative concord items in situ (in the embedded clause).

Conclusions

A metalinguistic explanation:

- long-distance negative concord (with finite clauses) is marginal, thus, we should make the NCI 'higher' to improve the structure;
- Concord into infinitive structures is normal, thus, the language prefers to hold NCIs in the embedded clause.

A question for future studies:

Is there a correlation between the properties of concord structures and the status of the embedded clause (balanced vs. deranked):

Lower status of the clause <=> lower position of concord items?

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