

Problem Set 3

Due October 12 before class. Submit on IVLE > Files > Student Submission > PS3.

Russian is a nominative/accusative language with case morphology. In negative sentences, some NPs have the option of being in *genitive* case.¹ Genitive NPs are in **bold**.

For example, the object 'letters' in the negative (1) can be *pis'ma* (accusative) or *pisem* (genitive).

Without negation, though, the object must be accusative: see (2).

- (1) Ja ne polučal {✓pis'ma, ✓**pisem**}.
I.NOM not received letters.ACC letters.GEN
'I didn't receive letters.'
- (2) Ja polučal {✓pis'ma, ***pisem**}.
I.NOM received letters.ACC letters.GEN
'I received letters.'

The data below shows that some NPs in negative sentences can become genitive but some cannot. Consider the following data and answer the questions on the next page.

Notes on the data:

- Russian negative quantifiers cooccur with 'not' *ne*, which is why (3), (4), (5), (9) look like they have two negations. Don't worry about this.
- Russian verbs show ϕ -agreement, which is why some verbs look like they have different forms. Ignore this.
- INSTR in (4) is another case, *instrumental*.

- (3) a. Ni odna devuška ne polučala naše pis'mo.
not one girl.NOM not received our letter.ACC
'No girl received our letter.'
- b. *Ni **odnoj devuški** ne polučalo naše pis'mo.
not one girl.GEN not received our letter.ACC
- (4) a. Ni odin gorod ne byl vzjat vragom.
not one city.NOM not PASSIVE.take enemy.INSTR
'No city was taken by the enemy.'
- b. ✓Ni **odnogo goroda** ne bylo vzjato vragom.
not one city.GEN not PASSIVE.take enemy.INSTR
- (5) a. Ni odna gazeta ne byla polučena.
not one newspaper.NOM not PASSIVE.received
'No newspaper was received.'
- b. ✓Ni **odnoj gazety** ne bylo polučeno.
not one newspaper.GEN not PASSIVE.received

¹Data here comes from David Pesetsky's 1982 dissertation, *Paths and Categories*, but don't look it up!

- (6) a. Zdes' xorošie ljudi ne suščestvujut.
here good people.NOM not exist
'Good people do not exist here.'
- b. ✓ Zdes' xorošix ljudej ne suščestvuet.
here good people.GEN not exist
- (7) a. Griby zdes' ne rastut.
mushrooms.NOM here not grow
'Mushrooms do not grow here.'
- b. ✓ Gribov zdes' ne rastet.
mushrooms.GEN here not grow
- (8) a. Otvet iz polka ne prisel.
answer.NOM from regiment not arrived
'An answer from the regiment did not arrive.'
- b. ✓ Otveta iz polka ne prišlo.
answer.GEN from regiment not arrived
- (9) a. Ni odin rebenok ne prygnul.
not one child.NOM not jumped
'No child jumped.'
- b. *Ni odnogo rebenka ne prygnulo.
not one child.GEN not jumped
- (10) a. V pivbarax kul'turnye ljudi ne p'jut.
in beerhalls cultured people.NOM not drink
'Cultured people do not drink in beerhalls.'
- b. *V pivbarax kul'turnyx ljudej ne p'et.
in beerhalls cultured people.GEN not drink

In case you know Russian: answer this question based solely on the data here.

1. What is the generalization for which NPs can become genitive in negative sentences?
Make sure your generalization accounts for all the data above.
2. The verbs 'swim' and 'float' are the same in Russian: *plavat'*. See (11a). Explain why *plavat'* in (11b) must mean 'float' and cannot mean 'swim'.
- (11) a. V bassejne nikakoj rebenok ne plavaet.
in pool no child.NOM not ✓float/✓swim
'No child ✓floats/✓swims in the pool.'
- b. ✓ V bassejne **nikakogo rebenka** ne plavaet.
in pool no child.GEN not ✓float/*swim
'No child ✓floats/*swims in the pool.'

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3. Let's now adopt the following assumptions about Russian:

- Negation in Russian is a Neg head with a [Case:GEN] feature.
- Case-assignment in Russian is always *downwards*: from a c-commanding head with a [Case:...] feature to a c-commanded N with [uCase: ___].

Which of the following hypotheses is correct for Russian?

- Hypothesis 1: The Hierarchy of Projections is T > (Neg) > v > V.
- Hypothesis 2: The Hierarchy of Projections is T > v > (Neg) > V.

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4. Use the lexical items below to build example (12), repeated from (7a). Give the tree and the sequence of Merge, Adjoin, Move_{phrase}, and Agree operations.

(12) Griby zdes' ne rastut.
 mushrooms.NOM here not grow
 'Mushrooms do not grow here.'

Lexicon:

- [N, uCase: ___] 'mushrooms': *griby* if NOM, *gribov* if GEN
- [Adverb] *zdes'* 'here'
- [Neg, Case:GEN] *ne* 'not'
- [V, uN] *rastut/rastet* 'grow'
- [v] (unpronounced)
- [T, uN*, Case:NOM] (unpronounced)

Hint: This takes 7 steps.

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5. Explain how the derivation will differ for (13), the genitive of negation variant of (12), repeated from (7b).

(13) **Gribov** zdes' ne rastet.
 mushrooms.GEN here not grow