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Genitive of Negation and Scope of Negation in Russian Existential Sentences

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Abstract

Introduction As noted by Brown (1999), there is general agreement in the literature on Russian "genitive of negation" (GenNeg) that GenNeg occurs only when the NP in question is within the scope of sentential negation (NEG). The apparent optionality of GenNeg within the scope of negation is a point of difficulty, with authors divided about whether the choice between Genitive and Nominative or Accusative in such cases is accompanied by some difference in syntactic structure and/or in semantics or pragmatics. A typical illustration of the correlation of Gen/Nom with scope of negation (underlined), is the classic example (1a-b): (1) a. Moroz ne cuvstvovalsja . Frost-NOM.M.SG NEG be.felt-M.SG `The frost was not felt.' b. Moroza ne cuvstvovalos'. Frost- GEN.M.SG NEG be.felt-N.SG `No frost was felt (there was no frost).' (Babby 1980 p.59) We are grateful for valuable discussions and comments on the genitive of negation to Jurij Apresjan, Leonard Babby, John Bailyn, Wayles Browne,

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