NEGATIVE CONCORD IN RUSSIAN SIGN LANGUAGE

Jeremy Kuhn
Institut Jean Nicod, CNRS
jeremy.d.kuhn@gmail.com

Lena Pasalskaya
HSE University
lena@ales.ru

SUMMARY

\[ \rightarrow \text{RSL has negative concord:} \\
\text{ nobody, nothing require sentential negation} \]

\[ \rightarrow \text{Unlike spoken Russian, it is non-strict concord:} \\
\text{ some positions allow NC items without negation} \]

\[ \rightarrow \text{Like a number of other SLs, the syntactic structure of} \\
\text{ negation is on the right not the left.} \]

\[ \rightarrow \text{Result: RSL is the mirror image of Italian} \]

\[ \rightarrow \text{Sign language informs theoretical linguistics:} \\
\text{ Syntactic properties common to sign language allow us to distinguish between hypotheses.} \]

BACKGROUND

Negative concord (NC) – a phenomenon in which two negative elements (NC item and its licensor) express a single negative meaning.

\textbf{Strict concord: NC items always require sentential negation}

\begin{enumerate}
\item a. Marija ne videla nikoago. (Russian)
\text{Maria NEG see.PST nothing.}
\text{'Maria saw nothing.'}
\item b. Nikto ne videl Mariju.
\text{nobody NEG see.PST Maria-ACC}
\text{‘Nobody saw Mary.’}
\end{enumerate}

\textbf{Non-strict concord: NC items may sometimes appear without sentential negation}

\begin{enumerate}
\item a. Non ha telefonato nessuno. (Italian)
\text{NEG PST call nobody}
\text{‘Nobody called.’}
\item b. Nessuno ha telefonato.
\text{nobody PST call}
\text{‘Nobody called.’}
\end{enumerate}

\textbf{No concord: NC items always appear without sentential negation}

\begin{enumerate}
\item I saw nobody. (English)
\end{enumerate}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Languages with NC} & \textbf{Languages without NC} \\
\hline
Russian, Greek, Hungarian & English, German \\
Italian, Portuguese, Spanish & DGS, ASL, LPS, LIS (Kuhn 2019) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Languages with and without NC}
\end{table}

ANALYSIS

\section{Word order}

\textbf{Facts:}

\begin{enumerate}
\item SVO \rightarrow SOVNeg
\item ‘Mother buy book’
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item V-Neg compounding:
\item The loss of repetition of the predicate
\item Mouthing change
\end{enumerate}

\textbf{Explanation:}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Movement to NegP on the right
\item CL, LIS, DGS, TID, HSCL
\end{enumerate}

\section{Negative concord}

Two parts of the analysis (Zeijlstra 2004)

\begin{enumerate}
\item Negative must appear higher than the NC item to check a syntactic feature
\item If this is not possible, then silent negation may appear as a last resort.
\end{enumerate}

\begin{equation}
\text{NP}^\text{nc}(\text{NEG}) \rightarrow \text{NP}^\text{nc}(\text{NEG}) \rightarrow \text{NP}^\text{nc}(\text{NEG})
\end{equation}

\section{Could this be topologicalization?}

\begin{enumerate}
\item 3\text{-call-1} NOBODY
\end{enumerate}

\textbf{As for calling me, nobody did:}

\textbf{Facts:}

\begin{enumerate}
\item reg
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item 3\text{-call-1} NOBODY
\text{‘Nobody called me.’}
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item NOBODY 3\text{-call-1} NOT
\end{enumerate}

\textbf{Inferences:}

\begin{enumerate}
\item This would contradict our analysis:
\text{‘NOBODY’ is lower than the rest}
\item Sometimes a prosodic break between right-dislocated negative word and the rest:
\text{Neutral between either analysis.}
\item No apparent eyebrow raise.
\item But there is relatively little eyebrow movement in general in our data...
\end{enumerate}

REFERENCES

Burkova, Svetlana. 2015. Russian Sign Language Corpus. (http://id.lsi.tku/)


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