

RUSSIAN GENITIVE OF NEGATION IS OBLIGATORY!
(AT LEAST WHEN THE SPEAKER SORT OF FEELS LIKE
USING IT)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the optionality of Russian genitive case under negation, using native-speaker data and online resources, such as Internet search engines and linguistic corpora. Of special interest is assessing the role of negative intensifier phrases in selecting genitive or other grammatical case forms. The paper includes a discussion of the pros and cons of relying on online resources in linguistic research, as well as an overview of the use of the Russian National Corpus, a highly robust linguistics research tool.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Philip Robinson has been interested in Slavic languages and culture since his undergraduate years at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where he took Russian courses and traveled to St. Petersburg to study intensive Russian there. Initially planning to complete a Ph.D. in Russian history, Philip switched over to an information technology career in 1998, which eventually led him to work at Cornell University. Continuing to be highly interested in Slavic studies and languages, he decided to take advantage of Cornell's Employee Degree Program and pursue a master's degree in Slavic linguistics. This thesis is in support of the degree.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis first of all to my parents, who made it possible for me to pursue higher education degrees and travel to Russia as an undergraduate student.

The love, patience and moral support of my wife, Kasia, has also been vital to my progress in everything I attempt to do.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
acc	accusative case
inst	instrumental case
dat	dative case
fem	feminine gender
gen	genitive case
GenNeg	genitive of negation
impf	imperfective verbal aspect
masc	masculine gender
NES	negative existential sentence
neut	neuter gender
nom	nominative case
NP	noun phrase
perf	perfective verbal aspect
pl	plural number
prep	prepositional case
RNC	Russian National Corpus (Nacional'nyj korpus russkogo jazyka, http://ruscorpora.ru)
VP	verb phrase

Неужто электрическая сила отрицательной частицы
должна пройти сквозь всю эту цепь глаголов и
отозваться в существительном? Не думаю.

-- A.S. Pushkin¹

Neužto èlektričeskaja sila otricatel'noj časticy dolžna
projti skvoz' vs'u ètu cep' glagolov i otozvat's'a v
suščestvitel'nom? Ne dumaju.

Does the electric force of a negative particle really have
to go through this whole chain of verbs and manifest
itself on a noun? I think not.

1 Overview of negation

Negation is a core feature of the cognitive and communicative apparatus of the human species.² One might hypothesize that negation should be a simple process of adding a negative element to reverse the meaning of a positive phrase or sentence, but the reality is that negation triggers very diverse complex phenomena in many languages.

Important factors in the negation strategies of languages include the scope of the negation (which parts of the phrase are negated), the signs or tokens of negation (what items make the phrase negative to one degree or another), the strength of the negation (is the speaker only mildly indicating a negative thought or feeling, or outright rejection of something?).

Linguists study negation across different languages for many reasons: negation can trigger specific syntactic, morphological and phonological phenomena, and it is integrally related to semantics. Languages typically grant free rein to negative operators to negate everything from

¹ “Oproverženie na kritiki i zamečanija na sobstvennye sočinenija”, A.S.Puškin. *Sobranie sočinenij v 10 tomach*. Article originally published in 1831.

² A very cogent overview of negation is found in John Lawler 2007.

the entire sentence, down to a single word belonging to just about any part of speech, including other negative operators.

There are well-known (if not always well understood) linguistic phenomena associated with negation. Sometimes negative agreement is required, sometimes the basic negation marker requires a second word (such as an auxiliary verb like English ‘do’) that has to be inserted in a particular linear order. Modern English and French are examples of languages where unmarked negation typically involves more than one word. In English, verbal negation requires an auxiliary verb, triggering a combination of DO-support + an infinitival verb, similar to interrogatives:

1. I went to Cornell.
2. *I went not to Cornell. / *I not went to Cornell.
3. I did not go to Cornell.

4. *Went you to Cornell?
5. Did you go to Cornell?

Standard French requires *pas* or other negation-related elements (*point*, *jamais* and so on) in most situations, in addition to the main negative operator *ne*.³ Negation can also trigger changes in word order in some languages. English licenses subject-verb inversion with adverb fronting in negated phrases:

6. Hardly ever/Never/*Ever/*Frequently have I seen such a thing.⁴

Russian, too, often alters its unmarked Subject-Verb-Object linear order under negation:

7. Rabotat' ja ne mogu.
Work I ne can
I cannot work.

³ Sometimes *ne* is elided in everyday speech: *C'est pas evident* / *Ce n'est pas evident*. ‘It’s not obvious’.

⁴ Lawler 2007.

Negation can also influence the choice of verb aspect in Russian.⁵ The combination *ne* + the perfective imperative is rare, even when speakers need to order someone not to finish an action in the future.

Among the important negation features of Russian, English, and many other languages, are Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) -- words that modify negative phrases but cannot convey negativity on their own within a sentence. English NPIs include ‘at all’, and negative usages of particular ‘any-’ words such as ‘anywhere’. The most common NPIs in Russian start with *ni* (including the word *ni* itself), and they must be accompanied by the negative operators *ne* or *net*⁶:

8. Ona nikogda ne čitala ètu gazetu.
She never ne read.fem.past that.fem.acc newspaper.fem.acc
She never read that newspaper.

The NI-words consist of *ni* + a wh-element (a question word, such as ‘when’, ‘who’).

The *ne* operator can prompt the use of these NI-words as part of a process called Negative Concord (NC), “[t]he cooccurrence of multiple negative constituents expressing a single instance of negation,”⁷ in which negative elements are used within the scope of another negative element.

⁸ Similar examples of NC NPIs in other languages include French *rien* (‘anything, nothing’) in:

9. Je ne regrette rien.
I don’t regret anything.

And Yiddish *kin* (‘no, none, any’) in:

10. Ix hob nit kin gelt
I don’t have any money.

⁵ Russian verbs typically have two verbal aspects, imperfective and perfective. This is a complicated topic, but the basic essence is that one uses perfective aspect to emphasize that an action has completed or will be completed in the future.

⁶ One class of exception is answers to questions, like *ničego* ‘nothing/anything’, which can exist on its own, especially as an answer to a question.

⁷ Brown 1999, 2.

⁸ Lawler 2007. Some varieties of non-standard English also demonstrate NC: ‘I don’t got nothing’.

In other languages, such as West Flemish, the negative constituents must occur in a certain configuration to receive an NC interpretation. Otherwise, the result is Double Negation (DN), where the negated constituents cancel each other out and yield an affirmative reading. Russian phrases can have double negation, typically when there are two instances of *ne* within a clause:

11. On ne mozet ne čitat' ètu gazetu.
He ne can ne read that.fem.acc newspaper.fem.acc
He can't not read that newspaper.

In many languages there are modifiers of negatives which affect the meaning and force or strength of the negative operator. Some examples in Russian include: *sovsem ne* or *vovse ne*, 'not at all, in no way'. These types of modifiers intensify the strength of the negation. *Sovsem* and *vovse* can also modify NPIs like *nikakoj*. Another kind of modifier of negative elements can only affect an NPI and not the negative operator; an example of this is *rovno nikakoj*, roughly glossed as 'absolutely no / not'. Examples of a modifier that weakens negation include *počti ne*, 'almost no / none', and *počti* + any NPI:

12. Počti nikomu i ničego ne podarili.
Almost no one.masc.dat.sg and nothing ne gave.pl
They gave almost nothing to hardly anyone.⁹

The relative strength of modifiers of negatives can cause morphosyntactic changes which will be explored below.

⁹ Wayles Browne, p.c.

2 Negation in Russian

In Russian, the canonical unmarked way to negate something is to put the negation operator *ne* to the left of what is being negated. *Ne* is a clitic, unable to exist by itself, and it must occur just before the negated item(s). In the most unmarked instances, *ne* negates the verb and the sentence, and no other morphosyntactic operations are necessary:

13. Ja ne rabotal segodn'a utrom.
I neg work.past.masc.sg today morning.inst
I didn't work this morning.

In the above example, the entire content of the sentence is negated (except, of course, 'I'), so the scope of the negation encompasses the entire sentence. The following example is another grammatically unmarked negative sentence:

14. Počemu ty ne delaesh' svoju rabotu?
Why you.2.sg ne do.2.sg one's.fem.acc.sg work.fem.acc.sg?
Why are you not doing your work?

Aside from the verb, *ne* can also modify practically any other part of speech, including nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases:

15. Oni letajut ne v Moskvu, a v Vladivostok.
They fly ne to Moscow.fem.acc.sg but to Vladivostok.masc.acc.sg
They are flying not to Moscow, but to Vladivostok.

In the above example, the scope of negation is restricted to the prepositional phrase *v Moskvu*; only 'to Moscow' is being negated. The following shows how the negative scope of *ne* can be restricted to just one word (a number):

16. Èto ne tri knigi, a četyre.
It-is ne three book.gen.sg but four
It isn't three books, but four.

Whereas *ne* is the principal negative operator in Russian, another very frequent operator is *net*, whose meanings include ‘no’ and ‘there isn’t/aren’t’. *Net* is the principal expressor of the non-existence of something.

17. Na stole net žurnalov.
On table net magazines.masc.gen.pl
There aren’t any magazines on the table.

Historically, *net* resulted from the merger of *ne* and *est* (‘there is/are’), and it can also be broken down into *ne* + another verb or predicate:

18. Vy vse tam budete, a ja net.
You all there will be, but I net
You will all be there, but I won’t.

19. Muž xočet rebenka, a ja net.
Husband wants child but I net
My husband wants a child, but I don’t.¹⁰

Net is of great interest to this thesis because of its complex relationship to the Russian case system.

¹⁰ Wayles Browne, p.c.

3 Case in Russian

Most members of the Slavic language group, of which Russian is the most widely spoken, have an elaborate morphosyntactic case system. Russian has six cases which affect nominals and adjectives: nominative, accusative, dative, prepositional, instrumental, and genitive. Each case is marked by a set of word endings which vary based on gender, number, part of speech (noun or adjective), and declension class.¹¹ Adjectives must agree with the nouns they modify in gender, number, and case. It should also be pointed out here that Russian verbs agree in number and gender with their subject, so long as it is in the nominative (though the gender of a verb is only explicitly marked in the past tense). If the subject is not nominative, the verb is in the default neuter singular.

Russian speakers select case based on syntactic position, neighboring preposition or other lexical item, or other factors. Frequently the choice of case is solely determined by the neighboring lexical items, although each case has at least one main grammatical purpose, which is often tied to a specific syntactic position. The principal purpose of the nominative case, which is generally considered to be the most unmarked case, is to signify that a word is the subject of its phrase. The main function of the accusative case is to mark direct objects of verbs, though it is also often used for time expressions and targets of verbs of motion.

The simplest and most unmarked case assignments are those based purely on syntactic position. In the following sentence, the subject is in the nominative case, while the direct object of the transitive verb is in the accusative:

20. On kupil skripku.

¹¹ Russian has three genders: masculine, neuter, and feminine. Neuter is the default gender in Russian when there is no clear referent. For example, *byt'* 'to be' shows up in the neuter past tense when combined with infinitives. And there are many constructions like *prišlos'* 'one had to' + dat, which is neuter.

He.masc.nom bought violin.fem.acc
He bought a violin.

For the dative case, the basic use is to mark an indirect object:

21. Oni emu dali skripku.
They.nom.pl him.masc.dat gave violin.fem.acc
They gave him a violin.

Prepositional case is applied only to the object of certain prepositions, and typically carries a locative meaning:

22. Maša živet v Omske.
Masha lives in Omsk.masc.prep
Masha lives in Omsk.

The primary meaning of the instrumental case is to convey that an object is used for some purpose:

23. Volod'a napisal pis'mo karandašom.
Volod'a wrote letter pencil.masc.inst
Volodya wrote a letter with a pencil.

Finally, the basic purpose of the genitive case is to denote that something is from or out of something else:

24. Student politexničeskogo instituta zdes' .
Student polytechnical.masc.gen institute.masc.gen here
The student from the polytechnical institute is here.

Although each case has a fundamental purpose in and of itself, Russian is guilty of having what is sometimes called “Quirky Case”: case is applied to nominals for many purposes other than syntactic position.¹² For example, non-nominative case forms often occur with subjects of certain constructions, and non-accusative cases can be applied to direct objects of

¹² For an elaboration of the Quirky Case concept with regard to Icelandic, which shares similarities with Russian morphosyntax, see Zaenen and Maling 1991.

particular lexical items. Russian has a large set of prepositions, all of which require the use of specific cases, regardless of syntactic position. The prepositional case example above showed how the preposition *v* governs the prepositional case, at least when conveying a locative meaning. But the most frequent case governed by prepositions is the genitive:

25. Ona byla vne seb'a ot vostorga.
She was outside self.gen from delight.masc.gen
She was beside herself with delight.

26. Sobaka dobegala do doma.
Dog ran-up-to up-to house.masc.gen
The dog ran up to the house.

Dative subjects are quite common:

27. Nam nado tys'ača rublej.
Us.dat needed thousand rubles.gen.pl
We need a thousand rubles.

28. Mne žarko.
Me.dat hot
I'm hot.

And many verbs require objects to be in the dative or other non-accusative cases:

29. Pomogite ej!
Help.2.pl her.fem.dat.sg
Help her!

30. Ona dvigala rukoj.
She moved hand.fem.inst.sg
She moved her hand.

Finally, the genitive case has a wide variety of usages. Commonly it denotes a parent-child relationship between nouns (when one noun comes from or is part of another), and the genitive must be used in certain quantitative and numerical constructions. But genitive also plays a crucial role in how Russian signifies negation. There is an alternation between the

genitive case and other cases on negated objects and subjects. Subjects normally governing the nominative in an affirmative sentence can take the genitive under negation. And verbs that would normally require the accusative case on direct objects can take genitive on them when negated.¹³ Only the most unmarked type of subject (in the nominative case) or object (in the accusative) can alternate with the genitive when negated.

31. Ne svetilo nikakoj zvezdy.¹⁴
Ne shine.past.neut.sg. no.fem.gen.sg star.fem.gen.sg
No star whatsoever shone in the sky.

32. Sto raz govorili: ne čitajte na noč' sovjetskix gazet!¹⁵
Hundred times said: ne read at night Soviet.gen.pl newspapers.gen.pl
A hundred times they said: "Don't read Soviet newspapers at night!"

This alternation between genitive and other cases under negation, which belongs to the so-called "Quirky Case" category, can seem arbitrary in many Russian sentences. Native speakers frequently cannot agree on which case to use except when certain genitive-friendly factors are in play. This thesis examines the apparent optionality of genitive case under negation, as well as the instances where native speakers agree that genitive is required, and what linguistic factors seem to be at play when there are case alternations.

¹³ It is important to note that a non-nominative subject or non-accusative object never takes the genitive when negated.

¹⁴ Example from Babyonyshev and Brun 2002, 50.

¹⁵ Example from Ogonek 2002, Nr. 01, found in the Tübingen Corpus.

4 Russian Genitive Case and Negation

To native speakers, the genitive case in Russian is integrally associated with negation, even though it signifies many other things (such as where something comes from).¹⁶ The paradigmatic situation where genitive is applied to negation is when the speaker expresses the non-existence of something. But even in contexts clearly expressing non-existence, the speaker can usually substitute another case for the genitive. Under sentential negation, the subject can appear in the genitive but does not have to, except under certain semantic conditions. A direct object can be in the genitive under negation but this, too, is not required.

When the genitive is used to signify or emphasize the non-existence of something in Russian, this is called the Genitive of Negation (hereafter GenNeg).¹⁷ The hallmark of GenNeg on subjects is not only that the nominal and its associated adjectives are in genitive case, but also that the verb has neuter singular agreement markings, regardless of the gender or number of the subject.

33. V buterbrode ne vstretilos' nikakogo luka.

In sandwich.masc.prep ne was-encountered.neut.sg none.masc.gen.sg. onion.masc.gen.sg
The sandwich had no onions whatsoever.

¹⁶ Childhood grammar books sometimes direct children to memorize *net*, the negative operator meaning “not” or “isn’t”, as the primary word to associate with the genitive case, rather than prepositions such as *iz* or *ot* which carry more classically genitival meanings (‘of’, ‘from’, and so forth). See, for example, Šalaeva’s primer, p. 96.

¹⁷ Other Slavic languages, such as Serbo-Croatian/Bosnian (SCB) and Polish, also have a genitive of negation that sometimes behaves similarly to Russian, but there is less optionality in their accusative/genitive case assignment. Evidence presented in Menac 1978 poses a challenge to linguists who try to universalize their findings for Slavic – the behavior of SCB sometimes is the direct opposite to that of Russian. Strikingly, according to Menac’s study of direct objects under negation, genitive and accusative are used with the opposite frequency in the two languages, according to one study: Russian Genitive 78.7%, Russian Accusative 21.3%; whereas Serbo-Croatian-Bosnian Genitive occurs 20.2%, versus 79.8% for Serbo-Croatian-Bosnian Accusative (Menac 74).

A non-GenNeg version of the above sentence would be the following, with the verbal gender and number agreeing with the subject, and the subject and its modifying adjective in the nominative case:

34. V buterbrode ne vstretils'a nikakoj luk.
In sandwich.masc.prep ne was-encountered.masc.sg none.masc.gen.sg.
onion.masc.gen.sg
The sandwich had no onions whatsoever.

Objects under GenNeg retain their gender and number:¹⁸

35. Zaberu Dancig, no, požalujsta, bol'soj vojny ne delaj.
Capture Gdańsk, but, please, big.fem.gen.sg war.fem.gen.sg ne do
Capture Gdańsk, but, please, don't do a big war.¹⁹

Searches against the Russian National Corpus (RNC) support the finding that the negation of verbs meaning 'to exist' or 'to be' (such as *suščestvovat'*, *imet's'a*, *vstrečat's'a*, and *naxodit's'a*) usually prefers the selection of GenNeg. A dramatic example is this potentially infinite loop of *ne suščestvuet ni* + GenNeg from a poem:

36. Ne suščestvuet ni vyxodnyx / ni prazdnikov / ni dnej / ni nočej / ni večerov / ni utr.../
èto Nord-Ost.

Ne exists.neut.sg ni weekends.gen.pl / ni holidays.gen.pl / ni days.gen.pl / ni
evenings.gen.pl / ni mornings / this Nord-Ost.

There are no weekends / or holidays / or days / or nights / or evenings / or mornings... /
This is the Nord-Ost [North-East].²⁰

However, counterexamples abound of nominative nouns following *ne suščestvovat'* and other obviously NES constructions:

¹⁸ Animate masculine and plural nouns and adjectives have the same endings in the accusative as in the genitive, so it is impossible to distinguish between the two cases.

¹⁹ Ogonek: Year 1996, Nr. 38. Found in Tübingen Corpus.

²⁰ A. Ivaščenko, L. Čeboksarova. Radio interview with A. Ivaščenko and L. Čeboksarova, Radio "Retro" (2002.05.29) (from RNC).

37. V nastojaščee vrem'a v Rossii i za rubežom ne suščestvujut informacionnye sistemy, oxvatyvajuščie oblast' pokrytij s vysokimi temperaturami služby.

38. At present time in Russia and beyond border ne exist information.fem.nom.pl systems.fem.nom.pl, covering area coatings with high temperatures service.

39. At the present time in Russia and abroad there are no information systems dealing with coatings having high-temperature service.²¹

40. Na vyrubkax i rasčiščennyx lesnyx ploščad'ax posle nix (v zavisimosti ot različnogo funkcional'nogo naznačenija) často byvajut narušeny ili polnost'ju uničtoženy počvy, ne suščestvuet pokrov lesnoj rastitel'nosti.

In clearings and cleared forest land after them (in dependence from different functional purpose) often are broken or completely destroyed soil, ne exists cover.masc.nom.sg forest vegetation.

In the clearings and cleared forest land after them (depending on the different functions), the soil is often broken or completely destroyed; there is no covering layer of forest vegetation.²²

41. Uveren: v Rossii ne suščestvuet spravedlivyj sud, bolee togo, u men'a est' massa dokazatel'stv ètomu.

Sure: in Russia ne exists fair.masc.nom.sg trial.masc.nom.sg, more than, of me is mass evidence this

I am sure: in Russia there is no fair trial; moreover, I have a mass of evidence of this.²³

Some linguists have tried to argue that “genitive of negation is obligatory,”²⁴ and others have tried to show that particular constructions and semantic conditions require genitive under negation, but counterexamples are too easily conjured up and native speakers disagree about the optionality of the genitive. The great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin was grappling with this

²¹ Excerpt from *Informacionnye texnologii* found in RNC.

²² “*Stok i èrozija počv na vyrubkax v gornyx lesax*”, in “*Lesnoe xoz'ajstvo*”, example from RNC.

²³ Grigorij Mkrť'an and Nikolai Volkov, “*Zloj i očen' opal'nyj*”, in “*Vslux o.*”, 2003, from RNC.

²⁴ Bailyn 1997.

same grammatical question in 1831, using the phrase “the electric force of negative particles” to describe the potential influence of negation on case selection:

42. Čto glasisit grammatika? Čto dejstvitel'nyj glagol, upravl'ajemyj otricatel'noju časticeju, trebuet uže ne vinitel'nogo, a roditel'nogo padeža. Naprimer: ” ja ne pišu stixov.” No v moem stixe glagol "ssorit" upravl'aem ne časticeju "ne", a glagolom “xoču.” Ergo {2} pravilo s'uda nejdet. Voz'mem, naprimer, sledujuščee predloženie: “Ja ne mogu vam pozvolit' načat' pisat'... stixi”, a už konečno ne “stixov”. Neužto èlektričeskaja sila otricatel'noj časticy dolžna projti skvoz' vs'u ètu cep' glagolov i otozvat's'a v suščestvitel'nom? Ne dumaju.

What does the grammar state? That an active verb, governed by the negative particle, requires not the accusative, but rather the genitive case. For example: “I do not write poetry.gen.pl”. But in my verse, the verb “to quarrel” is not governed by the particle “no”, but by the verb “I want”. Ergo, the rule [of GenNeg] does not fit here. Let’s take into consideration, for example, the following sentence: “I cannot allow you to start writing ... poetry.acc.pl”, and certainly not “poetry.gen.pl”. Does the electric force of a negative particle really have to go through this whole chain of verbs and manifest itself on a noun? I think not.²⁵

The apparent optionality of case selection under negation provides rich opportunities for researching the syntax / semantics interface, as well as pragmatics and historical linguistics. The optionality of genitive and accusative seems to mark a historical shift in meaning that can be seen in generational differences.²⁶ Much of the older received scholarship is based on pure syntax, but more recently, semantics is receiving increased attention. Partee and Borschev have produced a large body of semantic work on the topic, and have found still-unresolved examples like:

43. Ni odnoj butylki ne razbilos'.
NPI one.fem.gen.sg. bottle.fem.gen.sg was-broken.neut.sg

²⁵ “Oproverženie na kritiki i zamečanja na sobstvennye sočinenija”, A.S.Puškin. *Sobranie sočinenij v 10 tomach*. Article originally published in 1831. Also viewable at <http://www.rvb.ru/pushkin/01text/07criticism/02misc/1031.htm> and other Internet locations. Quotation marks and grammatical notations added for clarity.

²⁶ Babyonyshev and Brun (2002) compare speakers younger than 25 vs. their elders; for the former, the case selection is based on specificity, for the latter it is based on definiteness. Native informants consulted for this thesis are on the cusps of different generations and their differing attitudes toward cases under negation bear out Babyonyshev and Brun’s findings.

Not one bottle was broken.²⁷

There was apparently a known set of bottles, something happened that would be expected to break them, and not one of the existing bottles was broken. There is nothing in the sentence to suggest that they did not exist. The sentence is not semantically existential, yet the sentence is in GenNeg. We know this because the verb *razbilos* ' shows the language-default neuter agreement, and not agreement with a feminine referent like *butylki*.

There is a vast literature, almost two centuries long, on the problem of Russian alternating case selection on negated subjects and direct objects. Previous generations of linguists tended to treat negated subjects and objects as entirely different situations, whereas more recent scholars attempt to construct theories incorporating both types of NPs. One of the main concerns has been the role of “strong” vs. “weak” negative modifiers, such as *nikakoj* (‘negative intensifier’, ‘no/none’), *počti nikakoj* (‘almost no/none’), *ni odnoj* (‘not one’), and *rovno nikakoj* (‘absolutely no/none’), in being a crucial factor in determining which cases are licensed and selected by Russian speakers in various contexts. This thesis will explore the question of the importance of modifiers of negative operators on case selection.

²⁷ Example from Partee and Borschev 2005.

5 Methods

This study relies on a combination of methods to examine the optionality of the genitive case under negation. Native-speaker judgments based on responses to surveys provide valuable insight into the topic, and several online resources furnish a vast amount of important data. Historically, linguists have had to rely on much smaller data sets to develop their arguments, but in the last decade and a half they have been able to examine far more information in shorter periods of time thanks to the World Wide Web. The gold standard of web research in the Russian field is the well-designed and powerful Russian National Corpus (hereafter RNC), which currently boasts over 176 million words in its repository, an excellent morphosyntactic tagging system, and a rich and convenient set of search tools.²⁸ Its tagging system serves as an invaluable aid when working with such a morphologically rich language as Russian. The RNC has an English interface as well as Russian, and it offers a convenient on-screen Cyrillic keyboard feature.²⁹

The RNC query interface is state-of-the-art. It permits effortless searches not only for word sequences, but also for a large set of grammatical markers (such as case, part of speech, time, person, gender, anthroponyms, animacy, transitivity, adjectival short forms) and semantic features (including taxonomy [persons, animals, plants, substance, etc.], mereology [parts, sets, classes], topology, concrete / abstract / proper nouns, verbal semantics [movement, change of state, location, perception, causativity, etc.]). One can query for multiple sets of phrases and specify their exact or approximate distance from each other within texts. From the result set

²⁸ Nacional'nyj korpus korpus russkogo jazyka, <http://ruscorpora.ru> .

²⁹ The English version is at <http://ruscorpora.ru/en/index.html> .

interface, a mouse click on the title of the source yields a wide variety of information about the source: Author, title, publication date, historical epoch (such as “USSR: Perestroika”), literary style, type of text, probable audience (age, type, range), and so on. Clicking on any lexical item in a result set pops up a dialog box containing much useful information about the entry, such as its lemma form, grammatical tags, and semantic features. The box also has a link for communicating errors to RNC personnel. Result sets can be exported to various file formats, such as Microsoft Excel and XML. In addition to the main corpus, the RNC has separate subcorpora, such as ones with purely syntactic tagging and a corpus of spoken Russian.

Older, smaller searchable corpora on the Web also yielded useful results for this thesis, especially the Russian Corpora in Tübingen.³⁰ General web search engines such as Bing³¹, Google³², Yahoo!³³, and their principal Russophone competitor, Yandex³⁴, allow research over a much wider range of data than the corpora. All of them permit searches in the Russian Cyrillic alphabet. However, the use these sources requires great caution: much of the text on the Web is disorganized, and often suffers from sloppy grammar, spelling and punctuation. One is often unable to discern crucial aspects of the writer or text: native language, intended audience, age (for generational differences), and the real identity of the writer. Also, especially for long-term projects, the impermanence of non-corpora web content can be problematic for verifying data found a few years before.³⁵ Obviously this is a huge challenge in an academic context where

³⁰ <http://www.sfb441.uni-tuebingen.de/b1/en/korpora.html> . Unfortunately, this site has been dysfunctional since 2010. The site administrators have been contacted about the problem, but there has been no response as of this writing.

³¹ <http://www.bing.com>.

³² <http://www.google.com> .

³³ <http://www.yahoo.com> .

³⁴ <http://www.yandex.ru> .

³⁵ For example, I wanted to return to <http://www.gabri.ru> to derive the larger context behind an accusative usage of *vo vse nikak*- that I had found a few years earlier, but the content was removed.

verifiability of data is critical, and it makes the existence of large and persistent corpora even more important.

6 Previous approaches to the problem

Over the past several decades, much progress has been made in the understanding of how GenNeg works, but there is still no clear consensus about it. Linguists have applied the *de rigueur* theories and methodologies of their respective times to the problem. This section provides a brief overview of highlights in GenNeg research.

Timberlake (1986) makes a valuable observational contribution by seeking to organize and rank lexical, semantic, syntactic, morphological, and stylistic parameters behind the choice of genitive or accusative on direct objects under negation. Timberlake focuses on the alternation between accusative and genitive case on direct object NPs, and not the alternation between nominative and genitive on subjects. He discovers a large set of general tendencies influencing Russian speakers to pick accusative or genitive in various environments. He focuses on the relative acceptability of various data samples, relying on contemporary Russian usage, rather than the traditional literary examples upon which previous works tended to rely.

One of his key findings is the importance of the degree of individuation of the NP: There is an inverse relationship between individuation and GenNeg. An extreme dichotomy is found between proper nouns and common nouns. Proper nouns are “virtually never” in GenNeg, because they are thoroughly individuated.³⁶ Concrete nouns are more likely to be in the accusative than abstract nouns under negation, and mass nouns are more likely to be in GenNeg than counting nouns. Other dichotomies pertaining to individuation include: animate / inanimate, singular / plural (plural participants are by definition less individuated), definite / indefinite, topicalized / neutral, modified / unmodified (an N modified by an adjective,

³⁶ Timberlake, 339.

prepositional phrase, pronominal, etc. is more individuated). In each of these sets, Timberlake believes that the first type is more likely to be in the accusative under negation.

Another major observation by Timberlake is the contrast between neutral and emphatic negation. Emphatic negation increases the power of a feature he calls ForceNeg, the force of negation. He argues that a noun modified by *nikakoj*, *ni odin*, *ni*, etc., “almost always appears in the genitive as the object under negation.” These markers of emphatic negation “signal the indefinite and nonspecific sense of the noun and emphasize the impossibility of individuating the participant with respect to the event.”³⁷ However, this thesis will challenge this conclusion below; many nouns modified by those elements appear in accusative under negation.

Timberlake illustrates how features of the VP can also influence the choice of case. Accusative is more likely on objects of auxiliary and modal verbs, and for the two marked verbal moods in Russian, imperative and conditional, verbal objects prefer accusative, while objects of indicative verbs prefer genitive. Interrogative sentences prefer accusative over declarative ones, because the former often reflect doubt about the negation of the event, especially with rhetorical negative questions.³⁸ Some verbal semantic classes take GenNeg more regularly than others: Perception / Emotion (*znat* ‘to know’, *videt* ‘to see’), and Existence / Possession (*imet* ‘to have’, *polučit* ‘to receive’). Historically, Slavic perception / emotional verbs governed a genitive object, a natural context for quantification. Transitive verbs of existence / possession imply strong subordination of the object to the narrated event, so the scope of negation includes V and Obj as a whole.

Timberlake observes that perfective verbs prefer accusative more often than imperfective verbs do. He attributes this preference to the fact that the scope of negation is the end point of

³⁷ Timberlake, 343.

³⁸ Timberlake, 350.

the action, making it more individuated than NPs associated with imperfective verbs. However, this thesis finds mixed results when comparing case selection on imperfective and perfective verbs under negation, albeit on subjects rather than the direct objects that are Timberlake’s concern. For the perfective / imperfective pair *ustroit’s’a* / *ustraivat’s’a* (‘to be arranged / planned’), indeed the perfective negative overwhelmingly preferred non-genitive forms, while the imperfective form commonly appears with genitive NPs. The negated imperfective *ustraivat’s’a* typically refers to events that did not occur (because they were not planned or arranged). On the other hand, the perfective / imperfective pair *polučit’s’a* / *polučat’s’a* (‘to turn out, to be’) evinces the opposite tendency: the perfective form prefers the genitive on NPs under negation.

One of Timberlake’s particularly interesting findings is that second-declension singular nouns (nouns ending in *-a*, most of which are feminine) prefer accusative under negation more than all other declensions – a morphologically-driven selection of case. Second-declension nouns paradigmatically distinguish nominative, accusative, and genitive case, whereas other non-animate declension classes syncretize accusative and nominative.

Table 1. Russian singular noun endings

	Nom	Acc	Dat	Inst	Prep	Gen
Fem/Masc -a Nouns	-a	-u	-e	-oj	-e	-y
Fem -Ø	-	-	i	-’ju	-i	-i
Masc (inanimate)	-	-	-u	-om	-e	-a
Masc (animate)	-	-a	-u	-om	-e	-a
Neut	-o	-o	-u	-om	-e	-a

Second-declension nouns with mobile stress, like *ruk-I* (gen sg ‘hand’) vs. *RUK-i* (acc pl ‘hand’) can disambiguate forms. The existence of a morphological hierarchy suggests that GenNeg is in a state of transition and is not a stable rule.

Timberlake has some interesting theories about the role of historical literary styles in object case selection under negation. Contemporary standard Russian has reduced the tendency to use GenNeg compared with 19th-century Russian; grammarians have increasingly tolerated accusative direct objects under negation. Less formal style / More formal style is yet another of Timberlake’s hierarchies: Genitive is more formal stylistically, whereas colloquial speech uses accusative case more than literary Russian. Participles / gerunds, which are more literary forms, consistently take the genitive. This stylistic hierarchy is more evidence that genitive under negation is in transition and dying off. Timberlake’s general conclusion is that “the more basic or unmarked the context for the expression of quantification,” the more likely the genitive will appear, although one could argue that participles and such literary forms are themselves marked.³⁹

One of the key works on the topic of GenNeg is Leonard Babby (1980), which departs from the Russian-centric methodologies of previous scholarship, and integrates Russian syntax with general syntactic theory. Unlike Timberlake, who concentrates on direct objects under negation, Babby is primarily concerned with the alternation between nominative and genitive case on subject NPs in negated existential sentences. Babby introduces semantic and pragmatic elements, departing from Syntactic Structures theory, Standard Theory, and Extended Standard Theory, basing his work on generative-transformational theory and Deep / Surface Structure. The GenNeg NP is the underlying subject, yet not the surface-structure subject, and a rule of

³⁹ Timberlake, 355.

genitive marking produces a surface structure (SS) without a subject NP. On the other hand, affirmative existential sentences have the same deep-structure and SS subject. Babby does not think an arbitrary set of lexically specified verbs is the key to explain the verbs that can occur with negated gen subjects. The verb – NP semantic relationship is one factor, plus lexically-specified collocational restrictions on what verb of existence is appropriate for a given NP. Previous scholarship failed to capture the wide range of Russian existential verbs. In this respect, Babby’s approach fits the data better.

The key parameter for Babby is the scope of assertion, which can apply to affirmative and negated verbs.⁴⁰ The NP must be within the scope of assertion in an existential sentence (ES), but outside the scope of the negative operator in other sentence types. The assignment of nom/acc case to an NP takes place very late in the derivation (Babby’s framework is concerned with surface case, as opposed to structural Case). The final rule of genitive marking on Neg ESs (NES) is:

[_R V NP] NEG -> [ne V NP_{GEN}]

(where R = rtheme, NP is indefinite, and V is semantically empty)

Babby emphasizes that the verbal lexical item is not as important as its contextual existential semantics. All of the verbs in the following example are contextually equivalent to *byt’* (to be).

Since the existence of any meat is negated, GenNeg applies:

44. V supe ne { okazalos’, obnaruživalos’, soderžalos’, popalos’, plavalo, vstretilos’, našlos’, bylo } nikakogo m’asa.⁴¹

In soup ne {appeared, was discovered, contained, was found, floated, was encountered, was found, was} no.gen.neut.sg meat.gen.neut.sg

⁴⁰ Babby, 64, building on a concept by T. Givón from “Negation in Language” (Stanford, 1975). Assertion is a quality of a verb which applies only to existential sentences (affirmative or negative), and it does not apply to declarative sentences.

⁴¹ Babby, 18.

All have the meaning ‘There was no meat in the soup.’

In Russian NESs, nominative is often chosen over GenNeg when there is something in the phrase that makes a subject NP more definite, concrete, specific, or individuated.⁴² The impact of definiteness and specificity on case selection will be explored in more detail below.

Babby’s framework has been tested by later works. Among the more prominent ones is Carol Neidle (1988), which challenges some of Babby’s conclusions, especially the notion that subjects can have genitive case. Neidle and subsequent scholars of GenNeg tend to agree that it can only occur with verb-internal arguments. Where the scholars differ is in how they explain the mechanisms behind GenNeg. One of Neidle’s innovations is an attempt to merge the behavior of subject and object NPs into one theory, departing from Timberlake who studies direct objects, and Babby who is concerned with subjects. Her monograph has chapters on object case marking and GenNeg, and what she calls “Apparent Genitive Subjects within the Scope of Negation”. Neidle uses the Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) approach associated with Joan Bresnan (1977, 1979, 1982). There are two instances of syntactic case alternation: nominative/dative subjects, and accusative/genitive objects. She proposes an LFG theory of case assignment and case agreement, instead of the derivational processes favored by transformational grammar. Alternative Russian case analyses include David Pesetsky (1982), based on Chomsky’s (1981) Government-Binding Theory.

Neidle builds upon Roman Jakobson’s theory of Russian case outcomes, according to which the binary values of three features result in a particular case. The three binary options are called Marginal, Quantifying, and Ascriptive. The Marginal value differentiates between

⁴² Babby, 14.

syntactic cases (nominative, accusative, genitive) and adverbial cases (locative / prepositional, dative, instrumental). The value of Quantifying is based on the extent to which a noun is participating in an event. Finally, the Ascriptive value reflects the emphasis on directionality.

Table 2. Jakobsonian assignment of Russian case features⁴³

Case	Marginal	Quantifying	Ascriptive
Nominative	-	-	-
Accusative	-	-	+
Genitive ₁	-	+	+
Genitive ₂	-	+	-
Locative ₁	+	+	+
Locative ₂	+	+	-
Dative	+	-	+
Instrumental	+	-	-

The value set [-, +, +] results in genitive case (actually Genitive₁, the most common form of the genitive in Russian). Neidle relies on the middle position, Jakobson’s scope-marking feature [Q]⁴⁴, which is associated with logical operators like NEG or semantic operators inherent to lexical items. Under negation, the [Q] feature may spread to an object, which puts the object under the scope of negation. To capture the alternation between accusative and genitive in the direct object position, Neidle assigns a partially specified feature matrix [-, , +] to this position in a complex semantic equation, leaving the second value unassigned. Under negation, a

⁴³ From Neidle, 2-3.

⁴⁴ [Q] stands for ‘Quantifying’, a syntactic feature.

positive value of the second feature can be assigned, resulting in genitive case assignment. If a positive value is not assigned to this feature, then the unmarked value receives another equation: ([, - ,]). [Q] can be introduced semantically, via specific lexical items having some notion of quantification in their meaning.⁴⁵ The range of [Q] may spread to arguments within the scope of the operator.⁴⁶ The absence or presence of [Q] on the node dominating the object determines the value of a single case feature, hence the accusative/genitive alternation. Thus a lexically-imposed object case would trump direct assignment of accusative or genitive case.⁴⁷ The only reason it is possible for genitive to be assigned to NPs within the scope of *net*, is that the lexical arguments of *net / ne budet / ne bylo* ('there is not / will not be / was not') are objects, not subjects. The affirmative *est* ('there is') takes a subject argument, and *net* is the present tense of negated *est*. A key mechanism for Neidle is the 'demotion' of a subject argument to an object argument when an impersonal neuter verb is used. The following pair of sentences illustrates unmarked and marked ways, respectively, to say 'Five boys came':

45. P'at' mal'čikov prišli.
Five boys.masc.gen.pl came.pl⁴⁸

46. Prišlo p'at' mal'čikov.
Came.neut.sg five boys.masc.gen.pl

In the unmarked first sentence, there is number agreement between the NP and the verb, proving that *p'at' mal'čikov* is the subject. However, the second sentence does not have number agreement, so Neidle argues that *p'at' mal'čikov* has been 'demoted' from subject to object. Neidle believes this same 'demotion' concept is in play in GenNeg as well as in impersonal

⁴⁵ Neidle, 9-10.

⁴⁶ Neidle, 35-6.

⁴⁷ Neidle, 48.

⁴⁸ 'Boys' is in the genitive only because it is governed by a number.

sentences, Quantifier Phrases (QPs), and other constructions where the ostensible subject does not agree with the verb.

Neidle tries to simplify Timberlake's participant hierarchy.⁴⁹ The accusative / genitive alternation expresses narrow-scope / wide-scope preferences of the specification of the object. Hence genitive objects tend to be 'indefinite', accusative objects individuated. Objects that are known beforehand to exist, she argues, are more likely to be proper, concrete, definite, animate, modified, etc., so they are more likely to be in the accusative under negation. A topicalized NP moved to the front of the sentence, is presumed to exist a priori. Common, abstract, indefinite, inanimate, and unmodified nouns imply a wider scope; thus, they prefer to be in the genitive.

John Bailyn (1997) proposes the very stark statement that "GenNeg is Obligatory".⁵⁰ Where Timberlake argued that GenNeg optionality indicates historic change, Bailyn tries to show that it is an obligatory, configurational case. His argument is based upon his triple-interface view of Universal Grammar from his Ph.D. thesis.⁵¹ Bailyn argues that there is a single syntactic configurational position for GenNeg, and there are systematic discourse conditions that accompany it. GenNeg only applies to underlying direct objects and cannot occur on subjects of unergative verbs.⁵² GenNeg is obligatory on negative existential copula constructions like the following:

47. Na stole net žurnalov / *žurnaly.
On table net magazines.masc.gen.pl / *magazines.masc.nom.pl
There aren't magazines on the table.⁵³

⁴⁹ Neidle, 60.

⁵⁰ Bailyn 1997.

⁵¹ Deep Structure – Surface Structure – [Phonetic Form – Logical Form – Functional Form], where Functional Form deals with discursive and contextual factors.

⁵² Unergative verbs are intransitive verbs usually, but not always, having agentive subjects. For example, in English, 'sleep' and 'walk' are unergative. Unergatives stand in contrast to unaccusative verbs, which are also intransitive, but whose subjects are not agents and are not actively responsible for the action of the verb. English examples include: 'The snow melted' and 'The bottle broke'.

⁵³ Bailyn, 55-57.

The non-optionality of GenNeg in such contexts is corroborated by the findings of the native-speaker survey conducted for this thesis.

Bailyn posits a VP-internal structure where themes (direct objects) c-command other internal arguments. So subjects of unergative verbs, since they lack internal arguments, cannot be affected by GenNeg. There must be three base-generated positions to allow for Russian subject / object asymmetries as well as VP-internal asymmetries. Subject / object asymmetries include: object arguments, and not subject arguments, can be extracted out of embedded clauses over overt complementizers – the “that-t” effect.⁵⁴ According to Bailyn, Russian unergative subjects, dative objects, and oblique arguments are all base-generated in distinct positions. Bailyn limits the application of GenNeg to one underlying position: SpecVP. This correctly predicts, for example, that nominative themes in dative-subject constructions can take GenNeg:

48. Saše ne nužno medsestry.
Sasha.masc.dat.sg. neg need.neut.sg. nurse.fem.gen.sg
Sasha doesn't need a nurse.⁵⁵

Interestingly, *medsestry* may be an object argument rather than the subject, as NPs are often in the accusative in phrases like the following:

49. ne nužno medsestru
ne needed nurse.fem.acc.sg

Bailyn's syntactic tree forces GenNeg in negative copular sentences, and eliminates apparent optionality in such situations. He applies Molly Diesing's Tree Splitting hypothesis to support his theory, where existential closure applies to any unbound variable in the nuclear scope

⁵⁴ Bailyn, 89.

⁵⁵ Bailyn, 94.

(VP). Thus, arguments that remain in VP have an existential interpretation, which is borne out in Russian:

50. Pticy letajut.
birds fly.pres.pl
The birds are flying. (definite interpretation), vs.

51. Letajut pticy.
fly.pres.pl birds
Birds are flying. / There are birds flying in the sky. (existential)⁵⁶

Bailyn's syntactic treatment is largely successful, if limited to certain contexts, and subsequent works have picked up on some of his themes, including the emphasis on unaccusativity.

Sue Brown (1999) relies on unaccusativity to develop an explanation of Russian case optionality under negation within the minimalist framework. Brown, like Neidle, proposes a unified theory of object negation as well as subject existential negation, relying on distinctions among accusative, unaccusative, and unergative verbs as well as the transitive / intransitive dimension. Brown sees her work as a needed contribution to the study of universal negation, because Russian data has been neglected. The two main "diagnostics for clausal negation" in Russian are NI-words that are licensed only within the scope of overt clausemate negation, and language-specific GenNeg: "The optional Case-marking of the internal argument of a negated verb."⁵⁷

In Russian, the possible GenNeg environments are: direct objects of transitive verbs, and subjects of unaccusative intransitive verbs, such as:

52. Otveta ne prišlo.
Answer.masc.gen.sg ne came.neut.sg
No answer came.

⁵⁶ Bailyn, 100.

⁵⁷ Brown (1999), 1-2.

Forbidden GenNeg environments include

Subjects of unergative intransitive verbs:

53. *Lingvistov ne [spit/sp'at].
Linguists.masc.gen.pl ne [sleep.sg / sleep.pl]
No linguists are sleeping.

Subjects of transitive verbs:

54. *Studentov ne [čítaet/-jut] stixi.
Students.masc.gen.pl ne [read.sg / read.pl] poems.acc.pl
No students are reading poems.

Nouns intrinsically Case-marked for some other case also do not succumb to GenNeg:

55. Ja ne zvonila [moej sestře / *moej sestry].
I ne called.past.fem [my.fem.dat.sg sister.fem.dat.sg / *my.fem.gen.sg
sister.fem.gen.sg]
I did not call my sister.

An interesting environment where GenNeg can occur is Expletive (Pleonastic) Negation, where there is a sentential negative marker but no semantic negative force. Expressions of Expletive Negation include *čut' ne* (almost), *poka ne* (until), and negated subordinate conditional clauses introduced by conjunctions like *kak by* (as if) / *čtoby* (so that) after expressions of fear and worry. True sentential negation licenses both NI-words and GenNeg, while certain types of negated interrogatives only allow GenNeg, even though both types of clauses contain the negative marker *ne*. Brown claims that *ne* enters the derivation with the [POL] polarity feature in its sublabel. [POL] can optionally be attached to the [NEG] feature. [POL]-[NEG] is needed to license NI-words.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Brown (1999), 106.

The behavior of Expletive negation in Russian reveals an asymmetry, in that Expletive negation cannot license NI-words, even though it does license GenNeg. Yes/No *li* questions are similar:

56. [CP [C [Ne vyzyvaet][C li]][IP tol'ko pobeda kadetov kakix-nibud'/*nikakix bespor'adkov]]?
 Ne cause.sg li only victory.fem.nom.sg cadets.masc.gen.pl some.gen.pl / no.gen.pl
 disturbances.masc.gen.pl
 Could it be that the cadet victory is causing some disturbances?⁵⁹
 (*ne* and *li* are both clitics; *ne* moves along with the verb)

The way NegP works in Russian is that sentential negation requires the overt proclitic *ne*, without which NI-words are not licensed. The feature [NEG], overtly realized as *ne*, constitutes the NegP.⁶⁰ In NC languages, WH-elements and [NEG] must be licensed in a Spec-Head relation with an appropriate WH-head or NEG--head:

[XP [Op [[F]] X' [X⁰ [F]..... ..]]

In Negative Concord (NC), negated constituents have a [-Interp] [NEG] feature that must be checked and erased, leaving the [NEG] feature of the negative head as the sole feature expressing negation. The [NEG] of the Neg head does not itself need to be checked. So in Russian, [NEG] in the sublabel of NI-words is [-Interp].

57. Ja nikogo ne videl.
 I noone.masc.gen[or acc].sg ne saw.past.masc.sg
 I didn't see anyone.
 NegP [NEG nikogo] [Neg']] where there is overt raising of *nikogo*. Note that *nikogo* presents an ambiguity, marked for either acc on a masculine animate object, or gen, both having the same morphological ending.

⁵⁹ Brown (1999), 2-4.

⁶⁰ Brown (1999), 25-27.

The example *Ja ne videl nikogo* has covert feature raising; the post-V NI-word is in situ.⁶¹ There are multiple negative constituents checking [NEG]. But in the case of

58. *Ja nikogo nigde ne videl.*
I noone.masc.gen[or acc].sg nowhere ne saw.past.masc.sg
I didn't see anyone anywhere.

ne is at the bottom with an intact NEG feature; *nigde* and *nikogo* are higher and have had their NEG feature already checked. The linear order

59. *Ja ne videl nikogo nigde!*
I ne saw.past.masc.sg noone.masc.gen[or acc].sg nowhere
I didn't see anyone anywhere!

is explained as an instance of adjunction, with covert feature checking.

Brown discusses an alternative proposal for her data, which relies on the controversial theory of “Negative Absorption,” to satisfy the NEG-Criterion in NC languages. This proposal holds that NegAbsorp is the merger of NEG-operators into one instance of negation, via “factorization”: two or more universal quantifiers become one quantifier. Thus, English does not have NegAbsorp, but Russian does. Brown combines minimalist feature-checking with Heim’s notion of indefinites as variables to dispense with NegAbsorp, the latter seeming too stipulative.⁶²

Brown disagrees with Bailyn by arguing that the Genitive of Negation is not obligatory, and that it depends on grammatical and pragmatic factors. It can only occur on a non-oblique VP-internal argument of a negated verb (meaning an object of a transitive verb, or a subject of an unaccusative intransitive verb, including existential verbs).⁶³ Derived Subjects of negated

⁶¹ Brown (1999), 29-30.

⁶² Brown (1999), 31.

⁶³ Brown (1999), 42-46.

passives, and themes in constructions with optional Dative experiencers, can also receive

GenNeg. Here are some negated passive examples:

60. Ne bylo polučeno gazet.
Ne be.past.neut.sg was-received.past.neut.sg newspapers.fem.gen.pl
No newspapers were received.

61. Ol'gi v zerkalo vidno ne bylo, ne dorosla ešče.
Olga.fem.gen.sg in mirror visible.neut.sg ne be.past.neut.sg,
ne grow-up.past.fem yet
Olga could not be seen in the mirror, she had not grown up yet.

Dative examples include:

62. Im ne nužno sverkajuščix talantov.
They.dat.pl ne needed.neut.sg brilliant.gen.pl talent.gen.pl
They don't need brilliant talents.

Unaccusatives, existentials, passives, and other kinds of predicates can all have GenNeg \diamond

Nominative alternation on the subject.

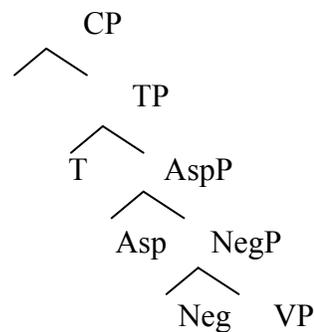
According to Brown's minimalist approach, the key mechanism in Russian GenNeg operates as follows: If a noun like *otvet* (answer.masc.nom.sg) is marked with GenNeg, and the V has no (or null) phi-features, assuming that T^{0max} does not have these features either, the default singular neuter morphology results on past-tense verbs (*prišlo* came.neut.sg.past). When V head-adjoins to Neg, the sublabel of the new Neg^{0max} contains [NEG] and [$+V^{max}$], which becomes the GenNeg checking domain. *Otvét*, being marked GenNeg, is attracted there to check Case. The V raises to check Asp and T features, but no new Nom domain is created, since neither the V nor the T have phi-features (person, number, gender). Thus the derivation converges as *Otveta ne prišlo* (answer.masc.gen.sg ne came.neut.sg.past) with no V agreement.

Acc would require [+PRED], but no Acc checking domain is created in unaccusative Vs, since they are [-PRED].⁶⁴

The following syntactic trees diagram the phrase *ne bylo doktora* in a sentence like:

63. V gorode ne bylo doktora.
 In city ne was.neut.sg doctor.masc.gen.sg
 There was no doctor in the city.⁶⁵

Brown identifies the potential checking domains thus:



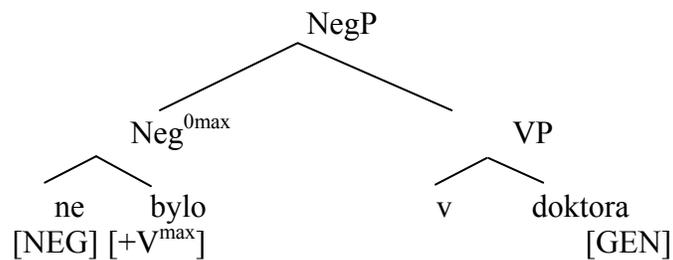
TP (Tense Phrase) is a potential checking domain for nominative case, AspP (Aspect Phrase, referring to Russian verbal aspects) for accusative case, and NegP is the potential domain for GenNeg. In NegP, all c-commanded elements receive an existential interpretation. An advantage of having NegP c-command the Subject position is that NI-words can occur there, without resorting to a stipulative lowering operation. In sentences like the following example, the NI-word passes through [Spec, Neg] to check its [NEG] feature on the way to merging at [Spec, T] to check nominative case:

⁶⁴ Brown (1999), 82-83.

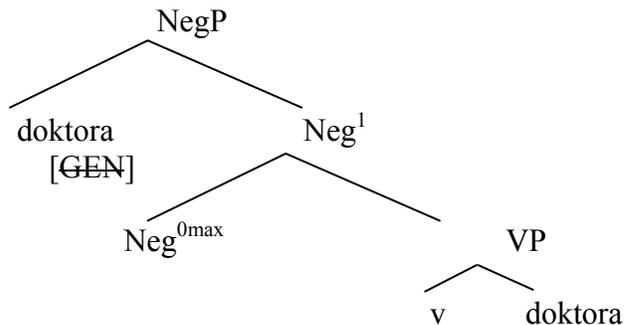
⁶⁵ Examples and trees from Brown (1999), 87-89.

64. Nikto ne zvonil.
 NI-who ne called.masc.sg
 No one called.⁶⁶

First, a head adjoins to Neg, creating Neg^{0max}, which is a zero-level maximal projection carrying in its sublabel the features needed for a GenNeg checking domain.



Next, *doktora* raises to check its own GenNeg feature:



The verb *bylo* ‘was’ has no [+PRED] feature that would make an accusative checking domain. Also, there are no phi-features to be checked or to create a nominative checking domain.

⁶⁶ Brown (1999), 92.

Brown posits that from the minimalist perspective, Feature Mismatch is a key element in Russian negation (especially GenNeg and Yes/No Questions). What happens when two mismatched features occur in the same checking domain? This should block or cancel the derivation. Chomsky thus modified his “Checking Relation”: Feature F’ in a F matrix is in a checking configuration with feature f, and F’ is in a checking relation with f if F’ and f match.⁶⁷ Only the head of the chain (α , trace) enters into Attract/Move. For Negative Constituents, a [NEG] feature heads the functional category NegP. Russian and other languages with overt negation morphology have a [-Interp] [NEG] feature in their sublabel that is attracted by [NEG] and checked. This leaves the [+Interp] NEG as the sole expressor of negation.⁶⁸

Part of Brown’s approach is to synthesize a configurational VP-shell GenNeg theory (like Bailyn (1997)’s “obligatory” GenNeg) with her earlier functional-category strategy. Minimalist Checking Theory and Bare Phrase Structure (BPS) nicely accommodate GenNeg, she believes, including its optionality, structural limitations, and semantic interpretation.⁶⁹ Brown argues that GenNeg is checked in the functional projection of V^0 dedicated to the checking of Object Case. Since Acc is checked in [Spec, AspP], she proposes that GenNeg is checked in the Spec of the AspP complement of Neg^0 .⁷⁰

Several linguists have emphasized the role of concepts like definiteness, indefiniteness, specificity, and non-specificity in the decision to use genitive under negation. According to

⁶⁷ Brown (1999), 13-14.

⁶⁸ Brown (1999), 18-22.

⁶⁹ Brown (1999), 53.

⁷⁰ Brown (1999), 58-59.

Reformatskij (1967), since Russian has no articles, definiteness/indefiniteness is expressed by accusative/genitive objects in negative sentences:

65. Ja ne vižu knigu / -i.
I ne see book.fem.acc.sg / fem.gen.sg
I don't see the / any book.⁷¹

Nonetheless, sometimes genitive is used on definite objects:

66. Ja ne čital knjig.
I ne read books.fem.gen.pl
I did not read any / the books.⁷²

Maria Babyonyshev and Dina Brun (hereafter B&B) recently published a significant article discussing what they call the “New Genitive of Negation” in Russian.⁷³ They argue that from 1970 to 2000, a change occurred in the GenNeg construction. Speakers under 25 years old (as of approximately the year 2000, so those who were born after 1975) speak what B&B call “Dialect II”, and their dialect systematically differs from that of older speakers (“Dialect I”) in the use of GenNeg. The syntactic restrictions on GenNeg are the same, but Dialect I’s semantic restrictions are based on definiteness, while Dialect II’s are based on specificity. B&B emphasize the impacts of Russian unaccusativity and unergativity in their analysis.⁷⁴ They find evidence of a

⁷¹ Neidle, 34.

⁷² Neidle, 35.

⁷³ Babyonyshev and Brun 2002.

⁷⁴ Russian, like many other languages, has unergativity (intransitive verbs having an agent subject) and unaccusativity (intransitive verbs whose syntactic subject is not a semantic agent, and is not actively responsible for the verbal action).

Unaccusativity in Russian has received a substantial amount of attention in the literature. See, for example, Babby (1980), Babyonyshev (1996), and Harves (2002).

Babyonyshev (1996) explains how the Extended Projection Principle operates in Russian, and for unaccusative verbs, non-nominal phrases such as PPs (locative inversion constructions) can satisfy the EPP and be in “subject” position. For example:

Na stole stojali lampi i pustoj stakan.
‘On the table stood lamps and an empty glass.’ (6)

dialect shift between DI and DII: Every speaker under 25 years old is considered to have DII, while every speaker older than 32 years has DI. 25- to 32-year-olds have an intermediate dialect (ID) with a mixture of results.⁷⁵

According to B&B, GenNeg can surface on nominals under sentential negation, provided that the nominal is base-generated as Comp of V, and the nominal has an indefinite interpretation. Therefore, the genitive can surface on direct objects of transitive verbs, and subjects of unaccusative verbs.⁷⁶ Genitive nominals are unambiguously indefinite; their non-genitive counterparts (nominative subjects of unaccusative verbs and accusative objects of transitive verbs) are ambiguous. That is, the latter can be either definite or indefinite.

67. Mal'čik ne čital stixov.
Boy ne read poems.masc.gen.pl
The boy did not read any poems / *the poems.

68. Mal'čik ne čital ètu knigu / *ètoj knigi.
Boy ne read this book.fem.acc.sg /*this book.fem.gen.sg
The boy did not read this book.⁷⁷

But when *nikak-* ('any') is added, both accusative and genitive are possible:

69. Mal'čik ne čital nikakuju knigu / nikakoj knigi.
Boy ne read any.fem.acc.sg book.fem.acc.sg / any.fem.gen.sg book.fem.gen.sg
The boy did not read any book.

An example of a Russian unaccusative verb is *svetit'* 'shine':

70. Na nebe ne svetilo zvezd.
In sky ne shine.past.neut.sg star.gen.pl
No stars shone. / *The stars did not shine.

Transitives and unergatives have the same tree, with a vP in topmost position, whereas unaccusatives have VP in topmost position:

Trans / unerg: [vP [NP v' [v VP [V NPobj]]]]

Unacc: [VP [(PP) V [V NP]]] (48)

⁷⁵ Babyonyshev and Brun, 60-61.

⁷⁶ Babyonyshev and Brun, 48.

⁷⁷ Babyonyshev and Brun, 49.

71. Na nebe ne svetila èta zvezda.
In sky ne shine.past.fem.sg that.nom.fem.sg star.nom.fem.sg
That star did not shine.

Unambiguously indefinite unaccusative arguments can alternate between nominative and genitive, even in the presence of a strong negative intensifier like *nikak-*. The first example in the next pair is a negative existential sentence with GenNeg; the second is a negative existential sentence without GenNeg, having agreement between the verb and the subject, and carrying exactly the same meaning:

72. Ne svetilo nikakoj zvezdy.
Ne shine.past.neut.sg. any.fem.gen.sg star.fem.gen.sg
No star whatsoever shone in the sky.

73. Ne svetila nikakaja zvezda.
Ne shine.past.fem.sg. ne.fem.nom.sg star.fem.nom.sg
No star whatsoever shone in the sky.⁷⁸

According to B&B, subjects of unergative and transitive verbs are not base-generated in the internal argument position, so they cannot surface with genitive case, even when indefinite.⁷⁹

74. *Ni odnogo mal'čika ne čitalo knigi.
Ni one.masc.gen.sg boy.masc.gen.sg ne read.neut.sg book.fem.gen.sg
Not one boy read the book.

B&B describe the structure of a Russian indefinite subject with a transitive verb thus:

[_{IP} NP_{Subj} [_{VP} [_{V'} V (NP)]]]

Genitive is not possible on an unergative verb with an indefinite subject:

75. *Ni odnogo mal'čika ne bežalo.

⁷⁸ Babyonyshev and Brun, 50.

⁷⁹ Babyonyshev and Brun, 50.

Ni one.masc.gen.sg boy.masc.gen.sg ne ran.neut.sg
Not one boy ran.⁸⁰

The intuitions of B&B's five native-speaker informants who were 28-36 years of age matched the standard description (Dialect I). However, Dialect II younger speakers diverge from DI in a striking way: DII permits a genitive nominal to have a definite and an indefinite interpretation. Even when the determiner *ètot* ('this') is present, DII allows genitive.⁸¹ One of B&B's GenNeg examples has a fronted PP, which can be a common environment for GenNeg:

76. S polki ne padalo nikakoj knigi.
From shelf ne fell.neut.sg no.fem.gen.sg book.fem.gen.sg
No book has fallen from the shelf.⁸²

There is a strong preference for fronting the PP in this situation, so a question naturally arises: Is it ungrammatical to remove the fronting of the PP, while keeping GenNeg (signaled by the non-agreement of the neuter verb with the feminine subject)?:

77. Nikakoj knigi ne padalo s polki
No.fem.gen.sg book.fem.gen.sg fell from the shelf
No book fell from the shelf.

According to many of the informants consulted for this thesis, removing the fronting of the PP is moderately acceptable, but not preferred. InfE would change the word order to *nikakoj knigi s polki ne padalo* (moving the PP leftward). And to her it seemed more natural to jettison GenNeg, and say instead:

78. Nikakaja kniga s polki ne padala.
No.fem.nom.sg book.fem.nom.sg from shelf ne fell.fem.sg

InfA and InfB found the GenNeg sentence unacceptable; the nominative case should be used instead. InfD preferred the verb *upalo* ('fell down'), because the meaning seems to be that one is

⁸⁰ Babyonyshev and Brun, 51.

⁸¹ Babyonyshev and Brun, 51.

⁸² Babyonyshev and Brun, 53.

expecting a book to fall but it does not. But otherwise, grammatically it seemed fine to her. InfC thought the sentence sounds natural as it is; people would frequently use this construction in colloquial speech or in book passages reflecting colloquial speech. She mentioned that one could even double the occurrences of *nikakoj* thus:

79. Nikakoj knigi nikogda ne padalo s nikakoj polki.
No.fem.gen.sg book.fem.gen.sg never ne fell.neut.sg from any.fem.gen.sg
shelf.fem.gen.sg
No book has fallen from any shelf.

Other informants were consulted on this issue. “InfF,” a 53-year-old man from Novosibirsk who has lived in the USA since 1994, preferred a non-GenNeg translation:

80. Ni odna kniga ne upala s polki.
Not one.fem.nom.sg book.fem.nom.sg ne fell.fem.sg from shelf

“InfG,” a 45-year-old woman who lives in Kiev, similarly prefers a non-GenNeg sentence (note that *nikakoj* here does not trigger genitive, as many Russians believe it should):

81. Nikakaja kniga ne padala s polki.
No.fem.nom.sg book.fem.nom.sg ne fell.fem.sg from shelf

“InfH,” a 52-year-old man from Moscow who has lived in the USA since 1994, felt that the GenNeg “*Nikakoj knigi ne padalo s polki*” was grammatically correct, so long as there is a context like the following: some book is found on the floor, but no book fell from the shelf. He thought about the problem some more and offered that a sentence like the following sounds perfectly natural in the genitive:

82. Na nego ne padalo nikakogo podozrenija.
On him ne fell.neut.sg no.neut.gen.sg suspicion.neut.gen.sg
No suspicion fell upon him.

“InfI,” a 46-year-old man from Kiev who has lived in the USA since 1994, also believed that the GenNeg sentence *Nikakoj knigi ne padalo s polki* was grammatically correct.

The principal contribution of B&B’s study is the line they draw between “Specificity” and “Definiteness” – the latter is purely syntactic, while the former is semantic. Specific nominals have a fixed referent in the world. Indefinite nominals can be specific, and definite nominals can be non-specific. In Russian DII, a nominal under the scope of sentential negation can be GenNeg if it is base-generated in object position and non-specific:⁸³

Table 3. Specificity in Dialect II

	Specific	Non-Specific
Genitive	N	Y
Nom/Acc	Y	N

B&B provide the following reasons for the dialect shift between DI and DII: It is an instance of a common crosslinguistic phenomenon where languages that allow nominal arguments to appear in multiple cases/positions treat the marked nominals as specific, rather than definite. This, the dialect shift is evidence of an adoption of a less-marked syntactic system. Most creole languages opt for a specificity-based syntax. Also, the shift moves away from an ambiguous set of interpretations to unambiguous (for example, DI non-genitive nominals can be both definite and indefinite). DII’s non-genitive nominals are unambiguously specific, and genitive nominals are unambiguously non-specific.⁸⁴

Syntactically, the DI ambiguity is due to Logical Form (LF) lowering of non-genitive nominals. The noun raises out of VP in overt syntax; if it remains in VP-external position at LF,

⁸³ Babyonyshev and Brun, 55-57.

⁸⁴ Babyonyshev and Brun, 64.

it is outside the Domain of Existential Closure and is definite. If it lowers at LF to its base-generated VP position, it is bound by Existential Closure and is indefinite.⁸⁵ The theory is that language learners would choose a system with less movement and less ambiguity (such as from LF lowering). The general spirit of B&B's findings is somewhat reflected in the responses that native informants provided for this thesis. Sometimes there was an age-related gap in their judgments of the data, though often speakers from the same age group still differed in their judgments.

⁸⁵ Babyonyshev and Brun, 65. See Diesing (1992) for a detailed analysis of indefinites.

7 Sample native-speaker views

If one needs proof that Russian case assignment under negation often has no readily apparent explanation, just ask some native speakers. The following instances of agreement and disagreement over case assignment among native Russian speakers testify to the mystery of the problem. Five main informants were consulted for this thesis, who shall be referred to as “InfA,” “InfB”, “InfC”, “InfD”, and “InfE”. InfA, in her mid-20s (as of 2011), was a pupil in Russian-language schools in Azerbaijan. InfB, InfC, and InfD are in the range of 35-40 years old. InfB grew up in a Russian-speaking family in Ukraine, InfC is from the Moscow area, and InfD is from St. Petersburg. InfE is a Muscovite in her mid-20s. All of them have been living in the United States for several years; InfB, InfC, and InfE a few years longer than InfA or InfD. This section will analyze their responses to a survey, with B&B’s thoughts on generational dialects, definiteness and specificity in mind. That is, do the alleged speakers of Dialect II prefer nominative or accusative when the noun is specific, and genitive when it is non-specific? And do they permit a genitive nominal to have both a definite and an indefinite interpretation?

The questionnaire presents sets of possible Russian translations of English negated sentences. Native speakers were asked to choose which option sounded most correct and natural, and why. Many of the examples were selected from various sources to test linguists’ conclusions about Russian GenNeg, and to verify the judgments of the native speakers whom other linguists had consulted. This author composed the remainder of the examples. The results are generally all over the board; often one of the younger informants accepted many of the sentences that the older ones rejected or thought were questionable, but then another younger informant would agree with the older ones. The older informants often did not agree among themselves.

1. “I didn’t find flowers.”⁸⁶

- a. Ja ne našel cvety.
I ne found flowers.acc.pl
- b. Ja ne našel cvetov.
I ne found flowers.gen.pl

The definiteness of 1a and 1b is ambiguous, by B&B’s definition (i.e. there is no morphosyntactic indicator as to whether they are definite or not). Semantically, depending on how the speaker perceives the concept of flowers, the noun could be either specific or non-specific. InfA and InfB had opposite opinions: InfA thought 1a was correct, and 1b sounded unnatural, while InfB and InfD felt the opposite was true. InfC and InfE were of the opinion that either sentence was fine. InfE felt that 1b had a slightly different meaning – ‘I didn’t find any flowers’, whereas 1a means ‘I didn’t find the particular flowers you were asking about’. So InfE semantically flagged 1a as specific, and 1b as non-specific, and as she is a younger informant, her response supports B&B’s narrative. But InfA is approximately the same age as InfE, and interpreted the examples differently. Some of the other respondents may have found it ambiguous whether the sentences referred to specific flowers, or any flowers. Timberlake (1986) asserts that plural participants are less individuated, hence GenNeg is preferred.⁸⁷ One informant’s response goes along with Timberlake, but another’s contradicts his opinion that plural participants are less individuated and therefore prefer genitive.

2. “Moose aren’t found here.”⁸⁸

⁸⁶ From Timberlake (1986), 341-2.

⁸⁷ Timberlake (1986) 341-2.

⁸⁸ Babby’s example, reused in Neidle (1988), 73.

- a. Zdes' ne vodits'a losej.
Here ne leads-self.sg moose.masc.gen.pl
- b. Zdes' losi ne vod'ats'a.
Here moose.masc.nom.pl ne lead-self.pl

The definiteness of 2a and 2b is also ambiguous. 2a was unacceptable to all of the contemporary informants except InfE, who found 2a marginally acceptable. But 2a was acceptable to Babby's informants, who presumably were adults who were asked about this in the 1970s. InfC noted that adding *nikakix* ('no' gen.pl adjective) would make 2a acceptable.

2b was acceptable to all of the informants, although InfD suggested that *Losi zdes' ne vod'ats'a* would be a more natural word order. So this example is all over the board, with many generational and semantic factors at play, but with a clear preference today for 2b. The fact that adding a negative intensifier like *nikakix* makes 2a acceptable supports the notion that stronger negation favors the genitive, about which more will be said below.

3. "You don't want chocolate?"

- a. Šokolad ne xočeš'?
Chocolate.masc.nom.sg ne want.2.sg.fam
- b. Šokolada ne xočeš'?
Chocolate.masc.gen.sg ne want.2.sg.fam

For three informants, 3a is unacceptable, unless speaking about specific chocolate ('the chocolate'). But InfD and InfE thought 3a was fine. 3b was acceptable to all, perhaps because the question seems to be referring to chocolate in very

general sense.⁸⁹ So this finding supports the commonly held view that the more specific the noun is, the more likely accusative will be preferred over genitive on direct objects under negation.

4. “I don’t see any car whatsoever!”⁹⁰
- a. Nikakuju mašinu ja ne vižu!
No.fem.acc.sg car.fem.acc.sg I ne see
 - b. Nikakoj mašiny ja ne vižu!
No.fem.gen.sg car.fem.gen.sg I ne see

To B&B, *nikakoj* is morphosyntactically indefinite, therefore 4a and 4b are indefinite. 4a was unacceptable to InfB, but acceptable to InfA and marginally acceptable to InfE. All the informants preferred 4b, except InfC who was undecided. The acceptability of 4a to the youngest informants suggests a generational difference in the rigidity of applying GenNeg to this situation.

5. “I am not reading a newspaper.”⁹¹
- a. Ja ne čitaju gazetu.
I ne read newspaper.fem.acc.sg
 - b. Ja ne čitaju gazety.

I ne read newspaper.fem.gen.sg

The definiteness of these examples is also ambiguous. To InfB, 5a was unacceptable and 5b was acceptable (but better with *nikakoj*). InfA and InfD had the opposite opinion: 5b would only be correct if it were in the accusative plural, which has the

⁸⁹ InfD preferred the word order ‘Ty ne xočeš’ šokolada?’, retaining the genitive case on the direct object, with ‘ty’ (‘you’) added as the overt subject. Note that the genitive case here could also be preferred because it could be interpreted as a partitive genitive: ‘some chocolate’.

⁹⁰ Timberlake (1986), 341.

⁹¹ Timberlake, 343.

same morphological ending as the feminine genitive singular for this noun. So InfA is willing to apply the accusative to a non-specific NP, which counters B&B's claims. To InfE, both sentences were acceptable, though 5a probably refers to a specific newspaper, while 5b refers to newspapers in general; her response falls in line with B&B. Timberlake's informants' judgment was that the accusative is fine, but genitive is questionable.

6. "I am not reading any newspaper at all."
- a. Ja ne čitaju nikakuju gazetu.
I ne read no.fem.acc.sg newspaper.fem.acc.sg
 - b. Ja ne čitaju nikakoj gazety.
I ne read no.fem.gen.sg newspaper.fem.gen.sg

The use of *nikakoj* signals that these examples are indefinite, and semantically, the presence of "any" and "at all" should trigger exclusively a non-specific interpretation. However, InfA felt 6a and 6b were both fine. InfB's judgment was that 6a was incorrect, and *nikakoj* requires the genitive in 6b. This accords with Timberlake's argument that *nikakoj*, as a negative intensifier should force the use of the genitive.⁹² InfD, however, preferred 6a, which has the accusative form *nikakuju*. InfE preferred 6b and thought that 6a is marginally acceptable, because it seems to have a different meaning – *nikakuju* can be synonymous with 'useless, bad' here. Based on some of the results, *nikakoj* may be becoming less of a "strong factor" in the application of the genitive on direct objects in negated sentences.

⁹² Timberlake, 343.

7. “I don’t see any woman whatsoever.”⁹³
- a. Ja ne vižu nikakuju ženščinu.
I ne see no.fem.acc.sg woman.fem.acc.sg
 - b. Nikakuju ženščinu ja ne vižu.
No.fem.acc.sg woman.fem.acc.sg ne see
 - c. Ja ne vižu nikakoj ženščiny.
I ne see no.fem.gen.sg woman.fem.gen.sg
 - d. Nikakoj ženščiny ja ne vižu.
No.fem.gen.sg woman.fem.gen.sg I ne see

The examples in 7 are all indefinite, and the words “any” and “whatsoever” should lead to a non-specific interpretation. 7a and 7b were unacceptable to InfB, while 7c and 7d were acceptable. InfA felt all were fine. InfD thought that all were acceptable except 7a. InfE found 7a unacceptable, 7b marginally acceptable, and the other sentences acceptable, true to Dialect II (but contradicting InfA, who is supposedly in the same dialect group). Timberlake’s informants considered 7a bad, while 7b was questionable to them, which accords with InfE’s judgments. This is interesting because Timberlake’s respondents are from an older generation than InfE. Her judgments about specificity and definiteness accord with theirs, contrary to the Dialect I and II paradigm developed by B&B. InfB felt stronger about 7b being bad, while InfA, the youngest informant, did not see a problem with assigning the accusative to such a strongly negated object. Timberlake’s book, dating from 1986, reflects the judgments of older generations, which is a factor that must be taken into account.

8. “I cannot allow you to start writing poetry.”⁹⁴

⁹³ Timberlake, 343.

⁹⁴ Timberlake, 347.

- a. Ja ne mogu Vam pozvolit' načat' pisat' stixov.
I ne can you.dat.pl allow to-start to-write poem.gen.pl
- b. Ja ne mogu Vam pozvolit' načat' pisat' stixi.
I ne can you.dat.pl allow to-start to-write poem.acc.pl

This was a rare example where all informants agreed in their judgments (and with Pushkin's, see p. 14): 8a was unacceptable, whereas 8b was acceptable. Auxiliary and modal verbal constructions with multiply embedded infinitives are highly unlikely to take genitive objects.

9. "I don't subscribe to a newspaper."⁹⁵
- a. Ja gazetę ne vypisyvaju.
I newspaper.fem.acc.sg ne subscribe
 - b. Ja gazety ne vypisyvaju.
I newspaper.fem.gen.sg ne subscribe

The definiteness of 9a and 9b is ambiguous, and the English wording suggests a non-specific reading of "newspaper". 9a was unacceptable to InfB. 9b was also unacceptable to InfB, unless one adds *nikakoj* (InfA agreed with this). InfC preferred 9b with the genitive. InfD did not like either choice, preferring instead *Ja ne vypisyvaju gazety*. InfE found both examples acceptable, though 9b might refer to newspapers in general, whereas 9a refers to a particular newspaper, which lines up nicely with B&B's proposal. Here, Timberlake is trying to show that 2nd-declension *-a* nouns prefer accusative based on the markedness of their morphological paradigm, but the native-speaker results do not strongly support that idea.

⁹⁵ Timberlake, 351-52.

10. “There are no magazines on the table.”⁹⁶

- a. Na stole net žurnalov.
On table there-are-not magazine.masc.gen.pl
- b. Na stole net žurnaly.
On table there-are-not magazine.masc.nom.pl

The informants all agreed with the judgments of Bailyn’s informants: 10a is correct, 10b was not. A negative existential copula construction requires the genitive. The fronted PP may also be a factor in their opinions.

11. “There is no magazine on the table.”⁹⁷

- a. Na stole net žurnala.
On table there-is-not magazine.masc.gen.sg
- b. Na stole net žurnal.
On table there-is-not magazine.masc.nom.sg

All informants agreed: 11a was fine, 11b was incorrect. Whether the subject is singular or plural, in this kind of construction, genitive is strongly preferred regardless of number. Again, the fronted PP structure prefers GenNeg.

12. “Didn’t he say something?”⁹⁸

- a. Ne skazal li on čto-nibud’?
Ne said question.particle he something.neut.acc.sg
- b. Ne skazal li on čego-nibud’?
Ne said question.particle he something.neut.gen.sg

12a and 12b are morphosyntactically indefinite. The informants offered some interesting insights about *čto-to* ‘something’ vs. *čto-nibud’* ‘anything’; both are indefinite, but the latter is even more indefinite -- and also non-specific.

⁹⁶ Bailyn (1997), 86-7/

⁹⁷ This minimal pair is the author’s, building on Bailyn’s example to test the singular.

⁹⁸ Brown and Franks, 70.

InfB found 12a to be unacceptable; it would improve with *čto-to* ‘something’:

On *čto-to* skazal?
He something said
Did he say something?

But InfA and InfE, the youngest informants, thought both 12a and 12b sounded fine.

InfC, on the other hand, felt that 12a is a good sentence but 12b is not, unless an adjective like *strannogo* ‘strange.neut (or masc).gen.sg’ is present. InfD preferred 12a. InfB’s judgment contradicts that presented in Brown and Franks, but it may be due to ambiguous interpretations of “something” vs. “anything”.

Native informants were asked about the optionality of genitive case in the following example, which contains the negative intensifier *nikak-*:

83. V odnom iz dvux odinakovyx polyx stekl’annyx šarov sozdan vakuum, a v drugom imeets’a vozdux. Kak, ne ispol’zuja nikakie izmeritel’nye pribory, opredelit’, v kakom iz šarov vozdux?

In one of two identical hollow glass balls made vacuum, and in other is air. How, ne using any.masc.nom.pl measuring.masc.nom.pl devices.masc.nom.pl to-determine in which of balls air?

A vacuum was made in one of two identical hollow glass balls, while the other ball contains air. How, without using any measuring devices, can it be determined which ball contains air?⁹⁹

According to one of the informants, *nikakix izmeritel’nyx priborov* (‘any measuring devices’ in genitive case) sounds a little better, possibly because of the presence of *Nikak-*, but accusative is also fine and produces the same meaning. Another informant finds no difference; both constructions mean the same thing.

⁹⁹ Vladimir Lukašik, Elena Ivanova. Sbornik zadač po fizike. 7-9 kl. (2003). From RNC.

The brief survey results presented above should illustrate the challenge of accurately summarizing when Russian speakers select the genitive case under negation instead of nominative (on subjects) or accusative (on direct objects). There are a few constructions where, indeed, genitive would seem to be obligatory, but otherwise the answer is quite elusive. One might need to explain such case selection in terms of general tendencies, rather than hard facts.

8 Analysis of Negative Modifiers and Constructions

The remainder of this thesis is dedicated to the analysis of a variety of common negative modifier constructions, and the presence / absence of GenNeg within them. This section of the thesis marshals data from a variety of Internet-based resources, such as the Russian National Corpus (RNC), the Tübingen Corpus, Google, Yahoo, and Yandex.

8.1 Strong negative intensifier – *rovno nikak-*

Many linguists have argued that the presence of strong negative intensifiers increases the chances of encountering GenNeg. Preliminary findings indicate that *rovno nikak-* (‘absolutely no, absolutely no kind of’) does strongly favor the genitive case, as expected, though accusative is still possible. *Počti nikak-* (‘hardly any, hardly any kind of’) favors the genitive, even though semantically it weakens the force of the negation; linguists have often argued that a stronger negative force increases the chance of selecting genitive case.

Native speakers were asked to evaluate a set of GenNeg sentences including *rovno nikak-*, and to voice their opinion as to whether the direct object can be in the accusative instead of GenNeg. In the following three data sets, the direct objects in the (a) sentences are in the genitive case, while the (b) sentences are in the accusative:

1 (a) Èto ne imeet rovno nikakogo značenija.
This ne has absolutely no.neut.gen.sg significance.neut.gen.sg
This has absolutely no significance.

(b) Èto ne imeet rovno nikakoe značenie.
This ne has absolutely no.neut.acc.sg significance.acc.sg

2 (a) A emu prosto nrazilos’ pričín’at’ ej bol’ ... a ona ne obraščala rovno nikakogo vnimanija na ètot sadizm.
And him simply enjoyed cause her pain ... but she ne turned absolutely no.neut.gen.sg attention.neut.gen.sg to this sadism

And he simply enjoyed causing her pain... but she paid absolutely no attention to this sadism.

(b) A emu prosto nraivilos' pričín'at' ej bol' ... a ona ne obraščala rovno nikakoe vnimanie na ètot sadizm.

And him simply enjoyed cause her pain ... but she ne turned absolutely no.neut.acc.sg attention.neut.acc.sg to this sadism

3 (a) No èto ne imeet rovno nikakogo otnošenija k suščestvu voprosa.

But this ne has absolutely no.neut.gen.sg relationship.neut.gen.sg to essence question

But this has absolutely no relationship to the essence of the question.

(b) No èto ne imeet rovno nikakoe otnošenje k suščestvu voprosa.

But this ne has absolutely no.neut.acc.sg relationship.neut.acc.sg to essence question

InfA felt that 1(b) was grammatically acceptable, but it sounds more like “It (a word, a sentence, a math variable) has no meaning/value” rather than the intended interpretation (“significance”). And to InfA, 2(b) and 3(b) sounded perfectly natural.

The informants InfC, InfD and InfE report that 1(b) is not grammatically correct, since the case should be genitive instead of accusative. InfC provides some background to her judgment:

“The second one sounds wrong and is wrong, ‘the absence of an object’ usually requires genitive [T]he definition of genitive form of a noun we are taught as kids is: ‘you say “net nikakoj... noun”’, and [what] sounds natural there is the genitive form of that noun, so [the] “This has no ...” construct feels to be [the] equivalent [of] “there is no ...”such noun”’ and thus requires genitive.” *Imet’* (‘to have’) normally requires accusative on its direct object, but this changes to genitive when *nikakoj* is used.

InfB, InfC, InfD, InfE, InfF, InfG, InfH and InfI reported that all three examples need to be in GenNeg. InfC said that the presence of *nikakoj* requires the genitive. InfF responded that all of the (b) variants used the wrong case; InfH emphasized that the genitive case is required in this kind of negative construction.

Set 2 is based on a common GenNeg expression: *obraščat' rovno nikakogo vnimanija* ('to pay absolutely no attention' [to ...]). InfD and InfE replied that genitive is required. InfC agreed, not because *rovno* is present, but rather because *nikakoj* is present. Without that element, free alternation between accusative and genitive is possible:

“[I]n a simple negation with ‘ne_verb’ [that is, without *nikakoj*], both genitive and accusative are possible for a verb that requires accusative, or [at] least it [feels] that way, it feels that both accusative and genitive are possible. [T]here might be [a] rule that one is preferred over the other [M]ost people would use both accusative and genitive interchangeably.”

Regarding set 3, InfE said 3(b) was ungrammatical; genitive is required. InfC and InfD agreed, though once again, InfC emphasized that it is the presence of *nikakoj* which is critical in choosing GenNeg, and not *rovno*. Overall, the evidence from the informants supports the conclusion that *rovno nikak-* strongly favors GenNeg, with several of them pointing to *nikakoj* as the critical element in selecting genitive case.

A Google search for *rovno nikakuju*, the feminine accusative singular form, resulted in only 5 hits. *Rovno nikakoj* had 14,300; some were feminine genitive singular; others were masculine nominative singular and referenced the subjects of their sentences. A query for the nominative or accusative *rovno nikakoe* yielded 27 matches, but many did not also include the negative element *ne*.¹⁰⁰ All the hits for *rovno nikakie* were nominative subjects, and not accusative objects, which is also possible with this word ending. *Rovno nikakogo* occurred 71,900 times and appeared to be all genitive. The Russian National Corpus had no examples of

¹⁰⁰ For example: <http://jesuschrist.ru/forum/showthreaded.php?Cat=&Board=&Number=112501>:

Počemu-to obyčno èto upuskajut iz vidu, i sosredotačivajuts'a na nedostatках kreacionizma, kotorye k voprosu o nevozmožnosti èvol'ucionnogo voznikovenija vidov s točki zrenija bespristrastnyx faktov imejut otnošenje **rovno nikakoe**.

For some reason this is usually neglected, and they focus on the insufficiencies of creationism, which have absolutely **no.neut.acc.sg relationship.neut.acc.sg** to the question of the impossibility of the evolutionary occurrence of species from the point of view of impartial facts.

rovno nikakoe, *rovno nikakie* nor *rovno nikakuju*. The RNC had many examples of ‘rovno’ + ‘nikakoj’ marked as accusative case, but they are false positives – they are all actually genitive, and often GenNeg, such as:

84. Tualetu i vsemu, čto s nim sv’azano, v drugie èpoxi ne pridavalos’ rovno nikakogo značeniija – v protivoves segodn’ašemu vremeni.

Bathroom and all that with it associated in other epochs ne was-given.neut.sg absolutely no.neut.gen.sg significance.neut.gen.sg

In other epochs, the bathroom and everything associated with it were given absolutely no significance - in contrast to today's time.¹⁰¹

A Google search for *počti nikakuju* (accusative, feminine singular) resulted in 670 hits. This is roughly the same frequency as occurrence of *rovno nikak-* with other non-genitive cases: *rovno nikakimi* (instrumental plural) had 532 results. *Počti nikakimi* was a little more popular (1000 hits). *Počti nikakoj* had 115,000; similarly to *rovno nikakoj*, many examples were in the feminine genitive singular, though many in the set were masculine nominative singular.

The following is a selection of the accusative *počti nikakuju* set:

85. U men’a glaza ne perenos’at **počti nikakuju** tuš’, krome Xeleny Rubinštejny I Loreal’ (s trudom). Vse ostal’noe, k sožaleniju, možno zabyt’¹⁰²

By me eyes ne tolerate almost no.fem.acc.sg mascara.fem.acc.sg

My eyes don’t tolerate hardly any kind of mascara, except the Helena Rubinstein and the L’Oreal (with difficulty). We can forget about all the rest, unfortunately.

It is possible that the above example refers to specific brands of mascara already mentioned previously, so accusative could be expected.

¹⁰¹ Elena Kv’atkovskaja, “Filipp Stark stavit myl’nuju operu” (“Philip Stark Puts on a Soap Opera”), “Mir & Dom. City”, 2004.07.15.

¹⁰² Club.passion.ru/viewtopic.php?t=95728&view=next&sid=3f55dd2ee1ba92162b2c164c1d6d1be0

However, the genitive might be expected in the following example, since it refers to the absence of something, yet the accusative appears instead. One reason might be the lack of the word *ne*, which was substituted with the euphemism *xren* ('horseradish', standing in for *xuj* 'dick', each of which can substitute for *ne* as the negativizer):

86. [K]ak pravil'no ob''jasnil Topper, glavnaja pričina v tom, čto xren najdeš' daže **počti nikakuju** kartu za adekvatnuju cenu ja na službu davno pokupaju iskl'učitel'no¹⁰³

Horseradish find even almost [video] card.fem.acc.sg map.fem.acc.sg

As Topper correctly explained, the main reason is that you won't find almost any [video] card for a proper price; for my job I've only [bought motherboards with integrated video cards]

Ne is present in the following example, whose object, while referring to the non-existence of something, is surprisingly in the accusative instead of the genitive:

87. [...] v nekotoryx salonax posidel na nem, očen' ponravils'a, no ne mogu v internete najti **počti nikakuju** infu, stat'ji, testy... xarakteristik ego navalom.¹⁰⁴

... in some showrooms sat on it, much liked, but ne can in Internet find almost any.fem.acc.sg info, articles.fem.acc.pl, tests.masc.acc.pl ...

... in some showrooms I've sat on it, and I liked it a lot, but I cannot find almost any information, articles, or tests on the Internet ... there are a lot of technical specifications about it.

Evidence from native informants as well as Internet and corpus queries supports the conclusion that a negative intensifier like *rovno* strongly favors the genitive, consonant with earlier findings, and *počti* usually, but not always, weakens the genitive tendency.

8.2 Negative intensifiers *vovse nikak-* and *sovsem nikak-*

¹⁰³ www.linuxforum.ru/lofiversion/index.php/t10492.html .

¹⁰⁴ www.400ccm.ru/forums/index.php?act=Print&client=printer&f=21&t=18199 .

The received assumption has been that Russian intensifiers of negation like *vovse nikak-* and *sovsem nikak-* (both glossed as approximately “in no way, not at all”) strongly favor the choice of genitive case on direct objects. To compare occurrences of accusative with genitive in the presence of negative intensifiers, Google, the Tübingen Corpus, and ruscorpora.ru were queried for occurrences of *vovse nikak-* and *sovsem nikak-*. Google returned more accusative hits than expected (115 at the time) for these strongly negative phrases. The strategy was to find unambiguously accusative instances of *nikak-* under negation. One finding was that *vovse nikakuju rol’ / vovse nikakoj roli* (‘no sort of role’) is an expression that commonly occurs in both the accusative and the genitive in similar negation environments.

In many examples, such as the following, accusative case is carried forward from one sentence to the next, overriding the optionality of GenNeg or using the genitive on a direct object under negation.

88. Komedijnaja grupa Killinga vypustila svoj pervyj polnometražnyj fil’m – i **vovse nikakuju** ne komediju, a soveršenno serěžnuju istoriju

Comedy group Killing released their.masc.acc.sg first.masc.acc.sg full-length.masc.acc.sg film.masc.acc.sg – And in-all not.fem.acc.sg ne comedy.fem.acc.sg, but completely serious story....

The comedy group Killinga released their first full-length film – And not a comedy at all, but a quite serious historical work....¹⁰⁵

89. Označæet že èto slovo **vovse nikakuju** ne svin’ju, a vot èto miloe i simpatičnoe životnoe – dikobraza.

Means this word in-all not.fem.acc.sg ne pig.fem.acc.sg, but instead this kind and nice animal – porcupine.

This word [Afrikaans *ystervark*] does not denote a pig at all, but instead this kind and nice animal – the porcupine.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ www.sweden.se/templates/cs/Article_12442.aspx .

The following are some typical uses of the genitive with *vovse nikakoj*. The first example has a direct object in the genitive, while the subject of the second is genitive:

90. Pravda, on vsě ravno ničego ne pojmět. Ovošč ovoščem ... A babki ja I vovse nikakoj ne znaju.

True he all equally nothing ne will understand. Vegetable vegetable ... But grandma I and in-all no ne I know

True, no matter what, he won't understand anything. He's really dumb ... But I won't know any grandma whatsoever.¹⁰⁷

91. Vsem xorošo izvestno i Elene tože, čto èto označæet, čto nadeždy vovse nikakoj net i, značit, Turbin umiraet.

All well known and Elena also, that this means, that hope.fem.gen.sg in-all none net and, it means, Turbin dies

It's well-known to everyone, and to Elena too, that this means there is no hope at all, and it means that Turbin is dying.¹⁰⁸

Sovsem nikak- often occurs in the accusative within the context of a question.

92. Neuželi parodontologi ne dajut **sovsem nikakuju** garantiju na svoju rabotu? P, ortopedy poroj delaja takuju složnuju rabotu dajut garantiju kak minimum na god.

Really peridontists ne give in-all no.fem.acc.sg guarantee.fem.acc.sg on their work? Physicians, orthopedists occasionally doing such difficult work give guarantee as minimum on year

Do peridontists really not guarantee their work at all? Physicians and orthopedists doing such difficult work occasionally provide a warranty of at least a year.¹⁰⁹

The accusative can appear with *sovsem / vovse nikak-* when the case is carried from a previous phrase or sentence:

¹⁰⁶ www.ystervark.net .

¹⁰⁷ Dmitrij Veresov, "Polet vorona". From Tübingen Corpus.

¹⁰⁸ Mixail Bulgakov, "Belaja gvardija." From Tübingen Corpus.

¹⁰⁹ form.strom.ru/lofiversion/index.php?t317.html .

93. A domoroščennaja istorija takaja ... Vstrečaju ženščinu – zav. (zavedujuščuju) počtovym otdeleniem Vovse nikakuju ne podругu ...

And homegrown story such ... I-meet woman.fem.acc.sg – mgr. (manager.fem.acc.sg) post office....In-all not ne girlfriend.fem.acc.sg

And it's such a homegrown story.... I meet a woman, a manager at the post office....Not a girlfriend at all....¹¹⁰

Accusative can occur with *sovsem nikak*- even in emphatically negative environments.

Typically this happens when there is a reference to a topic that was previously mentioned:

94. A čto, bez debita s kreditom – my SOVSEM nikakuju konkurenciju ne sostavim???

And what, without debit with credit – we IN-ALL no.fem.acc.sg competition.fem.acc.sg ne make

And what, without debit, with credit—we won't create ANY competition???¹¹¹

The above blog post appeared in response to a posting about being competitive. The next text occurs after a reference to dreams.

95. Sny ja sejčas sovsem nikakie ne vižu. Malen'kij byl i cvetnye videl i takie, čto pr'amo daže i ne skazat'.

Dreams.masc.acc.pl I now at-all no.masc.acc.pl ne see. Small was and colorful saw and such, that directly even ne to say

Now I don't have any dreams at all. When I was little, I had colorful dreams and ones that I won't even talk about.¹¹²

96. My sovsem nikakie podguzniki doma ne nadevali, prosto zakryvali legkoj pelenkoj i vse.

¹¹⁰

<http://form.pravda.ru/index.php?s=eb7fa13fa58561abb4f1df34f2085a2e&showtopic=1296&st=6440&p=350557&#entry350557> .

¹¹¹ http://ingushetiyaru.org/forum_misc/msg_73348_73141.html .

¹¹² <http://xoy.lenin.ru/teoriya/bogomyakov/rj10.html>

We at-all no.masc.acc.pl cloth-diapers.masc.acc.pl home ne wear, simply covered light diaper and all

At home we don't wear cloth diapers at all; we just use a simple light diaper and that's it.¹¹³

97. Poètomu, leèenie disbakterioza javl'aets'a važnoj, no ne edinstvennoj èast'ju leèenija allergii (atopièeskogo dermatita), a dietoj i vovse nikakuju allergiju ne vyleèit'.

Therefore, treatment dysbiosis is important, but ne only part treatment allergy (atopical dermatitis), but diet and in-all no.fem.acc.sg allergy.fem.acc.sg ne cure.

Therefore, the treatment of dysbiosis is an important part, but not the only part of the treatment of the allergy (atopical dermatitis). Diet does not cure any kind of allergy at all.

In the above example, native speakers report that one could replace the instances of accusative case with the genitive (*a dietoj i vovse nikakoj allergii*) with no difference in shade of meaning.

The next example is from a theatrical review, in which there is a possible ambiguity inherent in the word *rol'* (is it referring to an actual role in a play, or a symbolic role?), but probably does refer to an actual theatrical role:

98. "Pamela" polučila oèen' teplye otzvyvy: "Pokidèenko, kažets'a, vovse nikakuju rol' ne igraet, a 'prosto' i estestvenno na scene živet."

"Pamela" received very warm reviews: "Pokidèenko, it seems, in-all no.fem.acc.sg role.fem.acc.sg ne plays, but 'simply' and naturally on stage lives."

"Pamela" received very warm reviews: "Pokidèenko, it seems, is not playing any sort of role at all, but 'simply' and naturally lives onstage."¹¹⁴

¹¹³ upapashi.narod.ru/issue_025.htm .

¹¹⁴ www.vedomosti.sfo.ru/articles/?article=3016 .

Despite the presence of a strong negative modifier, the accusative is used instead of the genitive because there is a reference to a role in a play, and the focus is not on the non-existence of the role.

The following two examples have an accusative direct object, despite the strong negation in the sentences. The first is from a blog about users' dietary preferences. The fact that *rybu* 'fish' is in topic position suggests that there was a previous reference to eating fish:

99. Ja rybu sovsem nikakuju ne em, i kogda v restorane pytajus' preparirovat' kakoj-nibud' roll i izbavit' ego ot ryby, na men'a kak-to stranno posmatrivajut.

I fish.fem.acc.sg in-all no.fem.acc.sg ne eat, and when in restaurant is-tried to dissect some-kind-of roll and free it from fish, on me somehow strangely glances

I don't eat any fish at all, and when I'm in a restaurant and I attempt to dissect some sort of roll to free it from the fish, people glance at me kind of strangely.¹¹⁵

100. Ploxo, po nastojaščemu ploxo, davno tak ploxo ne bylo, i vse ot muzyki, prosto ot muzyki, skoro ja sovsem ne smogu ee slušat', sovsem nikakuju, sovsem sovsem ne smogu....

Bad, really bad, long so bad ne was, and all from music, simply from music.fem.gen.sg, soon I in-all will not be able to it.fem.acc.sg listen, in-all none.fem.acc.sg, in-all in-all ne will not be able to...

It's bad, really bad, it's been a long time since there was anything that bad, and all from music, simply from music, soon I won't be able to listen to it at all, none at all, I won't be able to at all, at all ...¹¹⁶

In the above example, it is possible that the writer refers to a specific piece of music earlier, but the negation is about listening to any music at all, which is a strong kind of negation where genitive might be able to be used.

¹¹⁵ forum.bizspravka.ru/forum/lofiversion/index.php/t16577.html .

¹¹⁶ rumiko-chan.livejournal.com .

8.3 *X nikak- ne Y constructions*

Although *nikak-* is a negative intensifier which can increase the chance of GenNeg, there is a construction *X nikak- ne Y* meaning approximately “Subject X is not at all a Y”, which never puts NPs in GenNeg. In these phrases, the adjective *nikak-* agrees in case, number and gender with the predicate noun, even though it is typically separated from this noun in the sentence.

Russian normally has a null copula in the present tense, often written as a long dash:

101. On – xudožnik.
He.masc.nom.sg Ø_{present} artist.masc.nom.sg
He is an/the artist.

The subject and predicate are always in the nominative case in these constructions. The past and future tenses, however, require an overt form of the verb *byt* ‘to be’. An interesting feature of Russian is the optionality of nominative or instrumental case on the predicate:

102. On byl xudožnik/ xudožnikom.
He.masc.nom.sg was artist.masc.nom.sg/inst.sg
He was an/the artist.

103. On budet xudožnik/ xudožnikom.
He.masc.nom.sg will-be artist.masc.nom.sg/inst.sg
He will be an/the artist.

When the null present copula is negated, the predicate must be in the nominative case, and cannot be either genitive or instrumental:

104. On ne xudožnik.
He.masc.nom.sg ne artist.masc.nom.sg.
He is not an artist.

105. On nikakoj ne xudožnik.
He.masc.nom.sg *nikak-*.masc.nom.sg ne artist.masc.nom.sg.
He is no artist.

The X *nikak- ne* Y construction can be expressed as the following, where *nikak-* agrees with the predicate NP, and not the subject NP:

[N.nom]_{NP} *nikak-.nom* *ne* Ø_{present} [N.nom]_{NP}

106. Ja obvinil generala v predatel'stve, čto on segodn'a s temi kto obmanyvaet vas, potomu čto čto nikakoj ne blok "Rodina," a obyčnaja fal'sivaja tusovka.

I accused general in treason that he now with them who cheat you, because this *nikakoj.masc.nom.sg* *ne bloc.masc.nom.sg* "Homeland," but usual fake party.

I accused the general of treason, since he is now with the ones who are cheating you, because this is not in any way the "Homeland" bloc, but the usual fake buffoonery.¹¹⁷

107. Ne nužno bylo byt' èkonomistom, čtoby pon'at', čto čudo -- nikakoe ne čudo, a Pinočet ne kudesnik, odarivšij stranu èkonomičeskim blagodenstviem. Čilijcev ne nado bylo ubeždat' v tom, čto blagodenstvija net i ne predvidits'a.

Ne needed was to-be economist, to understand, that miracle – *nikakoe.neut.nom.sg* *ne* miracle, and Pinochet *ne magician.masc.nom.sg*, endowing country economic prosperity. Chileans *ne* needed was to-convince in that, that prosperity net and *ne* to-be-expected.

One did not need to be an economist to realize that the "miracle" was no miracle, and that Pinochet is no magician who endowed the country with economic prosperity. Chileans did not have to be convinced that there is no prosperity, and that it is not expected.¹¹⁸

When the copula is overt (in the past and future tenses) in negated sentences, either nominative or instrumental can be applied to the predicate. The nominative occurs even in the presence of the strengthened negative phrases *sovsem nikak-* and *vovse nikak-*.

Often an instrumental predicate accompanies a marked word order due to focus, such as in the following two examples:

108. Drugoe delo, čto nemeckim špionom on nikakim ne byl. Byl vydvižencem Trockogo, potomu i pogorel.

¹¹⁷ V. Žirinovskij. "Vystuplenie V. Žirinovskogo", from the program "Svoboda slova", NTV (2004). From RNC.

¹¹⁸ Oleg Polyakov, "Nepodsuden" / "Vokrug mira", 2003.09.15. From RNC.

Another affair, that German.masc.inst.sg spy.masc.inst.sg he.masc.nom.sg ne was.masc.sg. Was protégé Trotsky, therefore and burned.

It was beside the point that he was in no way a German spy. He was Trotsky's protégé, therefore he burned.¹¹⁹

109. Zadaju ètot vopros, Silaev otvečæet, čto, konečno, demokratom on nikakim ne byl, byl texnokratom....

I-ask this question, Silaev answers, that, of-course, democrat.masc.inst.sg on.masc.nom.sg ne was.masc.sg, was.masc.sg technocrat.masc.inst.sg....

I ask this question, and Silaev answers that, of course, he was in no way a democrat; he was a technocrat....¹²⁰

110. Šarik stuknuls'a o pervyj šarik, oba lopnuli i prevratilis' v odin šar, - uže s bob veličinoj. - Dogadalas! - govorit vdrug Alla. - I sovsem nikakoj zdes' ne bal, a vse rabotajut.

Ball struck against first ball, both burst and turned into one ball – already from bean size. - Guessed! – says suddenly Alla. - And at-all no.masc.nom.sg here ne ball.masc.nom.sg, but all work.

The ball struck the first ball, both burst and turned into a single ball – the size of a bean. – I've guessed! - Alla said suddenly. – But this is no dance party, everyone is working.¹²¹

111. I tut on vovse nikakoj ne dogmatik i ne ortodoks.

And here he in-all any.masc.nom.sg dogmatic.masc.nom.sg and ne orthodox.masc.nom.sg.

And here he is not at all a dogmatist or a pedant.¹²²

Counterexamples can be found of NES phrases lacking either an overt 'to be' verb or *ne*, yet whose predicates are in genitive:

¹¹⁹ <http://www.film.ru/article.asp?id=2815> .

¹²⁰ <http://www.rulife.ru/old/mode/article/988/> .

¹²¹ Vitalij Bianki. „Lesnye byli i nebylicy” (1923-1958). From RNC.

¹²² Vladimir Vojnovič. „Ivan'kiada, ili rasskaz o vselenii pisatel'a. Vojnoviča v novuju kvartiru” (1976). From RNC.

112. Poèтому ja i govor’u: lučše oppozicija vmeste s kommunistami, čem vovse nikakoj oppozicii.

Therefore I and say: better opposition together with communists, than in-all
no.fem.gen.sg opposition.fem.gen.sg

And this is why I say it’s better to have an opposition together with the communists than no opposition at all.¹²³

One could speculate about the existence of an implicit ‘to have’ verb in some of these phrases, but it is not clear. Poetry has freer reign on case assignments and other grammatical mechanisms, so implicit verbs and *ne* may or may not be present in examples like this:

113. Kstati / golosujte / Vaš golos budet učtën. "Seks"/ "politika" i "600-j Mercedes" kakoj-to značenie imejut / no ne takoe bol’šoe. " Armija" / vsego odin golos. I "nacional’nost" / ni odnogo golosa.

By-the-way / vote / Your vote will-be counted. "Sex" / "politics" and "600-Class Mercedes" some significance have / but ne so much. "Army" / just one vote. And "nationality" / ni one.masc.gen.sg vote.masc.gen.sg.

By the way / vote / Your vote will be counted. "Sex" / "politics" and "600-Class Mercedes" have some significance / but not that much. "Army" / just one vote. And "nationality" / no vote.¹²⁴

With a negated future existential verb, such as *budet* ‘will be.3.sg’, GenNeg must occur:

114. A nadelënyj novymi polnomočijami Kadyrov ne somnevaets’a, čto smožet rešit’ mnogie problemy respubliki, v tom čisle problemu bežencev: "V sentiabre v Ingušetii ne budet ni odnoj palatki.”

And endowed new powers Kadyrov ne is-doubted, that could solve many problems republic, in that number problem refugees: "In September in Ingushetia ne will-be.3.sg ni one.fem.gen.sg tent.fem.gen.sg.”

Endowed with new powers, Kadyrov has no doubt he could solve many problems of the republic, including the problem of refugees: "By September, in Ingushetia there won’t be a single tent left.”¹²⁵

¹²³ Galina Sidorova. Novaja maska oligarxa, "Soveršenno sekretno", 2003.02.06. From RNC.

¹²⁴ Beseda o jumore v Internetu (2004.04.01). From RNC.

¹²⁵ Anastasija Matveeva. Kadyrov izbavits’a ot "i.o." 5 okt’abr’a, "Gazeta", 2003.07.06. From RNC.

Native speakers were consulted on the possibility of replacing the genitive form of ‘single tent’ with the nominative form: *ni odna palatka*. They replied that genitive was necessary.

8.4 Negated transitive imperatives

There is an alternation between accusative and genitive on objects in Russian negated transitive imperative sentences. In some instances, this alternation may be explained in the traditional way: The accusative *ètu knigu* ‘this book’ refers to a specific book that is not to be read, whereas the genitive *sovetskix gazet* ‘Soviet newspapers’ refers to not reading Soviet newspapers in general. Specificity favors the accusative in negated environments, but there are noteworthy exceptions to this axiom.

Direct objects in the following examples are in the accusative, often because a specific action, item or kind of item is being referenced:

115. Ne čitaj mne kurs molodogo bojca, a daj na vs’akij slučaj disketu.
Ne read me course.masc.acc.sg young fighter, but give on any case disk
Don’t bore me with a beginner’s lecture, but give me the disk anyway.¹²⁶

116. [M]ne kazalos’ takoj banal’ščinoj, perestraxovkoj. A teper’ ... Naprimer, papa govoril: “Nikogda ne delaj mužikam podarki.” Ja, naoborot, vseгда podarki delala. I tak razbalovyvala!

Me seemed such triviality, over-cautiousness. And now ... For example, Papa said: “Never ne do guys gifts.acc.pl.” I, on the other hand, always gifts did. And so spoiled. To me it seemed like such a triviality, an over-cautiousness. And now ... For example, Papa said: “Never give gifts to guys.” I, however, always gave gifts. And I spoiled the guys so much!¹²⁷

117. Tam vse vran’e. Ne čitajte ètu knigu. Èto ploxxaja kniga.
There all lies. Ne read this.fem.acc.sg book.fem.acc.sg. It is bad book.
Everything there is lies. Don’t read this book. It’s a bad book.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Andrej Tamancev, “Psy gospodni.” From Tübingen Corpus.

¹²⁷ Ogonek (2002), No. 16. From Tübingen Corpus.

¹²⁸ Ogonek (2001), No. 5. From Tübingen Corpus.

The genitive is frequently used with generalized commands about what not to do:

118. --Tol'ko ne čitaj mne propovedej, --pomorščils'a polkovnik. --Ja uže star dl'a ètogo.
--Only ne read me sermons.gen.pl, --frowned colonel. --I already old for that.
“Only don't read me any sermons,” frowned the colonel. “I'm already too old for that.”¹²⁹

A Google search for *ne čitajte ètoj knigi* (“don't read this book,” in genitive case) yielded 118 actual results (not Google's estimated result count, which is always much larger), whereas the accusative *ne čitajte ètu knigu* (same gloss) occurred 990 times. So due to the specificity of the command, accusative is more common, yet genitive is a viable alternative.

The pronoun *èto* (‘it, this, that’) is commonly found in the genitive form *ètogo* when it is a direct object under negation. There is an apparent lexicalization of the genitive form, dating from the era when GenNeg was more commonly used. So the genitive form appears even when on topical objects under negation. Google searches for ‘Don't do it/that’ in accusative *Ne delaj èto* and genitive *Ne delaj ètogo* variants reveal an almost equal usage of the two cases.

A few typical examples of *ne delaj èto* (acc) are sites providing lists of specific things not to do (especially in relationships).¹³⁰ Another common type of example is:

119. Esli umeeš' čto-to, ne delaj èto besplatno.
If you know how to do something, ne do it.neut.acc.sg free
If you know how to do something, don't do it for free.¹³¹

So *èto* ‘this’ specifically refers back to the pronoun *čto-to* ‘something’, and the specificity seems to prevent genitive from being used. However, the expression is also found in the genitive:

120. Esli umeeš' čto-to, ne delaj ètogo besplatno.

¹²⁹ Andrej Tamancev, “Uspet', čtoby vyžit'.” From Tübingen Corpus.

¹³⁰ For example, <http://ladyexpert.ru/art-7401.html> and http://www.69.kz/69n/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87:tabu&catid=3:newsflash&Itemid=18, each listing things not to do to one's husband / partner.

¹³¹ <http://blackquote.ru/id.php?id=33871>.

If you know how to do something, ne do it.neut.gen.sg free
If you know how to do something, don't do it for free.¹³²

Google finds the accusative and the genitive versions approximately 600 times each – it is a toss-up. A curious example is the following, when a specific concept of “idea” is linked to *ètogo* in the genitive:

121. Esli èto xorošaja ideja... Ne delaj ètogo!
If it good idea... Ne do it.neut.gen.sg
If it's a good idea.... Don't do it!¹³³

The nineteenth-century author Turgenev frequently used genitive on objects under negation, even when they are topics. In the next passage, the phrase meaning ‘this page’ is in the genitive:

122. Stoilo g-že El'covej dat' ej knižku i skazat': vot ètoj stranicy ne čitaj – ona skoree predyduščuju stranicu propustit, a už ne zagl'anet v zapreščennuju.

It-stands Mrs. El'cova to-give her little-book and say: here this.fem.gen.sg
page.fem.gen.sg ne read – she more-likely previous page skip and certainly ne peep into
forbidden

All Mrs. El'cova had to do was give her the booklet and say: “Don't read this page here!”
And she would more likely skip the previous page and certainly not peep at the forbidden
one.¹³⁴

Bulgakov and other writers tend to use the genitive on things that their characters are
commanding others not to read:

123. I bože vas soxrani ne čitajte do obeda sovetskix gazet. Gm ... Da ved' drugix net.
Vot nikakix i ne čitajte.

And God you save ne read before dinner Soviet.fem.gen.pl newspapers.fem.gen.pl. Hm
... Yes you know others net. There none and ne read.

¹³² <http://x-status.org/statusy-pro-zhizn/5219--esli-umeesh-chto-to-ne-delay-.html> .

¹³³ <http://ezotera.ariom.ru/2011/06/01/idea.html> .

¹³⁴ I. Turgenev, “Faust”. From Tübingen Corpus.

And God save you, don't read Soviet newspapers before dinner. Hmmm ... and there aren't any others, after all. So don't read any of them.¹³⁵

124. Bombardov brosil's'a bežat' v polut'mu, izdali doness'a ego tixij krik: --Vystrela ne čitaete! I nasmorka u vas net!

Bombardov threw-self to run into semi-darkness, from-afar came his quiet cry: "Shot" ne read! And cold by you net!

Bombardov started running into the semi-darkness, and from afar came his quiet cry: "Don't read 'Shot'! And you don't have a cold!"¹³⁶

125. Sto raz govorili: ne čitajte na noč' sovjetskix gazet! –Tak ty pojmi, my snačala mučims'a – a potom zadnym čislom uznaem [...]

Hundred times said: ne read at night Soviet.fem.gen.pl newspapers.fem.gen.pl! – So you understand, we at first torment ourselves – and then back date learn....

A hundred times they said, "Don't read Soviet newspapers at night!" So understand, we torment ourselves at first, and then we learn too late¹³⁷

The commands not to read something are interesting because they refer to specific works that may have been referenced or implied previously, yet the direct objects are often in the genitive. Similarly, the direct object *ètogo* ('this, that' in genitive) by definition points to a specific referent, yet itself is genitive and often appears in negative expressions:

126. [N]ado by ostanovit's'a, vgl'adet's'a pristal'no, sprosit', predostereč': "Poslušaj, net, ty ne delaj ètogo. Vot udividil! Nu, ty daeš'..."

Ought to stop, look intently, ask, warn: "Listen, no, don't do that.neut.gen.sg. That surprised! Well, you give ...

We ought to stop, look carefully, ask, and warn: "Listen, no, don't do that! So that surprised you! Well, you give ..."138

¹³⁵ M. Bulgakov, "Sobač'e serdce". From Tübingen Corpus.

¹³⁶ M. Bulgakov, "Tetral'nyj roman". From Tübingen Corpus.

¹³⁷ Ogonek (2002) No.1. From Tübingen Corpus.

¹³⁸ Ž. Koževnikova, Domašnie zadanija, "Junost'" (1984) 9: 39-45. From Tübingen Corpus.

In the following example, the phrase *bol'soj vojny* is in topic position, but is nevertheless in genitive:

127. “Zaberi Dancig, no, požalujsta, bol'soj vojny ne delaj.” Takoj sgovor v to vrem'a byl by vpolne realen. Tak vot, Stalin skazal: “Nam ètogo ne nado”

“Take Danzig, but, please, big.fem.gen.sg war.fem.gen.sg ne do.” Such agreement in that time would have been quite realistic. So, Stalin said: “Us that ne needed....”

Take Danzig, but, please, don't make a big war. Such an agreement at that time would have been quite realistic. So Stalin said, “We don't need that”¹³⁹

The next two examples illustrate a trend of using genitive when warning someone not to do something foolish, perhaps implying a strong negation resulting in the use of genitive:

128. Beregi žizn', roditelej i čest'. Ne delaj glupostej. Vse nakazuemo.
Protect life, parents, and honor. Ne do stupidities.fem.gen.pl. All punishable.
Protect your life, parents and honor. Don't do stupid things. Everything is punishable.¹⁴⁰

129. Davaj po por'adku. Esli rešil titulovat', to ne delaj ošibok.
Give according to order. If decided to title, then ne make mistakes.fem.gen.pl
Do it according to protocol. If you decide to use someone's title, then don't make mistakes.¹⁴¹

8.5 A special use of the negative imperative: *Ne bud' protasis conditionals*

Russian has a class of conditionals which typically accompany GenNeg, but do not denote or connote negative existence. Protasis conditionals are the equivalent of expressions like

¹³⁹ Ogonek (1996), No. 38. From Tübingen Corpus.

¹⁴⁰ Ogonek (1997), No. 27. From Tübingen Corpus.

¹⁴¹ Aleksandr Ščelkov, “Uničtožit' Izrail’”. From Tübingen Corpus.

“If it weren’t for X, Y would happen” in English. Their logic suggests scenarios of what would happen if something hypothetically did not exist – hence a preference for the genitive. Even though the object may actually exist, from the point of view of the imaginary, hypothetical world the speaker is depicting, the object simply does not exist. Thus, the preferred usage of genitive in protasis conditionals shows the primacy of the speaker’s point of view when selecting a case.

Corpus searches reveal that generally neither nominative nor accusative occurs with *ne bud’*. The Tübingen Corpus has some interesting instances of GenNeg with protasis conditionals:

130. Po televideniju ja videl odnu krasivuju amerikanku, ona ob”jasnila, čto, ne bud’ ètoj bomby, vojna unesla by ešče bol’še žertv.

On television I saw one beautiful American, she explained, that, ne bud’ that.fem.gen.sg bomb.fem.gen.sg, war carried-off would still more victims

On television I saw a beautiful American woman. She explained that, if not for that bomb, the war would have claimed even more victims.¹⁴²

131. I on pošel svoej dorogoj, v kotoruju ešče v junosti ego pozvali zvuki kontrabasa. Ne bud’ kontrabasa, -- govorit Gevorgian, -- ja by nikogda ne vošel v mir džaza[.]

And he went his way, onto which still in youth him called sounds double bass. Ne bud’ double-bass.masc.gen.sg, -- says Gevorgian, -- I would never ne entered in world jazz.

And he followed his own path, onto which the sounds of the double bass called him even in his youth. “If it weren’t for the double bass,” Gevorgian said, “I never would have entered the world of jazz.”¹⁴³

132. Ne bud’ ètogo spasšego rusckuju čest’ beznadežnogo soprotivlenija bol’ševizmu, ni o kakoj missii belyx èmigrantov govorit’ bylo by nevozmožno – kakaja možet byt’ vysokaja missija u l’udej, dobrovol’no i bezropotno otdavšix Rossiju čert znaet komu? Vse duxovnoe i kul’turnoe služenie Beloj èmigracii, dejstvitel’no spasšej – čast’ju dl’a

¹⁴² S. Zalygin, “Mistika,” in “Novyj mir,” 1987:12, pp. 32-41 (5.006). XGZA0201, from Tübingen Corpus.

¹⁴³ Ogonek (1999), No. 16. From Tübingen Corpus.

budušcej Rossii, čast'ju dl'a istorii – oblomki velikogo ruskogo nasledija, bylo by vnutrenne nevozmožnym, ne bud' u nee opravdanija pered istoriej v lice tex samyx dravšixs'a za Rossiju stabs-kapitanov.

Ne be this saved Russian honor hopeless resistance Bolshevism, ni about which mission White emigrants to say would be impossible – which may be high mission of people, voluntarily and uncomplainingly giving Russia devil knows what? All spiritual and cultural service White emigration, really saved – in part for future Russia, in part for history – wreckage great Russian heritage, were would intrinsically impossible, ne bud' of her justification.neut.gen.sg before history in face those same fought for Russia captains

If not for this hopeless resistance to Bolshevism, which saved Russian honor, it would be impossible to talk about any mission of the White emigrants, what higher mission could people have, who had voluntarily and uncomplainingly given Russia to God knows who? All the spiritual and cultural service of the White emigration which really saved -- in part for the future Russia, in part for history -- the fragments of the great Russian heritage, would have been intrinsically impossible, were it not for its justification before history in the persons of those very captains who fought for Russia.¹⁴⁴

133. Kat'ka uver'aet, čto trud oblagoraživaet čeloveka: -- Ne bud' raboty, my do six por byli by obez'janami. – A tak my vsego liš' lošadi, -- govor'u.

Kat'ka argues,that labor ennobles man: -- Ne bud' work.fem.gen.sg, we to these times would be monkeys. – And this way we in all just horses, -- I say.

Kat'ka argues that labor ennobles man: “If it weren't for work, we would still be monkeys.” “And as things are now, we are only horses,” I said.¹⁴⁵

134. Kakaja raznica, skol'ko let tomu pal'cu, kotoryj na kurok nažmet? Ne bud' ètogo voprosa – “začem?”, ja by ego srezal i ne kajals'a.

What difference, how many years to that finger, which on trigger presses? Ne bud' this.masc.gen.sg question.masc.gen.sg – “Why?”, I would it cut off and not regretted.

What's the difference, how old the finger is that presses the trigger? If it weren't for the question "why? ", I would have cut it off and not regretted it.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Ogonek (1999), No. 40. From Tübingen Corpus. Also M. Sokolov, “Četyre volny,” <http://lib.rin.ru/doc/i/73491p2.html> .

¹⁴⁵ Ogonek (2001), No. 19. From Tübingen Corpus.

¹⁴⁶ Andrej Tamancev, “Avtonomnyj rejd.” From Tübingen Corpus.

The common theme of the above examples is that although an object exists in real life, or an event actually happened, as the speaker hypothesizes a world where it does not exist or did not happen, genitive case is selected to emphasize the theoretical non-existence of the referent. No nominative or accusative counter-examples were found, supporting the conclusion that GenNeg is required on protasis conditionals with *ne bud'*.

8.6 GenNeg and Unaccusative “Not one X” constructions

Russian seems to have completely free variation of nominative and genitive on subjects of unaccusative¹⁴⁷ negated phrases meaning “not one X of group Y underwent something.”

There is no perceptible difference in meaning between the two:

Nominative:

135. Ni odna butylka ne razbilas'.
Ni one.fem.nom.sg bottle.fem.nom.sg ne broke.fem.sg
Not one bottle broke.

Genitive:

136. Ni odnoj butylki ne razbilos'.
Ni one.fem.gen.sg bottle.fem.gen.sg ne broke.neut.sg
Not one bottle broke.

Yandex searches yield an equal ratio of nominative to genitive subjects regarding eggs not breaking and bombs not exploding. The Topic status of the subject does not play a role in the assignment of the case. As was discussed earlier, topicalized NPs tend not to be in the genitive case under negation. However, the “not one X” kind of construction seems to contradict this tendency.

¹⁴⁷ On unaccusativity, see n. 68 above.

In the following paragraph, it is clear that specific bottles are being referenced, yet ‘bottles’ is in the genitive, and the neuter gender of the verb ‘broke’ indicates the presence of GenNeg:

137. V magazine, kuda my často jezdili za vodkoj, znakomaja prodavščica nabrosilas' na nas s rугan'ju: u nee ot ètogo vzryva razvalilas' peč' i daže vyletelo brevno iz steny! "Da ty ne kriči, - govorim my jej, - počinjat tebe pečku. Lučše posmotri, ostalis' li celye butylki?" Kak ni smešno, no vsja vodka ucelela: ni odnoj butylki ne razbilos'! U mnogix v sele vzryvom povredilo kryši, steny, stekla.

In shop, where we often went for vodka, known saleswoman came at us with insults: by her from this explosion collapsed stove and even fly out beam from the wall! "But you ne yell, - we say her - they will fix you the stove. Better look, remain whole bottles? As ni funny, but all vodka survived: not one.fem.gen.sg bottle.fem.gen.sg was broken.neut.sg! Of many in village explosion damaged roof, walls, glasses.

In the shop where we often went for vodka, a saleswoman we knew threw herself on us, cursing: Her stove collapsed from the explosion, and a beam even flew out of the wall! "Don't scream," - we say to her – “they'll fix the stove for you. Better look, are there any whole bottles left?” It was so funny – all the vodka survived: not a single bottle broke! Many villagers' roofs, walls and window panes were damaged by the explosion.¹⁴⁸

138. Prosid'a v bare časa tri i vypiv nemereno alkoholja raznogo, pered zakrytiem bara, ja kupil upakovku v 12 butylok piva i povez ee domoj na veleke Delo ešče davno bylo vo florede. Xot' i exat' nedaleko bylo, za paru ulic do doma ja poterjal ravnovesie i uebals'a s velika. Spas pivo cenoj svoego podborodka- ni odnoj butylki ne razbilos'

Sitting at bar hours three and drinking much alcohol different, before closing bar, I bought pack in 12 bottles beer and brought it home on bike. Business still long ago was in Florida Although and to go not far was,a couple streets to house, I lost balance and fell off the bike. Saved beer cost my chin -- not one.fem.gen.sg bottle.fem.gen.sg ne broke.neut.sg

Sitting at a bar for around three hours, and having drunk a lot of different kinds of alcohol, before the bar closed I bought a twelve-pack of beer and brought it home on my bike. This happened a long time ago in Florida. Although it wasn't far to ride, just a couple of streets from home, I lost my balance and fell off the bike. I saved the beer at the expense of my chin -- not one bottle broke....¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.bs.kuzpress.ru/text/vzryv.htm> .

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.disenteria.ru/index.php?s=&act=Print&client=printer&f=23&t=3292> .

By comparison, when a transitive verb is used to say that someone did not break something, such as eggs, genitive is also possible on the direct object:

139. - A vy sami xodite za produktami?!

- Iz supermarketov ja vozvraščajus' s ogromnymi baulami - znaete, takuju sem'ju prokormit'... No vot bukval'no nedavno zvonit staršaja žena, žaluets'a, čto ne možet bez men'a vybrat' bel'e. I mne èto prijatno.

- Možet, vy ešče i sami gotovite?

- Ja nikogda v žizni ne počistil ni odnoj kartofeliny, ne razbil ni odnogo jajca i ničego ne postiral.

- And you yourself go for groceries?!

- From supermarkets I return with huge trunks - know, such family to feed ... But just literally recently calls older wife, complains, that ne can without me choose underwear. And me it nice.

- Maybe, you yet and yourself cook?

- I never in life ne cleaned ni one.fem.gen.sg potato.fem.gen.sg, ne broke ni one.neut.gen.sg egg.neut.gen.sg and nothing ne washed.

- And you yourself go shopping for groceries?!

- I return from the supermarkets with huge trunks - you know, I have such a family to feed ... But just recently my older wife called, complaining that she can't select underwear without me. And that's nice.

- Maybe you even do the cooking yourself?

- I've never cleaned a single potato in my life, I haven't broken a single egg, and I haven't washed anything.¹⁵⁰

Yandex finds ample instances in the genitive of the word order *ne razbilos' ni odnoj butylki* as well, such as this text concerning a terrorist incident:

140. «L'udi v štatskom» prodolžajut osmatrivat' mesto proisšestvija. Vozle vxoda v supermarket na stul'čike sidit devuška i čto-to sobiraet pincetom. Ona – èkspert-podryvnik. Kstati, èksperty otmečajut strannuju zakonomernost': men'she vsej postradal alkohol'nyj otdel – ne razbilos' ni odnoj butylki.

"People in state" continue to examine the scene incident. Near entrance to supermarket on chair sits girl and something gathers tweezers. She – expert-demolition. By the way,

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.belgazeta.by/20060703.26/340260091/> .

experts notice strange pattern: least all affected alcoholic department – ne broke ni one.fem.gen.sg bottle.fem.gen.sg.

"People in civilian clothes" continue to examine the scene of the incident. Near the entrance to the supermarket, a girl is sitting on a little chair and gathering something with tweezers. She is a demolition expert. By the way, the experts notice a strange pattern: the alcohol section suffered the least damage – not one bottle broke.¹⁵¹

Yet similar examples having subjects in the nominative case, with the same linear word order, are also easy to find. The following text is about a ghost ship, after it is mentioned that the ship was carrying lots of liquor:

141. Korabl' byl v polnom por'adke i drejfoval gde-to v Atlantike. Korpus, mačty, parusa i drugie žiznenno važnye časti korabl'a byli cely, bolee togo, on voobšče ne byl povrežden. Gruz takže naxodilsja v celosti i soxrannosti, ne razbilas' ni odna butylka.

Ship was in full order and drifted somewhere in Atlantic. Housing, masts, sails and other vital parts ship were intact, more that, it generally ne was damaged. Cargo also found intact and whole, ne broke.fem.sg ni one.fem.nom.sg bottle.fem.nom.sg.

The ship was in perfect order and was drifting somewhere in the Atlantic. The housing, masts, sails and other vital parts of the ship were intact; what's more, the ship was not damaged at all. The cargo was also whole and intact; not one bottle was broken.¹⁵²

142. - Čto s vodkoj!!!!?

Okazalos', čto багаžnik byl plotno byl zabit butylkami, a pod otkos mašina zavalilas' na maloj skorosti, tak čto ni odna butylka ne razbilas'.

- What with vodka !!!!!?

Turned out that trunk was tightly packed bottles, and down slope car tumbled at low speed, so that ni one.fem.nom.sg bottle.fem.nom.sg ne broke.

- What's with the vodka !!!!!?

It turned out that the trunk was tightly packed with bottles, and the car tumbled down the slope at low speed, such that not one bottle broke.¹⁵³

And there are many instances in nominative case of the word order *ni odna butylka ne razbilas'*.

¹⁵¹ http://www.rg-rb.de/2000/34/riga_terror.shtml .

¹⁵² <http://lone-hunter.livejournal.com/40318.html> .

¹⁵³ <http://lj.rossia.org/users/dvarniaga/2007/07/23/>

143. Na obratnom puti nam navstreču popals'a paren', volokuščij uvesistye pokupki, - za neskol'ko šagov do togo, kak my poravnjalis', ručki u ego paketa ne vyderžali, i na zeml'u ruxnuli korobka s sokom i tri zapotevšie butylki "Tuborg green".
Paren' - javnyj kudesnik i ljubimec bogov. Vo-pervyx, ni odna butylka ne razbilas'.

On reverse way us meeting was guy, dragging hefty purchases - a few steps before we passed him, handles of his package ne hold, and on ground collapsed box with juice and three misty bottles "Tuborg green". Guy - clear magician and favorite of the gods. In-first, ni one.fem.nom.sg bottle.fem.nom.sg ne broke.fem.sg.

On the way back, we encountered a guy dragging some hefty groceries. He was a few steps before we passed him, the handles of his package broke off, and a box collapsed to the ground that was carrying juice and three bottles of Tuborg Green with condensation on them. The guy was clearly a magician and a favorite of the gods. First, none of the bottles broke.¹⁵⁴

Here are some instances of GenNeg applied to specific, clearly referenced topics, when nominative case would be expected:

144. [Vot] u nas mužik vez ženu s korzinkoj jaic popali v avariju ni odnogo jajca ne razbilos' a tetka nasmert'...

Here by us man carried wife with basket eggs fell in accident ni one.neut.gen.sg egg.neut.gen.sg ne broke but aunt death ...

One of our guys was transporting his wife with a basket of eggs, they had an accident, not one egg broke but the woman died ...¹⁵⁵

In the following example, the eggs are also presupposed. The text is from an online videogame where hundreds of eggs drop from the top of the screen, and if you win, a message appears about the non-breakage of any eggs in the game:

145. Sčet igry "Jajičnica": 0 0 Pojmannyx jaic: Ubežavšix cypl'at: SČET IGRY Ešče raz? 100% popadanie! Ne razbilos' ni odnogo jajca! VY - ČEMPION!!!

¹⁵⁴ <http://sister-tabl.livejournal.com/?skip=20> .

¹⁵⁵ www.nn.ru/community/user/fso/?do=read&thread=257769&topic_id=4672634 .

Score game "Scrambled Eggs": 0 0 Caught eggs: Escaped chickens: SCORE GAME again? 100% hit! Ne broke ni one.neut.gen.sg egg.neut.gen.sg! YOU - WINNER!

The score of the game "Scrambled Eggs": 0 0 Eggs caught: Chickens escaped: SCORE GAME Play again? 100% hit! Not one egg broke! YOU ARE THE WINNER!¹⁵⁶

Many similar examples were found concerning bombs exploding or not. There are lots of references to bombings prior to this snippet, though GenNeg is used on *ni odnoj bomby* 'not one bomb':

146. Xaos i panika teper' byli zakonom na ulicax. Vsë èto videl Vas'a, on šel čerez ètot ad. Ni odnoj bomby ne vzorvalos' na ètix tixix ran'se ulicax, ni odnogo čužogo soldata ne videli èti golye derev'a, no skladyvalos' takoe vpečatlenie, čto zaxvatčiki uže pobyvali zdes'.

Chaos and panic now were law on streets. All that saw Vas'a, he went through this hell. Ni one.fem.gen.sg bomb.fem.gen.sg ne exploded.neut.sg on these quiet before streets, ni one foreign soldier ne saw those bare trees, but put such impression, that invaders already were here.

Chaos and panic now were the law on the street. Vas'a saw all of it; he went through this hell. Not one bomb had exploded on these previously quiet streets, their bare trees had not seen one foreign soldier, but the impression set in that invaders had already been here.¹⁵⁷

The next few examples illustrate the use of nominative case on *odno* 'one' in constructions and contexts that are quite similar to the genitive examples. In the first excerpt, the eggs are presupposed:

147. Postepenno menea ustojčivye natury načali sdavat' i pokidat' jajca, i k koncu ispytaniya ostalis' vsego tri nasedki. Iz nix otobrali odnu po toj prostoj pričine, čto korobku, v kotoroj ona nasiživala jajca, sbrosilo vetkoj s kryši mašiny na zeml'u vmeste so vsem soderžimym (èlement trenirovki, ne predusmotrennyj programmoj); korobka prokatilas' neskol'ko metrov po zemle i ostanovilas' vverx dnom, a kogda ee otkryli,

¹⁵⁶ www.aga.spb.ru/flash/eggs.swf (A Flash online game) .

¹⁵⁷ http://mars-x.ru/proza/2/75_1.shtml

kurica po-prežnemu s mračnoj rešimost'ju nasiživala jajca, pričem ni odno iz nix ne razbilos' - očevidno, nasedka svojim telom zaščitila ix ot udara.

Gradually less stable natures began to give up and leave eggs behind, and toward end test remained in all three hens. From them selected one for the simple reason, that box in which she incubated eggs, threw branch from top machine on ground together with all contents (element training ne covered program); box rolled few meters along ground and stood upside down, and when it opened, chicken as-before with grim determination hatched eggs, and ni one.neut.nom.sg of them ne broke - evidently hen her body protected them from shock.

Gradually less stable natures began to give up and leave eggs behind, and by the end of the experiment there were only three sitting hens left. One of them was selected for the simple reason that the box in which she incubated the eggs was thrown to the ground, by a branch from the top of the machine, along with its contents (an element of training not covered by the program); the box rolled a few meters on the ground and stopped upside down, and when it was opened, the hen still had a grim determination to hatch the eggs, and none of them had broken – evidently the hen protected them from the shock with her body.¹⁵⁸

The following excerpt, about terrorist events in general and without prior mention of particular bombs, uses the nominative case on *bomba*:

148. Ešče by den'-drugoj, da bez edy da vody mnogix daže ubivat' ne nužno bylo by - sami by umerli. A to, čto ne vzorvalas' ni odna bomba - opravdyvaet l'ubye dejstvija specnaza.

Another would day--other, but without food or water many even kill ne need was would – themselves would died. And that, that ne exploded ni one.fem.nom.sg bomb.fem.nom.sg - justifies any actions Spetsnaz.

It would still take a day or two, but without food or water, it would not even have been necessary to kill many people--they would have died anyway. And the fact that not one bomb exploded - justifies any actions of the special forces.¹⁵⁹

And GenNeg would seem appropriate for the bomb (and the missile) mentioned in this example, where there is no previous mention of bombs or missiles:

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.animal-s.net/4/20/75.php> .

¹⁵⁹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/talking_point/newsid_2368000/2368731.stm .

149. Govor'at, za vrem'a vojny na territorii Žirovičskogo monastyr'a ne vzorvalas' ni odna bomba, ni odin snar'ad. Oni padali s neba, slovno derev'annye čuški, ne prinos'a vreda.

Say, during time war on territory Zhirovichskij monastery ne exploded ni one.fem.nom.sg bomb.fem.nom.sg, ni one.masc.nom.sg missile.masc.nom.sg. They fell from sky, like wooden beams, ne causing harm.

They say that throughout the war, not one bomb or missile exploded on the territory of the Zhirovichskij Monastery. They fell from the sky like wooden beams, causing no harm.¹⁶⁰

Many Russian business stories discuss companies going bankrupt and not going bankrupt, with a construction similar to bombs (not) exploding and eggs (not) breaking. However, there is much less free variation of GenNeg and nominative on the subject. Google and Yandex each only find one instance of the GenNeg: *ni odnoj kompanii ne obankrotilos'*, as opposed to many hits for the nominative version: *ni odna kompanija ne obrankotilas'*.

The first snippet is from a forum about the economic challenges of publishing gaming software when piracy is rampant:

150. Poka èto pizdež, kakie nesut ubytki naši programmistkie mèjdžory, ešče ni odnoj kompanii ne obankrotilos', kak togo pugaet Boris.

While this [vulgarity], how bring damages our programming majors, still ni one.fem.gen.sg company.fem.gen.sg ne bankrupted.neut.sg, as that threatens Boris.

While this is bullshit, what losses do our programming majors cause, when not one company has gone bankrupt, as Boris threatens us with?¹⁶¹

151. [V]езде krizis, a u nix ni odnogo banka ne ruxnulo, ni odnoj kompanii ne obankrotilos'!! i vsë za sčët irakskoj nefi, aga[.]

¹⁶⁰ <http://minsk.kp.ru/2005/11/03/new89192/> .

¹⁶¹ http://www.603005.org/perl/mwf-nino/topic_show.pl?tid=747 .

Everywhere crisis, but by them ni one bank ne collapsed, ni one.fem.gen.sg company.fem.gen.sg ne bankrupted!! And all on account Iraqi oil, aha

Crisis everywhere, yet not one of their banks collapsed, not one company went bankrupt! And all on account of Iraqi oil, aha.¹⁶²

Here are a few of the many nominative examples:

152. V celom že, nado skazat', rynek novyx domov projavil otmennye kačestva po vyživaemosti. Ni odna kompanija ne obankrotilas' v polose zastoja, nikto ne svalils'a v pozornyj demping.

In general, must say, market new homes showed excellent qualities of survival. Ni one.fem.nom.sg company.fem.nom.sg ne went bankrupt in zone stagnation, no one ne fell in infamous dumping.

In general, it must be said, the market of new homes demonstrated excellent survival qualities. Not one company went bankrupt in the zone of stagnation, and no one resorted to the infamous dumping.¹⁶³

153. O tom, čto vysšij cenovoj segment moskovskogo gostiničnogo rynka blizok k nasyščeniju, èksperty stali govorit' ešče tri-četyre goda nazad. Odnako s tex por na rynke ežegodno pojavl'ajuts'a novye igroki, i ni odna kompanija ne obankrotilas' i ne pokinula pole boja.

About that, that high price segment Moscow hotel market close to saturation, experts began to say three- four years ago. However since those times in market annually appear new players, and ni one.fem.nom.sg company.fem.nom.sg ne went bankrupt and ne left field battle.

Regarding the fact that the upper price segment of the Moscow hotel market is close to saturation, the experts began saying this three or four years ago. However, since that period there are new players in the market every year, and no company has gone bankrupt and left the battlefield.¹⁶⁴

In some of unaccusative “Not one X” instances we can see the semantics of non-existence determining that GenNeg case is applied, but in other semantically non-existential instances, the unmarked nominative or accusative cases are applied.

¹⁶² <http://forum.mariupol.com.ua/viewtopic.php?p=730325> .

¹⁶³ <http://www.reline.ru/cgi-bin/index2.pl?=-press/2004/75/75> .

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.cityhotel.ru/ru/print/messagepage/111/> .

We have seen how Russian seems to have free variation of nominative and genitive in unaccusative “Not one X” constructions. Next, we will look at another kind of construction that also displays free case variation: *Ne imet’ mesto / mesta*, ‘to not take place’.

8.7 *Ne imet’ mesto / mesta*

The expression *ne imet’ mesto / mesta*, meaning ‘to not take place, not happen, not exist’, is an existential construct that causes very unusual case patterns. Sometimes the subject can be in the genitive rather than the nominative, sometimes the direct object *mesta* can be in the genitive instead of the accusative, and occasionally even both nouns are in the genitive, which is remarkable and possibly a unique phenomenon in the language. The behavior of *ne imet’ mesto* sheds light on whether Russian prioritizes syntactic mechanisms over semantics. Some other Slavic languages, such as Polish and Slovenian, have standardized genitivization of negated direct objects, a mechanism which is driven by syntax rather than semantics. The apparent optionality of the genitive in Russian constructions like *ne imet’ mesto* points to a semantic driver of case selection.

According to a Google search, there were 495 hits for the GenNeg *ne imelo mesta*, and 459 for the accusative *ne imelo mesto*. Most native informants consulted on this question felt that *mesta* in genitive is preferable.

Following are some of the possible case combinations for this construction:

GenNeg subject, GenNeg *mesta*:

154. Odnako pri skorosti daže v 64 km/č nikakogo ograničenija ugla zrenija dl’a lokomotivnoj brigady ne imelo mesta.

However at speed even in 64 km / hour no.neut.gen.sg limit.neut.gen.sg
angle.masc.gen.sg view.neut.gen.sg for locomotive brigade ne took.neut.gen.sg
place.neut.gen.sg

However, even at a speed of 64 km / hour, no limit to the viewing angle for the
locomotive took place.¹⁶⁵

155. Èto ego ustraivalo, ustraival takoj sposob rešenija voprosov, potomu što nikakoj
kritiki v otnošenii ètix planov ne imelo mesta, ibo nikto ne prisutstvoval pri ix
obsuždenii.

It him suited, suited such way resolution problems, because no.fem.gen.sg
criticism.fem.gen.sg in relationship these plans ne took.neut.sg place.neut.gen.sg, because
no one ne was-present during their discussions.

It suited him and this way to solve problems suited him, because no criticism of these
plans took place, for no one was present during their discussion.¹⁶⁶

Nominative plural subject, GenNeg singular *mesta*:

156. Razumeets'a, ni v Drevnem Rime, ni — tem bolee — v sovremennyx nam SŠA stol'
radikal'nye formy degradacii sozdannogo občinoj političeskogo učastija ne imeli mesta.

Of-course, neither in Ancient Rome nor – so more - in contemporary us USA so
drastic.nom.pl forms.nom.pl degradation created community political participation ne
took.pl place.neut.gen.sg.

Of course, neither in Ancient Rome nor - even more so - in our contemporary USA, had
such drastic forms of degradation of political participation by the community taken
place.¹⁶⁷

Nominative subject, accusative *mesto*:

157. No esli neposredstvennaja vysadka fašistskix vojsk na amerikanskij kontinent ne
imela mesto, to èto bylo sv'azano ne s otsustviem fašistskoj ugrozy kontinentu, a s tem,
čto fašizmu ne udalos' osuščestvit' svoi plany.

¹⁶⁵ “Lokomotiv” 07/26/2001, from RNC.

¹⁶⁶ Anastas Mikoyan, “Tak bylo (1971-1974),” from RNC.

¹⁶⁷ Sergej Turkin, “Političeskoe učastie v SŠA i Drevnem Rime: o pol'ze sravnenija,” *Neprikosnovennyj zapas*,
01/15/2004, from RNC.

But if actual.fem.nom.sg landing.fem.nom.sg fascist troops on American continent ne took.fem place.neut.acc.sg, then this was tied ne with absence fascist threat continent, but with that, that fascism ne succeeded implement their plans.

But if the actual landing of the fascist troops on the American continent did not take place, it was not due to the absence of the fascist threat to the continent, but because fascism had failed to implement its plans.¹⁶⁸

158. Malo togo, nikakix vrednyx posledstvij ot xudožestvennoj akcii ne moglo nastupit'. Ne imelo mesto osoznanie s moej storony "protivopravnogo xaraktera" takix dejstvij.

Little that, no harmful effects from art action ne could ensue. Ne took.neut place.neut.acc.sg understanding.neut.nom.sg from my part "unlawful character" such actions.

Moreover, no harmful effects from the art action could ensue. There was no understanding on my part of the "unlawful nature" of such actions.¹⁶⁹

GenNeg Subject, Gen *mesta* + *byt'* ('to be'):

There is an interesting existential expression where *imet' mesto / mesta* is combined with *byt'* ('to be'), and the genitive case is often applied to *mesto* under negation:

159. Nasčët Izrail'a nam soobščili zaranee, tak čto izvin'at's'a po ètomu povodu èto est' nemnogo lišnee[.] Osobo krupnomasštabnogo fotoreportaža **ne imelo mesta byt'**, esli u kogo najdëts'a čto na mobilax i esli kačestvo priličnoe, možete s'uda skinut'.

As-for Israel we informed in advance, so that to apologize on this occasion it is a bit too much. Especially the large-scale photo-reportage ne took.neut.sg place.neut.gen.sg to be, if by whom is-found what on mobile-phones and if quality decent, you can here throw down.

As for Israel, we were informed in advance, so apologizing on this occasion is a bit too much. The large-scale photo-reportage especially did not take place; if someone has something on a mobile phone and if the quality is decent, you can send it down here.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Natal'ja Gladyševa, *Ugolok Rossii v Paragvae*, "Specnaz Rossii" 01/15/2003, from RNC.

¹⁶⁹ <http://www.zaprava.ru/content/view/219/>.

¹⁷⁰ <http://forums.ferra.ru/index.php?showtopic=10502&st=100>.

The presence of *byt'* 'to be' seems redundant in this phrasing, but nevertheless it is used by some Russian speakers. When negated, there is a strong tendency to apply GenNeg to the subject, as with other NESs.

8.8 *Nikak- iz nix constructions*

The phrase *nikak- iz nix* 'none of them' displays free variation of genitive and nominative on subjects, and of genitive and accusative on direct objects. When speakers select the genitive, sometimes it could be due to the strength of the negation inherent in the NPI *nikak-*.

Below are some typical GenNeg existential phrases with *nikak- iz nix*:

Direct Object in negative:

160. Vse-taki vy živate v parallel'nom dl'a men'a mire, esli sčitaete, čto dl'a normal'no [sic] obščeniya rebenku neobxodimo imet' opredelennye material'nye blaga, naprimer, vozmožnost' ezdit' na èkskursii za granicu. Ne imeja **nikakix iz nix** (poezdki, dorogie prestižnye igruški, telefon BEZ kamery, kotoryj ja obyčno ne razrešaju nosit' v školu, ibo - nezačem) moja doč' nikogda ne imela problem s obščeniem[.]

Still you live in parallel world to me, if think that for normally contact child must have certain material benefits, for-example ability go on trips beyond border. Not having any.gen.pl of them (travel, expensive prestigious toys, phone WITHOUT camera, which I usually ne allow to bring to school, because - no need to), my daughter never ne had problems with communication[.]

Still, you live in a parallel world to me, if you think for normal communications that a child must have certain material benefits, such as the ability to go on trips abroad. Not having any of them (trips, expensive prestigious toys, a phone WITHOUT a camera, which I usually do not allow her to bring to school, because – there's no need to), my daughter has never had problems with communication[.]¹⁷¹

161. Po slovam poslednego, "v proekte pokupki 'Silovyx mašin' mnogo sostavl'ajuščix, poètomu ja by predpočel sejščas ne kommentirovat' **nikakix iz nix**."

¹⁷¹ <http://www.7ya.ru/conf/confer-theme.aspx?cid=Care7&tid=7713> .

In words latter, "in project purchase 'Power machines' many components, therefore I would prefer now ne comment none.gen.pl of them.

According to the latter, "In the project there are many components to the purchase of the 'Power Machines', so I would prefer not to comment on any of them now."¹⁷²

In the above citation, there is some ambiguity as to whether *nikakix* refers to the components or the 'Power Machines'. But the strength of the negation seems clear, which could explain the choice of genitive on *nikakix*.

Genitive plural on negative existential subject:

162. Naverno èto v por'adke veščej, što ja ispytyvaju men'shee količestvo èmocij, esli ne skazat', što sejčas počti **nikakix iz nix** ne ostalos'... odna pustota.

Probably this in order things, that I experience lower quantity emotions, if ne say, that now almost none.gen.pl of them ne remained ... a void.

Probably it is in the normal order of things that I feel fewer emotions, if not to say that now almost none of them remain ... a void.¹⁷³

163. Nam važen sozdajuščij odeždu čelovek, kontakt s nim. My orientirovalis' na marki molodye, maloizvestnye i ne sliškom dorigie. K tomu že nikakix iz nix v Moskve do ètogo ne bylo.

Us important creating clothes person, contact with him. We focused on brands young, little-known, and ne too expensive. To that none.gen.pl of them in Moscow to that ne was.

What is important to us is the person creating the clothes, contact with him. We have been focusing on the young, not well-known and not too expensive brands. Furthermore, until then none of them had been in Moscow.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² <http://www.urm.ru/newsOne.php?docid=59461&PHPSESSID=4a2378a3ea1e0> .

¹⁷³ <http://narutorpg.mybb.ru/viewtopic.php?pid=63587> .

¹⁷⁴ <http://s-11.ru/?p=235> .

8.9 *Ni odin iz nix* constructions

Ni odin iz nix ‘not one of them’ constructions seem to follow the same pattern of genitive vs. accusative on the direct object as the *nikak- iz nix* sentences, but more research needs to be done. One challenge is that many instances are ambiguous between the masculine animate accusative and the genitive.

164. Tut firma odna po proizvodstvu mašin dogovorilas' s magami na vse svoi mašiny zaščitnye zaklinanija stavit'. I pomoglo! Ni odin čelovek na nej ne postradal. To li potomu čto oni bol'se 10 km/č ne davali, to li iz-za togo čto bol'se časa ne rabotali. A možet i potomu, čto **ni odnoj iz nix ne kupili**...

Here company one for production cars agreed magicians on all their cars protective spells put. And helped! Not one person in it was hurt. That whether because that they more 10 km / h ne gave, it whether because that that more hour ne worked. Could. But maybe it was because, that ni one.fem.gen.sg of them ne bought ...

Here a lone company agreed with magicians for the production of cars to put protective spells on all their cars. And it helped! Not one person was hurt. It could have been because they never exceeded 10 km / h, it could have been because they didn't work for more than an hour. But maybe it was because not of them was purchased ...¹⁷⁵

A native speaker was consulted about whether negated direct object of the above *ni odnoj* phrase could be changed to the accusative “*Ni odnu iz nix ne kupili*”. She responded that the genitive *odnoj* is better, though *ni odnu* is not incorrect, and there is no difference in meaning.

Google searches found 509 instances of ‘*ni odnu iz nix*’ and 505 results for ‘*ni odnoj iz nix*’, so the feminine accusative and genitive of *odin* seem to occur with the same frequency. The RNC favored the genitive: 55 instances of *odnoj* vs. 29 of *odnu* in this phrase. However, the grammatical markup codes of *odnoj* were very ambiguous, so it is difficult to find useful results in RNC:

¹⁷⁵ <http://bludnikov.nm.ru/>.

165. Skol'ko ja ni byval na vs'akogo roda banketax, vseгда muzykanty uezzajut s devuškami, daže esli ni odnoj iz nix ne znali do ètogo.

How much ni I was to all kind banquets, always musicians leave with girls, even if ni one.fem.gen.sg of them ne knew to this.

However often I have been to all kinds of banquets; musicians always leave with girls, even if they didn't know any of them before.¹⁷⁶

The RNC grammatical markers on *odnoj* included dative, genitive, and instrumental cases for listings like this one (and indeed the *-oj* ending can signify all these cases, though it is clear to a Russian speaker that genitive is intended), so clearly the morphosyntactic analysis has not been completed.

8.10 *Ne polučat's'a constructions*

The expression *ne polučat's'a* can have an ambiguous gloss; in the past tense it can carry a negative existential meaning: “there were no results of an action at all,” but it can also mean “there were no satisfactory results,” or more vaguely, “it didn't work out.” In other words, *ne polučat's'a* can mean:

- 1) There was an intent to do X, and it was unsuccessful
- 2) There was an intent to do X well, but it turned out badly
- 3) Nothing resulted from action X.

Ne polučat's'a is of interest to this thesis because it frequently co-occurs with GenNeg. This is the case whether it is in the imperfective verb aspect (*polučat's'a*) or perfective (*polučit's'a*).

But is GenNeg used freely in all semantic contexts, and does the ambiguity itself play a role in the case selection?

¹⁷⁶ Fazil' Iskander, “Sandro iz Čegema” (Book 2), 1989, from RNC.

In the following excerpt, GenNeg is clearly applied on the subject. The semantic emphasis seems to be on the non-existentiality of the successes:

166. Userdnaja , ona zanimalas' celymi dn'ami , večerami , inogda i nočami , no uspexov ne polučalos'. A vot s obščezžitiem ej povezlo: popala v dvuxmestnuju komnatu so svoej odnokursnicej Asej [....]

Diligent, she studied entire days, evenings, sometimes and nights, but successes.masc.gen.pl ne result.neut.gen.sg. But with dormitory her carried: fell in double-room with her classmate Asya [....]

Diligent, she studied entire days, evenings, and sometimes nights, but without success. However, in the dormitory she was lucky: she ended up in a double room with her classmate, Asya [....]¹⁷⁷

The next example is not ambiguous—there was constant surveillance, and it failed—and the genitive is applied on *sleženija* ‘surveillance’:

167. Naši prežnie "šumnye" [podvodnye] lodki ešče otsleživalis' na opredelennyx rubežax , dlitel'noe vrem'a ix veli , no postojannogo sleženija, daže za nimi , ne polučalos' . [Podvodnaja] Lodka - samoe skrytoe sovremennoe strategičeskoe oružie .

Our former “noisy” submarines still were-monitored at certain borders, long time them led, but constant.neut.gen.sg surveillance.neut.gen.sg, even behind them, ne succeeded. Submarine – the most hidden contemporary strategic weapon.

Our former “noisy” submarines were still monitored at certain borders, they were tracked for a long time, but the constant surveillance, even for them, did not succeed. The submarine is the most concealed contemporary strategic weapon.¹⁷⁸

The following instance is an unambiguous GenNeg statement that no explosion results:

168. Rasčety našix japonskix specialistov davali odin i tot že rezul'tat : nažimali knopku ili ne nažimali -- vzryva ne polučaets'a .

Calculations of our Japanese specialists gave one and that that result: pushed button or ne pushed – explosion.masc.gen.sg ne result.

¹⁷⁷ Grekova, I. “Kafedra,” from the book “Kafedra,” Moscow (1980), pp. 30-44, from Tübingen Corpus.

¹⁷⁸ Ogonek (1996), No. 20, <http://www.ogoniok.com/archive/1996/4451/32-34/> .

The calculations of our Japanese specialists gave the very same result: whether one pushed the button or not, no explosion resulted.¹⁷⁹

The next example is interesting because GenNeg is used even though the duels do exist, but are rare:

169. Polnovesnyx duëlej vnutri čempionata praktičeski ne polučaets'a.

Full-fledged.gen.pl duels.gen.pl within championship practically ne exist.neut.sg.

Full-fledged duels within the championship practically don't exist.¹⁸⁰

In the following excerpt, GenNeg is probably selected due to the non-existence of the hoped-for miracle: It is a headline for an article about inflation continuing to occur, despite attempts to improve the Russian economy:

170. Infl'acija: čuda ne polučilos'

Inflation: Miracle.neut.gen.sg ne occurred

Inflation: The miracle did not occur¹⁸¹

In another example of the ambiguous readings of *ne polučat's'a* a three-way meeting did not occur (or succeed or turn out well) because only Ukraine and the EU showed up, and not Russia. A meeting did occur, but it was merely two-way instead of three-way! And one could also interpret the passage as saying that a three-way meeting was attempted but it failed. Regardless, there is a genitive subject in the headline, as well as an unambiguous GenNeg on the Russian no-show:

171. Trexstoronnej vstreči po gazu ne polučilos'

V Br'ussele ... byli priglašeny predstaviteli Ukrainy i Rossii dl'a obsuždenija "voprosa dal'nejšego sotrudničestva meždu ES, Ukrainoj i Rossiej A. Marčenko i sovetnik

¹⁷⁹ Ogonek (2000), No. 15, <http://www.agharta.net/Chernoby13.html> .

¹⁸⁰ Ogonek (2000), No. 46, <http://www.ropnet.ru/ogonyok/win/200046/46-58-61.htm> .

¹⁸¹ <http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article.shtml?2007/10/17/134472> .

Predstaviteľstva Ukrajiny pri ES V.Kn'ážnickij prin'ali učastie vo vstreče. Predstaviteľej Rossii ne bylo.

Three-way.fem.gen.sg meeting.fem.gen.sg on gas ne work / occur / work out.neut.sg

In Brussels ... were invited representatives Ukraine and Russia for discussion "the issue further cooperation between EU, Ukraine and Russia" A. Marchenko and Advisor Representative Ukraine to EU Vladimir Kn'ážnickij took part in meeting. Representatives.gen.pl Russia ne were.neut.sg.

Three-way meeting about gas did not work / occur / work out

In Brussels ... representatives of Ukraine and Russia were invited to a discussion "of the issue of further cooperation between the EU, Ukraine and Russia [Ukrainian representative] A. Marčenko and advisor to the Ukrainian Mission to the EU V. Kn'ážnickij took part in the meeting. There were no Russian representatives.¹⁸²

The example below has two instances of *ne polučilos'*, each with an ambiguous reading and a GenNeg referent. The author discusses a system of agricultural insurance that did not come to be or did not work, and also competition between companies that did not exist, or was tried but failed:

172. Xedžirovanija ne polučilos'

Ožidaets'a, čto uproščenie sozdanij obščestv vzaimnogo straxovanija niveliruet nedostatki sistemy ob'azatel'nogo straxovanija v rastenievodstve. Skoree vsego, oni zamen'at straxovye kompanii na sele Konkurencii sredi kompanij, zanimajuščix's'a ob'azatel'nym straxovanijem v rastenievodstve, ne polučilos'.

Hedging.neut.gen.sg ne worked / existed.neut.gen.sg

Is-expected, that simplification creation companies mutual insurance eliminates drawbacks system compulsory insurance in growing-crops. Sooner all, they replace the insurance companies in village Competition.fem.gen.sg among companies, involved in compulsory insurance in crop-growing, ne worked out / existed.neut.sg.

Hedging did not work

It is expected that the simplification of the creation of mutual insurance companies eliminates the drawbacks of the compulsory insurance system in crop-growing. Most likely, they will replace the insurance companies in the village

¹⁸² <http://news.finance.ua/ru/~1/0/all/2007/10/29/109528> .

Competition among companies involved in compulsory insurance for growing crops did not work / happen.¹⁸³

In the next snippet, a team struggled to win a match, but to no avail. The main verb *polučilos'* does not carry an existential reading, yet the subject is still genitive:

173. Stanislav Eremin: "Bor'by ne polučilos'" [...]
"Žal', čto ne polučilos' bor'by. Moi podopečnye byli očen' skovany v zaščite: propustili 93 očka, čto očen' mnogo dlâ našej komandy...."

Stanislav Eremin: "Struggle.fem.gen.sg ne worked-out.neut.sg" [...]
"Pity, that ne turned-out.neut.sg struggle.fem.gen.sg My players were very constrained in defense: let-by 93 points, which very much for our team...."

Stanislav Eremin: "The struggle didn't work out" [...]
"Pity, that the struggle didn't work out. My players were very constrained in their defensive play: they allowed 93 points, which is a lot for our team...."¹⁸⁴

According to a native informant, in the above example it would be grammatically possible to replace the perfective verb *polučilos'* with the imperfective form, *polučalos'*, and retain the genitive case on *bor'by*. The only difference in gloss would be that the imperfective would refer to the battle not turning out well for a period of time, but later on the team turned the game around and started winning.

A knockout in a boxing match is in GenNeg, because no knockout resulted, despite the many strong blows the winner was able to land on the loser:

174. Nokauta ne polučilos'
Včera v nemeckom Ol'denburge Nikolaj Valuev smog pobedit' kanadskogo požarnogo Žana-Fransua Beržerona, kotoryj legče rossijanina na sto funtov, tol'ko po očkam: 118-111, 117-111, 118-111.

Knockout.masc.gen.sg ne resulted.neut.sg

¹⁸³ <http://www.expert.ru/printissues/kazakhstan/2007/14/strahovanie/> .

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.sports.ru/basketball/3629830.html> .

Yesterday in German Oldenburg Nikolaj Valuev was-able defeat Canadian fireman Jean-François Bergeron, who lighter the-Russian on 100 pounds, only on points: 118-111, 117-111, 118-111.

Yesterday in the German city of Oldenburg, Nikolaj Valuev was able to defeat Canadian fireman Jean-François Bergeron, who is 100 pounds lighter than the Russian, only on the basis of points: 118-111, 117-111, 118-111.¹⁸⁵

175. Elena Iščeeva: «Družby s Xangoj, uvy, ne polučilos'»
POMNITS'A, dva goda nazad vy vstrečali Lenu Xangu s cvetami v aèroportu, kogda ona priletela iz Ameriki s novoroždennoj dočkkoj, očen' xoteli s nej podružit's'a. Ne polučilos'?
— Net, ne polučilos'....My prosto vmeste rabotaem.

Elena Iščeeva: “Friendship.fem.gen.sg with Xanga, alas, ne resulted.neut.sg”
Is-recalled, two years ago you met Lena Xanga with flowers in airport, when she flew from America with newborn daughter, very wanted with her become-friends. Ne resulted?
— No, ne resulted....We simply together work.

Elena Iščeeva: “Friendship with Xanga, alas, did not work out”
I remember two years ago, you met Lena Xanga with flowers in the airport, when she flew in from America with her newborn daughter; you very much wanted to become friends with her. It didn't work out?
— No, it didn't work out....We just work together.¹⁸⁶

The situation in this next excerpt is: Fearing defeat, political parties apparently organized negotiations with their opposition, but the negotiations failed. There were meetings, but either no negotiations occurred, or if they did, they didn't work out. There is some ambiguity, and GenNeg is used:

176. Peregovorov ne polučilos'
Po vsej vidimosti, blizost' vozmožnogo poraženija v političeskom protivostojanii počuvstvovali i v komande mèra. Vo vs'akom slučae, imenno tak èksperty sklony rassmatrivat' r'ad vstreč, kotorye, po svedeniju r'ada istočnikov, imeli mesto meždu glavnym ideologom gorodskoj administracii, vice-mèrom Vladimirom Tungusovym i glavoj administracii gubernatora Sverdlovskoj oblasti Anatolijem Tarasovym.

¹⁸⁵ <http://drugoi.livejournal.com/2339247.html> .

¹⁸⁶ http://gazeta.aif.ru/online/superstar/38/14_01 .

Negotiations.gen.pl ne work-out / exist.neut.sg

According-to all visibility, proximity possible defeat in political opposition felt and in team mayor. In any case, precisely thus experts inclined consider array meetings, that, according-to information several sources, took place between chief ideologist city administration, vice-mayor Vladimir Tungusov and head administration governor Sverdlovsk Region Anatoly Tarasov.

Negotiations did not occur / work out

Apparently, the proximity of a possible defeat in the political opposition was perceived even on the mayor's team. Anyway, that's precisely what the experts are inclined to believe about a number of meetings that, according to several sources, took place between the chief ideologist of the city administration, Vice Mayor Vladimir Tungusov, and the administrative chief of the governor of the Sverdlovsk Region, Anatoly Tarasov.¹⁸⁷

The non-genitive subjects and objects of *ne polučit's'a / polučat's'a* prove that there is no lexical requirement to use genitive; the selection of genitive is driven by syntactic and/or semantic factors.

The following instance of *ne polučils'a* occurs after an awkward, halting conversation that exists, but doesn't succeed in its intent:

177. Pon'av, čto razgovor ne polučils'a, Dima rešil podstupit' s drugoj storony, xot' i t'aželo emu èto bylo.

Understood, that conversation.masc.nom.sg ne worked-out.masc.sg, Dima decided approach other side, though and difficult him it was.

Understanding that the conversation didn't work out, Dima decided to approach it from the other side, though it was very difficult for him.¹⁸⁸

In the next example, it is possible to interpret “didn't work out” as “didn't exist,” because theoretically a turn that doesn't work out does not exist, but the noun is in the nominative, so probably there was a turn and it failed to avoid an incident.

¹⁸⁷ <http://www.politsovet.ru/analitic.asp?article=1285> .

¹⁸⁸ Aleksej Slapovskij, “Gibel' gitarista” (1994-1995).

178. Uvidev približajuščijs'a ogon' majaka, komandir popytals'a sdelat' gals v more, no povorot ne polučils'a.

Seeing approaching flame lighthouse, commander tried do tack in sea, but rotation.masc.nom.sg ne worked-out.masc.sg.

Seeing the approaching flame of the lighthouse, the commander tried to tack toward the sea, but the rotation didn't work out.¹⁸⁹

Similarly, the next example discusses a flight that did not work out, and *polet* ('flight') is in the nominative. The flight existed, but didn't succeed:

179. Samolet razbegaets'a, otryvaets'a kolesami na mig ot pol'a, no srazu že prizeml'aets'a, zaval'as' na pravoe krylo....
Polet ne polučaets'a i čerez nedel'u — aviator snova padaet, edva vzletev, i uezžaet iz goroda besslavno, uvoz'a razbityj "Blerio".

Airplane scrambles, detaching wheels for moment on field, but immediately landing, falls on right wing....

Flight.masc.nom.sg ne works out and within week -- Aviator again falls, barely taking off, and leaves from town ignominiously, hauling broken "Bleriot".

The airplane scrambles, its wheels breaking away for an instant from the field, but it suddenly lands, falling on its right wing....

The flight doesn't work out, and within a week the aviator falls again, barely having taken off, and he leaves town ignominiously, hauling the broken "Bleriot" [airplane].¹⁹⁰

8.10.1 Mnogoe / mnogogo ne polučat's'a / polučit's'a

The genitive forms of *mnogoe* ('a lot / many'), such as *mnogogo*, are relatively rare in Russian (only 1,972 instances out of the 209,201,893 words stored in the RNC), yet *mnogogo* occurs relatively frequently with *ne polučat's'a*.

¹⁸⁹ Sergej Aksent'ev. Žizn' na majakax, "Nauka i žizn'", 2009.

¹⁹⁰ <http://magazines.russ.ru/znamia/2005/4/shi2.html>.

In a discussion about the failures of a soccer team during a match, the nominative form of *mnogoe* ('a lot / many') is used rather than the genitive form *mnogogo*, and the verb *polučilos'* has perfective aspect:

180. *Mnogoe ne polučilos'*. "Rubin" otošel nazad, a kontrolirovat' m'ač na v'azkom pole bylo t'aželo. V pervom tajme my rešili poprobovat' sygrat' s dvum'a napadajuščimi.

A-lot.nom.neut.sg ne worked-out.neut.sg.perf. "Ruby" went behind, and control ball on mucky field was difficult. In first period we decided try play with two strikers.

A lot of things didn't work out. "Ruby" got behind, and controlling the ball on the mucky field was difficult. In the first period we decided to try to play with two strikers.¹⁹¹

However, in the next passage, the meaning is almost identical but genitive is used on *mnogogo*, and the verb *polučalos'* is imperfective:

181. *Igra v Kazani ponravilas'*, žal' čto proigrali, no nastroj tatar byl prosto sumasšedšij. A čto tvoril Ven'a - prosto super! Praktičeski zapasnoj sostav smotrels'a prilično, xot'a očen' mnogogo ne polučalos', vidno, čto v pervye v takom sostave, kak grits'a "s čistogo lista".

Game in Kazan liked, pity that lost, but mood Tatars was just crazy. And that worked Venia - just super! Almost backup staff looked decent, although very much.neut.gen.sg ne worked-out.neut.sg.impf, clearly, that first in this format, as is-said "from clean leaf".

In Kazan they liked the game, it's a pity that they lost, but the mood of the Tatars was just crazy. And what Venia did - just super! The backup players looked decent. Even though a whole lot didn't work out, it is clear that for the first time in this configuration it was done, as they say, "from scratch".¹⁹²

The next two excerpts, also about failed attempts to win games, again place the genitive on *mnogogo* when paired with imperfective aspect on *polučalos'*:

¹⁹¹ <http://news.sport-express.ru/2007-11-03/209690/undefined> .

¹⁹² <http://www.peski.ru/gbook/index.php3?page=5&showdate=2003-11-3> .

182. Kak i sledovalo ožidat', gorn'aki pošli v ataku, pravda u nix mnogogo ne polučalos'.

As and followed to expect, miners went in attack, true of them much.neut.gen.sg ne worked-out.neut.sg.impf.

As one should have expected, the “Miners” mounted an attack, though they had many things that did not work out.¹⁹³

183. Nu proigrali my zasluženno, očen' mnogogo ne polučalos' i čto? Nado krepit's'a duxom i gotovit's'a k otvetnoj igre na Delle Al'pi. I šansy u nas est', pričem vovse neploxie.

Well lost we deservedly, very much.neut.gen.sg ne worked-out.impf and what? Must strengthen spirit and prepare for the return game at Delle Alpi. And chance of us to-be, and at-that not-bad.

Well, we deservedly lost, a lot didn't work out, and so what? We need to strengthen our spirit and prepare for the return game at Delle Alpi. And we have a chance, in fact not a bad chance at all.¹⁹⁴

In contrast to the frequent pairing of imperfective aspect with the genitive, there are counterexamples such as the following:

184. Real'no xotel tol'ko xorošego. Pytals'a otučit' pit'-kurit'-deboširit', sodejstvoval meroprijatijam. Bez nego mnogogo ne polučilos' by, finansovaja podderžka ego vooščee neocenima.

Really wanted only good. Tried to wean drinking-smoking-debauching, assisted activities. Without him much.neut.gen.sg ne worked-out.neut.sg.perf would, financial support his generally priceless.

Really he only wanted to do good. He tried to break the drinking-smoking-debauchery habits and he assisted with various activities. Without him, a lot would not have worked out; his financial support was generally priceless.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ <http://fm-x.net/forum/index.php?s=7a58821b8a3a304df2357c9c3216807c&showtopic=180&mode=threaded&pid=6615> .

¹⁹⁴ <http://www.serie-a.ru/forum/viewtopic.php?p=44988&sid=458778d889377ee0269640dafdbc3ee8> .

¹⁹⁵ http://www.edu-all.ru/pages/allotz_search.asp?page=3&searchstr=3220 .

Thus, GenNeg constructions with *mnogogo* ('much' in genitive) can occur with both the perfective and imperfective forms of *ne polučat's'a*.

There are plenty of examples where *ne polučat's'a* does not have a genitive subject. In the following excerpt, an interview with a goalkeeper, the semantics are basically the same as previous soccer examples where genitive was used together with imperfective verb aspect to indicate "nothing resulted / succeeded", but here the subject is nominative:

185. - V pervom tajme u nas mnogoe ne polučalos', - priznal Andrej P'atov, korrespondentu «SĚ». - Ne vse bylo v por'adke s kontrolom m'ača v seredine pole, ne xvatalo točnyx peredač napadajuščim.

- In first half by us much.neut.nom.sg ne worked-out.neut.sg.impf, - admitted Andrej P'atov, correspondent "SE". - Not all was in order with control ball in middle field, ne was precise to-pass attackers.

- In the first half a lot of things didn't work out for us, - admitted Andrej P'atov to a correspondent for "SE". - The control of the ball wasn't good in the center of the field, and there weren't enough accurate passes to the attackers.¹⁹⁶

Here, a hockey coach discusses his team's loss of the first match in the Russian "Ak Bars" championship:

186. Bil'aletdinov: my volnovalis', i u nas mnogoe ne polučalos' [.]

Bil'aletdinov: we worried, and by us much.neut.nom.sg ne worked-out.neut.sg.impf[.]

Bil'aletdinov: we were worried, and a lot of things didn't work out for us [.]¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ http://www.profootball.com.ua/2007/07/16/andrey_pyatov_u_nas.html .

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.hawk.ru/press/1103.html> .

Sometimes the writer/speaker lists specifically what failed. This specificity can lead to the choice of nominative case instead of genitive, such as in this situation where a soccer coach describes the actions and spirit of his team during a tough game:

187. K česti našix reb'at, oni upr'amo šli vpered. Mnogoe ne polučalos': brak v peredačax i poteri m'ača na rovnom meste, netočnye udary... No bylo glavnoe – žažda bor'by i ogromnoe želanie otygrat's'a i vyrvat' pobedu.

To honor our boys, they stubbornly went ahead. Much.neut.nom.sg ne worked-out.neug.sg.impf: flaw in passes and loss ball on level place, inaccurate shots ... But was important – thirst battleand great desire win-back and pull-out victory.

To the credit of our guys, they stubbornly forged ahead. Many things did not work out: flawed passes and the loss of the ball out of the blue, inaccurate shots on the goal ... But what was important was the thirst for battle and a great desire to catch up from behind and pull out a victory.¹⁹⁸

8.10.2 *Ne uvenčalos' uspexom* constructions

The expression *ne uvenčalos' uspexom* 'was not successful; (lit.) was not crowned with success' has roughly the same meaning as the *ne polučat's'a* constructions (above) and the *ne ustraivat's'a* constructions (below), yet never cooccurs with genitive case on the subject. This is true even when a negative intensifier like the phrase *ni odin* is present:

188. Na Adol'fa Gitlera bylo zaplanirovano i soveršeno okolo 50 pokušenij, ni odno iz nix ne uvenčalos' uspexom.

On Adolf Hitler was planned and completed nearly 50 attempts, not one.neut.nom.sg from them ne crowned success

Nearly 50 attempts on Adolf Hitler's life were planned and carried out; not one of them met with success.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.fc-volga.ru/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=758&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0> .

¹⁹⁹ www.lipstick.ru/tvguide.php?act=more&prg=371715 .

189. Gospodin episkop ne znal, čto Bog okončatel'no otvorotil ot nego svoju blagoželatel'nost', i ni odno iz načinanij sv' aščennika ne uvenčalos' uspexom.

Lord Bishop ne knew, that God definitively turned from him his benevolence, and ni one.neut.nom.sg of undertakings priest ne crowned success.

The bishop did not know that God had definitively turned His benevolence away from him, and none of the undertakings of the priest was successful.²⁰⁰

8.11 Ne ustroit's'a / ustraivat's'a constructions

Ne ustroit's'a (perfective aspect) and *ustraivat's'a* (imperfective) can carry a few different meanings: 'to not be arranged', with negative existential semantics and therefore sometimes assigning GenNeg on the subject; 'to not find a job'; 'to not get settled'; and also a gloss similar to *ne polučat's'a*: 'to not work out'. The perfective form *ne ustroit's'a* overwhelmingly prefers non-genitive case on its subject NP, whereas typically the imperfective form governs the genitive. The negated imperfective verb typically refers to events that did not occur (because they were not planned or arranged).

This example is actually a conditional GenNeg; the discussion is about a large Soviet military statue in Estonia:

190. "Dlâ ètix l'udej net ničego sv'atogo". Da est', no, vidimo, ne sovetskij soldat. Tak to èto ix territorija. Esli by vokrug nesčastnogo kuska bronzy ne ustroilos' takogo gemorroja, na nego voobščè ne obraščali by vnimanija.

"For these people net nothing sacred". Yes there-is, but, apparently, ne Soviet soldier. So that that their territory. If would around unfortunate piece bronzy ne was-arranged.neut.sg.perf such.masc.gen.sg hemorrhoid.masc.gen.sg, on it generally ne turned would attention.

²⁰⁰ fantasyland.info/wp/?p=196 .

“For these people nothing is sacred”. Yes there is, but, apparently, not a Soviet soldier. Because that is their territory. If such an eyesore had not been arranged around the unfortunate piece of bronze, generally no one would pay attention to it.²⁰¹

A typical use of *ne ustraivat's'a* with GenNeg is events that did not exist because they were not scheduled / organized / arranged. The following sentences show GenNeg on *sorevnovanij* (‘competitions’), because they have not been arranged and therefore do not exist:

191. Unikal'nost' ètogo turnira, kotoryj состоits'a 13 april'a, v tom, što v odin den' projdet srazu šest' boev V Rossii podobnyx sorevnovanij ešče ne ustraivalos'.

Uniqueness this tournament, which is 13 April, in that, that in one day passes at-once six fights In Russia similar.neut.gen.pl competitions.neut.gen.pl still ne were-arranged.neut.sg.impf.

The uniqueness of this tournament, which will be held on April 13th, is that in a single day, six fights will happen at once In Russia such competitions have not been arranged yet.²⁰²

And here, a test was not arranged, so it did not exist, and GenNeg is an appropriate case form to use. This is especially true because the negative intensifier *nikak-* (‘no, not any’) is in the NP:

192. Psihologičeskoe vzroslenie prixodilo èl'fu ne ranee 20 let. On načinal čuvstvovat' potrebnost' vo vsex vzroslyx ob'azannost'ax i pravax. Nikakogo obščego èkzamena na zrelost' ne ustraivalos'. Èl'f sam osoznaval svoju stepen' vzroslenija.

Psychological maturation came elf not earlier 20 years. He began feel need in all adult responsibilities and rights. No.masc.gen.sg general.masc.gen.sg test.masc.gen.sg on maturity ne was-arranged.neut.sg.impf. Elf himself realized his degree maturity.

Psychological maturation came to the elf in not earlier than 20 years. He began to feel the need for all adult responsibilities and rights. No general test for maturity was arranged. The elf himself realized his degree of maturity.²⁰³

²⁰¹ <http://aliastra.livejournal.com/2007/04/29/>.

²⁰² <http://www.vremya.ru/print/8817.html>.

²⁰³ <http://lukvalentain.ltalk.ru/>

193. Včera izpolnilos' rovno 150 let so dn'a osnovanija v Samare Iverskogo ženskogo monastyr'a. Eto, konečno že, ne cerkovnyj prazdnik, a liš' istoričeskaja data, poètomu nikakix toržestv ne ustraivalos', odnako u nas est' povod vspomnit'.

Yesterday completed exactly 150 years from day founding in Samara Iverskaja nunnery. This, of course, ne church holiday, and only historical date, so no.neut.gen.pl celebrations.neut.gen.pl ne was-arranged.neut.sg.impf, however by us is occasion to-remember.

As of yesterday it was exactly 150 years since the founding of Iverskaja Nunnery in Samara. This, of course, is not a church holiday, but only a historical date; therefore, no celebrations were arranged. However, we do have an occasion to remember.²⁰⁴

The next example shows a conditional situation involving the hypothetical non-existence of great social tension and a community of idealistic people. This environment often favors GenNeg, but here *soobščestvo* 'community' is in the nominative. The reason may be that the perfective aspect of the verb is used (*ne ustroilos'*). Also note the clear GenNeg of *ne suščestvovalo ogromnogo obščestvennogo napr'aženija*, due to the obvious emphasis on non-existence inherent in the verb *ne suščestvovalo* 'did not exist'.

194. Esli by v Rossijskoj imperii v XIX veke ne suščestvovalo ogromnogo obščestvennogo napr'aženija i ne ustroilos' soobščestvo l'udej, uvlekajuščix's'a idealami - istorija pošla by inače.

If would in Russian empire in 19th century ne existed great social tension and ne was-organized.neut.sg.perf community.neut.nom.sg people, attracted ideals – history went would otherwise.

If in the Russian Empire of the 19th century, there was no great social tension, and no community of people fond of ideals had organized, history would have turned out differently.²⁰⁵

Ne ustroit's'a / ustraivat's'a constructions thus demonstrate similar GenNeg behavior to other constructions discussed in this thesis, with the difference that the *ne ustroit's'a*

²⁰⁴ <http://old.samara.ru/paper/41/2960/43430/?printable> .

²⁰⁵ <http://www.hrono.info/text/2006/nech0106.html> .

constructions sometimes carry meanings other than existential ones, in which case they do not accompany GenNeg.

8.12 *Ne znat' vse / vsex + NP expressions*

There are some interesting patterns in the relative frequency of genitive and accusative on direct objects in expressions like

195. *Vy ne znaete vsex obstojel'tstv / vse obstojel'stva.*
You ne know all.neut.gen.pl circumstances.neut.gen.pl / all.neut.acc.pl
circumstances.neut.acc.pl
You don't know all the circumstances.

The genitive *vsex* is strongly preferred. There could be something about the verbal semantics that triggers the case alternation, or maybe the relevant factor is the quantitative semantics of *vsex* ('all'). If one does not know all the circumstances about something, then the entire set of circumstances does not exist in the mind of the speaker. Therefore, it becomes a negative existential environment which usually triggers genitive case on the direct object *obstojel'stv* ('circumstances'), regardless of whether the actual circumstances existed in real life or not. Furthermore, the expression 'you don't know all the circumstances' is often accompanied by negative emotions. There is some degree of strength in the negation, which is a favorable environment for genitive of negation.

Here are the Google figures on the present tense forms of *znat'* ('to know') (not trusting Google's estimates on the total results, but instead navigating to the end of the result sets to find out the true number):

Table 4. Case selection in negated *znat'* phrases

Phrase	Case	Number
Ne znaete vse ^{sex} obstojatel'stv	Genitive	194
Ne znaete vse obstojatel'stva	Accusative	7
Ne znaeš' vse ^{sex} obstojatel'stv	Genitive	119
Ne znaeš' vse ^{sex} obstojatel'stva	Accusative	7
Ne znaju vse ^{sex} obstojatel'stv	Genitive	436
Ne znaju vse obstojatel'stva	Accusative	19
Ne znajem vse ^{sex} obstojatel'stv	Genitive	471
Ne znajem vse obstojatel'stva	Accusative	32
Ne znajet vse ^{sex} obstojatel'stv	Genitive	155
Ne znajet vse obstojatel'stva	Accusative	21
Ne znajut vse ^{sex} obstojatel'stv	Genitive	82
Ne znajut vse obstojatel'stva	Accusative	9
Ne znaja vse ^{sex} obstojatel'stv	Genitive	333
Ne znaja vse obstojatel'stva	Accusative	22
Total genitive		1790
Total accusative		117

Genitive is preferred around 15 times as often. The RNC had 9 instances of genitive, and no instances of accusative, for this expression.

Some typical examples of genitive case with this expression occur in blogs:

196. alexandrAV:

Vot imenno èto - o vozmeščanii moral'nogo vreda - v dannom slučae zr'ašnoe delo, uvy. Ne dokažete moral'nyj vred voobščè, skoree vsego.

Dmitrievna:

Spasibo za podderžku. Spasibo za podderžku.

No ja prosila liš' ovpročem Vy ne znaete vse obzhatel'stv dela, a uže takoj vyvod, ja zdes', posledn'aja Nadežda, kak v pr'amom tak i v perenosnom smyslax[.]

alexandrAV:

Here exactly that – about compensation moral damage - in given case purposeless affair, alas. Ne prove moral damage generally, sooner all.

Dmitrievna:

Thank you for your support. Thank you for your support.

But I asked just about but you ne know all.neut.gen.pl circumstanes.neut.gen.pl affair, and already such conclusion, I here, last Hope, as in direct and figurative senses [.]

alexandrAV:

Exactly this – about compensation for moral damage – is in this case a useless attempt, alas. You won't be able to prove there was moral damage at all, most likely.

Dmitrievna:

Thank you for your support. Thank you for your support.

But I asked just about but you don't know all the circumstances of the affair, and there's already such an outcome – I'm here, the last Hope, in both the direct and figurative senses [.]²⁰⁶

In response to a lengthy posting by “Eger” about a dog owner who was compensated after his licensed hunting dog was shot by dog officers in Arzamas, who thought it was a stray dog:

197. Strahov:

Vy ne znaete vse obzhatel'stv pri kotoryx byla otstrel'ana sobaka.. A to, čto ona vpisana v ox. bilet.. prosto bylo potvrždeniem dl'a suda PRAVA SOBSTVENNOSTI na ètu sobaku.. ne bolee togo! Tem bolee, sud'a po vsemu, delo bylo v gorodskoj čerte, a ne v oxotugodijax[.]

You ne know all.neut.gen.pl circumstanes.neut.gen.pl at which was shot dog .. And that, that it was inscribed in hunting ticket .. simply was confirmation for judgement right ownership on this dog .. no more that! That more, judging after everything, event was in city limits, and not in hunting-grounds[.]

You do not know all the circumstances under which the dog was shot And the fact that it was written on the hunting license was simply confirmation of your legal

²⁰⁶ <http://www.zonazakona.ru/showthread.php?t=53191>: .

ownership of the dog ... and no more! Especially since, apparently, this happened within city limits, and not at a hunting ground[.]²⁰⁷

Somebody did shoot a dog, so some circumstances existed. However, the writer believes that the full set of circumstances may not have been known, so genitive is used. Finally, the next blog posting, from a thread about the relative safety of large and small buses in accidents, demonstrates how the strength of negation contributes to the selection of genitive case on *obstojatel'stv* ('circumstances'):

198. Èta informacija absol'utno ni o čem ne govorit. Èto ne prigovor suda i govorit' o vine preždevremenno. Vy ne znaete vsekh obstojatel'stv proisšestvija. Vpročem, ne ezdite na Ikarusax, èto strašno i užasno. Vašix l'ubimyx skotovozok s čabanami za rulem v gorode prud-prudi.

This information absolutely ni about what says. This ne judgment court and talk about guilt premature. You ne know all.neut.gen.pl circumstances.neut.gen.pl accident. However, ne go on Icaruses, it's scary and awful. Your favorite animal-cart with shepherds behind wheel in town pond-pond.

This information tells us about absolutely nothing. This is not a judgment of the court and talking about guilt is premature. You do not know all the circumstances of the accident. However, don't ride on the Icaruses [Hungarian-made buses], it's scary and awful. There are a lot of your typical animal carts with shepherds driving in the city.²⁰⁸

8.13 The hazards of being virtually misled – Olbanskij jazyk

In the following examples, *ne* is a misprint of *net*. It is frequent enough that it might be a case of the *olbanskij jazyk* or *padonki* (the recent phenomenon of purposeful misspellings of words on the Russian Internet [*runet*]). These misspellings are yet another hazard of relying on the wilds of the Internet for reliable linguistic data. When discussing GenNeg, the distinction between *ne* and *net* is particularly critical (*net* strongly triggers GenNeg in NESs).

²⁰⁷ <http://ohotairybalka.ru/forum/index.php?showtopic=1315&st=0&start=0> .

²⁰⁸ <http://forumtr.ru/read.php?12,751619,1082797,page=2> .

199. Inače v učastii v politike ne nikakogo smysla.
Otherwise in participation in politics ne any.masc.gen.sg sense.masc.gen.sg
Otherwise, participation in politics does not make any sense.²⁰⁹

Two informants confirmed the grammatical rule that the last phrase must be *net nikakogo smysla*.

200. 2-3 dn'a ne nikakoj informacii / zanimalis' podtasovkoj
2-3 days ne any.fem.gen.sg information.fem.gen.sg / was-done rigging
There wasn't any information for 2-3 days / Rigging was involved²¹⁰

One informant could not parse the above phrase at all; another felt that *net nikakoj informacii* instead of *ne* would make it marginally acceptable.

201. Prežde vsego, byla l'ubov' i očen', èè, tverdaja uverennost', čto deduška pravil'nyj čelovek, potomu čto nikogda ničego ne nikakoj lži, nikakogo takogo fonbaronstva [fanfaronstva?], èto byl čelovek, mm, delovoj, očen' xorošij sem'janin , i, èè, očen' čestnyj čelovek.

Before all, was love and very, uh, firm belief, that Grandfather correct person, because never nothing ne any.fem.gen.sg lie.fem.gen.sg, any.neut.gen.sg such.neut.gen.sg bragging.neut.gen.sg, this was person, mm, productive, very good family-man, and, uh, very honest person.

First of all, there was love and a very, uh, firm belief, that Grandfather was an honest man, because there was never any kind of lying, and no bragging, this was a man, mm, hard-working, a very good family man, and, eh, a very honest man.²¹¹

One native speaker thought that the passage is ungrammatical because of the use of *ne* instead of *net*. However, she felt that *ne* could be dropped and replaced with a comma: '*nikogda ničego, nikakoj lži, ...*', with an implicit *net* signifying the negation. To another informant, the original statement was parseable, but *kor'avo* ('coarse, substandard'). Since it is a transcription of a

²⁰⁹ *Beseda s sociologom na obščestvenno-političeskie temy*, Samara, FOM (2003.09.30). From RNC.

²¹⁰ *Beseda s sociologom na obščestvenno-političeskie temy*, Samara, FOM (2000.10.10). From RNC.

²¹¹ T. Sebencova, A. Maksimov. *Beseda A. Maksimova s T. Sebencovoj v programe "Vremečko"*, TVC, Archive of the University of Helsinki. From RNC.

conversation, and from a Finnish archive, possibly a non-native speaker thought s/he heard *ne*, possibly because due to poor quality of a recording.

The next example is probably an unusual inversion of *Vy nikakoj ne kommunist* ‘you are in no way a communist’ (see Section 8.3), rather than a mistaken omission of *net*, since the predicate is in the nominative instead of genitive:

202. Odin iz kotoryx otravlen. Vy ne nikakoj kommunist, problema! K tajnoj policii s Vami!

One of which poisoned. You ne no.masc.nom.sg communist.masc.nom.sg, problem! To secret police with you!

One of which was poisoned. You are in no way a communist, that’s a problem! To the secret police with you!²¹²

It is easy to find many online examples of the sequence *ne nikak-.gen N.gen*, often with GenNeg meaning, but all of them seem to be either mistakes of one kind or another, or examples of a deliberate *Olbanskij jazyk* slang.

8.14 Summary of negative modifiers and constructions

The following table summarizes the approximate influence of the factors examined in this section on case selection in various kinds of negative environments.

Table 5. Summary of case selection probabilities with different negative modifiers and constructions

Direct Object Environment	Acc more probable					Gen more probable				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No negation in sentence	X									
Preposition, numeral or verb governing genitive on object										X
Negated object					X					
Negated object with <i>počti nikakoj</i>				X						

²¹² forum.cncreneclips.com/lofiversion/index.php?t12435.html .

modifier										
Negated object with <i>nikakoj</i>								X		
Negated object with <i>rovno nikakoj</i>									X	
Negated object with <i>sovsem nikakoj</i>						X				
Negated object with <i>vovse nikakoj</i>						X				
Negated transitive imperative without specificity				X						
Negated transitive imperative with specificity	X									
<i>Ne imet' mesto / mesta</i>						X				
<i>Nikak- iz nix</i>					X					
<i>Ne znat' vse / vsex</i>									X	

Subject

Environment	Acc more probable					Gen more probable				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Negative existential sentence								X		
Preposition, numeral or verb governing genitive on subject										X
X <i>nikak- ne</i> Y construction	X									
Unaccusative "Not one X" construction					X					
<i>Nikak- iz nix</i>					X					
<i>Ne polučat's'a</i>						X				
<i>Ne ustroit's'a</i> (perfective aspect)		X								
<i>Ne ustraivat's'a</i> (imperfective aspect)								X		
<i>Ne uvenčalos' uspexom</i>	X									

Ne bud' protasis conditional

Environment	Acc more probable					Gen more probable				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Ne bud'</i> protasis conditional										X

Most of the environmental factors fall into the middle of the spectrum between the probability of a genitive NP and a non-genitive NP. The presence of negative intensifiers like *nikakoj* increases the likelihood of genitive case, but not as much as some linguists and native speakers have argued. A strong measure of specificity in the NP favors the accusative, while the

subject of a negative existential sentence generally—but not always—favors the genitive.

Surprisingly, the *ne bud'* protasis conditional, carrying no real semantic negativity, always requires genitive case, making it a stronger genitive environment than negative existential subjects.

Using the Russian National Corpus for grammatical queries

This section evaluates the usefulness of the National Corpus of the Russian Language (*Nacional'nyj korpus russkogo jazyka*, <http://ruscorpora.ru/>) and other corpora for conducting grammatical searches, as compared to traditional popular Internet search engines such as Google, Yahoo! and Yandex.

The RNC is primarily intended for students of the Russian language, as well as linguists and language teachers. As of April 2012, the RNC boasts over 300 million words in its database. It has powerful search capabilities by morphology, syntax, semantics, and many other parameters. One can query it using an English Interface (<http://ruscorpora.ru/en/search-main.html>) as well as Russian. For Russian, the Corpus provides a Cyrillic virtual keyboard if needed. Many specialists and linguistic organizations from the Russian Federation contributed to the Corpus.

The RNC offers many advantages over using Google or other Internet search engines for conducting linguistic research: clean data; searchable by case declensions and other grammatical categories; a more stable data set than the Internet overall (text and web pages disappear and change all the time). The data originates from a wide variety of sources, non-fiction and fiction, and much of the information is grammatically and semantically coded using XML (Extensible Markup Language), to facilitate querying. Computer programs initially processed and marked up much of the data, then human experts reviewed the results and made decisions on ambiguous data where possible. A user can easily export search results into Microsoft Excel, OpenOffice Calc, and XML formats.

For this paper, the RNC search capabilities were quite valuable for finding negated nouns modified by such negative intensifiers as *nikakoj*, *sovsem nikakoj*, and *vovse nikakoj*. Queries of Internet search engines like Google and Yandex do not allow fine-grained techniques for finding examples of words within a certain distance from each other. One either relies on wildcarding or on exact phrase matching, though the search engines are getting better at including results having different inflectional forms than what was being sought.

For example, many good data examples were found by searching for a first word *nikakoj* (using Cyrillic), with a noun in the nominative or accusative occurring within three words of *nikakoj* (the RNC code is S,(nom|acc|acc2)). And of course, many queries were fruitfully done by specifically searching for genitive case on the noun, and/or neuter gender on the verb (which can be a signal for GenNeg if the subject is not neuter), and so on. The National Corpus has many useful grammatical search parameters, but there is no separate category for GenNeg, just genitive case and the second genitive. This is interesting because it does list a special “counting form” (*sčetnaja forma*) which could just as easily have been subsumed under genitive queries involving numerals. Of course, how to define and tag the counting form is much easier than the still unresolved GenNeg feature of Russian.

Another useful search experience with the RNC was a query for *ni odin* (‘not one’) in the genitive, with the following word being a genitive substantive (S,gen). It allowed me to focus on finding non-existential negated genitive nouns occurring with *ni odnogo* including all genders and numbers. A search for *ni odin* in the accusative or nominative, modifying an accusative or nominative substantive, yielded almost as many hits as the genitive form: 7,719 in 3,369 documents for nominative / accusative, versus a genitive count of 8,123 found in 3,254

documents.²¹³ So this challenges the proposition that *ni odin* strongly prefers the genitive, even though its semantics typically imply the non-existence of something.

At one point I was curious whether negated verbs like *ne vstrečat's'a* ('not is-encountered') can occur with a GenNeg NP as well as a dative experiencer noun which acts as the subject of the sentence. I found solid results using the RNC search terms: S,dat S,gen *ne vstrečat's'a* with the first two nouns within a distance of 4 words from each other; and, in another search, I replaced S,dat with (SPRO|famn|persn),dat (dative names or personal pronouns). I found that GenNeg does work with dative subjects, some of which have negative intensifiers modifying them:

203. Po doroge mne ne vstretilos' ni odnoj černoj koški, i svetofory na perexodax, kak soobščniki, dobroželatel'no podmigivali mne svoim xitrym zelenym glazom.

Along way me.dat.sg ne were-encountered.neut.sg ni one.fem.gen.sg black.fem.gen.sg cat.fem.gen.sg, and traffic-lights at crossings, as accomplices, kindly winked me his shrewd green eye.

On the way I didn't come across any black cats, and the traffic lights at the crossings, acting like accomplices, kindly winked at me with shrewd green eyes.²¹⁴

These kinds of focused grammatical queries are impossible with typical search engines. One would need to search for every variant of each substantive, and still without being able to specify the range of distances between specific words. In a morphologically rich language like Russian with three genders, six cases, and two numbers, this would be a daunting or even impossible task. Despite the significant research usefulness of the tool, however, one still needs a solid background in the language to deal with grammatical ambiguities. For example, the

²¹³ From an RNC query conducted 2008-05-14. Incidentally, a great convenience of the RNC is that its result sums are accurate, unlike Google's, where one has to manually click through to the last page of results to see the true sum. More recent search engines, such as Bing, have not improved the accuracy of the hit counts.

²¹⁴ Ekaterina Markova, *Otrečenie* (1990-2000). From RNC.

phrase *odnogo učastkovogo* ‘one district militia officer’ in the following example is marked as both accusative and genitive. This in itself is interesting, because presumably both the grammatical markup software and the human editors were unable to decide which case is acting on the phrase. In Russian, the morphological endings on accusative nouns and adjectives referring to a human male happen to be the same as the genitive endings. Accusative case is possible in the excerpt because the NP is the direct object of the clause, and genitive case is also possible since it is semantically interpretable as a NES:

204. I voobšče / proživ stol'ko let na svete / ja voobšče ni odnogo učastkovogo v žizni svoej ne videla.

And generally having-lived so-many years on earth / I generally ni one.masc.acc?/gen?. sg district-militia.officer.masc.acc?/gen?. sg in life my ne saw.

And in general, having lived so many years in this world, generally speaking, I have never seen a single district militia officer in my life.²¹⁵

8.15 Illustrated Overview of the Russian National Corpus

This section shows how to use the RNC to undertake various kinds of searches, starting with finding nouns in the nominative or accusative that occur within three words of *nikakoj*. First, type *nikakoj* in Cyrillic in the first field labeled ‘*Slovo*’ (‘Word’). Then enter the number 3 in the second box of the section labeled ‘*Rasstojanie: ot ___ do ___*’ (‘Distance: from ___ to ___’). The next step is to select the grammatical markings on the second word. Click the ‘*vybrat*’ (‘choose’) link in the ‘*Gramm. priznaki*’ (‘Gramm[at]ical features’) section in the bottom row of the form. The window shown in Figure 1 appears, where the user selects the desired grammatical categories (in this case: noun, nominative, accusative, accusative 2).

²¹⁵ *Beseda v Novosibirsk*, 2003.07.22. From RNC.

Грамматические признаки - Google Chrome

ruscorpora.ru/reqgrm.html

Часть речи <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> существительное <input type="checkbox"/> прилагательное <input type="checkbox"/> числительное <input type="checkbox"/> числ-прил <input type="checkbox"/> глагол <input type="checkbox"/> наречие <input type="checkbox"/> предикатив <input type="checkbox"/> вводное слово <input type="checkbox"/> мест-сущ <input type="checkbox"/> мест-прил <input type="checkbox"/> мест-предикатив <input type="checkbox"/> местоименное наречие <input type="checkbox"/> предлог <input type="checkbox"/> союз <input type="checkbox"/> частица <input type="checkbox"/> междометие	Падеж <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> именительный <input type="checkbox"/> звательный* <input type="checkbox"/> родительный <input type="checkbox"/> родительный 2 <input type="checkbox"/> дательный <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> винительный <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> винительный 2* <input type="checkbox"/> творительный <input type="checkbox"/> предложный <input type="checkbox"/> предложный 2 <input type="checkbox"/> счётная форма	Наклонение / Форма <input type="checkbox"/> изъявительное <input type="checkbox"/> повелительное <input type="checkbox"/> повелительное 2 <input type="checkbox"/> инфинитив <input type="checkbox"/> причастие <input type="checkbox"/> деепричастие	Степень / Краткость <input type="checkbox"/> сравнительная <input type="checkbox"/> сравнительная 2* <input type="checkbox"/> превосходная <input type="checkbox"/> полная форма <input type="checkbox"/> краткая форма
	Число <input type="checkbox"/> единственное <input type="checkbox"/> множественное	Лицо <input type="checkbox"/> первое <input type="checkbox"/> второе <input type="checkbox"/> третье	Переходность <input type="checkbox"/> переходный* <input type="checkbox"/> непереходный*
Имена собственные <input type="checkbox"/> фамилия <input type="checkbox"/> имя <input type="checkbox"/> отчество	Род <input type="checkbox"/> мужской <input type="checkbox"/> женский <input type="checkbox"/> средний <input type="checkbox"/> общий*	Залог <input type="checkbox"/> действительный <input type="checkbox"/> страдательный <input type="checkbox"/> медиальный	Прочее <input type="checkbox"/> словарная форма <input type="checkbox"/> цифровая запись <input type="checkbox"/> аномальная форма* <input type="checkbox"/> искаженная форма* <input type="checkbox"/> несловарная форма** <input type="checkbox"/> инициал* <input type="checkbox"/> сокращение* <input type="checkbox"/> несклоняемое* <input type="checkbox"/> топоним**
	Одушевленность <input type="checkbox"/> одушевленное <input type="checkbox"/> неодушевленное	Вид <input type="checkbox"/> совершенный <input type="checkbox"/> несовершенный	

* - только в корпусе со снятой омонимией
 ** - только в корпусе с неснятой омонимией

Figure 1. RNC Grammatical Indicator Selection Page, with “noun,” “nominative case,” “accusative case,” and “accusative case 2” selected

Part of speech <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> noun <input type="checkbox"/> adjective <input type="checkbox"/> numeral <input type="checkbox"/> numeral adjective <input type="checkbox"/> verb <input type="checkbox"/> adverb <input type="checkbox"/> predicative <input type="checkbox"/> parenthesis <input type="checkbox"/> pronoun <input type="checkbox"/> adjective pronoun <input type="checkbox"/> predicative pronoun <input type="checkbox"/> adverbial pronoun <input type="checkbox"/> preposition <input type="checkbox"/> conjunction <input type="checkbox"/> particle <input type="checkbox"/> interjection	Case <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> nominative <input type="checkbox"/> vocative* <input type="checkbox"/> genitive <input type="checkbox"/> genitive 2 <input type="checkbox"/> dative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accusative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accusative 2* <input type="checkbox"/> instrumental <input type="checkbox"/> locative <input type="checkbox"/> locative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> adnumerative	Mood / Verb form <input type="checkbox"/> indicative <input type="checkbox"/> imperative <input type="checkbox"/> imperative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> infinitive <input type="checkbox"/> participle <input type="checkbox"/> gerund	Degree / Adj. form <input type="checkbox"/> comparative <input type="checkbox"/> comparative 2* <input type="checkbox"/> superlative <input type="checkbox"/> full form <input type="checkbox"/> short form
Proper names <input type="checkbox"/> family name <input type="checkbox"/> first name <input type="checkbox"/> patronymic	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> masculine <input type="checkbox"/> feminine <input type="checkbox"/> neuter <input type="checkbox"/> common*	Person <input type="checkbox"/> first <input type="checkbox"/> second <input type="checkbox"/> third	Transitivity <input type="checkbox"/> transitive* <input type="checkbox"/> intransitive*
Animacy <input type="checkbox"/> animate <input type="checkbox"/> inanimate	Number <input type="checkbox"/> singular <input type="checkbox"/> plural	Voice <input type="checkbox"/> active <input type="checkbox"/> passive <input type="checkbox"/> middle	Other features <input type="checkbox"/> dictionary form <input type="checkbox"/> numeral recording <input type="checkbox"/> anomalous form* <input type="checkbox"/> distorted form* <input type="checkbox"/> non-dictionary form** <input type="checkbox"/> initials* <input type="checkbox"/> abbreviation* <input type="checkbox"/> indeclinable*
<input type="button" value="OK"/> <input type="button" value="Clear"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/>			

* - only in the corpus with resolved homonymy
** - only in the corpus with unresolved homonymy

Figure 2. English version

The options one selects are “OR” conditions within each subcategory (for example, choosing “noun” and “adjective in the same box will return both), and “AND” conditions across subcategories (in this example, [noun AND [nominative OR acc OR acc2 case], not [noun OR [nominative OR acc OR acc2 case]]).

Text on the search form must be entered in Cyrillic, be it using one’s operating system’s Cyrillic font or the virtual one provided on the RNC search page.

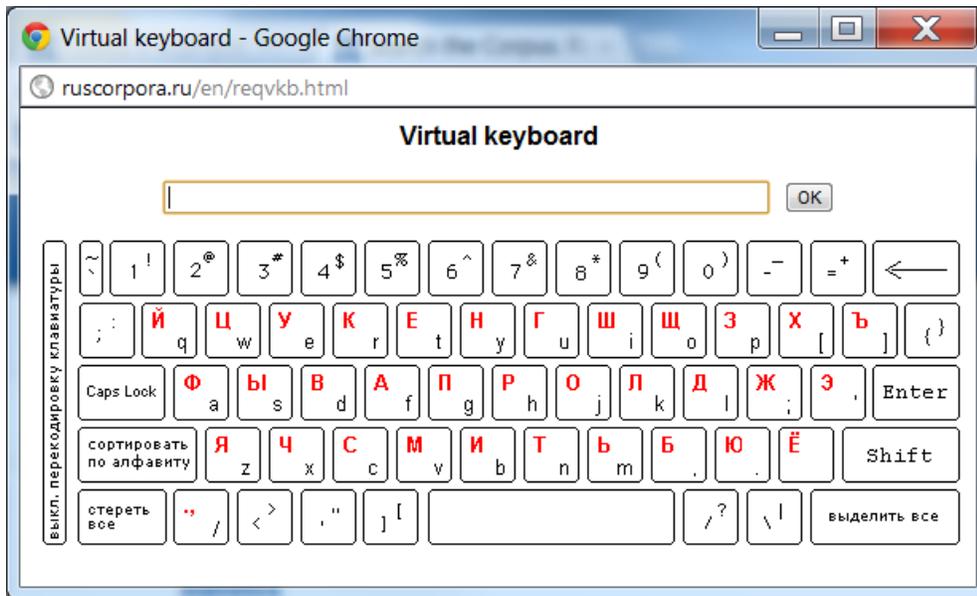


Figure 3. RNC virtual Cyrillic keyboard

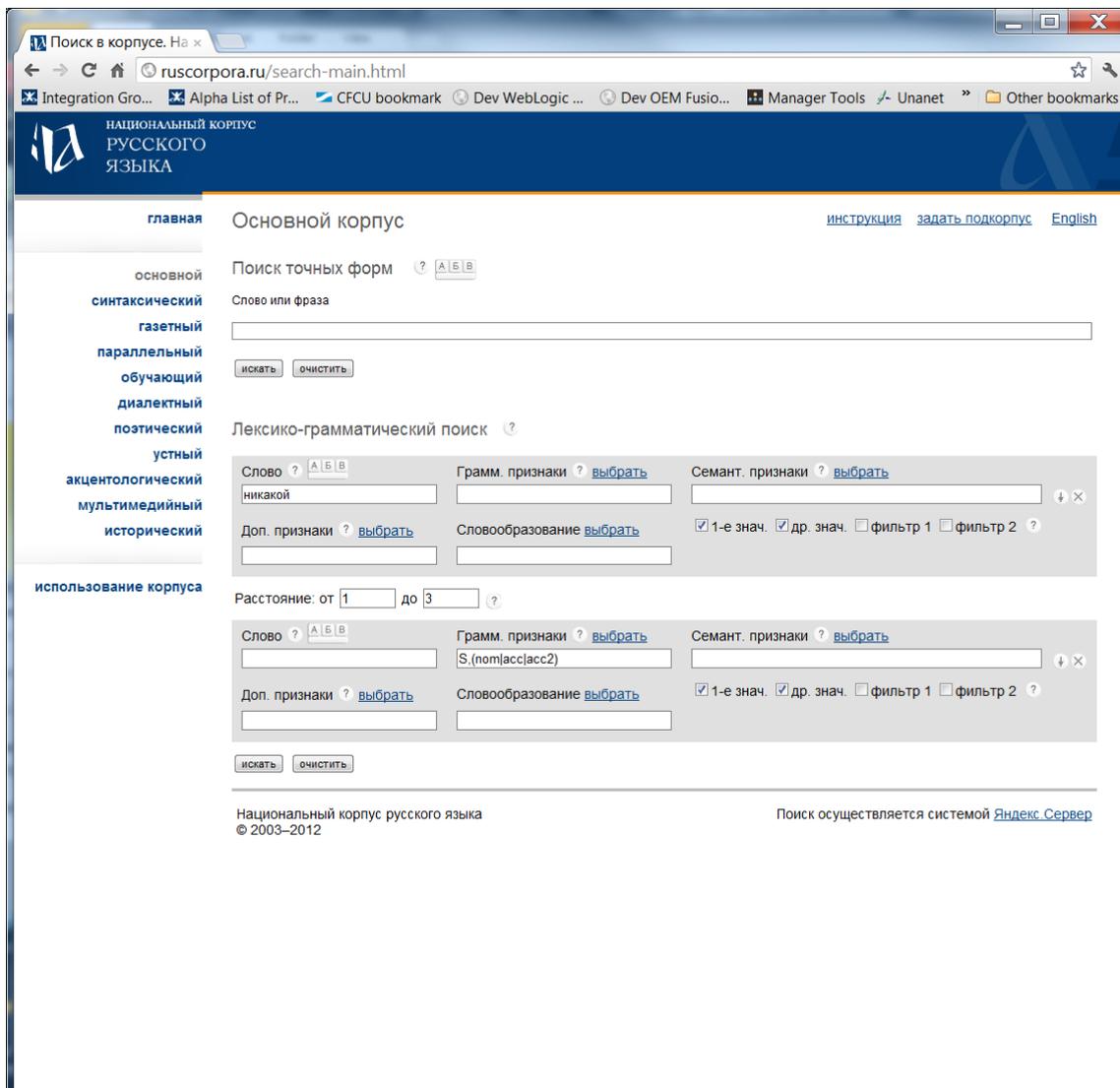


Figure 4. RNC search form with *nikakoj*, a distance of 1-3 words, and grammatical categories chosen

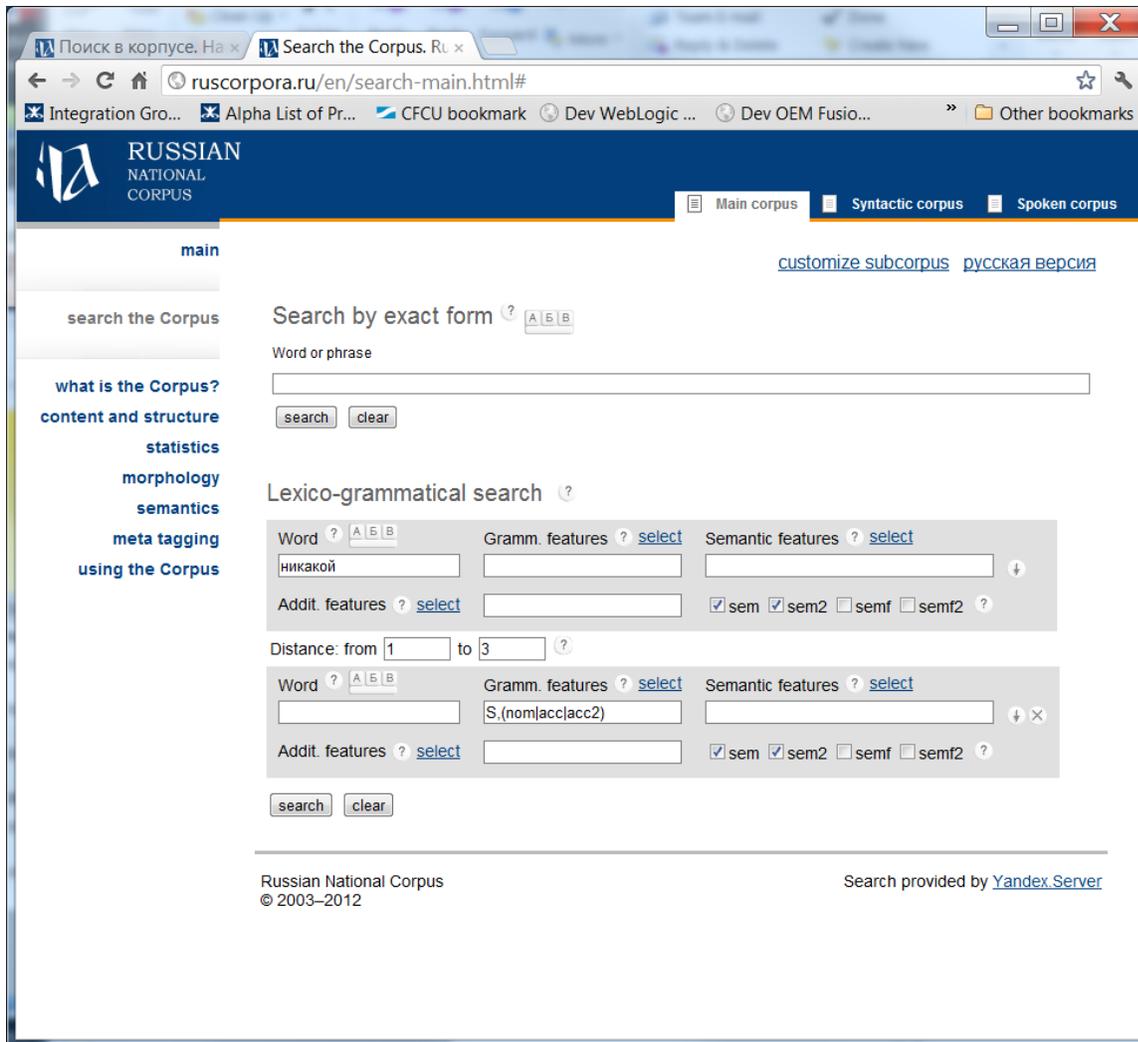


Figure 4a. English version of RNC search form

Поиск в корпусе. На x Национальный корп x

search.ruscorpora.ru/search.xml?env=alpha&mycorp=&mysent=&mysize=&mysentsize=&spd=&text=lexgramm&mo

Integration Gro... Alpha List of Pr... CFCU bookmark Dev WebLogic... Dev OEM Fusio... Manager Tools Unanet Other bookmarks

НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ КОРПУС
РУССКОГО
ЯЗЫКА

[перейти на страницу поиска](#) [выбрать подкорпус](#) [версия с ударениями](#) [настройки](#) [формат KWIC](#) [English](#)

Результаты поиска в основном корпусе

Объем всего корпуса: 76 881 документ, 17 574 647 предложений, 209 203 107 слов.

никакой
на расстоянии от 1 до 3 от S,(пом | acc | acc2)

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1. В. Э. Карпов, Т. В. Мещерякова. Об автоматизации нетворческих литературных процессов // «Информационные технологии», 2004 [\[омонимия снята\]](#) [Все примеры \(1\)](#)
Только эта логика и сюжетная строгость для нашей области **никакой** роли как **раз** не играет. [В. Э. Карпов, Т. В. Мещерякова. Об автоматизации нетворческих литературных процессов // «Информационные технологии», 2004] [\[омонимия снята\]](#)
2. Ю. Ф. Флоринская, Т. Г. Рошина. Жизненные планы выпускников школ из малых городов (2004) // «Человек», 2005 [\[омонимия снята\]](#) [Все примеры \(1\)](#)
В конце концов, возникнет ситуация, когда уже **никакие инвестиции** не смогут оживить градообразующие предприятия и, следовательно, сами малые города. [Ю. Ф. Флоринская, Т. Г. Рошина. Жизненные планы выпускников школ из малых городов (2004) // «Человек», 2005] [\[омонимия снята\]](#)
3. А. Ю. Савинков. Синхронизация и верификация в имитационном моделировании // «Информационные технологии», 2004 [\[омонимия снята\]](#) [Все примеры \(1\)](#)

Figure 5. Results from search using criteria in the previous figure

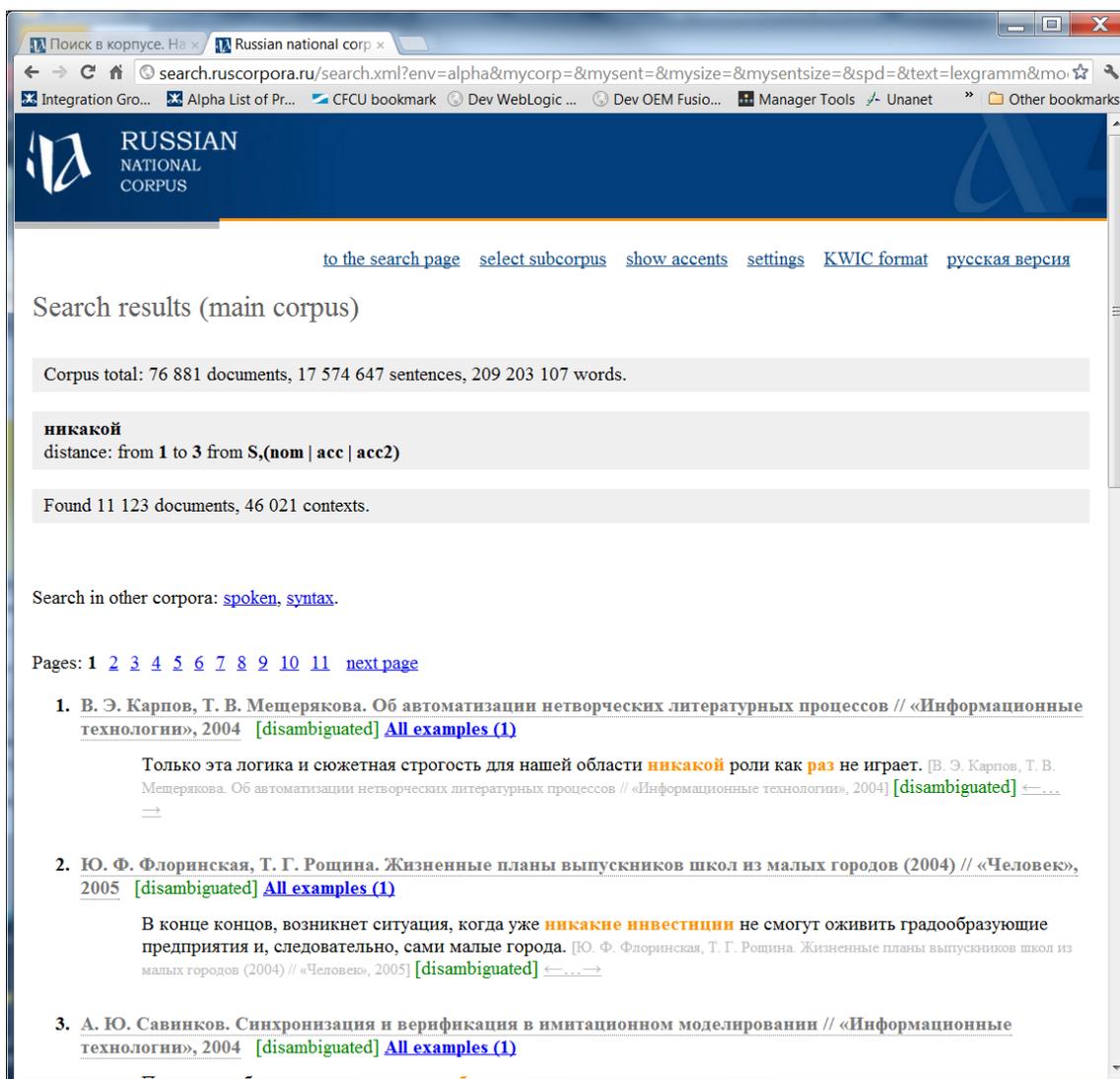


Figure 5. English version of results from previous figure

Currently the RNC does not offer translations of results from Russian into other languages, but given the mediocre quality of automatic translation programs currently, that is not necessarily a disadvantage.

The RNC search mechanism is especially powerful when dealing with the complex morphology of Russian. For example, a researcher interested in nouns has to take into account 3 genders x 2 numbers x 6 cases for each noun, or 36 possible variants. And someone interested in

irregular nouns like *človek* ‘person, man’ may also want to include the suppletive plural form *l’udi* ‘people’ in the search results. Furthermore, a peculiarity of this irregular but quite common noun is that the genitive plural form is *človek* in some grammatical situations (such as after numerals greater than 4, while genitive singular *človeka* is used after numerals 2 and 3), and *l’udej* in other situations. There is no way that a search engine can be very useful unless it is ‘aware’ of the relationship of all the morphological variants. Google is unaware of them. The Russian search site yandex.ru generally takes the variants into consideration, but does not permit targeted queries based on factors like case or gender. So the RNC, being specifically programmed to allow grammatically specific searches, is invaluable in this regard. If one searches for *človek* and selects the plural number, all of the relevant forms are returned without one needing to remember the suppletive plural forms. In addition, one can add an adjective like *nemeckij* ‘German’ to the criteria and not worry about factoring in the 36 possible adjectival endings – RNC takes care of it.

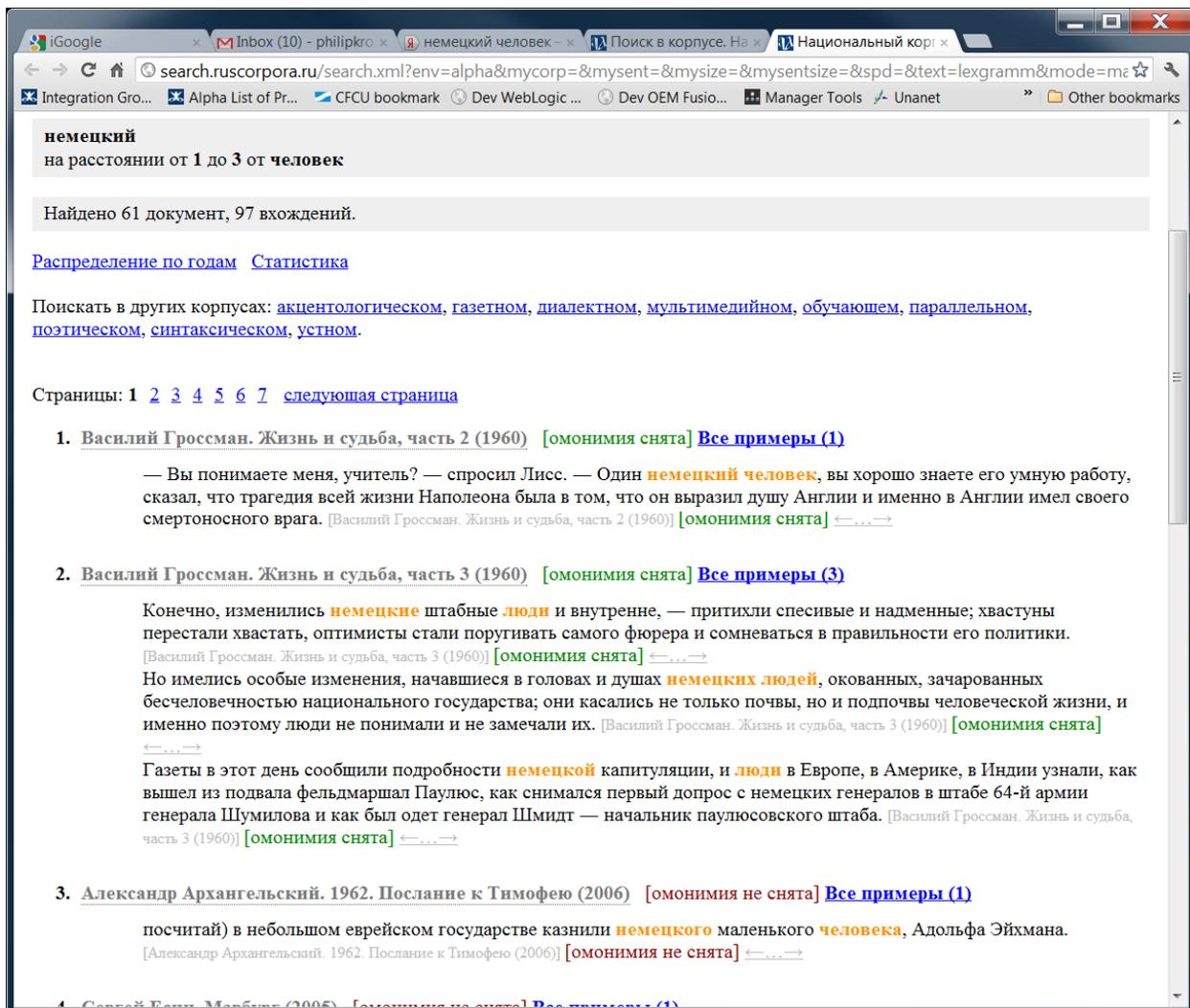


Figure 6. RNC search results for 'немецкий человек'

As Figure 6 shows, both *немецкий* and *человек* are returned in a variety of cases and numbers, and the adjective also occurs in various genders.

The screenshot shows a search results page for the word "немецкий". The search results are as follows:

- 1. Василий Гроссман. Жизнь и судьба, часть 2 (1960)** [омонимия снята] [Все примеры \(1\)](#)
 — Вы понимаете меня, учитель? — спросил Лисс. — Один **немецкий человек**, вы хорошо знаете его умную работу, сказал, что трагедия всей жизни Наполеона была в том, что он выразил душу Англии и именно в Англии имел своего смертоносного врага. [Василий Гроссман. Жизнь и судьба, часть 2 (1960)] [омонимия снята]
- 2. Василий Гроссман. Жизнь и судьба, часть 3 (1960)** [омонимия снята] [Все примеры \(3\)](#)
 Конечно, изменились **немецкие** штабные **люди** и внутренне, — притихли спесивые и надменные; хвастуны перестали хвастать, оптимисты стали поругивать самого фюрера и сомневаться в правильности его политики. [Василий Гроссман. Жизнь и судьба, часть 3 (1960)] [омонимия снята]
 Но имелись особые изменения, начавшиеся в головах и душах **немецких людей**, окованных, зачарованных именно поэтому люди не понимали и не замечали их. [Василий Гроссман. Жизнь и судьба, часть 3 (1960)] [омонимия снята]
 Газеты в этот день сообщили подробности **немецкой** капитуляции, и вышел из подвала фельдмаршал Паулюс, как снимался первый допрос генерала Шумилова и как был одет генерал Шмидт — начальник паулюсов. [Василий Гроссман. Жизнь и судьба, часть 3 (1960)] [омонимия снята]
- 3. Александр Архангельский. 1962. Послание к Тимофею (2006)** [омонимия снята] [Все примеры \(1\)](#)
 посчитай) в небольшом еврейском государстве казнили **немецкого** мальчика. [Александр Архангельский. 1962. Послание к Тимофею (2006)] [омонимия не снята]

The pop-up window for the word "немецких" displays the following information:

немецких	
Лемма	немецкий (см. в словарях)
Грамматика	прип, мн, род, полн
Семантика основная	der:s, dt:hum:etn, r:rel
Доп. признаки	num:red
Словообразование	(нем: root), (ец: suffix), (к: suffix), (ий: flexion)

Figure 7. Revealing the coding of a word in RNC

Another terrific feature of RNC is the ability to click on any word (not just the highlighted ones) and reveal how it was encoded, whether by software or a human. For example, clicking on *немецких* ‘German’ as in Figure 7 shows lots of useful information, such as its status as a genitive plural adjective having a semantic category of human ethnicity. At the top of the dialog is a quick link that will look up the word in online dictionaries, and the bottom row consists of a breakdown of the root and affixes of the word.

Fields in the RNC search form allow wildcarding with asterisks, so the results of a search for *ne** (in Cyrillic) include *ne*, *neskol'kix* ('several' gen.pl), *nemeckij* and so on. One can specify that the word has a punctuation mark before or after it. For adjectives, the Corpus includes comparatives, superlatives and other types of adjectives by default. Or, narrow the results by specifying criteria such as comparative or short-form adjective. Verbs can be parameterized by tense, transitivity, aspect, infinitival status, mood, and voice. So there is a staggering range of possibilities, and researchers have been greatly benefiting from the power of the Corpus since its inception in 2003.

9 Conclusion

What attracted me to the topic of genitive of negation in Russian is the general question of optionality in grammatical judgments, processes and rules. To me, a native speaker of English, it seems that there are very few comparably optional syntactic or morphological features in English vis-à-vis the genitive of negation in Russian. One possibility could be the ambiguity of number assignment in minimal pairs like:

205. A crowd of people are gathering to protest the decision.
A crowd of people is gathering to protest the decision.

This thesis has examined the optionality of Russian genitive case under negation, leveraging native-speaker data as well as online resources most likely written by native speakers, such as Internet search engines and linguistic corpora. Of special interest was assessing the role of negative intensifier phrases in selecting genitive or other grammatical case forms. Overall, the evidence suggests that aside from a few specific situations, such as NESs involving the word *net* ('there is / are no'), GenNeg is never obligatory. Negative intensifiers like *nikakoj*, which are usually considered to favor the selection of genitive case, actually do not in and of themselves swing the pendulum in the genitive direction. Native-speaker informants frequently say that *nikakoj* requires the genitive in negated phrases, even as they disagree among themselves when to really choose genitive case, but the examples found in online corpora and web searches point to a muddier picture. And to take the most advantage of those online resources, one must wade through the pro and cons of relying on various kinds of online resources in linguistic research, and one discovers true online gems such as the Russian National Corpus.

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Tübingen Corpora, linguistic corpus. <http://www.sfb441.uni-tuebingen.de/b1/en/korpora.html> .
As of 2011, this useful corpus search site is apparently defunct.

Yahoo, World Wide Web search engine. <http://www.yahoo.com>

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