

## TWO CASES OF DISAGREEMENT IN RUSSIAN: CONTRASTIVE IMPERATIVES AND ROOT INFINITIVES

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### 1. Goals and data

This study investigates two Russian nonfinite constructions which exhibit lack of agreement between their subjects and predicates: contrastive imperative constructions and root infinitives. Contrastive imperatives are one noncanonical use of Russian imperatives, as in (1); another type is the counterfactual conditional in (2). Common to both is that their meaning has nothing to do with the imperative's canonical illocutionary forces (such as command, instruction, request). Conditional-type imperatives will not be discussed here (see Jakab (*in press*) for analysis). An example of root infinitives can be seen in (3).

- (1) On vse vremja igraet v karty s druž'jami, a ja  
 he all time plays in cards with friends but I-nom  
 rabotaj na kuxne.  
 work-imp2sg on kitchen  
 'He plays cards all the time with his friends, and I have to work  
 in the kitchen.' (Townsend 1970:257)
- (2) Bud' on p'janym, on pel by gromče.  
 be-imp2sg he-nom drunk-inst he sang MOD more-loudly  
 (i) 'If he were drunk, he would sing more loudly.'  
 (ii) 'Had he been drunk, he would have sung more loudly.'
- (3) Ljudi pirovat', a my gorevat'.  
 people-nom feast-inf but we-nom grieve-inf  
 'People are off to feast, but we have to grieve.'  
 (Greenberg 1991:353)

Contrastive imperatives (1) and root infinitives (3), which exhibit striking structural and semantic similarities, have so far received no theoretical attention; this study provides a unified formal account for the two, along with abundant empirical evidence.

## 2. Contrastive imperative constructions

Most contrastive imperatives, as in (4-7) below, are coordinated structures which contrast two simultaneous situations or actions. However, a semantic distinction must be made: in (1) and (4-5), the first clause describes an event or circumstance, and the second containing the imperative, expresses an unpleasant obligation. On the other hand, the imperative clause in (6-7) expresses unusual, often abrupt, behavior with respect to the previous clause. The imperative may be preceded by idiomatic expressions such as *voz'mi da (i)*<sup>1</sup> to emphasize the unexpectedness and abruptness of the action.

(4) Na ulice prazdnik, u vsjakogo v dome prazdnik, a ty  
 on street holiday at everybody in house holiday but you-nom  
 sidi doma v četyrex stenax!  
 sit-imp2sg at-home in four walls  
 'There is holiday in the street, there is holiday in everybody's  
 house, and you have to sit at home, within your own four walls.'  
 (Barnetová et al. 1979:196)

(5) Vse otdyxajut, a on begi.  
 all rest but he-nom run-imp2sg(imperfective)  
 'Everybody is resting, while he has to run.'  
 (Jakobson 1984:50)

(6) Vse veselo guljali i peli, a on – voz'mi da  
 all gaily walked and sang but he-nom take-imp2sg PRT  
 vernis' domoj.  
 return-imp2sg home  
 'Everybody was strolling along gaily and singing, and he,  
 suddenly takes it into his head to go home.' (Townsend 1970:258)

(7) Prožili oni god duša v dušu, a na drugoj-to god ona  
 lived they year soul in soul but on second year she-nom  
 voz'mi da i pomri.  
 take-imp2sg PRT and die-imp2sg  
 'They lived for a year in full happiness, and then, in the second  
 year, she up and dies.'

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<sup>1</sup> *Voz'mi* is another "functional" imperative derived from *vzjat'* in the meaning of *vzdumat'* 'to take it into one's head'.

Syntactically, (4-7) show lack of agreement between the imperative and its clause-mate subject, which can be any person of either grammatical number. The imperatives in (4-7) resemble the other noncanonical function, the counterfactual conditional (cf. (2)), in the following respects: (i) They lack TP, hence the subject of the imperatives in (1-7) has no case or default case. (ii) They do not contain AgrSP since the subject does not agree with the imperative verb which lacks  $\phi$ -features. (iii) The imperative moves to C in both constructions. These properties will be discussed in section 4 below.

There are, however, several differences. Besides the fact that conditional-type imperatives are subordinate sentences and contrastive imperatives in (4-7) are coordinated ones (in most cases), they differ in the feature specification of C and the location of the subject. It has been proposed in Jakab (*forthcoming*) that C has a [cond] feature in (2) to account for the properties of this type of construction. On the other hand, here I shall argue that C in (4-7) has the feature [imp] that is canonically attributed to imperative verbs. The feature [imp] entails the semantics expressed by (4-7), for example obligation, given that the imperative contains a deontic modal force. Therefore there is no need to ascribe a different feature specification to the imperative operator in C.

We see in (4-7) that the subject of the clause introduced by the conjunction *a* ‘but; on the other hand’, always precedes the imperative verb, in contrast with (2), in which the subject necessarily follows the imperative. It will be argued that the subject in (4-7) moves from its base-generated position (i.e., Spec-vP) to a topic position in Spec-CP, thus accounting for the word order.

I extend the analysis proposed for contrastive imperatives to root infinitives such as (8), which exhibit similar properties. Both root infinitives and contrastive imperatives show non-agreement between the obligatorily clause-initial nominative subject and the main predicate. Section 4 will show how my analysis differs from Greenberg’s (1991) proposal of an adjoined topic position for the nominative NP in Russian “actor-infinitives”<sup>2</sup>.

- (8) Muž            zevat’, a žena spat’.  
 husband-nom yawn-inf but wife-nom sleep-inf  
 ‘The husband yawns and the wife sleeps.’ (Greenberg 1991:352)

The theoretical advantage of my proposal (see section 4) is that it accounts for two syntactically related constructions, contrastive imperatives and root infinitives, in a similar way. I begin by describing the main characteristics of Russian root infinitives.

<sup>2</sup> Instead of “actor-infinitive”, I use the term “root infinitive” (following Avrutin 1999).

### 3. Root infinitives

Root infinitives in Russian contain an infinitive, which is not a complement but the main predicate of the clause, and a nominative NP, which performs the action indicated by the infinitive. Illustrations are in (9-10) below. In (9), the action has an inceptive interpretation. In (10), two infinitive clauses are conjoined; the actions denoted by them are simultaneous and contrast with one another. The interpretation and structure of (10) strikingly resemble the contrastive imperatives in (4-5) above. In both (10) and (4-5), one clause depicts a pleasant action, while the other (conjoined by *a* ‘but; however’) expresses an unpleasant obligation.

(9) *Princessa xoxotat’.*  
 princess-nom laugh-inf  
 ‘The princess started to laugh.’

(10) *Ljudi pirovat’, a my gorevat’.*  
 people-nom feast-inf but we-nom grieve-inf  
 ‘People are off to feast, but we have to grieve.’  
 (Greenberg 1991:353)

Thus root infinitives (9-10) and contrastive imperatives (4-7) have similar properties: the subject NP always precedes the infinitive and there is no agreement. Moreover, the verb in both (9-10) and (4-7) is untensed. Hence I shall discuss the two structures together, and provide a similar explanation for both.

## 4. The analysis

### 4.1. Contrastive imperatives

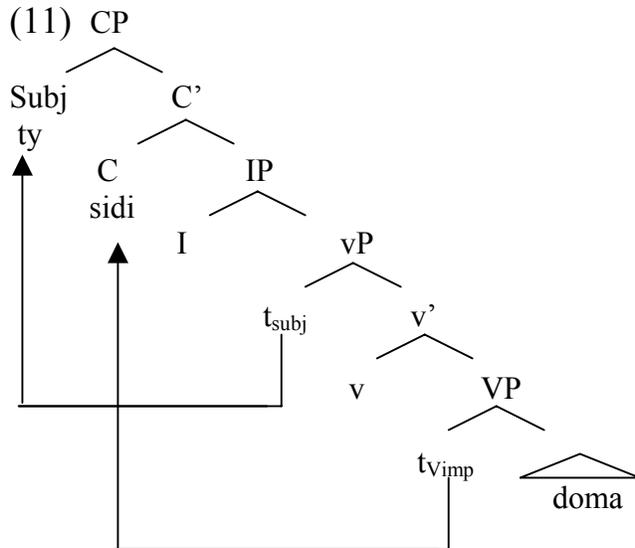
We saw in section 1 that examples (4-7) all lack agreement between the nominative subject NP and the imperative verb since the imperative has no  $\phi$ -features. The verb never agrees with the invariantly nominative subject, albeit the latter is always overt. It will thus be argued that while the subject of regular imperatives has a case-feature, which is checked in Spec-AgrSP, the subject of contrastive imperatives is caseless or gets default case<sup>3</sup> (cf. conditional-type

<sup>3</sup> There is independent evidence for syntactic caselessness in Russian, namely, bare copular sentences such as (i). For more detail see chapter 4 of Pereltsvaig 2001.

(i) *Čexov byl pisatel’.*  
 Chekhov-nom was writer-nom  
 ‘Chekhov was a writer.’ (Pereltsvaig 2001:1)

imperatives). I propose that the imperative verb raises to C in (4-7) like the conditional-type imperatives in (2). The difference is that while C in (2) has a [cond] feature, C in (4-7) has an [imp] feature that is regularly attributed to imperatives. Since the feature [imp] bears modal illocutionary forces, it can attract the imperatives in (4-7), which also express some modal meaning, such as obligation (Jakab *forthcoming*).

Another difference between (4-7) and (2) is the position of the subject. Jakab (*in press*) proposes that the subject of (2), which always follows the imperative, stays in situ since it has no feature that needs checking (its  $\phi$ -features are interpretable and its default case-feature needs no checking). Conversely, the subject of (4-7), which comes after the contrastive conjunction *a*, obligatorily precedes the imperative. The subject's permanent clause-initial position suggests that it moves to a topic position, in which it receives contrastive stress. Departing from Greenberg's (1991) proposal for root infinitives (outlined below), I argue that the topic position is not an adjoined CP projection, but the Spec of CP. Unlike him, I suggest that the subject is not base-generated in the adjoined topic position since it cannot get its  $\theta$ -role there. Instead, the subject raises to Spec-CP from its base-generated position, where it receives its  $\theta$ -role. The structure of the imperative clause in (4-7) is given in (11), exemplified with (4).



The representation in (11) thus shows that, apart from the subject's location, the imperatives in (4-7) have all the same properties as the conditional-type imperatives like (2). That is, they lack TP (cf. Platzack and Rosengren 1998), i.e., the imperative verb never marks tense distinctions. Moreover, they contain no

AgrSP, which accounts for the non-agreement between the imperative and the subject. Since all the possible nominative case checking positions (Spec-TP and Spec-AgrSP) are missing, there is no position for the subject of contrastive imperatives to check its case features. On the other hand, the subject of regular imperatives checks its case and agreement features in Spec-AgrSP. Since the subject of the imperatives in (4-7) receives default case or no case, the subject in (4-7) moves only for one reason: it needs to be in a topic position to account for the contrastive semantics of the imperative clauses. Notice that subject and imperative are in a Spec-head agreement relation in (11). Nevertheless, it does not follow from this relation that the subject gets case-marked since there is no Agr element in I (see Chomsky 1986:24).

#### 4.2. *Root infinitives*

Let us now consider the root infinitives in (9-10). We have seen that both root infinitives and contrastive imperatives contain a nominative subject NP with which the immediately following verb shows no agreement. A further similarity is that neither construction tolerates a quantified subject. As Avrutin (1999) observes, only referential nouns can participate in root infinitives; no quantifiers are permitted in subject position (see (12)). The referential constraint on nouns also holds for the imperatives in (4-7): they do not tolerate a quantified subject (see (13-14) below). Avrutin explains this by the absence of an index on T. He argues that events have a discourse representation similar to NPs, and are represented as “event file cards.” An event file card contains a time interval during which the event holds, and, for a time interval to be specified, T has to bear an index. Thus T has a referential potential and consequently can denote a time interval. Avrutin contends that T of an infinitival has no index. This means that the event cannot be anchored, i.e., the event has no index. Since T has no index, the subject NP cannot have an index either. He sees the subject as a NP, and not a DP; hence it has no D-feature and needs to establish no agreement with its predicate; it can receive default case. However, nonreferential nouns like quantifiers need an index to enter an operator–variable relation. Thus (12-14) are not interpretable and are ruled out.

- (12) \*Pjat' devušek xoxotat'.<sup>4</sup>  
 five girls laugh-inf  
 'Five girls started to laugh.'
- (13) \*On vse vremja igraet v karty s druž'jami, a nikto  
 he all time plays in cards with friends but nobody  
 ne rabotaj na kuxne.  
 NEG work-imp2sg on kitchen
- (14) \*Vse veselo guljali i peli, a kto-to – voz'mi da  
 all gaily walked and sang but someone take-imp2sg PRT  
 vernis' domoj.  
 return-imp2sg home

Avrutin argues that the Russian default non-structural (lexical) case is nominative, as in (15), and so the subject NP automatically acquires this default case (4-7) despite the lack of agreement.

- (15) Èto ona/\* ee.  
 it she-nom/\*she-acc  
 'It's her.'

However, his claim that nominative is a lexical case is ad hoc though it may be a default case. His only empirical support is (15), which, according to him, contains no agreement. But, when we look at the same sentence in the past tense, (16), we can see that the verb shows agreement with the subject (Leonard Babby, personal communication). Albeit similarities concerning quantified subjects do exist between root infinitives and the imperatives in (4-7), another explanation is needed for the non-agreement between the subject and its infinitive or imperative predicate.

- (16) Èto byla ona.  
 it was-sgF she-nom  
 'It was her.'

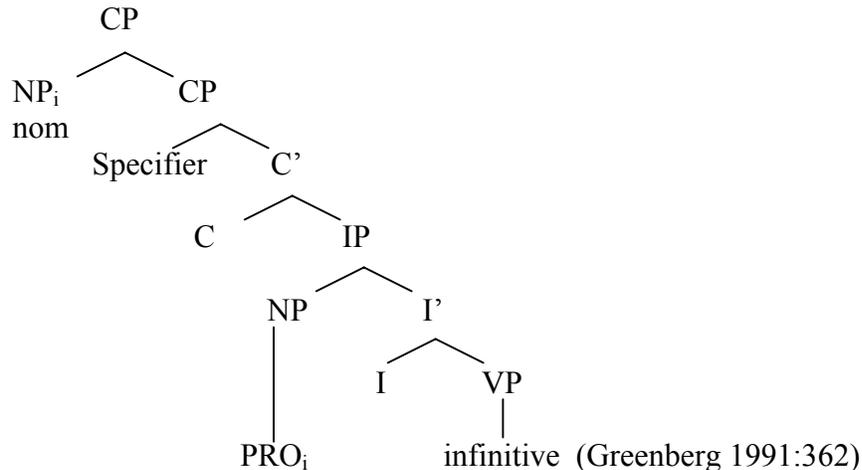
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<sup>4</sup> Note that the sentence is good if it contains a collective numeral like *pjatero* 'the five of them' since such numerals make the subject referential, as in (i).

- (i) Pjatero xoxotat'.  
 Five-of-them laugh-inf  
 'The five of them started to laugh.'

Before presenting my proposal for root infinitives, I shall outline Greenberg's (1991) analysis and show how mine diverges from it. Greenberg suggests that the nominative NP in (9-10) is base-generated in a topic position, which he identifies as the Spec of the CP adjoined to the CP containing the infinitive, as in (17).

(17)



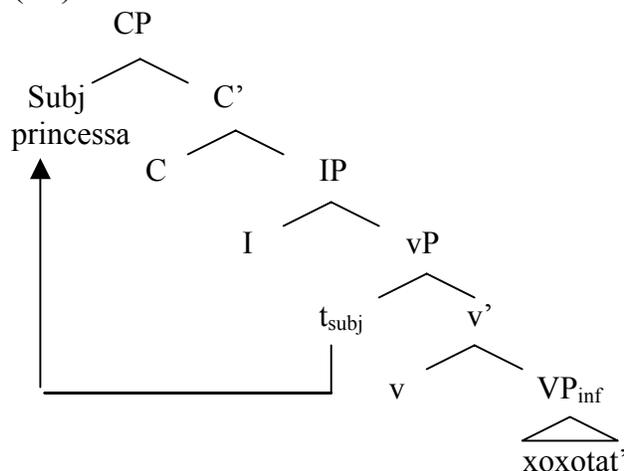
He argues that the nominative NP cannot move from the original subject position to Spec-CP because there is no subject-verb agreement in root infinitives, and because this NP has a fixed clause-initial position. He explains the nominative case of the topicalized NP by a predication relation between the topic position and the clause containing PRO (given that (17) is not a control construction, the topic cannot control PRO). He suggests that nominative is a “Configurational Case,” a kind of default case<sup>5</sup>, which is automatically assigned to the position sister to CP (where the nominative NP is located). Since this NP is coindexed with PRO, which is caseless, it gets the Configurational Case by default.

While I agree with Greenberg in placing the subject in a topic position given its permanent clause-initial location and its semantics, my mechanism diverges from his in some respects. First, the subject cannot be base-generated in an adjoined position since it has to get its  $\theta$ -role from the verb. I thus propose that it is base-generated in Spec-vP (where it receives its  $\theta$ -role), and subsequently moves to Spec-CP. Second, if the topic position is an adjoined position in which the nominative NP is base-generated, there has to be some null element in the subject position to account for the case of the NP. Greenberg indeed posits PRO in the subject position. It is, however, hard to justify PRO in non-control structures like root infinitives. Greenberg's configuration-based explanation for the assignment of

<sup>5</sup> “Configurational Case is the weakest form of case marking and imposes case only when no other method has been used during a sentence's derivation.” (Greenberg 1991:363)

nominative seems stipulated since the indexing mechanism between the topicalized NP and PRO is not clear. Moreover, if we posit PRO as the subject of infinitives in a clause without agreement (a description that fits root infinitives), we would expect the subject to appear in dative (see Babby 1998; Moore and Perlmutter 1999, 2000). However, the subject in root infinitives is never dative, as (9-10) show<sup>6</sup>. Hence, I propose that in root infinitives, the subject bears no case features similar to the subject of conditional and contrastive imperatives. It is not a stipulation to suggest that root infinitives lack a TP projection (the infinitive in (9-10) is “tenseless” in Avrutin’s terms) because the infinitive expresses no tense distinction (see fn. 7). There is no AgrSP in (9-10) either because the infinitive does not agree with the subject. Since the two potential nominative case checking positions, Spec-TP and Spec-AgrSP, are missing, the subject can be caseless or can receive default nominative in morphology (we saw that it is not dative, as would be expected with an infinitive predicate). Since the subject has no other features to be checked (the  $\phi$ -features of the subject, being a nominal element, are interpretable and thus need no checking), it moves to topic position only to account for word order and meaning<sup>7</sup>. The infinitive, on the other hand, stays in situ because the derivation has no element (lexical or functional) that could attract it. Taking (9) as an example, root infinitives are illustrated in (18).

(18)



<sup>6</sup> In the next section I further discuss the reasons why root infinitives and regular infinitives differ with respect to their subject’s case.

<sup>7</sup> Note that Spec-CP is an A-bar position, and as such, it cannot check case and  $\phi$ -features on the nominal, exactly what is expected since the nominal does not need these features to be checked (cf. recursive CP-structures of Chomsky 2001).

The lack of TP in the structures above can be tested by adding sentential versus VP-adverbials. Sentential adverbials, adjoined at the TP-level, cannot occur within the infinitival construction, but only outside of it, as the examples in (19) show. On the other hand, VP-adverbials can freely appear inside the infinitive, as in (20).

- (19) a. \*Muž zevat', a žena **vdrug** spat'.  
 husband-nom yawn-inf but wife-nom suddenly sleep-inf  
 ' \*The husband yawns and the wife suddenly sleeps. '
- b. Muž zevat', a **vdrug** žena spat'.  
 husband-nom yawn-inf but suddenly wife-nom sleep-inf  
 'The husband yawns and, suddenly, the wife sleeps. '

- (20) Muž zevat', a žena **gluboko** spat'.  
 husband-nom yawn-inf but wife-nom deeply sleep-inf  
 'The husband yawns and the wife deeply sleeps. '

Thus, we conclude, contrastive imperatives and root infinitives can be explained by a similar mechanism. Both contain a caseless or default subject that shows no agreement with its invariable imperative and infinitive predicate.

#### 4.3. *Paraphrasing contrastive imperatives that express obligation*

In this section I show why the subject of contrastive imperatives and root infinitives cannot be dative. The imperative clauses of (4-5), which express obligation, can be paraphrased, as in (21-22). Although (21-22) express the same semantics as (4-5), they have different structures.

- (21) ..., a tebe (nado) sidet' doma v četyrex stenax.  
 but you-dat (must) sit-inf at-home in four walls  
 '...and you have to sit at home, within your own four walls.'
- (22) ..., a emu (nado) bežat'.  
 but he-dat (must) run-inf  
 '... while he has to run.'

Here the nominative subject of the imperative clauses is changed to dative, and the imperative becomes an infinitive. However, the meaning is preserved: (21-22) also all imply obligation. To account for this interpretation of (21-22), we posit a modal



joint effect of the modal and the infinitive (see Jakab 2001). The infinitive alone is not able to supply the subject with dative, as (9-10) demonstrate.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has analyzed contrastive imperative constructions, one of the instances in which the Russian imperative obtains an interpretation other than its typical illocutionary force. Unlike regular imperatives, they have no AgrSP, which accounts for the lack of agreement between subject and imperative. I argued that imperatives contain no TP projection since they never show tense distinctions. While the subject of canonical imperatives has case, which is checked in Spec-AgrSP, the subject of contrastive imperatives is caseless or receives default case-marking since both potential nominative case checking positions are absent. Moreover, since the  $\phi$ -features of the subject are interpretable, they need no checking. Also, a unified analysis was given for contrastive imperatives and root infinitives that exhibit similar structural and semantic properties.

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