Non-syncretic mismatches in Russian ATB-movement — the role of the genitive of negation

Mariia Privizentseva & Martin Salzmann (University of Potsdam)

Overview. ATB-movement is generally subject to a case-matching requirement: The same case must be assigned to the filler in both conjuncts; different cases are allowed only if the two are syncretic. In this paper, we will discuss an instance of ATB-movement that is grammatical despite a non-syncretic case mismatch. The data come from the genitive of negation in Russian. While similar mismatches have been documented for other Slavic languages (Bondaruk 2003, Citko 2011, Rothert 2022), we will present a comprehensive picture of the empirical facts in Russian and provide the first analysis of the pattern. We will argue that such mismatches are possible because the genitive featurally subsumes the accusative but not other cases and show that the facts are best derived under a sideward movement approach (Nunes 2004).

Data. As in other languages, ATB-movement in Russian requires case-matching (Franks 1993, Citko 2005). If the same case is assigned in both conjuncts (cf. accusative in (1a)), the sentence is well-formed. (1b) is ungrammatical due to a mismatch between instrumental and accusative.

(1) a. [Kakogo aktëra] Ira ljubut __, i Galja obožaet __?
which.ACC actor.ACC Ira loves and Galya adores
'Which actor does Ira love and Galya adore?' ACC & ACC

b.*[Kakoj mašinoj] Ira pol'sovalas' __, a Galja kupila __?
which.INSTR car.INSTR Ira used but Galya bought
'Which car did Ira use but Galya buy?' INSTR & ACC

Interestingly, non-syncretic mismatches are possible with the genitive of negation. In Russian, genitive of negation appears on direct objects of negated transitive verbs instead of the accusative. The mismatch in ATB-movement is possible if genitive in the first conjunct (CJ) is coordinated with the accusative in the second as in (2a). The reverse order is ungrammatical; see (2b).

(2) a. [Kakix knig] Katja daže ne videla __, a Maša uže čitala __?
which.PL.GEN book.GEN.PL Katja even not saw but Masha already read
'Which books has Katja not even seen but Masha already read?' GEN ($\prec$ ACC) & ACC

b.*[Kakix knig] Maša uže čitala __, a Katja daže ne videla __?
which.PL.GEN book.PL.GEN Masha alrealy read but Katja even not saw
'Which books has Masha already read but Katja not even seen?' ACC & GEN ($\prec$ ACC)

Genitive of negation also appears on subjects of unaccusative (or passive) verbs instead of the nominative. However, a fact that has not been observed in previous literature, case mismatch is not possible if such a genitive is combined with the nominative, irrespective of the order:

(3) a.*[Kakix pisem] __ eščë ne prišlo, no __ dolžny rešit' našu problemu?
which.PL.GEN letter.PL.GEN yet not arrived but must solve our problem
'Which letters have not arrived yet but must solve our problem?' GEN ($\prec$ NOM) & NOM

b.*[Kakix pisem] __ dolžny rešit' našu problemu, no __ eščë ne prišlo?
which.PL.GEN letter.PL.GEN must solve our problem but yet not arrived
'Which letters must solve our problem but have not arrived yet?' NOM & GEN ($\prec$ NOM)

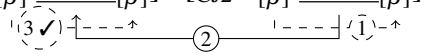
Analysis. We propose that the key to understand this pattern can be found in the way case is represented in syntax. We argue that genitive featurally contains accusative, but neither accusative nor genitive contains nominative (cf. Harðarson 2016, Christopoulos & Zompí 2022, Akkuş at al. 2024). Concretely, we suggest that nominative corresponds to the feature $[\alpha]$, accusative corresponds to $[\beta]$ and genitive to $[\beta, \gamma]$. Case-matching in ATB-movement follows from restrictions on multiple case assignment: case features can only be added to an existing feature set if they constitute a superset (proper or improper). Otherwise, an additional feature set is added. Two feature sets on one noun lead to ungrammaticality, unless there is a syncretic marker. We further adopt a sideward movement approach where first the second CJ is built, the filler is assigned case there, and is only then copied to the first CJ (e.g., Nunes 2004). Finally,

we will assume that negation assignes genitive (Harves 2002, Matushansky 2009) and that the assignment of nominative is optional if there is another case assigner in the same clause.

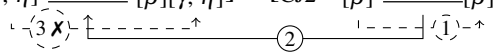
Derivations. *1. Case-matching* ACC&ACC (cf. (1a)): The filler is assigned accusative/[β] in the 2nd CJ; it is then copied to the 1st CJ, where v also assigns [β], a superset. We thus obtain a single feature set [β] that is realized by an accusative exponent; the derivation converges, (4).

2. Case-mismatch INST&ACC (cf. (1b)): The filler is assigned [β] in the 2nd CJ and is then copied to the 1st CJ. Since V in the 1st CJ assigns mismatching instrumental, corresponding to [γ, η], a second feature set is created on the filler. As there is no single exponent that is the best match for both features sets, VI fails and the derivation crashes, (5):

(4) [CJ1 v$_{[\beta]}$ whNP$_{[\beta]}$]&[CJ2 v$_{[\beta]}$ whNP$_{[\beta]}$]



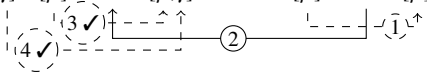
(5) [CJ1 V$_{[\gamma, \eta]}$ whNP $_{[\beta][\gamma, \eta]}$]& [CJ2 v$_{[\beta]}$ whNP$_{[\beta]}$]



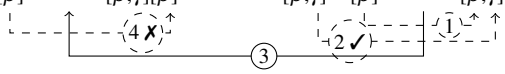
3. Case-mismatch GENNEG($\prec$ACC)&ACC (cf. (2a)): The filler is assigned [β] in the 2nd CJ and then copied to the first CJ. There, v assigns [β], as superset; then, Neg ($\neg$) assigns [β,γ], also a superset; this results in the feature set [β,γ] on the filler, which is realized by a genitive exponent and the derivation converges, see (6).

4. Case-mismatch ACC&GENNEG($\prec$ACC) (cf. (2b)): The filler in the 2nd CJ is first assigned [β] by v and then [β,γ], a superset, by Neg, resulting in [β,γ]. Then it is copied to the first CJ. v assigns [β], a subset. Hence, a second feature set is added to the filler. Since there is no single exponent that is the best match for both feature sets, VI fails and the derivation crashes, (7).

(6) [CJ1 $\neg_{[\beta,\gamma]}$ v$_{[\beta]}$ whNP$_{[\beta,\gamma]}$]&[CJ2 v$_{[\beta]}$ whNP$_{[\beta]}$]



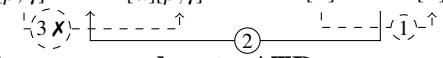
(7) [CJ1 v$_{[\beta]}$ whNP$_{[\beta,\gamma][\beta]}$]&[CJ2 $\neg_{[\beta,\gamma]}$ v$_{[\beta]}$ whNP$_{[\beta,\gamma]}$]



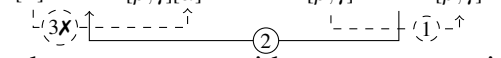
5. Case-mismatch GENNEG($\prec$NOM)&NOM (cf. (3a)): In the 2nd CJ, T assigns [α], while in the first CJ, Neg assigns [β,γ], which is not a superset, thus leading to two feature sets on the filler. Since there is no exponent that is the best match for both sets, VI fails and the derivation crashes.

6. Case-mismatch NOM&GENNEG($\prec$NOM) (cf. (3b)): In the 2nd CJ, Neg assigns [β,γ], while in the first T assigns nom/[α], not a superset, hence leading to two feature sets on the filler. Since there is no exponent that is the best match for both sets, VI fails and the derivation crashes, (9):

(8) [CJ1 $\neg_{[\beta,\gamma]}$ whNP$_{[\alpha][\beta,\gamma]}$]&[CJ2 T$_{[\alpha]}$ whNP$_{[\alpha]}$]



(9) [CJ1 T$_{[\alpha]}$ whNP$_{[\beta,\gamma][\alpha]}$]&[CJ2 $\neg_{[\beta,\gamma]}$ whNP$_{[\beta,\gamma]}$]



Alternative approaches to ATB-movement. Sideward movement provides an asymmetric derivational approach to ATB-constructions and therefore allows to account for the difference between the grammatical gen-acc mismatch in (2a) and the ungrammatical acc-gen mismatch in (2b). Other approaches either cannot derive the asymmetry between the two conjuncts (Fusion, Hein & Murphy 2020; Parallel Merge, Citko 2005; parasitic gap-approach, Franks 1995) or (probably) allow all kinds of mismatches (ellipsis approach, Ha 2006, Salzmann 2012).

Outlook and conclusion. We will show that our approach extends to further contexts such as (i) GenNeg($\prec$Acc) & GenNeg($\prec$Nom) in both orders, (ii) lexical Gen & GenNeg($\prec$N/A) in both orders and, remarkably, (iii) GenNeg($\prec$N) & Acc (only in this order). In (i) and (ii), the features assigned in both CJs are identical, i.e., [β,γ]; (iii) involves the same feature combination as (6).

In summary, we provide the first analysis of grammatical non-syncretic mismatches in Russian ATB-movement involving the genitive of negation. Our analysis is based on the assumption that the genitive of negation featurally contains the accusative but not other cases. This not only explains how such mismatches are possible, it also accounts for the entire range of case-mismatch combinations: It thus explains why mismatches with other cases (e.g., Inst & Acc) and also certain configurations with the GenNeg($\prec$N) are ungrammatical. We have argued that the facts provide evidence for a derivational partially asymmetric analysis of ATB-movement like the sideward movement approach, while alternatives either undergenerate or overgenerate.