

Differential Object Marking in Serbo-Croatian: Evidence from Left Branch Extraction in Negative Concord Constructions

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Introduction. In this paper, I examine previously unnoticed Serbo-Croatian (SC) patterns in (1-5) involving left branch extraction of a *ni*-negative constituent (*ni*-NCI) over another *ni*-NCI. I argue that the data provide evidence for the existence of differential object marking (DOM) in SC in terms of structural height of objects, which is triggered by their animacy (see also Bošković to appear a). More specifically, I argue that animate accusative (ACC) objects are case-licensed in a projection higher than *v**P where inanimate ACC objects can be licensed.

Data. The data in (1-5) show an interesting pattern with respect to the possibility of left branch extraction of a *ni*-NCI (*ni*-NCI LBE) over another *ni*-NCI: (1b) shows that splitting an animate NOM *ni*-NCI over an animate ACC one is banned. At the same time, if a full animate NOM *ni*-NP, and not only its left branch element, moves across an animate ACC *ni*-NCI, the result is grammatical, as in (5). In all other examples in (1-3), *ni*-NCI LBE over a *ni*-NCI is possible, regardless of the case and animacy of the NCI's in question. *Ni*-NCI LBE over an adjunct *ni*-NCI is also possible, as in (4). The question is how to account for this pattern, and crucially to explain why an animate ACC object *ni*-NCI blocks LBE of a NOM *ni*-NCI over it, while an inanimate ACC *ni*-NCI object does not.

Analysis. It has been noted crosslinguistically that animate and inanimate ACC objects may display different syntactic and morphological behavior, one of the differences being their structural height (see, for example, Torrego 1998, Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007 for Spanish, and Bošković to appear a for Slavic). Following these insights, in order to account for the patterns in (1-5), I propose the structure in (6), with the possibility of case-licensing animate and inanimate ACC objects in distinct positions, with the former higher than the latter. In addition to (6), I adopt the following: (i) Bošković's (2008) analysis of SC negative concord constructions, which requires overt movement of *ni*-NCI's to SpecNegP, (ii) the feature-sharing view of Agree of Pesetsky and Torrego (PT) (2007) (see also Frampton and Gutmann 2000), and (iii) the theory of Agree and Move proposed in Bošković (2007, to appear b) that differs from Chomsky's (2000, 2001) in a number of important ways (e.g., the locality of Agree (with Agree being free from the Phase Impenetrability Condition and Activation Condition), the moving-element-driven, rather than the target-driven Move, the dissociation of Case and agreement, and the valuation rather than interpretability view of Agree). I show that these assumptions, together with (6), can successfully account for (1-5). In particular, examples like (1b) are ungrammatical for the following reason: At the point in (7), *nikoga* is in SpecAccP, where its [Case]-feature is valued. *Nijedan momak* is in SpecNegP, with its [Case] unvalued. AdjP *nijedan* is in SpecNP (Bošković 2005), and agrees with N *momak* in case, number and gender. Prior to Merge with N, these Adj features are unvalued. Upon Merge with N, they probe and are replaced by the corresponding N's features, including [*unval u*Case], given the feature sharing view of Agree (PT 2007). Thus, Adj and N share the same features (except [Person]), which allows for the transitivity of their valuation (as in PT 2007). So, at this point *nijedan* has [Gender] and [Number] valued, but its [Case] is unvalued. Next, T is inserted with unvalued uninterpretable ([*unval u*]) ϕ -features and valued uninterpretable ([*val u*]) Case (as in Bošković to appear b). After T is merged, [*unval u* ϕ]-features of T probe, but *nikoga*, having the matching features, blocks Agree between T and *nijedan momak*. Next, *nijedan* undergoes LBE to SpecTP, which also allows its [*unval Case*] feature to probe T, with the valuation of *nijedan*'s [Case] (and by transitivity N's (*momak*'s) [Case]) as a result. T also probes *nijedan*, but since *nijedan*, an adjective, has no [Person], T's [Person] remains unvalued, and the derivation crashes. This is not the case in (5), since here an NP moves to SpecTP (under Bošković's moving-element driven movement), and is thus able to value all T's features. Crucially, (2b) is ok, because the inanimate ACC *ni*-NCI *ništa* can get its case valued in *v**P, rather than in AccP, which is absent in this derivation. At the point in (8), both *ništa* and *nijedan momak* have moved to SpecNegP, and T is inserted. Even if *ništa* is in the outer spec of NegP, T is able to probe *nijedan momak* across *ništa* and agree with it,

assuming Equidistance Principle in (9). The result is the valuation of T's ϕ -features at this point, with the reason that caused the derivation to crash in (1b) thus eliminated. In the next step, *nijedan* undergoes LBE. (3b) and (4) are grammatical for the same reason. (1a), (2a), and (3a) are ok, because given that full NOM NP's *niko* and *ništa* move to SpecTP here, no T's feature remains unvalued, unlike in (1b). Thus, the structural height difference with respect to the case-licensing of animate and inanimate ACC objects is responsible for the crucial contrast in (1b) and (2b), while allowing the derivation of all other cases in (1-5) to converge.

(1)a. Nijednog niko momka ne voli. no _{ACC} nobody _{NOM} guy _{ACC} not loves 'Nobody loves any guy.'	b. *Nijedan nikoga momak ne voli. no _{NOM} nobody _{ACC} guy _{NOM} not loves 'No guy loves anybody.'
(2)a. Nijednog ništa momka ne zanima. no _{ACC} nothing _{NOM} guy _{ACC} not interests 'Nothing interests any guy.'	b. Nijedan ništa momak ne voli. no _{NOM} nothing _{ACC} guy _{NOM} not loves 'No guy loves anything.'
(3)a. Nijedan ništa zakon ne uslovljava. no _{ACC} nothing _{NOM} law _{ACC} not conditions 'Nothing conditions any law.'	b. Nijedan ništa zakon ne uslovljava. no _{NOM} nothing _{ACC} law _{NOM} not conditions 'No law conditions anything.'
(4) Nijedan nigdje momak ne ide. no _{ACC} nowhere guy _{NOM} not goes 'No guy goes anywhere.'	(5) Nijedan momak nikoga ne voli. no _{NOM} guy _{NOM} nobody _{ACC} not loves 'No guy loves anybody.'

(6) [_{TP} NOM T [_{AccP} anim/inanim-ACC Acc [_{NegP} Neg... [_{v*P} inanim-ACC v*...]]]]

(7) [_{TP} T [_{AccP} nikoga_i Acc [_{NegP} ~~nikoga_i~~ [_{NP} nijedan momak] Neg [_{v*P} ...v*...]]]]

(8) [_{TP} T [_{NegP} ništa [_{NP} nijedan momak] Neg [_{v*P}...v*...]]]]

(9) Equidistance Principle (Chomsky 2000)

Terms of the edge of HP are equidistant from probe P.

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