

# Don't be 'a' Negative Nancy: Genitive of Negation's origins in definiteness

Joseph Rhyne  
Cornell University

## Objectives

Numerous analyses of Genitive of Negation (GofN) in the modern Slavic languages, as well as the origins in Proto-Slavic, have been proposed. Definiteness has often been a factor in these. A holistic account of the development and usage of GofN throughout the entire history of Slavic has been lacking. Current Goals:

- Begin to map out the diachronic development and use of Genitive of Negation (GofN) in the old Slavic languages
- Develop a formal analysis based on corpus studies to capture any syntactic, semantic, or morphological contrasts found in GofN constructions

## Object GofN in Old Church Slavonic

### Affirmative sentence and ACC:

- (1) ljubľeše že isusŭ  
loves.IPF.3RD PTCL Jesus.NOM  
marto i sestřo eje i  
Martha.ACC and sister.ACC her and  
lazarě  
Lazarus.ACC  
'For Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.' (John 11:5; *Codex Marianus*)

### Negative sentence and GEN

- (2) blōdite ne vědōšte  
be.mistaken.PRES.2ND NEG knowing  
kŭnigŭ ni sily bžije  
books.GEN nor power.GEN divine.GEN  
'You are mistaken, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.' (Matthew 22:29; *Codex Marianus*)

GofN can appear in other contexts, e.g. subjects of certain verbs, temporal and locative adjuncts, etc.

## Corpus Study: *Codex Marianus*

Preliminary corpus study using the **PROIEL Treebank** (Haug & Jøhndal 2008), which uses a version of dependency grammar for syntactic tagging, in addition to morphological tags.

- Examine usage of GofN in *Codex Marianus*
- Comparison with *Greek New Testament* to look at potential contrasts of definiteness.

## Examples

- (3) ni vĭlivajotŭ vina nova  
NEG pour.PRES.3RD wine.GEN new.GEN  
vŭ mĕxy vetŭxy  
into wineskin.ACC old.ACC  
'Neither do they put new wine into old wineskins' (Matthew 9:17)
- (4) ne iskusiši gospodi boga  
NEG tease.PRES lord.GEN god.GEN  
tvojego  
2ND.SG.GEN  
'Do not test the Lord your God' (Luke 4:12)
- (5) bezumĭni ne iže li  
foolish.VOC NEG who.NOM INTERROG  
estŭ sutvorilŭ  
be.PRES.3RD make.PART.NOM  
vŭnestinee i vŭnotrinee  
outside.ACC also inside.ACC  
sŭtvori  
make.AOR.3RD  
'O foolish people, did the one who made the outside not also make the inside?' (Luke 11:40)
- (6) ne može utaiti se  
NEG be.able.AOR hide.INF REFL.ACC  
'And he was not able to hide himself.' (Mark 7:24)

## Results

Type of GofN	Count
Objects (GEN)	419
Weak adjs. (GEN)	25
Indefinite pronoun objects (GEN)	26
Strong adjs. (GEN)	0
Possessive Pronouns (GEN)	100
Objects (ACC)	93

Figure 1: GofN in *Codex Marianus*

- 1 OCS uses strong adjectives and possessive pronouns to mark definiteness.
- 2 Definiteness contrast: No GEN object is definite, unless accompanied by a possessive pronoun.
- 3 ACC objects can occur under negation and are definite
- 4 Strong adjectives only occur with ACC under negation

## Analysis

How do we explain this contrast in definiteness? Diesing's (1992) **Tree-Splitting hypothesis** can handle the mapping between syntax and semantics:

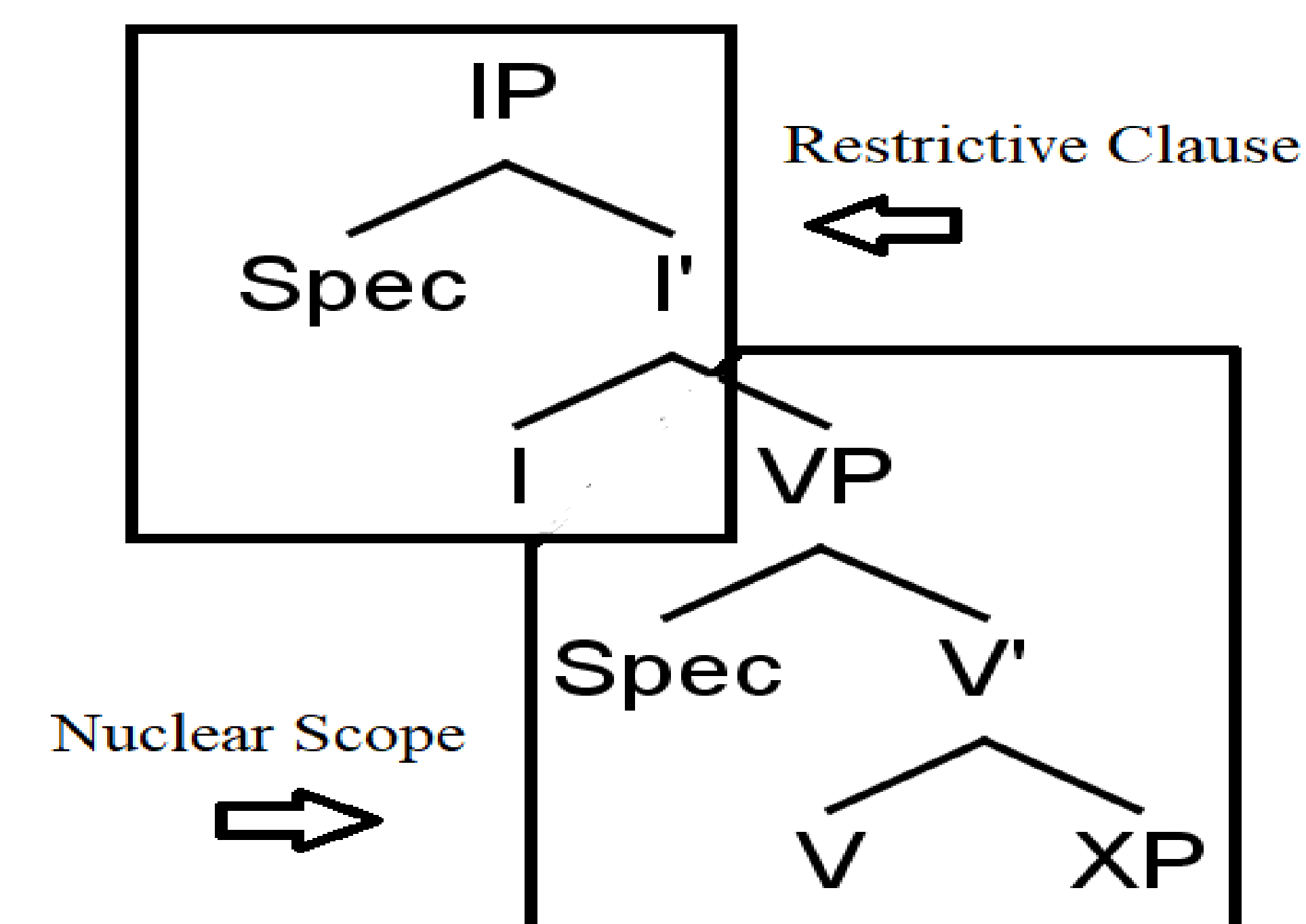


Figure 2: Tree-Splitting and Mapping Hypothesis

## Conclusion

### Takeaways:

- 1 GofN definiteness contrast under negation partially present in OCS: might be on the way in or on the way out of the language
- 2 NegP is a possible extension of Nuclear Scope in OCS, leading to this contrast

### Further work:

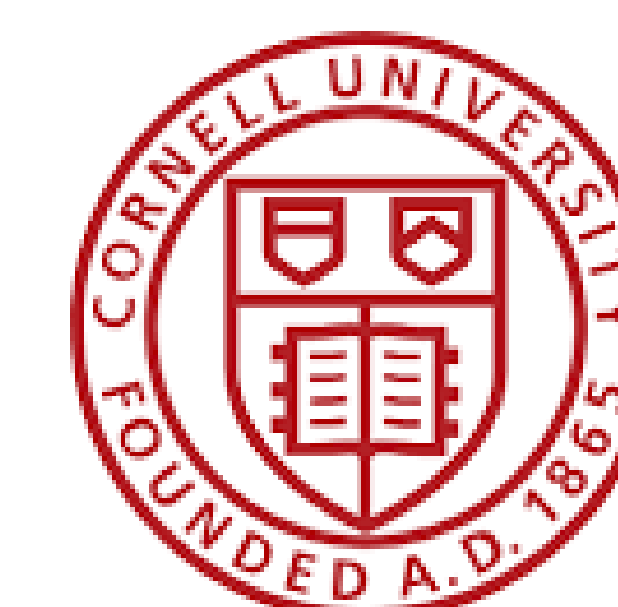
- 1 Expand the scope of this study to include other GofN contexts
- 2 Need to extend this to other OCS manuscripts and old Slavic languages to see if this contrast holds up
- 3 Compile and tag corpus of old Slavic languages

## Selected References

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## Contact Information

- Web: [cornell.academia.edu/JosephRhyne](http://cornell.academia.edu/JosephRhyne)
- Email: [jtr92@cornell.edu](mailto:jtr92@cornell.edu)



Cornell University