-Nibud' Pronouns in Irrealis Infinitivals: Structure and Licensing

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Abstract
This paper uses the distribution of ni- and –nibud’-series of irrealis pronouns in Russian to explore the structure of irrealis infinitivals. Members of the ni-series are negative concord items licensed by sentential negation (the head of NegP, which dominates TP); they cannot be licensed long across a CP phase boundary (Brown (1999), Fitzgibbons (2010), among others). -Nibud’-items are licensed by certain items that have been argued in the literature to be in the CP domain at LF, such as, for example, question operators ((Cheng (1991), Chomsky (1995), Rizzi (1997), (1999), Sportiche (1995))) and imperative operators ((Han (2001), (Belletti (1999), Schwager (2005), Zanuttini (2008)).

This paper draws the following conclusions from the near-complementary distribution of these two pronominal series in irrealis infinitivals:

1. Russian irrealis infinitivals can be generated as either CPs or as TPs, and the irrealis infinitivals where–nibud’-items are licensed are CPs.
2. -nibud’-items that are licensed in the subject position of moč’ ‘can’ undergo A-movement out of the infinitival complement CP.
3. It is not the matrix modal word that licenses the –nibud’-items in irrealis infinitival complements. The licenser is the irrealis C of the embedded infinitival.
-Nбуд’ Pronouns in Irrealis Infinitivals: Structure and Licensing

Natalia Fitzgibbons*

1 Introduction

This paper uses the distribution of -нбуд’ and нi- indefinite pronouns in Russian to explore the structure of irrealis infinitivals in this language. Irrealis infinitivals are understood in the sense of Stowell 1982: they express unrealized future and, in the spirit of Stowell’s discussion (although not following his work to the letter), will be argued to contain the irrealis operator C_{IRR} in the CP domain. For example, in 0, (1a) is an example of an irrealis infinitival, and (1b) is not.

(1) a. Ja могу ему помоћ.
I can him help

Ja могу [C_{IRR(eals)} ему помоћ]

b. Ja начала читат’ роман.
I started read novel

Ja начала [C_{R(eals)} читат’ роман]

Next, the paper presents evidence showing that Russian irrealis infinitivals can be generated as either TPs or CPs. They are generated as TPs when нi- items are licensed in them by superordinate negation, and as CPs when -нбуд’ items are licensed in the absence of any licenser in the matrix clause. Where neither нi- nor -нбуд’ items are present in the sentence, there is no way to tell whether the infinitival is a TP or a CP.

The paper begins with a short discussion of нi- and -нбуд’ pronouns in Section 2, which concludes with the observation that in irrealis infinitivals, нi- and -нбуд’ pronouns are mutually exclusive. Section 3 offers an explanation of this mutual exclusivity by arguing that the licensing conditions of нi- and -нбуд’ items cannot be satisfied simultaneously in irrealis infinitivals. Section 4 concentrates on licensing -нбуд’ items in irrealis infinitival complements to modal words and concludes that modal words are not the licensors of -нбуд’; rather, the licenser is C_{IRR}. Section 5 is the conclusion.

2 Ni- and -Nбуд’ Series of Dependent Indefinite Pronouns

2.1 The Ni- Series

The нi- series of indefinite pronouns is a negative concord series, licensed only by syntactic agreement with the clausemate sentential negation head (Brown 1999, Zeijlstra 2004, Fitzgibbons 2010, among others). The sentential negation head ne carries the interpretable negative feature f_{NEG}, the нi- items carry the uninterpretable negative feature u_{NEG}. Ni- items undergo movement to Spec,NegP where they c-command the goal f_{NEG} of sentential negation and their u_{NEG} is checked off. This process is illustrated in (2a, b). (2c) shows that нi- items are not licensed across a finite CP boundary, even if the CP is subjunctive. If the нi- item can move overtly across the CP, as in (2c), the acceptability of the sentence improves significantly.

(2) a. Ja нi-kogo ne знам.
I нi-who not know

‘I do not know anybody.’
I use (4b) in the main text with sentential negation for ease of presentation. Sentences corresponding to this structure are even more natural than the example in (4b). The reader will notice that the analysis I have proposed for the ni- and -nibud’ items paints a picture where, everything else being equal, ni- items and -nibud’ items cannot co-occur in an infinitival complement. The reason is that ni- items cannot be separated from a sentential negation by a CP boundary, while -nibud’ items, on the contrary, require the CP layer to be licensed. Two such environments are schematized in (4). Taking the matrix CP to contain no potential licenser for -nibud’, only ni- items can be licensed in the infinitival TP in (4a), and only -nibud’ items can be licensed in the infinitival CP in (4b). The examples in (5) show that this prediction is confirmed.

\[ (2) \begin{array}{l}
\text{b. } [_{\text{AgrP}} \text{Ja } [_{\text{NegP}} \text{nikogo } ne ]_{\text{TP}} \text{ja znaju nikogo]}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{c. } \text{Ja (?ni-kogo) ne xoču, čtoby on (*ni-kogo) obižal.}
\end{array} \]

‘I do not want him to bully anyone.’

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{I (ni-who) not want that.SUBJ he (ni-who) bully.SUBJ}
\end{array} \]

2.2 The -Nibud’ Series

The -nibud’ series is a non-specific indefinite pronoun series. Each -nibud’ item consists of a wh-stem and the additional morphological material -nibud’. The distribution of this series is restricted to contexts that satisfy two requirements: (a) -nibud’ items are TP-adjoined or, if they are subjects, possibly in Spec.AgrSP; (b) the -nibud’ items are in the scope of a quantificational operator, which itself is in the CP domain at LF (see Fitzgibbons 2010 for discussion). The examples in (3) illustrate this analysis of -nibud’ items. As -nibud’ items are always non-specific, I will gloss them as ‘someone or other,’ ‘somehow or other,’ etc.

\[ (3) \begin{array}{l}
\text{a. } [\text{I know for sure that…}]
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
*\text{Ty kogo-nibud’ iz nix znæš’}.
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{you someone.or.other from them know}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
[\text{[CP}_{\text{AgrP}} \text{Ty [TP kogo-nibud’ iz nix [TP ty znæš’ kogo-nibud’ iz nix]]]]}
\end{array} \]

2.3 Mutual Exclusivity of the -Nibud’ Series and the Ni- Series

\[ (4) \begin{array}{l}
\text{a. } [\text{CP … ne … [TP …]]]}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{b. } [\text{CP}_{\text{NegP}} \text{ne … [CP …]]]}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
(5) \text{[Imagine that …]}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{a. } *\text{Ja ne xoču komu-nibud’ ni-čego davat’/ni-čego komu-nibud’ davat’}.
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{I not want someone.or.other ni-what give /ni-what someone.or.other give}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{b. } \text{Ja ne xoču ni-čego emu davat’}.
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{I not want ni-what him give}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{‘I do not want to give him anything.’}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{c. } \text{Ja ne xoču komu-nibud’ davat’ den’gi.}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{I not want someone.or.other give money}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{‘I do not want to give money to someone or other.’}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{d. } *\text{Ja ni-čego ne xoču komu-nibud’ davat’}.
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{I ni-what not want someone.or.other give}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{‘I do not want to give anything to someone or other.’}
\end{array} \]

\[ 1 \text{Nibud’ items do not require the presence of negation, so they are expected to be licensed in (i) too, and sentences corresponding to this structure are even more natural than the example in (4b).}
\]

\[ (i) \begin{array}{l}
\text{[CP Ja xoču [CP komu-nibud’ odat’ starye igrusik]}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{I want someone.or.other give.away old toys}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{‘I want to give the old toys away to someone or other.’}
\end{array} \]

I use (4b) in the main text with sentential negation for ease of presentation.
(5a) shows that, irrespective of the order of the ni- item and -nibud’ item, they cannot occur in the same infinitival clause; in contrast, (5b) and (5c) show that a ni- item or a -nibud’ item alone can occur in an infinitival clause. Finally, (5d) is an expected outcome if our previous conclusions about licensing ni- items in (2) are correct: if the ni- item moves out of the infinitival and into the matrix clause that contains sentential negation, the status of the sentence markedly improves compared to (5a). Given that ni- items and -nibud’ items do not compete for the same position and that their licensors are not mutually exclusive semantically, it is odd that ni- and -nibud’ items cannot co-occur in an irrealis infinitival.

3 Locality of Ni- and -Nibud’ Licensing

I argue that ni- items and -nibud’ items cannot co-occur in the same infinitival clause because the locality of their licensing relations is different. The ni- items and the -nibud’ items only appear to be in the same infinitival; looked at more closely, they really need different structures to survive. Consider first ni- items: the examples in (6) show that the infinitival they occur in is a TP (6a) or a NegP as in (6b), where the infinitival contains both the ni- item and its licensing sentential negation ne. Crucially, we know that ni- items are not licensed across a CP (as in (2c) above).

(6) a. Ja ne xoču [XP ni-kogo videt’].
   I not want ni-who see
   ‘I do not want to see anyone.’

   b. Ja xoču [XP nikogo ne videt’].
   I want someone.or.other not see
   ‘I want to not see someone or other.’

If the infinitival complements in (6) are smaller than CP, we expect that, in the absence of a licenser in the matrix clause, -nibud’ items cannot be licensed in them. Contrary to this expectation, -nibud’ is acceptable, as (7) shows.

(7) [It is a fact that …]
   a. Ja (ne) xoču kogo-nibud’ ne videt’.  
      I (not) want someone.or.other see
      ‘I do not want to see someone or other.’

   b. Ja xoču kogo-nibud’ ne videt’.
      I want someone.or.other not see
      ‘I want to not see someone or other.’

Is the infinitival XP [(ne) videt’] no larger than a TP or NegP, but at the same time a CP? More likely this XP can be generated as either a TP (or NegP) or a CP, and in each particular case we get one but not the other. The infinitival XP that contains ni- items is a TP (or NegP), and one that contains -nibud’ items in the absence of a licenser in the matrix clause is a CP. This difference is illustrated by the partial bracketing in (8).

(8) a. Ja ne xoču [TP nikogo videt’]. (6a)

   b. Ja (ne) xoču [CP kogo-nibud’ videt’]. (7a)

4 Modal Words are not Licensers of -Nibud’ Items

We have established that -nibud’ items are licensed in infinitival complements that have a CP-layer. This brings up a further question: is the modal word the licenser of -nibud’ items or is it the CIRR operator in the infinitival? If the modal word is the licenser, then the conclusion that the licenser of -nibud’ items needs to be in the CP-layer at LF needs to be qualified. If it is CIRR, then modal words do not have a direct role in licensing -nibud’ items. Modal words may be the reason for the presence of CIRR, but it is CIRR that licenses -nibud’. In this section, I defend the latter view. The crux of this argument is the sharp contrast between epistemic and root infinitival comple-
ments to modal words with respect to licensing of -$nibud’$ items in the pre-modal position.

Russian modal words belong to various lexical classes: moč’ ‘can’ is a verb, dolžen ‘must’ is a predicative adjective, možno ‘allowed’ and nužno ‘needed’ are predicative adverbs (Švedova 1980, among others). Apart from that, the examples in (9–11) below illustrate the familiar root vs. epistemic contrast: when in the pre-modal position (for example, when they are matrix subjects), -$nibud’$ items are licensed only in epistemic meanings. Both epistemic and root infinitivals license -$nibud’$ items in the post-modal position, for example, as the object of the infinitive, which means that in principle both root and epistemic infinitivals are a licensing environment for -$nibud’$.

(9) a. ??/*Kto-nibud’ možet mne pomoč’.
    someone.or.other can me help
    Root: Someone or other is capable/allowed to help me.
b. *Kto-nibud’ dolžen mne pomoč’.
    someone.or.other must me help
    Root: Someone or other is obligated to help me.

(10) a. Kto-nibud’ možet mne pomoč’.
    someone.or.other can me help
    Epistemic: It is possible that someone or other will help me.
b. Kto-nibud’ dolžen mne pomoč’.
    someone.or.other must me help
    Epistemic: It is highly probable that someone or other will help me.

(11) a. Ja mogu komu-nibud’ pomoč’.
    I can someone.or.other help
    Root: I am allowed/ capable of helping someone or other.
    Epistemic: It is possible that I will help someone or other.
b. Ja dolžna komu-nibud’ pomoč’.
    I must someone.or.other help
    Root: I am obligated to help someone or other.
    Epistemic: The probability is very high that I will help someone or other.

The pattern in (9) though (11) is consistent with the idea that root meanings of modals correlate with control infinitival complements and epistemic meanings of modals correlate with raising infinitival complements. Then, -$nibud’$ items in pre-modal position are licensed by raising infinitives, not by root infinitives. The difference comes down to whether the pre-modal -$nibud’$ was inside the infinitival complement at any point in the derivation. When there is no point in the derivation when -$nibud’$ was inside the infinitival, the sentence is ungrammatical. This is best demonstrated with matrix subject -$nibud’$ items in (9a) vs. (10a) above and partially diagrammed in (12).

(12) a. Control (9a)
    ??/[Agsp [TP Kto-nibud’; možet [CP PRO, mne pomoč’]]]
b. Raising (10a)
    [Agsp [TP Kto-nibud’; možet [CP I, mne pomoč’]]]

The conclusion that the epistemic moč’ is a raising predicate is confirmed by several tests: idiom chunks, scope interpretation, and the distribution of expletives (more exactly, of impersonal verbs).

The idiom chunks test shows that idiomatic meanings of clausal idioms survive when they are complements to moč’ on the epistemic meaning and are lost when these idioms are complements to moč’ on the root meaning.

(13) a. (u nego) Duša možet ujti v pjatki.
    (at him) soul can leave into heels
    OK Epistemic: ‘There exists the possibility he will get very scared.’ Idiomatic
    Root: ‘His soul has the ability to go into his heels.’ Literal
Another test involves scope interpretation of the pre-modal quantifier with respect to the modal (see Wurmbrand 2001 and references cited there for discussion). In a sentence where the modal is taken on its root meaning, the infinitival complement is a control structure. The pre-modal quantifier in such cases is expected to scope only above the modal word. In contrast, in a sentence where the modal is taken on its epistemic meaning, the infinitival complement is a raising structure and the pre-modal quantifier is expected to take scope either below or above the modal. This entails that pre-modal -nibud’ should be acceptable with epistemic, not root readings of modals. The examples in (14) and (15) show that this prediction is confirmed: pre-modal -nibud’ is only licensed on the epistemic meaning of moč’ ‘can’.

The third applicable test concerns the acceptability of expletives. Russian does not have overt expletives, but it does have impersonal verbs.\(^2\) As discussed in Fleischer 2006, impersonal verbs in Russian are disallowed in control infinitivals. We then expect pre-modal -nibud’ items to be unacceptable where impersonal verbs are unacceptable. The examples in (16) and (17) show that this prediction is borne out.

\(^2\)For some discussion and arguments to the contrary, see Franks 1996 and Skorniakova 2008.
To sum up, the outcomes of all three applicable tests support the conclusion that *moč* ‘can’ is a raising predicate on the epistemic meaning, and this is also the meaning on which *-nibud* is licensed in the pre-modal position. Taken together, these two outcomes force the conclusion that these pre-modal *-nibud* items originate inside the infinitival CP and undergo A-movement out of it. This conclusion is illustrated in the partial labeled bracketing in (18a). Unlike epistemic infinitivals, root infinitivals are control structures. *-Nibud* items in the pre-modal position of control structures do not originate inside the infinitival (18b). Everything else being equal, this difference in the point of origin of the pre-modal *-nibud* item accounts for the contrast between root and epistemic infinitivals.

(18) a. \[\text{A} \rightarrow \text{SP} \quad \text{čto-nibud}’_i \quad \text{možet} [\text{CP} \ldots t_i \text{ zaměřznut}] \] – A-movement out of CP
    something_or_other can freeze

b. \[\ast \text{A} \rightarrow \text{SP} \quad \text{kto-nibud}’_i \quad \text{možet} [\text{CP} \; \text{PRO}_i \; \text{brosit}’ \; \text{kuri}’] \]
    someone_or_other is capable quit smoke

We can now answer the question posed at the beginning of this section: is it the matrix modal word or the C\_IRR of the infinitival that licenses *-nibud*? Where the modal word is a predicative adjective or adverb, no contrasting predictions can be made. For the verb *moč* ‘can’, however, we can make a clear testable prediction that would tease apart the two hypotheses based on the fact that modal verbs undergo head movement (Stowell 2004, Lechner 2006, among others). If the modal verb was the licensor of *-nibud*’, there would be a point in the derivation (its exact characterization does not bear on the argument) where the modal has the *-nibud*’ item in its scope. The pre-modal *-nibud*’ is then expected to be licensed with both epistemic and root infinitivals, which, as we have seen, is not the case. If the matrix modal was the licensor, then, the fact that the *-nibud*’ item originates inside the infinitival complement only on epistemic meanings should make no difference. No epistemic vs. root contrast in licensing pre-modal *-nibud*’ items is predicted, as illustrated in the partial derivations in (22). Extra stipulations would be required to ban reconstruction of *-nibud*’ in (22c) into the post-modal position.

3A-movement out of CP is sometimes considered impossible, but is in fact not unheard of. The literature cites examples of A-movement out of CP for various languages. One of the languages that has been argued to have A-movement out of CP is Japanese. Observe that in the following examples, the CPs in question are finite, introduced by overt complementizers.


(i) a. \[?\text{Otagai-no sensei-ga John}-n_i [\text{či kareera}-o hihansu-ru-yoo(-ni-to)] \text{ it-ta.} \]
    each_other GEN teacher-NOM John-DAT they-ACC criticize-NONPAST-SUBJ-COMP tell-PAST
    ‘Each other’s teacher told John to criticize them.’

b. \[?\text{Kareera-o [oagai-no sensei-ga John}-n_i [\text{či t_i hihansu-ru-yoo(-ni-to)] \text{ it-ta.} \]
    they-ACC each_other GEN teacher-NOM John-DAT criticize-NONPAST-SUBJ-COMP tell-PAST
    ‘Them, each other’s teacher told John to criticize.’


(ii) a. \[?\text{Otagai-no [Bill-ir orokanimo tensai-da-to] omot-teiru.} \]
    each_other GEN Bill-NOM stupidly genius-COP-COMP think-PROG
    ‘Stupidly, John thinks that Bill is a genius.’

b. \[\text{John-ir Bill}-o_i orokanimo [t_i tensai-da-to] omot-teiru. \]
    John-NOM Bill-ACC stupidly [t_i genius-COP-COMP] think-PROG
    ‘John thinks of Bill stupidly as a genius.’

(iii) a. \[?\text{Otagai-no sensei-ga kareera-o i [t_i baka-da-to] omot-teiru.} \]
    each_other GEN teacher-NOM kareera-OI [t_i fool-COP-COMP] think-PROG
    ‘Each other’s teachers think of them as fools.’

b. \[?\text{Kareera-o [oagai-no sensei-ga t_i [t_i baka-da-to] omot-teiru.} \]
    them-ACC each_other GEN teacher-NOM [t_i fool-COP-COMP] think-PROG
    ‘Them, each other’s teachers think of t_i as fools.’

Ura (1994) gives examples from over a hundred languages that allow A-movement out of CP (Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Moroccan Arabic, Persian, and many others).
The conclusion is then warranted that the modal verb itself is not the licensor of ‘nibu’d’ items. The difference between the structures on the epistemic and root meanings lies within the infinitival clause, not outside of it. Stowell (1982) captures this difference in terms of a difference in the CP layers of epistemic and root infinitivals. In epistemic infinitivals, the CP layer (COMP for Stowell) contains a tense operator with the meaning of ‘unrealized future’; I have referred to it as it C_{IRR}. Assuming that C_{IRR} is the licensor provides exactly the right cut between root and epistemic structures with respect to licensing of the pre-modal ‘nibu’d’:

(23) a. Root: *[[AgSP Kto-nibu’d’, možet, t, t [CP C_{IRR} PRO_t stat’ millionerom]].
  someone_or_other is_capable become millionaire

b. Epistemic: [AgSP Kto-nibu’d’, možet, t, t [CP C_{IRR} t, t [CP PRO_t stat’ millionerom]].
  someone_or_other can become millionaire

5 Conclusion

I have discussed the distribution of the ni- and -nibu’d’ series of indefinite pronouns in Russian and reached the following surprising conclusions:

- Russian irrealis infinitivals can be generated as either CPs or TPs; the irrealis infinitivals where ‘nibu’d’ items are licensed are CPs.
- ‘Nibu’d’ items that are licensed in the subject position of mo’z ‘can’ undergo A-movement out of the embedded infinitival CP.
- It is not the matrix modal word that licenses the ‘nibu’d’ item in the pre-modal position, or the ‘nibu’d’ items that remain inside the infinitival complement. The licensor is the irrealis C of the embedded infinitival.

References


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