

Relativizing Zemskaya's Word Order Puzzle

There is a well known puzzle in Slavic word order studies involving some significant differences between movement of question (WH) phrases and movement of non-question phrases based on facts first identified by Zemskaya 1973 and discussed in Yadroff 1991, Müller & Sternefeld 1993, Bošković & Takahashi 1998 and elsewhere. As Müller & Sternefeld note: “we encounter a surprising asymmetry between wh-movement and scrambling [movement of non-questions], which...calls for a sophisticated theory of improper movement” (M&S 1993: 468).

The basic facts of Zemskaya's puzzle (based on Russian) are as follows: First, for non-questions, extraction from (subjective (*čtoby*) and) indicative (*čto*) clauses is fine (1) and there are few if any subject/object asymmetries (2), whereas for WH-phrases, there is a strong subjunctive/indicative asymmetry in extraction possibilities (3) and significant subject/object asymmetries (4)-(5). Combining all of these factors into the most extreme case, we see that WH-questions strongly disallow subject extraction out of indicative clauses (as expected under standard assumptions following Rizzi 1990), whereas non-WH phrases are close to fully acceptable when dislocated even from embedded subject position across an overt indicative complementizer, as shown in the contrast in (6).

This state of affairs has led to some fairly unorthodox claims about the derivation of word order in Russian and other Slavic languages, particularly in the theories of Müller & Sternefeld 1993, Bošković & Takahashi 1998, Bošković 2004, and van Gelderen 2005. Those theories differ greatly among themselves, but all share the general abandonment of standard aspects of movement theory and locality in natural language familiar from Rizzi 1990, 1997, 2004, Chomsky 1995, 2001, Saito 1992, 2004, 2005 and many others. The most serious of those accounts, van Gelderen's (2005) Early Spell Out and Bošković & Takahashi (1998) Base-Generation and Lowering have been showed by Bailyn 2001 and others to encounter significant empirical and theoretical obstacles, and remain to be successful worked out. We therefore assume that an overt movement account of the dislocation of both WH and non-WH phrases is desirable, and that is what is pursued here.

In this paper we therefore explore the possibility that a more nuanced theory of blocking of movement based on a feature system of the kind discussed in Rizzi 2004 will allow us to account for Zemskaya's puzzle while not abandoning standard aspects of movement theory, as is required for the theories mentioned above to work out.

The major pieces of the proposed analysis are as follow:

- (i) apparent Russian complementizers sit in SpecC position and not in the head of CP (Antonenko 2006). This accounts for their inability to be dropped, and for the fact that object WH-movement out of such clauses is significantly better than subject WH-movement, a paradigm highly reminiscent of Rizzi's 1990's Weak Islands. It also accounts for a range of other differences between Russian and English indicatives.
- (ii) Given (i), the primary piece of Zemskaya's puzzle reduces to the question of why movement of non-WH phrases out of indicatives, as in (6)b, is acceptable. Here, we appeal to Rizzi's 2004 nuanced theory of A'-features to explain why the contrast in (6) obtains. In (6)b, the [WH] feature of the *čto* complementizer fails to block the [TOP] feature of the moved element.
- (iii) However, when a non-interrogative structure is used with Focus on the moved element, as in (7), things are markedly worse, as predicted by Rizzi's typology of features (8), whereby [FOC] is quantificational (along with [WH]), whereas [TOP] is not. The crucial undiscovered fact is the degree to which (6)b becomes degraded when the moved element is (a) focused and (b) the entire sentence is not a Y/N question (a fact about all of Zemskaya's sentences of the relevant type, that has previous gone unnoticed). Y/N questions disallow focus reading, and presuppose the givenness of the elements contained in them, and as such carry the feature [TOP], as described in Rizzi 2004. The relevance of such features to blocking is further supported by the findings in Shields 2006 in adverb movement that also obey Rizzi's 2004 typology of features.

This accounts for Zemskaya's puzzle within an overt-movement model of word order derivation.

- 1) On skazal [čto [noski [on rad [čto kupil _]]].
he said that the-socks he is-glad that bought
“He said that he is glad that he bought **the socks**.” (ex from M&S 1993)

- 2) a. Mne **Katju** kazetsja [što [otпустit' [__ odnu] tak pozdno]] bylo by bezumiem
 me Katja_{ACC} seems that to-let-go alone so late would be insanity
 "It seems to me that it would be insane to allow Katja to go alone so late at night." (M&S)
- b. ?što [**Petrov** [stranno [što [__ nam pomogal]]]]
 that Petrov_{NOM} is-odd that us helped
 "...that it is odd that **Petrov** helped us" (ex from M&S 1993)
- 3) a. ?*[**Kakuju knigu**] ty dumaeš' [što Petr pročitaj __] ?
 which book you believe that Peter read
 "Which book do you believe that Peter read?" (ex from M&S 1993)
- b. [**Kakuju knigu**] ty xočeš' [čtoby [Petr pročitaj __]] ?
 which book you want that Peter read
 "Which book do you want Peter to have read?" (ex from M&S 1993)
- 4) a. ?***Kogo** tebe kazetsja [što [otпустit' [__ odnogo tak pozdno]] bylo by bezumiem?
 Who_{ACC} you seems that to-let-go alone so late would be insanity
 "To let **who** go alone so late would seem to you to be insanity?" (ex from M&S 1993)
- c. ****Kto** stranno [što [__ nam pomogal]] ? (subject WH out of *što*-clause)
 who_{NOM} is-odd that us helped
 "Who is it strange (that) helped us?" (ex from M&S 1993)
- 5) a. **Komu** ty xočeš' [čtoby [on pomogal __]] ? (obj WH out of *čtoby*-clause)
 who_{DAT} you want that he helped
 "Who do you want that he help?"
- b. ??/***Kto** ty xočeš' [čtoby [__ nam pomogal]] ? (subj WH out of *čtoby*-clause)
 who_{NOM} you want that us helped
 "Who do you want that help us?"
- 6) a. ***Kto** ty videl [kogda [__ pod'ježžal]] ?
 Who_{NOM} you saw when came
 "Who did you see when (he) was approached?" (ex from M&S 1993)
- b. Ty [**doktor** [videl [kogda [__ pod'ježžal]]]] ?
 you docto_{NOM} saw when came
 "Did you see when **the doctor** came?" (Zemskaya ex, quoted in M&S 1993)
- 7) ??/*Studenty [tol'ko **DOKTOR** [videli [kogda [__ pod'ježžal]]]]
 students only DOCTOR_{NOM} saw when came
 "The students saw when only **A DOCTOR** came"
- 8) Kinds of A'-positions (Rizzi 2004)
- i. Argumental: person, number, gender, case
 - ii. Quantificational: Wh, Neg, measure, focus . . .
 - iii. Modifier: evaluative, epistemic, Neg, frequentative, celerative, measure, manner, . .
 - iv. Topic

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