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**Background:** Genitive of negation (GN; 1), locative inversion (LI; 2), and distributive *po*-phrases (3) are considered to be the main candidates for an unaccusativity diagnostic in Russian (Harves 2016).

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| (1) <i>Otveta ne prišlo.</i><br>answer.GEN not came<br>‘No answer came.’ | (2) <i>Na stole stoit čaška.</i><br>on table stands cup<br>‘There is a cup on the table.’ | (3) <i>Po jabloku upalo s<br/>po apple fell from<br/>každogo dereva.<br/>each tree<br/>‘An apple fell from each tree.’</i> |
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All three, however, have been met with robust counterexamples (Levin and Rappaport-Hovav 1994; Babby 2001; Kuznetsova 2005; Glushan and Calabrese 2014).

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| (4) <i>Tam bolše ne igraet<br/>there anymore not play<br/>nikakix detej.<br/>no children<br/>‘No children are playing there anymore.’</i> | (5) <i>Na večere pela odna<br/>on sparty sang one<br/>izvestnaja aktrisa.<br/>famous actress<br/>‘One famous actress was singing at the party.’</i> | (6) <i>Za každoe mesto v<br/>for each seat in<br/>parlamente borjutsja<br/>parliament fight<br/>po dva kandidata.<br/>po two candidate<br/>‘Two candidates are fighting for each seat in the parliament.’</i> |
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**The hypothesis:** The examples above constitute evidence against LI/GN/*po*-phrases being unaccusativity diagnostics only given the implicit assumption that the same lexical verb cannot occur in different argument frames. If the same verb can be unaccusative in one sentence and unergative in the other, the view that LI/GN/*po*-phrases are indicators of an internal argument can be maintained.

**Testing setup:** We suggest that unaccusativity diagnostics should be employed together with diagnostics for presence of external arguments. Even if the same lexical verb is able to pass both unaccusativity and external argument presence diagnostics, it is expected not to pass them simultaneously. We show that this prediction is borne out, lending support to variable argument linking.

**Diagnostics for external arguments:** We employ agent-oriented adverbials and purpose clauses formed with *čtoby* as diagnostics for presence of external argument-introducing Voice head (Jackendoff 1972). To guarantee that they work in Russian, we use the absolute impersonal verb *tošnit* ‘to be nauseated’, considered to involve an internal argument (Lavine and Franks 2008).

- (7) a. \**Menja naročno tošnit*  
me.ACC intentionally nauseates  
Int.: ‘I intentionally nauseate myself.’  
b. \**Menja tošnit, čtoby ne čuvstvovat’ sebja ploxo s utra*  
me.ACC nauseates in.order not feel self bad in morning  
Int.: ‘I nauseate myself in order not to feel bad in the morning.’

**Applying diagnostics for external arguments:** The arguments against employing LI, GN, and *po*-phrases as unaccusativity diagnostics go through insofar as the counterexamples involve external arguments. As shown by agent-oriented adverbials and control into a purpose adjunct, LI configurations do not involve external arguments.

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| <p>(8) a. <i>Deti naročno igraju na</i><br/>children intentionally play on<br/><i>ploščadke.</i><br/>playground<br/>‘Children are playing on the play-<br/>ground intentionally.’</p>            | <p>b. <i>#Na ploščadke naročno igraju</i><br/>on playground intentionally play<br/><i>deti.</i><br/>children<br/>Int.: ‘Children are playing on the play-<br/>ground intentionally.’</p>              |
| <p>(9) a. <i>Deti igraju na ploščadke,</i><br/>children play on playground<br/><i>čtoby razvlečsja.</i><br/>in.order have.fun<br/>‘Children are playing on the play-<br/>ground to have fun’</p> | <p>b. <i>??Na ploščadke igraju deti,</i><br/>on playground play children<br/><i>čtoby razvlečsja.</i><br/>in.order have.fun<br/>Int.: ‘Children are playing on the play-<br/>ground to have fun.’</p> |

GN configurations do not involve external arguments either.

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| <p>(10) a. <i>Nikakije deti ne igraju na</i><br/>no children not play on<br/><i>ploščadke naročno.</i><br/>playground on.purpose<br/>‘No children play on the playground<br/>on purpose.’</p>                  | <p>b. <i>*Nikakix detej ne igrajet na</i><br/>no children.GEN not play on<br/><i>ploščadke naročno.</i><br/>playground on.purpose<br/>Int.: ‘No children play on the play-<br/>ground on purpose.’</p>              |
| <p>(11) a. <i>Nikakije deti ne igraju na</i><br/>no children not play on<br/><i>ploščadke, čtoby razvlečsja.</i><br/>playground in.order have.fun<br/>‘No children play on the playground<br/>on purpose.’</p> | <p>b. <i>*Nikakix detej ne igrajet na</i><br/>no children not play on<br/><i>ploščadke, čtoby razvlečsja.</i><br/>playground in.order have.fun<br/>Int.: ‘No children play on the play-<br/>ground on purpose.’</p> |

Finally, neither do configurations with *po*-phrases.

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| <p>(12) <i>#Na každyj ploščadke naročno</i><br/>on every playground intentionally<br/><i>igrajet po rebjonku.</i><br/>plays po child<br/>Int.: ‘One child is playing on each play-<br/>ground intentionally.’</p> | <p>(13) <i>*Na každyj ploščadke igrajet po</i><br/>on every playground plays po<br/><i>rebjonku, čtoby razvlečsja.</i><br/>child in.order have.fun<br/>Int.: ‘One child is playing on each play-<br/>ground to have fun.’</p> |
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**Conclusion:** While the same monotransitive lexical verb can pass diagnostics for both unaccusativity and unergativity, this abstract has shown that such verbs cannot undergo these diagnostics simultaneously. If either of the diagnostics was faulty, their incompatibility would be unexpected.

If, however, the diagnostics do show opposite configurations of argument structure, their incompatibility is predicted. We therefore conclude that patterns of unaccusativity in Russian support the notion of variable argument linking, predicted in neo-constructionist theories of argument structure (Neu 2024).

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