More Misery Is Coming:
Negative Concord (Not) As a Form of Agree in West Slavic*

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Abstract.

This paper explores the phenomenon of Negative Concord (NC) in West Slavic (WS) languages and challenges the comparison to the traditional Minimalist Agree. Through empirical analysis, it demonstrates that NC operates beyond typical locality constraints like PIC and CED and instead conforms to the finite CP boundary. This constraint applies uniformly to both licensing and movement, implying that no NC items can cross finite CP boundaries. By adopting a downward Agree framework, this study provides a clearer understanding of NC, highlighting its distinct syntactic behaviour and reinforcing the significance of the CP boundary in WS languages.

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Contents

I Introduction & Definitions

Negative Concord, one of the signature characteristics of the West Slavic[1] grammatical structure, has been enjoying a lot of attention from generative syntacticians. This is mainly due to its positioning on the interface of syntax and semantics and the fine art of multiple negative items uniting to express a single semantic negation. This paper sheds light on how NC also raises fundamental questions about the mechanisms underlying otherwise well-studied syntactic operations and their applications.

What is Negative Concord. As an experienced reader might be already aware, Negative Concord (NC) is a phenomenon of multiple negative items contributing to the same semantic negation. This in practice means that indefinites (e.g., *something*, *somebody*, *somewhere*) show in an obligatorily negative form (i.e., *nothing*, *nobody*, *nowhere*), typically marked with the prefix *ni-*,[2] when neighbouring a negative layer, typically overtly marked as the *ne-* prefix (Czech, Slovak) or the *nie* clitic preposition (Polish) on the verb (1).[3]

(1) a. Zoja **ni-**kogo **nie** widziała
Zoja **NEG.NDEF-**person.ACC **NEG** see.PAST.FEM
'Zoja didn't see anybody.'

b. *Zoja **nie-**kogo **nie** widziała
Zoja **NDEF-**person.ACC **NEG** see.PAST.FEM
int.: 'Zoja didn't see anybody.' (*Polish*)

Negative Concord versus Double Negation. Note that NC is not an almighty force and the WS syntax also includes multiple negation readings (i.e., multiple negative items within the same sentence contributing to multiple semantic negations) (2). That the language contains constructions capable of yielding both single- and multiple-negation readings implies a finite scope of NC, necessitating further research to understand where exactly the boundary between these two readings lies.

(2) a. Marek **ne-**ví, že zítra **ni-**kdo **ne-**přijde
Marek **NEG-**know.3SG C tomorrow **NEG.NDEF-**person **NEG-**come.3SG.FUT
'Marek doesn't know that nobody is coming tomorrow.'
≠ 'Marek doesn't know that anybody is coming tomorrow.'

b. Marek **ne-**ví o **ni-**kom, kdo zítra **ne-**přijde
Marek **NEG-**know.3SG about **NEG.NDEF-**person REL tomorrow **NEG-**come.3SG.FUT
'Marek doesn't know about anyone that isn't coming tomorrow.'
≠ 'Marek doesn't know about anyone that is coming tomorrow.' (*Czech*)

II Background

Negative Concord as a Form of Agree. A popular analysis of NC is one that understands NC as a result of the traditional Minimalist Agree (e.g., Deal, 2022; Zeijlstra, 2004). The Minimalist Agree (Chomsky, 2001) is an operation between a Probe and a Goal with matching features (e.g., grammatical gender, number, *wh* etc.), where the Goal must be located in a domain accessible to the Probe. The parallels with NC are immediately obvious due to the overt marking on both verbs and the targeted indefinites.

This study adopts the analysis of NC as a downward (Deal, 2022) rather than upward (Zeijlstra, 2004) Agree. By the former analysis, the verbal negation (the prefix *ne-* or prepositional clitic *nie*) plays the role of a Probe while the indefinites constitute the Goals that receive overt marking (the prefix *ni-*)

[1] Under the term 'West Slavic', this paper understands mainly Czech, Polish, Slovak, and their dialects, although similarities with less widely spoken members of this language family such as Sorbian or Silesian are also likely.

[2] Note that negative indefinites in West Slavic (WS) are typically marked with the negative prefix *ni-* (e.g., Slovak *ni-č* 'nothing', *ni-kto* 'nobody', *ni-kde* 'nowhere'), which is not to be mistaken for the existential indefinite prefix *nie-* (cf., *nie-čo* 'something', *nie-kto* 'someone', *nie-kde* 'somewhere'). See Penka (2011) for more detail on positive and negative indefinites across Slavic languages and beyond.

[3] All data in this paper is original, collected from conversations with consultants from the region.

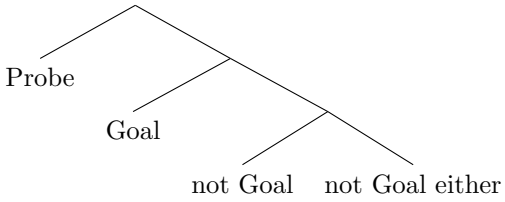
after matching with the Probe. The latter analysis swaps these roles and assumes that multiple Probes (i.e., indefinites with negative marking) must target the same Goal (i.e., the verbal negation).

Both of these analyses depend on the notion of *c*-command for the Probe to be able to match and subsequently agree with its Goals, but all examples in the present study are too straightforward and none would differ on this account. Therefore, this essay chooses to proceed with the analysis that yields accurate results with comparatively greater theoretical simplicity, providing a clearer and more intuitive explanation of the means of NC in WS.

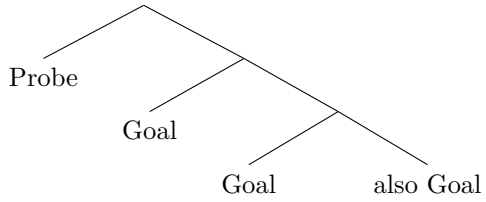
First, this analysis follows the traditional syntactic hierarchy where higher elements (Probes) govern and interact with lower elements (Goals) rather than vice versa. Second, it eliminates the need to explain the complexities behind how multiple Probes (i.e., negative indefinites) target a singular Goal (i.e., the verbal negation) without impacting the negative marking on either. Third, it minimises the number of steps needed for the correct final form: only one operation (i.e., only one active verbal Probe targeting every indefinite Goal in its domain) is necessary to yield the accurate NC construction, while multiple operations initiated by multiple Probes (i.e., multiple negative indefinites) are necessary to yield the accurate NC construction according to the alternative thesis.

Note that for the downward analysis to hold, the verbal negation must be an insatiable Probe (Deal, 2022). This means that the Probe does not deactivate upon successfully matching its features with the first available Goal but proceeds to match with every other available Goal until the end of its domain. Trees (4) and (3) provide a visualisation of the difference between a satiable and an insatiable Probe. Example (5) shows that NC in WS requires the marking of every available indefinite and therefore more closely resembles the insatiable thesis shown in (3).

(3) Satiable Probe:



(4) Insatiable Probe:



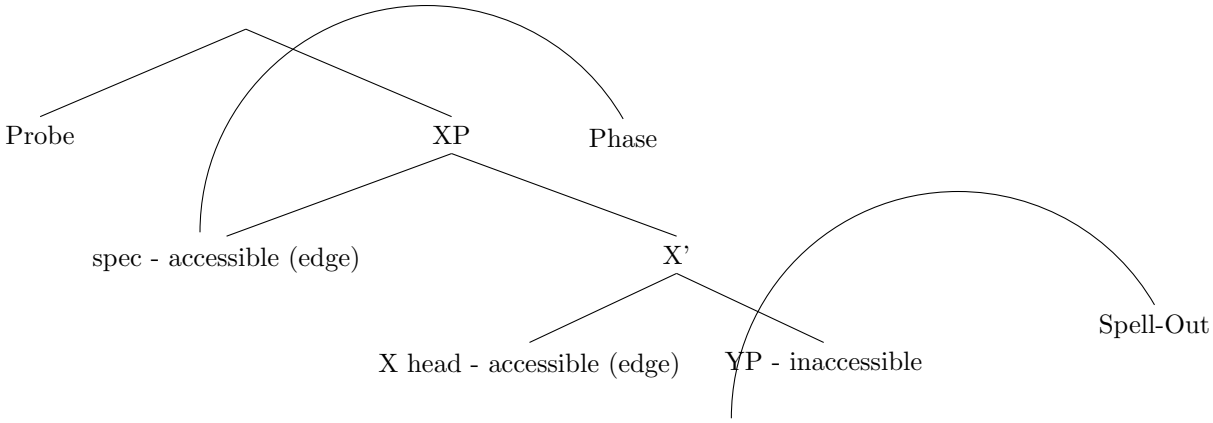
(5) Marek **ne-**vie **ni-**č/*niečo o **ni-**kom/*niekom.
Marek NEG-know.3SG **n-**thing.ACC/*something.ACC about **n-**person.LOC/*someone.LOC
'Marek doesn't know anything/*something about anybody/*somebody.' (*Slovak*)

That said, the traditional Minimalist Agree (regardless of its direction) is also, to nobody's surprise, an operation restricted to a certain, finite domain. This domain has been widely studied and several so-called locality constraints, containing the operation to a local domain, have been proposed. One of the most cited constraints on Agree have been the *Phase Impenetrability Condition* (Chomsky, 2001) and the *Condition on Extraction Domains* (Huang, 1982). As a form of the Minimalist Agree, NC should play by the same rules and give in to the same constraints.

PIC (6) is a constraint on the interaction between the Probe and the Goals based on phases. The condition states that only the edge of a phase (i.e., the spec and the head) are accessible to Probes from above this phase. At this point, the complement has been sent to the spell-out and is no longer available (see visual in (7)). Note that this constraint depends on the definition of the phasal head. In this context, popularly discussed heads have been especially C, *v*, D, and P.

(6) *Phase Impenetrability Condition (original definition):* The domain of a head X of a phase XP is not accessible to operations outside XP; only X and its edge are accessible to such operations (Chomsky, 2001).

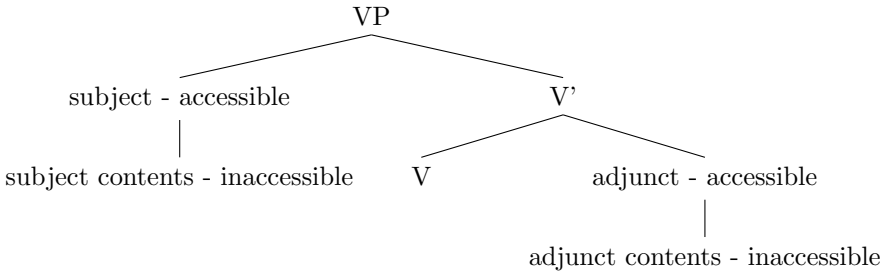
(7) PIC visualised:



CED (8), on the other hand, restricts the interaction of an external Probe with items contained within more complex subjects and adjuncts. In other words, due to the lack of 'proper governance', items inside subjects and adjuncts (though not subjects and adjuncts as a whole) are not available for extraction and (and other external operations). The head of a phrase is not discussed as it is typically not targeted or extracted to the same extent as subjects and adjuncts (see (9) for a visual outline of the constraint).

(8) *Condition on Extraction Domains (original definition)*: A phrase A may be extracted out of a domain B only if B is properly governed (Huang, 1982).

(9) CED visualised:



As outlined above, the domain of the traditional Minimalist Agree has been at the centre of the generative debate. However, its application to other matching operations labelled as forms of Agree has so far gone rather unnoticed.

Proposal. This paper makes the following claims: (i) that NC does not subscribe to the same locality constraints as the traditional Minimalist Agree, (ii) that the true constraint NC responds to is the CP boundary, (iii) that, in order for this constraint to hold, CP has to be finite, and (iv) that this constraint applies for licensing as well as movement.

III Negative Concord and Locality

In order to determine whether or not NC displays similar behaviours as the Minimalist Agree, it is also necessary to look at how Agree applies in the standard contexts (as proposed by the discussions on locality). That said, this section first tests the behaviours of typical Agree Probes, C and T, and tests similar situations with the negative Probe (previously assumed to be the verbal negative marker) second. Two previously mentioned conditions, the PIC and CED, are tested.

Phase Impenetrability Condition. Recall that PIC is responsible for a Probe from outside a phase failing to access Goals inside the next phase's complements. More specifically, a commonly attested Probe such as T (responsible for the subject-verb agreement) should not be able to agree with items inside the complements of phasal heads such as C, *v*, D and P. This paper focuses on D and P, as C is later argued to

be the true boundary and v is directly chained with the negative layer in ways that go beyond the scope of this paper.

The best way to show the application of PIC in the language is to try to force T into agreeing with Goals inside DPs and PPs of predicates with no subjects to agree with. In other words, if T has no subject to agree with, will it reach into a DP or a PP for the next best available option or is there a boundary it cannot cross due to the PIC? The way to tackle this question is through subject-free predicates such as weather predicates.

Consider (10) and (11). In these weather predicates, T has no subject to agree with, but it does have Goals available behind the PP and DP boundary respectively. Note that the target Goals are in both cases plural. This means that if T could successfully reach these Goals, the verbs would have displayed a plural agreement—but they do not. This is because Goals inside PPs and DPs are not available, showing that the PIC in WS applies.

(10) V Európe prš-**í**/*prš-ia [PP počas všetk-**ých** obdob-**í**].
In Europe.LOC rain-**3SG**/*rain-3PL [PP during all-**PL**.GEN season-**PL**.GEN]
'In Europe it rains during all the seasons.' (*Slovak*)

(11) Padał-**o**/*padał-y [DP cał-**e** dn-**ie**].
rain.**3SG**.PAST/*rain.3PL.PAST [DP all.**PL**.ACC dni.**PL**.ACC]
'It rained all days.' (*Polish*)

This study next tests PIC in the same context (that is, of DP and PP) for the negative Probe. For the lack of suitable examples, (10) and (11) only showed the presence of PIC in adjunct contexts, which can be more easily complemented by DP and PP arguments in the context of the negative Probe, as any eligible argument can be modified to contain an appropriate indefinite that either is or is not accessible. Note that all tested DPs and PPs must be embedded to ensure that they are placed in the complement.

Although argument PPs in case-rich languages such as WS are less frequent than in less case-rich languages, there exist suitable verbs that mandatorily select a PP for arguments (12). However, both in argument (12) and in adjunct (13) PPs, positive indefinites are ungrammatical. Likewise, Goals inside both argument (14) and adjunct (15) DP are mandatorily licensed. This means that the negative Probe successfully reaches Goals inside these phrases, even though PIC predicted it would not.

(12) Zoja [PP s **ni-**kým/*někým] **ne-**vychází.
Zoja [PP with **NDEF-**person.INS/*somebody.INS] **NEG**-get.along.3SG
'Zoja doesn't get along with anyone/*someone.' (*Czech*)

(13) Zoja **ne-**spa-la [PP počas **ni-**ktor-ej/*niektor-ej prezentáci-e].
Zoja.NOM **NEG**-sleep-PAST.FEM [PP during **NDEF-**some-GEN/*some-GEN presentation-GEN]
'Zoja didn't sleep during any/*some of the presentations.' (*Slovak*)

(14) Marek **ne-**opáči-l [DP kúsok [DP **ni-**jak-ého/*nejak-ého syr-a]].
Marek.NOM **NEG**-taste-PAST.MASC [DP bit.ACC [DP **n-**some-GEN/*some-GEN cheese-GEN]]
'Marek didn't try a piece of any/*some cheese.' (*Slovak*)

(15) Zoja **nie** widzia-ła [DP prezent-u [PP dla **ni-**kogo/*kogoś]].
Zoja.NOM **NEG** see-PAST.FEM [DP present-ACC [PP for **n-**person.ACC/*somebody.ACC]]
'Zoja didn't see a present for anybody/*somebody.' (*Polish*)

Condition on Extraction Domains. Recall that CED restricts the access of a Probe to Goals INSIDE the subjects and adjuncts of phrases (though subjects and adjuncts as a whole remain accessible). In other words, parts of complex subjects and adjuncts are not accessible to an external Probe. This condition must be very familiar to the reader due to its close association with the restrictions on fronting in *wh*-questions, licensed by the C Probe.

CED splits into two main parts: (i) the subject condition and (ii) the adjunct condition. By the subject

condition, the C Probe attempts to reach inside complex subjects or adjuncts and tries to agree with only parts of them. If this agreement were successful, C would have successfully fronted parts of the shown subjects (16) and adjuncts (17) but it fails, showing that CED is indeed a valid constraint for AGREE in WS.

(16) a. [$_{subj}$ Komentár **o Marekovi**] nahneval Zoju.
[$_{subj}$ comment.NOM **about Marek.LOC**] upset.MASC.PAST Zoja.ACC
'A comment about Marek upset Zoja'

b. ***O kom** [$_{subj}$ komentár _____] nahneval Zoju?
about who.LOC [$_{subj}$ comment.NOM _____] upset.MASC.PAST Zoja.ACC
Intended: 'A comment about whom upset Zoja?' (*Slovak*)

(17) a. Zoja žiarli, [$_{adj}$ lebo Marek sa ne-rozpráva **s ňou**].
Zoja.NOM be.jealous.3SG [$_{adj}$ because Marek SE NEG-talk.3SG **with 3SG.INS**]
'Zoja is jealous because it is not her that Marek is talking to.'

b. ***S kým** Zoja žiarli, [$_{adj}$ lebo Marek sa ne-rozpráva ____]?
with who.INS Zoja.NOM be.jealous.3SG [$_{adj}$ because Marek SE NEG-talk.3SG ____]
Intended: 'Who is it that Zoja is jealous of Marek not talking to?' (*Slovak*)

In order to assess the ability of the negative Probe to access elements inaccessible by the CED, it is important to consider examples with complex subjects and adjuncts involving indefinites. Such constructions may involve, for example, embedded genitives (18) or clausal subjects (19). According to the CED, no elements inside these subjects should be accessible to the negative Probe, but their licensing is either mandatory (18) or at least acceptable to a part of the speakers (19).[4]

(18) [$_{subj}$ **Ni-**čí/-koho/ *nie-čí/*-koho otec] **ne-**pil víno.
[$_{subj}$ **n-**POSS/-person.GEN/ *somebody-POSS/*-GEN father] **NEG**-drink.3SG.PAST wine.ACC
'Nobody's father drank wine.' (*Slovak*)

(19) ?[$_{subj}$ Vystopovať **ni-**koho/niekoho] dnes **nie** je jednoduché.
[$_{subj}$ track.down.INF **n-**person.ACC/somebody.ACC] today **NEG** be.3SG easy.3SG
'Tracking anyone/*someone down is not easy these days.' (*Slovak*)

As an attentive reader may have noticed, both of these examples also show an interesting phenomenon: the licensed indefinites may occur well before the negative Probe in the surface representation. This suggests that rather than surface-level *c*-command (e.g., MORITZ and VALOIS, 1994), NC requires that the negative Probe *c*-commands its Goal, the negative indefinite, at least at some point of the derivation.

The constant failure of the CED to hold for the negative Probe also extends to the adjunct condition. In addition to the access to Goals inside complex PPs (13) and DPs (15), this section adds an example of a non-finite CP. As discussed in the later section, it comes as no surprise that indefinites inside non-finite CPs are available to agree with external Probes. However, CED predicts that any adjunct inside these complements should not be accessible. Much to the contrary of this prediction, the negative Probe (20).

(20) a. Zoja **ne-**chce [$_{CP}$ **ni-**komu pomôcť]
Zoja.NOM **NEG-**want.3SG [$_{CP}$ **NEG.NDEF-**person.ACC help.INF]
'Zoja doesn't want to help anybody.'

b. Zoja **ne-**chce [$_{CP}$ prísť [$_{CP}$ **ni-**komu pomôcť]]
Zoja.NOM **NEG-**want.3SG [$_{CP}$ come.INF [$_{CP}$ **NEG.NDEF-**person.DAT help.INF]]
'Zoja doesn't want to come to help anyone.'

[4]Note that WS is a group of frequently scrambling languages. This means that the partial acceptability of (19) may well be a result of a more lenient application of long-distance rather than argument movement. However, (19) is just an additional example of a CED violation confirmed in (18) with a firm judgement.

c. *Zoja **ne**-chce [$_{CP}$ prísť [$_{CP}$ niekomu pomôcť]]
Zoja.NOM **NEG**-want.3SG [$_{CP}$ come.INF [$_{CP}$ **NEG.NDEF**-person.DAT help.INF
int.: 'Zoja doesn't want to come to help anyone.' *Slovak*

IV CP as a Boundary

Recall that this paper proposed that the domain of NC is, rather than the typical domain of Agree as shown above, the finite CP. That CP is a reliable boundary is evident from various contexts such as CPs embedded using various complementisers such as *že* (21) and *aby* (22) (roughly equivalent to English 'that'), interrogative CPs (23), and relative clauses (24). In all these contexts, attempting to extend NC inside these CPs yields a double-negation reading.

(21) Zoja **ne**-povedala [$_{CP}$ že **ni**-č **ne**-kúpi].
Zoja **NEG**-say.PAST.FEM [$_{CP}$ C **n**-thing.ACC **neg**-buy.FUT.3SG]
'Zoja didn't say that she wouldn't buy anything.' (*Slovak*)

(22) Marek **ne**-chce [$_{CP}$ aby **ni**-kdo **ne**-přišel].
Marek **NEG**-want.3SG [$_{CP}$ C **n**-person.NOM **neg**-come.PAST.3SG]
'Marek doesn't want that nobody comes.' (*Czech*)

(23) Marek **ne**-vidí [$_{CP}$ jak se **ni**-komu **ni**-c **ne**-daří].
Marek **NEG**-see.3SG [$_{CP}$ how SE **n**-person.DAT **n**-thing.NOM **neg**-do.well.3SG]
'Marek doesn't see how nobody is doing well.' (*Czech*)

(24) **Ni**-kto, [$_{CP}$ kto **ne**-prišiel,] **ne**-oľutoval.
n-person [$_{CP}$ who **NEG**-come.MASC.PAST] **NEG**-regret.MASC.PAST
'Nobody who didn't come regretted (not coming).' (*Slovak*)

Crucially, for CP to successfully keep two semantic negations apart, this CP needs to be finite. This boundary makes sense: it is only inflected verbs that can merge with a negative layer and trigger thus NC, and so every time an inflected verb merges in, the boundary gets established, just to prevent domain clashes in case the verb later also merges with a negative layer.[5] Neat contrasting examples of this difference are control-verb constructions (25) as well as relative clauses (26).

(25) a. Zoja **ne**-chce [$_{CP}$ **ni**-komu/*někomu pomoct].
Zoja.NOM **NEG**-want.3SG [$_{CP}$ **NEG.NDEF**-person.DAT/*somebody.DAT help.INF]
'Zoja doesn't want to come to help anyone/*someone.'

b. Zoja **ne**-chce [$_{CP}$ aby **ni**-komu **ne**-pomohla].
Zoja.NOM **NEG**-want.3SG [$_{CP}$ C **NEG.NDEF**-person.DAT **NEG**-help.SG.PAST]
'Zoja doesn't want that she help no one.' (*Czech*)

(26) a. Marek **ne**-videl **ni**-jakú knihu ležiacu na
Marek **NEG**-see.3SG.PAST **NEG.NDEF**-which book.ACC [$_{RC}$ lie.INF.FEM.ACC
ni-ktorom/*nie-ktorom zo stolov
on **NEG.NDEF**-which.LOC/*some.LOC from table.PL]

[5] Note that infinitive verbs in WS can occasionally also merge with a negative layer (i), necessarily implying that the low-focus reading for this complement. Read Belletti (2004) for a more detailed analysis of low focus.

(i) Marek dnes chce **ni**-c **ne**-pít
Marek today want.3SG **NEG.NDEF**-thinking **NEG**-drink
'It is not drinking anything that Marek wants to do today.' (*Czech*)

'Marek saw no book lying on any of the tables.'

b. Marek **ne-**videl **ni-**jakú knihu [RC ktorá ležala na
Marek NEG-see.3SG.PAST NEG.NDEF-which book.ACC [RC REL lie.FEM.3SG.PAST on
niektorom/*ni-ktorom zo stolov]
some.LOC/*NEG.NDEF-which.LOC from table.PL]
'Marek saw no book that lied on any of the tables.' (*Slovak*)

V Negative Concord in Motion

Perhaps most interesting of all is the observation that this boundary is not only applicable to licensing but further extends to restricting movement. In the case of NC, one can consider two types of movements: (i) the movement of the Probe (i.e., the verbal prefix *ne-* or prefix *nie*) as well as (ii) the movement of the Goal. The aim of this section is to demonstrate that the otherwise reasonable movement across the finite CP is not possible for NC items.

Moving the Probe. Moving verbal negation across the CP boundary is not an unheard-of phenomenon in generative syntax. Consider Collins and Postal (2017). According to this analysis, the negative layer can freely raise from the embedded clause to the matrix clause without any changes to the overall meaning conveyed by the construction.

As one of the main arguments for such a movement, the study offers examples of clauses with embedded Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) which need a clausal negative layer to yield a grammatical single-negation reading. This reading is also available if the singular present negative layer occurs in the matrix clause, demonstrating that it must have been the same negation raising rather than a different negation freshly merged (27).

(27) a. [CP I do think [CP that Marek does**n't** know [NPI ***jackshit***] about archery]].
b. [CP I do**n't** think [CP that Marek _____ knows [NPI ***jackshit***] about archery]].

Although it appears that the same kind of raising is possible in WS because it also offers the option to change the placement of the verbal negation from its embedded position to the matrix position with no impact on the meaning (28), this view is rather deceptive. This is because as soon as negative indefinites (which, by the way, serve exactly as strict NPIs due to requiring a local licenser) get involved, this raising movement is no longer licensed and the verbal negation must stay within its original CP (29).

(28) a. [CP Marek si myslí [CP že Zoja **ne-**príde]]
[CP Marek.NOM SE think.3SG [CP C Zoja.NOM NEG-come.3SG.FUT]]
'Marek thinks that Zoja will not come.'

b. [CP Marek si myslí [CP že Zoja **ne-**príde]]
[CP Marek.NOM SE think.3SG [CP C Zoja.NOM NEG-come.3SG.FUT]]
'Marek thinks that Zoja will not come.' (*Slovak*)

(29) a. [CP Myslím, [CP že Marek *(**ne-**)vie [NPI *a-**ni*** ***hovno***]]].
[CP think.1SG [CP C Marek.NOM *(NEG-)know.3SG [NPI *either-*NEG.NDEF ***shit***.ACC]]]
'I think Marek doesn't know *jackshit*.'

b. *[CP **Ne-**myslím, [CP že Marek vie [NPI *a-**ni*** ***hovno***]]].
[CP NEG-think.1SG [CP C Marek.NOM know.3SG [NPI *either-*NEG.NDEF ***shit***.ACC]]]
'I don't think Marek knows *jackshit*.'

c. [CP **Ne-**myslím, [CP že Marek **ne-**vie [NPI *a-**ni*** ***hovno***]]].
[CP NEG-think.1SG [CP C Marek.NOM NEG-know.3SG [NPI *either-*NEG.NDEF ***shit***.ACC]]]
'I don't think Marek doesn't know *jackshit*.' (*Slovak*)

Moving the Goal. Perhaps the simplest way to show the possible—or rather impossible—movement of

the Goals of NC is through fronting. This is because through this movement, parallels with other types of elements such as *wh*-words and even definite arguments can be drawn. While both of these types of arguments can be easily fronted from the embedded CP, the negative indefinite cannot assume the frontal position in a clause and must stay in the clause of initial merge (30).

(30) a. Koho Marek hovoril, [$_{CP}$ že zajtra (**ne-**)stretne _____]?
who.ACC Marek say.SG.PAST [$_{CP}$ C tomorrow (**NEG-**)meet.3SG.FUT _____]
'Who did Marek say that Marek he'd meet tomorrow?'

b. Zoju Marek hovoril, [$_{CP}$ že zajtra (**ne-**)stretne _____]?
Zoja.ACC Marek say.SG.PAST [$_{CP}$ C tomorrow (**NEG-**)meet.3SG.FUT _____]
'Was it Zoja that Marek said he'd meet tomorrow?'

c. *__Ni-__koho Marek hovoril, [$_{CP}$ že zajtra **ne-**stretne _____]?
NEG.NDEF-person.ACC Marek say.SG.PAST [$_{CP}$ C tomorrow **NEG**-meet.3SG.FUT _____]
'Was it nobody that Marek said he'd meet tomorrow?' (*Slovak*)

Note that one might argue that example (30) is ungrammatical not because the negative indefinite is attempting to cross the C boundary but rather because negative indefinites simply may not be selected for fronting (cf. *As for the teacher, John saw them yesterday* and *As for nobody, John saw them yesterday*). However, this movement is not allowed into alternative positions, either (31).

(31) a. *Marek **NI**-koho hovoril, [$_{CP}$ že zajtra **ne-**stretne _____]?
Marek **NEG.NDEF**-person.ACC say.SG.PAST [$_{CP}$ C tomorrow **NEG**-meet.3SG.FUT _____]
'Was it nobody that Marek said he'd meet tomorrow?'

b. *Marek hovoril **NI**-koho, [$_{CP}$ že zajtra **ne-**stretne _____]?
Marek say.SG.PAST **NEG.NDEF**-person.ACC [$_{CP}$ C tomorrow **NEG**-meet.3SG.FUT _____]
'Was it nobody that Marek said he'd meet tomorrow?' (*Slovak*)

VI Conclusion

This paper substantiates that Negative Concord in West Slavic languages operates beyond the traditional Minimalist Agree constraints like PIC and CED, indicating its own distinct syntactic behaviour. The primary constraint governing NC is the finite CP boundary, which ensures that only clauses with inflected verbs can participate in NC, thereby preventing domain clashes and maintaining the integrity of negation structures. This constraint applies to both the licensing of Goals as well as the movement of all participating items. These findings enhance our understanding of NC's unique syntactic properties in WS languages and contribute to the broader theoretical framework of generative grammar.

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