

Russian *-nibud'* items as dependent indefinites

This paper examines the distribution and interpretation of Russian *-nibud'* indefinites, as in (1), and proposes a novel formal analysis thereof. Previous descriptions of these indefinites relied on notions of specificity (Haspelmath 1997), scope (Dahl 1970), assertiveness (Fontaine 1978), speaker knowledge (Pitkevich 2001, Timberlake 2004), or referential possibilities (Tatevosov 2002: 128); however, as argued in this paper, such analyses are inadequate. Our alternative proposal is to analyze *-nibud'* indefinites in terms of valuation constraints (following Farkas 1997 on Hungarian), more specifically, to treat them as dependent indefinites.

- (1) On vsegda nosit s soboj {**kakie-to** / **kakie-nibud'**} knigi.
 he always carries with self *which-to* *which-nibud'* books
 'He always carries with him some books (not necessarily the same ones).'
 [On the $\forall\exists$ reading both are ok]

What *-nibud'* indefinites are not. The co-distribution of *-nibud'* indefinites with other indefinite series in Russian (i.e., *-to* and *-libo* indefinites) shows that an analysis of *-nibud'* indefinites either as narrow scope indefinites or as weak NPIs is problematic because:

- in some contexts, *-nibud'* and *-to* indefinites are interchangeable and synonymous, as in (1), while in other contexts they are not, as in (2);

- (2) {**Kto-to** /* **Kto-nibud'**} ne prišel, { **kto-to** /* **kto-nibud'**} opozdal.
who-to /* *who-nibud'* not came *who-to* /* *who-nibud'* came-late
 'Some people didn't come, and some people came late.'

- in some instances *-nibud'* indefinites are not licensed in simple affirmative contexts (cf. the 1st conjunct in (2)), yet in other instances they are licensed in such non-NPI contexts, as in (3a-c).

- (3) Quantificational licensors for *-nibud'* indefinites are underlined:

- a. Každyj ved' v **kogo-nibud'** vljublën.
 everybody EMPH into *who-nibud'* in-love
 'Everybody is in love with somebody.' $\forall\exists$, $*\exists\forall$
- b. Kogda oni igrajuť **čto-nibud'** gromkoe i bystroe...
 when they play *what-nibud'* loud and fast
 'When(ever) they play something loud and fast...'
- c. Snova zatevaete **kakoe-nibud'** očerednoe kovarstvo?
 again you-plan *which-nibud'* next devilry
 'Are you again planning something devilish?'

Proposal: *-nibud'* indefinites are **dependent indefinites** in the sense of Farkas (1997): they must introduce a **dependent variable**, i.e., a variable the values assigned to which co-vary with those assigned to another variable. Such other variable may be introduced by a lexical quantifier (3a), a non-lexicalized universal quantifier (3b), iterative aspect (3c), or an intensional predicate. In other words, *-nibud'* indefinites are licensed by a distributive quantificational element, whether individual or temporal quantification or quantification over possible worlds. Since negation does not introduce the right kind of variable, *-nibud'* indefinites are not licensed by negation (cf. (2)). Furthermore, the dependent nature of *-nibud'* indefinites is confirmed by the data concerning their compatibility with universal quantifiers *každyj* 'every' (distributive) and *vse* 'all' (non-distributive). This proposal opens the door to analyzing other types of indefinites in Russian in terms of **valuation constraints** rather than in terms of specificity or polarity sensitivity.