Negation-Licensed Commands  
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I. Introduction

The expression of commands can be achieved in a number of ways. The most commonly known are by way of the imperative verb form, the infinitive or the subjunctive. But beyond verbs, other syntactic categories can also be used to convey commands:

1. Quickly!
   - To the principal!
   - Hands in the air!
   - No loud noises!
   - Silence!

   All the expressions in (4) are interpreted as commands. And if one thinks a command is achievable only with functional categories in the extended projection of the verb, which contain a modal or some other element with directive force (Kaufmann 2012, Schwager 2006, Oikonomou 2016 inter alia), one will have some serious eliding to do to derive (4). However, also in a framework in which pragmatics plays the crucial role and the basic syntax is a property or a proposition, with the modal meaning originating in the discourse component to which the property or proposition gets mapped (Hausser 1980, Portner 2007, von Fintel and Iatridou 2017), there is still some serious thinking to do for (4). The commands in (4) are not sentences, so one would have to again consider ellipsis as a possible source or consider non-sentences to be mappable to the hearer's to-do list.

This paper looks at yet another form of conveying commands. The discussion will be cross-linguistic, as the construction under investigation appears in a number of languages. Even though the syntactic properties will be somewhat different in different languages, we will see that there is one common characteristic: these commands survive as commands only when they are negated. The absence of negation does not lead to a positive command. It leads either to a completely different (i.e. non-command) meaning, or to ungrammaticality. I will therefore introduce the term “Negation-Licensed Command” or NLC.

I have three goals for the current paper: to establish the existence of the phenomenon of NLCs, to discuss some of their morpho-syntactic properties cross-linguistically, and to show

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1 Though it is also well-known that many of these verb forms can convey non-commands as well. Note the acquiescence/permission (i), or indifference (ii), uses of the English imperative:

i. A: It is very hot in here. May I open the window?
   B: Sure. Open the window

ii. A: Which way should I go?
   B: Go left. Go right. Do whatever you want

See von Fintel and Iatridou 2017, section 3.5, for a cross-linguistic picture of possibilities.
that a number of possible explanations for them cannot be correct. What, in fact, the correct explanation for NLCs is is not achieved in the current paper.

II. English NLCs (with a bit of Greek NLCs thrown in).

Consider the expressions in (2), all of which can be interpreted as commands:

2a. No talking with your mouth full!
   b. No teasing your sister!
   c. No reading the newspaper in class!
   d. No walking on the grass!

There are several remarkable properties that characterize these sentences. First and foremost is the fact that negation is obligatory:

3a. *Studying hard!
    b. *Reading the newspaper outside of class
    c. *Playing the piano carefully!
    d. *Staying off the grass!

This is an English NLC then\(^2\). So we see that negation is necessary but not any negation will do. Sentential negation doesn’t (4). Nor adverbial \textit{never} (5).

4a. *Not talking with your mouth full!
    b. *Not teasing your sister!
    c. *Not reading the newspaper in class!

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item\textbf{2} The phenomenon of NLC should not be confused with the known problem of combining negation with the imperative verb. In many languages, negation cannot combine with the imperative verb and a non-imperative verb must be used, one which typically also has command uses, eg subjunctive or infinitive, to combine with negation (see among other, Rivero and Terzi 1995, Han 2000, Zeijlstra 2013)
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item ia. fige! (Greek)
\begin{itemize}
\item Leave.imperative
\item ‘leave!’
\end{itemize}
\item b. *min fige
\begin{itemize}
\item Neg Leave.imperative
\end{itemize}
\item c. Min figis!
\begin{itemize}
\item Neg leave.subj
\item ‘Don’t leave!’
\end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

This is not the same as negation being necessary to express a command (NLC).

In addition there is the phenomenon of ‘prohibitives’ where the bare stem combines with a marker that contains both negation and directive force (van der Auwera 2010). This is not the NLC either, though we will come back to prohibitives later in the paper.
5a. *Never talking with your mouth full!
   b. *Never teasing your sister!
   c. *Never reading the newspaper in class!

The only form of negation that appears to work is the determiner no. This raises the suspicion that the remainder might be a nominal projection. Specifically, that it could be a gerund, which is consistent with the -ing suffix. But if it is a gerund, what sort of gerund is it? Classifications like Abney 1985, recognize 3 (or 4) types of gerunds in English: ACCing (6), POSS-ing (7) and ing- of (8). There is also the PRO-ing gerund, which is often considered a subcase of ACCing (9).

6. I am relying on [them solving the problem carefully] ACC-ing
7. [Their advertising cigars publicly] bothered me POSS-ing
8. [The careful singing of the opera] impressed me ing-of
9. I am relying on solving the problem carefully PRO-ing / ACC-ing

In this common classification, the only gerund capable of taking the determiner no or the determiner the, is the ing-of gerund (10). ACC-ing and POSSing cannot take the/no (11, 12), and neither can the PRO-ing gerund (13).

10a. No singing of any opera impressed me
     b. The singing of the opera impressed me
11a. *[The their/them advertising cigars] bothered me
     b. *I am relying on [the their/them solving the problem]
12a. *[No their/them advertising cigars] bothered me
     b. *I am relying on [no their/them solving the problem]
13. *I am relying on the/no solving the problem

In general, the belief in the literature is the following: If an English gerund is (verbal enough to be) able to assign Case to its object, it cannot take the/no. Similarly, if a gerund’s modifier is adverbial and not adjectival, it cannot take the/no.

The ACCing gerund can assign case to its object, as evidenced by the necessary absence of of (14), and it is modified by adverbs, not adjectives (15):

14. I am relying on [them solving (*of) the problem]
15. I am relying on [them carefully / *careful solving the problem]

For Abney and others, the different types of gerunds are the result of the height of attachment of the nominalizing suffix –ing. The name of the highest nominalization, “ACC-ing”, is derived from the fact that the subject of the gerund is in the Accusative. “POSS-ing” is derived from the fact that the subject of the gerund looks like a possessor. The term “ing-of” reflects the belief that this nominalization is the lowest, so low, in fact, that the verb is deprived of its ability to assign Case, which results in the need of the insertion of the (dummy) case assigner of. Finally, the term ‘PRO-ing’ regardless of whether it is a separate type, takes its name from the belief that the unpronounced subject is PRO.
The POSS-ing gerund also can assign case to its object, and its modifiers are also adverbial:

16. [their advertising cigars] bothered me
17. [their publicly/*public advertising cigars] bothered me

The PRO-ing gerund also has case for its object and takes adverbs:

18. publicly/*public advertising cigars bothers me

Finally, the ing-of gerund, as we already saw, requires of for its object, an indication that it is incapable of assigning case, and takes adjectival modifiers:

19. [The careful/*carefully singing of the opera] impressed me

With these distinctions in mind, we can look at the NLC and ask which type of gerund it belongs to. We will see that this question does not have a simple answer.

Given that the NLC contains the determiner no, the first gerund that should be considered is the only one that can take this type of determiner, namely the ing-of gerund.

It is easy to show that the NLC CAN be an ing-of gerund, with the presence of adjectives and of (22), and negation necessary for the command reading, the hallmark of the NLC (23):

20. No careless playing of the piano!
21. *Careful playing of the piano!

As mentioned in fn. 3, the ing-of gerund is considered a “low” nominalization, its head being a noun. So the following question arises: Is the fact that we observe the NLC with ing-of gerunds the result of their being nouns?\(^4\) This presupposes that we know the answer to the following question: Can we observe the NLC with nouns? Indeed, we can\(^5\):

22a. No solicitors!
   b. No crank calls!
   c. No dogs!
23a. *Students!
   b. *Cats!

\(^4\) Though if all types of gerunds are anyway DPs (or NPs), this question is not particular to the ing-of gerund. But this will become a moot point, as we will soon see.

\(^5\) Of course, not every sentential phrase with combination No+noun does not have to be an NLC. The following were contributed by Roger Schwarzchild:
  i. No wonder she's so happy
  ii. No shit! ≈ I'm not surprised
  iii. No worries
There is a small number of nouns that can be commands without negation:

24a. Silence!
   b. Attention!
   c. Caution!

However, these seem quite formulaic and few. As far as I can tell, nouns, as a category, need negation to convey a command. In other words, nouns productively form NLCs.

The NLC can be seen with nouns in other languages as well. For example, in Greek (27):

25a. Oxi gates!
   No cats
   ‘No cats!’
   b. *gates!
   Cats

And we see that the same form of negation⁶ appears with a nominalized verb which also displays the NLC. In (26) the presence of the negation marker oxi is obligatory for the expression of a command. Plain ‘treksimata’ does not mean ‘run!’.

26a. Oxi treksimata!
   No run (nominalized verb)
   No running!
   b. *Treksimata!
   Intended: ‘Run!’

So nouns do seem to exhibit NLC-behavior in English and other languages as well. Possibly then the fact that ing-of gerunds can be NLCs is a special case of the fact that nouns in general can be subject to the NLC. And the fact that the very same negative marker must be used with the NLC on nouns as on a deverbal item in Greek is consistent with this preliminary conclusion.

However, the NLC footprint is broader, in fact. If the relation to nouns used as commands was all there was to it, it would still be interesting, but the fact is that NLC-behavior is not JUST a property of low nominalizations/nouns. Consider the following examples:

27a. No teasing your sister!

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⁶ The negative marker ‘oxi’ is not sentential negation. It is the particle used in negative answers:
   i. A: Is it raining? B: oxi (‘no’)
And also in what appears to be constituent negation:
   ii. Idha tin Miranda ala oxi tin Elena
      Saw.1sg the Miranda but not the Elena
      ‘I saw Miranda but not Elena’
b. No secretly reading the newspaper in class!
c. No playing the piano carelessly!
d. No carelessly playing the piano! (% 29c is preferred by some)

The expressions above do not have of; these are not ing-of gerunds. Moreover, they take adverbs, as can be seen in (27b-d), and adjectives are out:

28. No secretly / *secret reading the newspaper in class!

So we have a gerund that can assign Case and take adverbs but which also takes the determiner no. This is not a known category of gerund. From now on, I will use the term ‘no-gerund’ for the English gerund with the following properties: it can assign case to its object, it takes adverbs, and yet it can take the determiner no --though, crucially, no other determiner.

We saw the use of the no-gerund in NLCs. It seems that the no-gerund cannot appear in argument positions (with one possible exception to which we will return):

29a. *I am relying on no teasing your sister
   b. *I witnessed no teasing your sister
   c. *No teasing your sister impressed me

The fact that the no-gerund does not appear in argument position is actually quite helpful because it can help us eliminate ellipsis as a possible source of the NLC. Ellipsis could in principle have been the source of the NLC phenomenon, if a modal had been deleted. More specifically, one might have wondered whether the NLC behavior of the ing-of gerund was the result of (a somewhat unusual) deletion from either a source like (30) or (31):

30. There is no reading of Anna Karenina allowed
    \rightarrow There is no reading of Anna Karenina allowed

31. No reading of Anna Karenina is allowed
    \rightarrow No reading of Anna Karenina is allowed

Admittedly, such an account would not have addressed the NLC part, that is, why negation is needed. If deletion is possible in (30, 31), why would it not be possible in (32)?

32. Reading of Anna Karenina is allowed --x--> *Reading of Anna Karenina is allowed

Nor would it capture the modal force, that is, if the deletion of the modal is possible in (30, 31), why would a modal with universal force not be deletable, as in (33):

33. No reading of AK is required --x--> *No reading of Anna Karenina is required

7 Unlike the no-gerund, the negated ing-of gerund can appear in argument position, but without an modal interpretation:
i. I witnessed no teasing of the sister
Even so, one could well have wondered whether deletion is not the source of the NLC involving the ing-of gerund. But deletion as the source of the no-gerund is a non-starter because the no-gerund cannot appear in an argument position, as we already saw. The putative source of deletion is ungrammatical (i.e. in the pre-deletion sentence, the absence of of is ungrammatical):

34a. *There is no reading Anna Karenina allowed
   b. *No reading Anna Karenina is allowed

In other words, there are several reasons to reject deletion of a modal as the source of the NLC, with the ing-of gerund, as well as with the no-gerund.

Summarizing the current section, we have seen the phenomenon of NLC in English and Greek. We saw that this occurs with English ing-of gerunds and nominalized verbs in Greek, possibly as a special case of NLCs with nouns, which we saw exists in English and Greek as well. But more interestingly, we saw that there are English NLCs with what I called the ‘no-gerund’, whose properties do not reduce to those of any known English gerund. We also saw that NLCs, especially in the case of the no-gerund cannot be attributed to a quirky case of modal deletion.

I will leave English for now, as I try to establish the cross-linguistic stability of the NLC phenomenon. However, I will return to English a few more times, to check whether questions raised by NLCs in other languages can be asked about English with any meaningful results.

III. Dutch

In this section we discuss the NLC in Dutch. Our starting point will be Rooryck and Postma (2007), ‘RP’ henceforth. RP’s main focus is something other than the NLC so here I will present only the data and discussion relevant to us, as well as their analysis.

Somewhat in passing, RP mention a construction that clearly shows the NLC and which is of central importance to us and also completely productive (contra to the construction which is the main topic of their paper):

35. Geen gepraat! / gepruts! / getreuzel! / getoeter! / gedans!
   no GE-vpraat /GE-vpruts / GE-vtreuzel / GE-vtoeter / GE-vdance
   ... no talking / fidgeting / hanging around / honking / dancing

All the expansions in (35) are interpreted as commands. Moreover, the negation is obligatory. In the absence of the negative marker geen there is no interpretation of command. This is the

8 Many thanks to Gertjan Postma and Hedde Zeijlstra for data and for patient and generous discussion of Dutch. Moreover, an initial investigation points to the distinct possibility that what we observe in Dutch holds in German as well. Even so, the examples here will only be from Dutch.
diagnostic profile of the NLC. In addition, the negation in (35) is the negative determiner *geen*, not the sentential negation *niet*. We saw that the negative determiner (as opposed to any other form of negation) is also a necessity for the English NLC.

A reader familiar with Dutch might think that *gepraat* is participial, given the presence of the prefix *ge-* and the title of RP’s paper. However, despite the presence of *ge-* , these are not participles but deverbal nouns. Eg for the verb *prutsen* (‘to mess around’), the participle is *gepruts* , and the deverbal noun *gepruts*. As we can see in (35), the Dutch NLC contains a deverbal noun. In short, we can detect the existence of NLCs in Dutch.

RP propose an explanation for a different construction that their paper is about (a hortative, which is good in South Dutch, but not North Dutch) and which analysis they say can be extended to the negated deverbal noun commands, though they do not do this themselves. I will lay out their account, along with my questions about it. Part of the aim of the discussion will be to see if RP’s account of Dutch can be extended to NLCs in general.

According to RP, Dutch has the following process of ellipsis:

36a. *Ben je naar de kapper geweest?*
   ‘Did you go to the hairdresser’s?’

b. *Nee, ik heb de verkeerde shampoo gebruikt.*
   ‘No, I used the wrong shampoo.’

c. *is er nog wat post voor mij?*
   ‘Is there any mail for me?’

While these negated deverbal noun commands are very productive, they are not possible with unaccusatives or verbs that have no argument (Postma p.c.):

9. *geen geval hier*
   ‘no fall here’

But this restriction is not particular to the command use of these deverbal nouns. It comes with these deverbal nouns in general (Postma 1996). Moreover, like the ing-of NLC, and unlike the no-gerund, these deverbal nouns have (in general) no Case for the object, which must either incorporate, or take the preposition *van* ; this is preserved in the NLC.

And like the ing-of NLC, but unlike the no-gerund, the negated deverbal noun can be an argument, but crucially, without the command reading:

9. *Ik hoorde geen gepraat*
   ‘I heard no talk’
RP’s idea is that there is also ellipsis in the case of our negated deverbal noun, even though they do not provide the pre-ellipsis sentence: “…the ellipted auxiliary is most likely a modal one: the situation described by the participial must be brought about.” p. 8

This hypothesis builds in part of the answer. Why would the elided auxiliary be a modal? And why would it have to be a performative modal? Why could it not have been a reportative modal? If that was the case, the sentence would report that somebody has an obligation to do something or it would report that somebody is forbidden from doing something. This is different from the NLC, which bestows an obligation/prohibition rather reports it.  

A related question is, why would the elided subject necessarily be 2nd person? We see that in (36), the elided subject can be a variety of persons. In other words, postulating the ellipsis of a performative addressee-oriented modal leaves many questions unanswered. We might as well stipulate the presence of a covert modal with the desired properties.

But let’s assume that it is indeed ellipsis that creates the negated deverbal noun commands. Why should such an ellipsis be possible only under negation? In our terms, why the NLC? To answer this, RP propose the “No-Ambiguity Principle”:

37. No-Ambiguity Principle

* [...AUX Mods...] if AUX Mods is ambiguous

RP say that the No-Ambiguity Principle “…is a particular realization of the Principle of Full Interpretation (FI)” (p. 8). I don’t quite see how this could be a case of FI as language tolerates plenty of (structural) ambiguities, including with modals. But let’s evaluate (37), regardless of whether or not it is a special case of FI.

RP appeal to (37) to capture both the necessary presence of negation, as well as the fact that the elided modal is of existential, not of universal force. The rationale is as follows. RP correctly point out that modals that scope under negation can be of universal or of existential force:

10 In fact, it seems that reportative modals and epistemic modals are not elidable (the pre-ellipsis sentences are fine):

i. A: Why does Frank study so much?
   B: *Hij moet een negen halen
      ‘He has to get a nine’

ii. His lights are off.
    *Hij zal niet thuis zijn.
    ‘He must not be home’

11 To be clear, RP regard the No-Ambiguity Principle as holding of language in general, not just of covert items or ellipsis. p. 8: "Ambiguous structures do not exist.....we will assume that [(37)] is a particular realization of the Principle of Full Interpretation (FI). In the cases in [(38b)] and [(39a)], disambiguation is mediated by the Lexicon. Under the assumption that [(37)] is a general property of Dutch and English, it follows that abstract, i.e. non-lexical AUX Mods is not well-formed unless it is disambiguated."
Modals that scope over negation are only of universal force. There is no deontic modal of existential force that scopes over negation (at least in Dutch or English). They do not claim to know why (39b) does not exist.

39a. She must not leave  MOD_{UNIV} \rightarrow \text{Neg}
   b. ????
      MOD_{EX} \rightarrow \text{Neg}

RP argue that if the elided modal was one that scoped under negation, we would not know whether it is of universal or existential force, and the No-Ambiguity Principle would be violated:

40. \text{Neg} \rightarrow \text{MOD}_{UNIV} / \text{MOD}_{EX}

But if the elided modal scoped over negation, the No-Ambiguity Principle would be satisfied as there is only one type of modal that can scope over negation: a modal of universal force (39a). Hence the elided modal can only be universal.

45. \text{MOD}_{UNIV} \rightarrow \text{Neg}

According to RP, the No-Ambiguity Principle also forces the presence of negation: in the absence of negation, it is not clear whether we are dealing with a universal or existential modal. The presence of negation is necessary, as it will leave the wide scope of a universal modal as the only possible option, as above (RP. p. 9):

“Let us finally consider the structure in (26), without negation.

[[46]] [...AUX_{MOD} ...]

In [[46]], if AUX is not lexical, it can be interpreted as MUST or CAN and, hence, is not well-formed with respect to the No-Ambiguity Principle. “

However, it is not quite clear how the No-Ambiguity Principle in (37) can work as a constraint on ellipsis. In addition to language permitting a host of ambiguities, ambiguities created by ellipsis (including ACD) are also tolerated just fine. The ellipsis in (47, 48) creates the ambiguities in (47a,b) and (48a,b):

47. John wanted to read the book you did
   a. John wanted to read the book you read
   b. John wanted to read the book you wanted to read

48. I read every book one day before you did
   a. I read every book one day before you read it
   b. I read every book one day before you read every book
So the No-Ambiguity Principle as guiding ellipsis, would need more support than it seems to have. Unless we make it apply ONLY in cases of the particular type of ellipsis involving performative modals. But this does not seem ideal.

Furthermore, imperative verb forms are known to be ambiguous between a strong and weak readings (permission/acquiescence reading):

49a. Open the door!  (command)
   b. A: I want to open the door
      B: Sure. Open the door. (acquiescence)

So the string *Open the door* has no problem being underdetermined with respect to its interpretation, in violation of the No-Ambiguity Principle.

Finally, note that the No-Ambiguity Principle does not say that negation is necessary so that the interpretation is a command. It says that there cannot be ambiguity and negation appears because it disambiguates. This means that if there is a way to disambiguate without negation, that should be fine too. One such environment is (50), in fact, where the permission/acquiescence reading is by far the most felicitous, and the command reading is not:

50. A: I want to open the door
    B: Sure. Open the door. (acquiescence)
    B’. Sure. You may open the window
    B”’. (Sure) #You must open the window

This means that in a context like (50), one should be able to satisfy the No-Ambiguity Principle by means other than negation. But this prediction is not verified. First the control case, to show that Dutch does have acquiescence with the imperative:

51. A: Meester, mag ik weg?
    master, may I away
    ‘Master, may I go away?
    B: Ok, ga (maar) weg
    ok go (MAAR) away
    ‘OK. Go’

But in this same environment, the affirmative deverbal noun does not work, even though it is clear that the only possible interpretation is that of an existential modal (the presence of *maar* does not improve the sentence at all):

52. A: Mag ik naar de bakker rennen?
    may I to the baker run
    B: (Ok.) * (* maar) geren
    Intended: ‘Ok. Run’
In short, the context in (52) should in principle disambiguate, as it does in (50), and negation should not be necessary to reveal which modal force is involved, which would be compliant with the No-Ambiguity Principle. Still, the utterance without negation is still not possible.

Another way to disambiguate the modal force is with particles. Grosz (2011) shows that the German particles ‘bloss’ and ‘ruhig’ disambiguate an imperative in favor of the universal and existential reading respectively. In Dutch there are also such particles (Zeijlstra p.c.). Maar, already encountered in (51) disambiguates towards permission. On the other hand, Nu (‘now’) disambiguates towards commanding.

53. Zit maar
   sit MAAR (only permission, not command)
54. Zit nu
   ‘Sit now!’ (command, not permission)

So one might expect that since these particles disambiguate, they should permit the affirmative deverbal noun, as the No-Ambiguity Principle would be satisfied. But this is again not the case:

55a. */???Getoeter maar (intended: sure. Go ahead and honk) (as in 52b)
   b. */???Getoeter nu (intended: Honk! --as command)

So we see that RP’s account of ellipsis and the No-Ambiguity Principle, do not adequately capture or explain the facts.

But even if we had grasped the details of the ellipsis in the Dutch deverbal noun, there is a problem with extending the RP account to English no-gerunds. We saw that the English no-gerund has properties unlike that of any other known gerund and that it cannot appear in argument position in a full clause. This means that there is no source for an ellipsis where the remnant is the no-gerund. And hence NLCs cannot in general be the result of the need to disambiguate a remnant of ellipsis.

So RP did not provide us with an explanation of the NLC phenomenon. Fortunately, though, their paper did help us identify NLCs in Dutch and provided us with some additional support in the belief that the phenomenon of NLCs is not a quirk of English or Greek.  

12 A question that arises is how similar to the imperative an NLC is. For example, one might wonder whether the NLC shares with the imperative the ability to function as a permission/acquiescence, expression of indifference, participate in conditional conjunctions as the first conjunct etc (von Fintel and Iatridou 2017 and references therein). As far as I can tell, in English, Greek and Dutch, the NLC can yield neither non-command readings, nor participate in conditional conjunctions (space considerations prevent me from including the data here). The NLC is only interpreted as a command. In other words, NLCs are properly named. They are commands, not “imperatives”, as they lack the flexibility that imperative verbs have. Another difference between NLCs and imperatives is that the former can take PROarb as subject, while the imperative cannot.

i. No washing oneself in public!
ii. *Don’t wash oneself in public.
IV. Next Stop: Russian

Next on our crosslinguistic search for NLCs we come to Russian. This language shows the NLC as well, and again also with nominalizations. The following sentences are interpreted as commands and the presence of negation is obligatory for this effect.

56. ni-kak-ogo     gulja-nij-a     v     parke!
    Ni-which-GEN.SG walk-NMN-GEN.SG in     park
    No walking in the park!

57. ni-kak-ogo     pe-nij-a         pesen!
    Ni-which-GEN.SG sing-NMN-GEN.SG        song.GEN.PL
    no singing of songs!

Let us start with a closer look at the morphology. The -nij- affix on the verb is the regular means by which deverbal nouns are produced. Such deverbal nouns take their object in the Genitive, both in and outside NLCs. This is the case of the object ‘songs’ in (66). The string ni-kak-ogo, which I translated as no is composed as follows. ni is a negative marker, possibly related to the negative “conjunction”, which can be seen here:

58. Ni Vasja, ni Petja
    neither Basil, nor Peter

kak is a “quexistential”, a word which has interrogative or existential uses depending on the environment. The genitive –ogo is obligatory. No other Case will do. Similarly, the Case on the deverbal noun itself is also necessarily genitive. So ni-kak-ogo is in case, number and gender concord with the nominal, as would be expected in Russian.

In other words, ni-kak-ogo is like the Dutch negative determiner geen (or German kein or English no) which also incorporates negation and an indefinite existential determiner.

So far we have explained everything in the form of the Russian NLC except the necessity of genitive on the negative determiner and on the deverbal noun (the genitive on the object of the deverbal noun is as expected, as mentioned above). Let’s turn to the genitive on the negative determiner, then.

Russian is a negative concord language (unlike Dutch or English). The string ni-kak-ogo is a Negative Concord Item (NCI). That means that there should be sentential negation in the sentence, but no such negation is visible. Moreover, overt negation is not possible here, for

This difference is interesting but it is not clear to me how it necessarily relates to the interpretative variability of the imperative verb, so I will not focus on it here.

Thanks to David Pesetsky and Sergei Tatevosov for discussion of the Russian data.

This decomposition is due to Sergei Tatevosov, p.c.

I take this term from Hengeveld, Latridou and Roelofsen ms. Amsterdam/MIT.

So with respect to Case on its object, the Russian deverbal noun is like the Dutch one, and the English ing-of NLC, and not like the English no-gerund.
reasons unknown to me. To stay consistent to the negative concord nature of Russian, I will assume that there is a covert negative operator\textsuperscript{17}:

\begin{center}
59. OP\textsubscript{NEG} ni-kak-ogo gulja-nij-a
OP\textsubscript{NEG} no\textsubscript{N.word} walking
\end{center}

But now we can explain the genitive on the negative determiner and the deverbal noun: this is the famous Russian ‘Genitive of Negation’.

One might object that the Genitive of Negation is typically optional, while the genitive in NLC is not:

\begin{center}
60. * ni-kak-oje pe-nij-e\textsuperscript{18} pesen!
NEG sing-NMN-NOM.SG song.GEN.PL
int.: ‘no singing of (the) songs!’
\end{center}

However, Babyonishev et al 2001, citing Babby 1980 and Chvany 1975, point to cases of obligatory Genitive of Negation with verbs that assert “existence, nonexistence, or presence at a location” p. 14\textsuperscript{19}:

\begin{center}
61a. V gorode ne bylo vrača.
in town not was-NEU.SG doctor-GEN.SG
‘There was no doctor in town.’
\end{center}

\begin{center}
b. *V gorode ne byl vrač.\textsuperscript{20}
in town not was-MASC.SG doctor-NOM.SG
\end{center}

It is not impossible to see NLCs as falling under predicates of “existence, nonexistence, or presence at a location” in that they assert the non-existence of permission (itself an item with existential force).

I conclude, therefore, that it is possible to analyze the genitive on the determiner and deverbal noun as a Genitive of Negation, and that therefore there is a covert negation and the prefix ni- is not negation itself, but the morphological mark of an NCI, as one would expect to find in a negative concord language.

What we have seen so far then, is that Russian, like English and Dutch, has NLCs and does so with a nominalization and a negative determiner. Moreover, as in English and Dutch,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{17} The marker \textit{ni} cannot itself be the negative operator, as elsewhere it requires negation in the sentence.
\textsuperscript{18} This string is ungrammatical with any gender on the deverbal noun.
\textsuperscript{19} Thanks to David Pesetsky for making me aware of obligatory cases of Genitive of Negation, and discussion of this point.
\textsuperscript{20} Sergei Tatevosov (p.c.) tells me that (61b) is acceptable on the reading ‘The doctor was not in town’, with \textit{in town} focused.
\end{flushright}
not any negation will do for the Russian NLC. Verbal/sentential negation won’t do --- with either Genitive or Nominative on the deverbal noun:

62. * ne pe-nij-a / e pesen!
   NEG sing-NMN-GEN/NOM.SG song.GEN.PL
   intended: ‘no singing of (the) songs!’

As for the nominalization contained in the NLC, it behaves like other Russian nominalizations. For example, the adjective/adverb distinction, has a certain pattern: an adjective before, an adverb after the nominalization (63) and the same pattern holds for the NLC (64)

63a. gromk-oje pe-nij-e pesen
   loud-NOM.SG sing-NMN-NOM.SG song.GEN.PL
   loud singing of (the) songs
b. pe-nij-e pesen gromk-o
   sing-NMN-NOM.SG song.GEN.PL loud-ADV
   singing of (the) songs loudly
64a. ni-kak-ogo gromk-ogo pe-nij-a pesen!
   NI-which-GEN.SG loud-GEN.SG sing-NMN-GEN.SG song.GEN.PL
   no loud singing of (the) songs!
b. ni-kak-ogo pe-nij-a pesen gromk-o
   NI-which-GEN.SG sing-NMN-NOM.SG song.GEN.PL loud-ADV
   no singing of (the) songs loudly!

As in Dutch, and the English ing-of NLC, the nominalization can appear in argument position but without the command reading.

\[\text{\footnotesize 21}\] This pattern also occurs in nominalizations for several speakers of English (including ing-of gerunds):

i. His deliberate removal of the evidence
ii. His removal of the evidence deliberately
iii. *His deliberately removal of the evidence

Fu et al. fn 4 also cite Jesperson (1961, 1940) for the following example:

iv. The shutting of the gates regularly at ten o’clock had rendered our residences very irksome to me.

\[\text{\footnotesize 22}\] One difference between Russian and Dutch/English relates to the question of whether the NLC with nominalizations can be reduced to the NLC with nouns, which we already saw is active in English and Greek (and Dutch as well).

This does not hold exactly the same for Russian. The following is ungrammatical on signs

i. Nikakix sobak
   no-GEN.PL dog.GEN.PL

However, one can utter (ii) upon seeing someone with a dog entering a space where dogs are not allowed. (Mitya Privoznov p.c.). Why (ii) is bad on a sign, I do not know.

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   no-GEN.PL dog.GEN.PL

However, one can utter (ii) upon seeing someone with a dog entering a space where dogs are not allowed. (Mitya Privoznov p.c.). Why (ii) is bad on a sign, I do not know.
65. I did not hear any singing of (the) songs.

To summarize this section then, we have seen that Russian also has the NLC phenomenon, just like English and Dutch. Moreover, the NLC in the three languages shares several semantic and syntactic properties, even though we have also seen language-specific properties like negative concord, manifesting themselves. So the NLC holds in Germanic as well as in Greek and at least one Slavic language. But NLCs can also be found in non-Indo-European, and we turn to three such languages next.

V. Turkish\textsuperscript{23}, with a bit of Hungarian\textsuperscript{24} and Hebrew\textsuperscript{25}.

The existence of NLCs in Turkish can be seen in the obligatory presence of the negated existential copula ‘yok’ on a nominalized clause. The affirmative existential copula ‘var’ is not permitted. Example (66) shows the negated existential copula in a common use. As can be seen from the translation, there is nothing modal in this sentence. That is, (66) does not mean that milk is forbidden in the fridge:

66. Dolap-ta süt \textit{yok}.

fridge-LOC milk YOK
"There isn’t milk in the fridge."

We can see yok in the Turkish NLCs in (67).

67a. Geç saat-te TV izle-mek \textit{yok}!

late hour-LOC watch-NOML YOK
Lit: "There isn’t watching TV late at night!"
‘No watching TV at night!’

b. Sınıf-ta sakız şişne-mek \textit{yok}!

class-LOC gum chew-NOML YOK
Lit: "There isn’t chewing gum in class!"
‘No chewing gum in class’

c. Bu kapı-yi aç-mak \textit{yok}!

class-LOC gum chew-NOML YOK
Lit: “There isn’t opening this door!”
‘Don’t open this door’

\textsuperscript{23} Many thanks to Ömer Demirok for Turkish data and discussion.
\textsuperscript{24} Many thanks to Dóra Takács for Hungarian data and discussion.
\textsuperscript{25} Many thanks to Omer Preminger for Hebrew data and discussion.
Example (68) contains the affirmative existential copula ‘var’ and (69) shows that a command is not possible with it:

68. Dolap-ta süt var.
fridge-LOC milk VAR
"There is milk in the fridge."

69. *Yaşlı yolcu-lar-a öncelik ver-mek var!
elderly passenger-PL-DAT priority give-NOML VAR
Intended: "Give priority to elderly passengers!"

The nominalization that is the complement of the negated existential copula YOK is quite high, as it contains Case for the object, including the Accusative associated with specificity, as in (67c) (and this is common for Turkish nominalizations). So we see that NLCs can be observed in Turkish as well. And again, it is negation on some type of nominalization\textsuperscript{26}.

Hungarian exhibits the same NLC pattern as Turkish. That is, the negated existential copula nincs can yield commands (70), the affirmative van cannot (71), and neither can the absence of any copula (72):

70. Nincs olvas-ás!
NINCS read-NOM
No reading!

71. *van olvas-ás!
VANread-NOM
intended: “Read!”

72. *olvas-ás!
read-NOM
intended: “Read!”

So like the other languages we have seen so far, Hungarian has the NLC-phenomenon and its NLCs are constructed with a nominalization of a verbal projection. But like Turkish, the Hungarian NLC uses the negated existential copula on a nominalized clause, and not a negative determiner on a deverbal noun or gerund.

\textsuperscript{26} Even though nominalization is present, it is unclear if the phenomenon of NLCs with nominalized clauses can be reduced to an NLC on nouns in Turkish, as NLCs are not very productive with nouns (ii). According to Ömer Demirok p.c., examples like (i) are possible but very restricted. Specifically, (ii) could only be a parent’s comment to a child:

i. *Köpek-lер yok!
Dog-pl YOK
Intended: “No dogs!”

ii. TV yok!
TV YOK
"No TV!"
Hebrew also uses the same paradigm as Turkish and Hungarian. It has the NLC phenomenon with nominalizations and it uses the negated existential copula eyn, while the affirmative copula yeʃ precludes the interpretation of a command:

73. eyn ʃimuj be-maxʃevon-im be-mahalax ha-bxina!
    EYN use.NMLZ in-calculator-PL in-course.CS the-exam
    "No using calculators during the exam!"
74. # yeʃ haxnasat klav-I’m la-park!  
    YEʃ enter.CAUS.NMLZ.CS dog-PL DAT.the-park
    Intended: "dogs must enter the park"

Summarizing what we have seen so far, the NLC phenomenon occurs in English, Greek, Dutch, Russian, Hungarian, Turkish and Hebrew. Moreover, in all cases there appears to be a nominalization involved. We have not seen any cases of NLC holding on verbs.

VI. A possible solution? (unfortunately, not)

Languages like Turkish give us the impetus to explore a particular avenue towards a possible solution for NLCs. Consider the Turkish NLCs again:

75. Geç saat-te TV izle-mek yok!
    late hour-LOC watch-NOML YOK
    Lit: "There isn’t watching TV late at night!"
    ‘No watching TV at night!’

Given the literal meaning of the negated existential copula and the absence of imperative morphology or overt modality, one might think that there is a pragmatic phenomenon going on that can also be observed in English. Consider (76a,b) which can be understood as a negative command like (76c):

76a. In this house, we do not watch TV at night.
    b. In this house, there is no TV-watching at night.
    c. Don’t watch TV at night!

__________

27 The only possible difference I have found between the Hebrew and Hungarian consultants is that for the latter, the presence of the affirmative copula leads to ungrammaticality, as already reported in the main text, while in Hebrew, Omer Preminger reports that a string like (74) can mean ‘The entering of dogs into the park exists’, "though it’s an odd sentence" (Preminger p.c.). (See Ömer Demirok's identical comment on the equivalent Turkish sentence in section VI.) However, due to the small number of consultants, I do not how this would generalize. It may be what is "an odd sentence" for one speaker, is an ungrammatical one for another. What is clear is that in all these languages, the affirmative copula does not yield affirmative commands.
It is clear how this implicature might come about: if there is no TV watching at night, it must be because it is not allowed. But such a command interpretation is optional, as can be seen from the possibility for the following continuation:

77. In this house we do not watch TV at night because the power goes off at 8

In these “pragmatic commands” there is no NLC phenomenon at play, that is, negation is not obligatory. Even when interpreted pragmatically as a command, specifically the command in (78b), (78a) is just fine:

78a. In this house we brush our teeth at 8pm!
   b. Brush your teeth at 8pm!

Could it be that the negated existential copula in Turkish brings about a command in a pragmatic way? That is, is (75) a command because it is interpreted as (76a,b) are when they yield the meaning of (76c)?

The answer is no. The pragmatic inference of a command is optional, as we saw earlier: it is possible to interpret it simply as a description of facts, as we saw in (77). But this is not possible with the particular construction in Turkish.

79. #Maalesef, gece TV izle-mek yok çünkü akşamları elektrik gid-iyor
   unfortunately night TV watch-NOML YOK because evenings electricity go-IMPF

The meaning of the relevant sub-string in (79) is still only an NLC, and (79) as a whole has the somewhat incoherent following meaning: "Unfortunately, it is forbidden to watch TV at night because the electricity goes out in the evening" and not "Unfortunately, it is not possible to watch TV at night because the electricity goes out in the evening".

If one wanted the equivalent of a pragmatically inferred command, as in (76), which can lose the implication of command reading in context, as in (77), one can also do that in Turkish, but not with the negated existential copula. Instead, simple sentential negation is used:

80. Bu evde gece hiç TV izlemiyoruz çünkü akşamları elektrik gid-iyor
    this house-LOC night TV we.not.watch because evenings electricity go-IMPF
    'In this house we do not watch TV at night because the electricity goes off in the evenings'

    Moreover, a pragmatically inferred command, should not require negation, as (78a) does not. However, the affirmative copula does not yield an affirmative command as we already saw in the previous section. And as predicted, therefore, the equivalent of (81a) with the affirmative copula lacks the command reading, and "is a weird sentence. It literally means 'There is brushing teeth at 8pm in this house.' I cannot imagine this being uttered in any context." (Omer Demirok, p.c.):

81. Bu evde saat 8'de diş fırçala-mak var
    this house.LOC hour 8-LOC tooth brush-NOML VAR
'In this house there is some brushing of teeth at 8pm'

In other words, the NLC is not reducible to a pragmatic command, not even in Turkish, where one might have thought it might, at first.

VII. Another possible solution? (Unfortunately, again no)

Since Rooryck and Postma had us thinking about ellipsis as a possible source for the NLC, and since Turkish brought us to the topic of (negated) existential sentences, let’s look at another possible source of English no-gerunds.

There is an interesting construction described in Kjellmer 1980, which has a number of similarities with the no-gerunds. Consider (82a), which I refer to as the 'Kjellmer construction' for lack of a better term. First, the Kjellmer construction is modal in its interpretation:

82a. There was no mistaking that scream
   b. = It was not possible to mistake that scream

Second, negation is obligatory. The absence of negation does not result in an interpretation of affirmative modality:

83. #*There was mistaking that scream

Third, not any negation will do. Only the negative determiner can produce the desired result:

84a. *There was not mistaking that scream
   b. *There was never mistaking that scream
   c. *There was seldom mistaking that scream
   d. *There was hardly mistaking that scream

Finally, the gerund in the Kjellmer construction, like the no-gerund, falls outside the common classification of English gerunds, in that it can both take a determiner, and have Accusative for its object, as can be seen in (82a).

Kjellmer himself does not explain the syntactic or semantic properties of the construction in (82a) but observes what it takes to undo the modality. He notes that unlike (82a), (85) lacks a modal interpretation. This sentences asserts that no shouting, merry-making or waving of flags occurred. It does not say that it was impossible to do so.

85. There was no shouting, no merry-making, no waving of flags

This non-modal sentence does not require negation (86) and when it takes negation, any negation will do (87):

86. There was shouting, merry-making and waving of flags
87a. There wasn’t shouting or merry-making or waving of flags
b. There was never shouting or merry-making or waving of flags
c. There was seldom shouting or merry-making or waving of flags
d. There was hardly shouting or merry-making or waving of flags

So what is the difference between the modal (82a) and the non-modal (85)? Here is Kjellmer’s position in his own words, as I have nothing more to add (boldfacing mine): “By and large it could be said that the modal gerund can take a direct object, especially an object clause, that it must occur in the singular, that it hardly takes any other adjectival adjunct than no and that it can be turned into a passive. The non-modal gerund, on the other hand, takes a direct object only in special circumstances, and never an object clause, it can be turned into a plural and have various adjuncts other than no and it can hardly be made passive.” p. 60

The question that now arises is whether we can derive the no-gerund from Kjellmer’s construction by a RP-style ellipsis?

88. There was no smoking!

Unfortunately, this seems rather a non-promising path as well. First, the no-gerund in the NLC has no verb class restriction and can be intransitive, as seen in (89), unlike the Kjellmer construction, which can be modal only with an object, as shown again in (90):

89. No smoking! (modal)
90a. There was no smoking (not modal)28
   b. There was no smoking that cigar. (modal)

Second (and very crucially), the modality is very different in the two cases. In the NLC no-gerund, it is deontic (and performative). While in the Kjellmer construction it is ability or dynamic (and reportative).

91. There was no mistaking that scream =
   it was not possible to to mistake that scream.
   (NOT: it is forbidden to mistake that scream)
92. There is no killing that rat =
   it is not possible to kill the rat
   (NOT: it is forbidden to kill that rat)

In other words, despite some apparent similarities, the no-gerund cannot be reduced to the construction discussed by Kjellmer.

28 One might rebut that (90a) is modal with the present tense:
i. There is no whispering in his house.
But this is a case of a pragmatically induced rule as we saw earlier, and such an interpretation, unlike with the no-gerund, is always optional
ii. There is no whispering in this house as everybody is by nature loud
Moreover, we have already seen several languages that have the NLC but I know of the existence of the Kjellmer construction only in English. Even in Turkish, which, as we saw, shows the NLC with negated existential copulas (which would make it close to *There is no...*), the relevant sentences cannot receive the interpretation of the Kjellmer construction, but only receive the command reading. Having said this, the Kjellmer construction and the role of negation in it is mysterious. But whatever it is, it is not an instantiation of the NLC phenomenon, given that it is not a command to begin with.

So we still do not have a good candidate to reduce the NLC to, nor an obvious explanation for it.

VIII. Buli

In this section we will look for (and find) the NLC phenomenon in one more unrelated language: The Niger-Congo language Buli, as spoken in Ghana. As expected, Buli has an imperative verb, which can be negated.

93a. ñū sīgāārī!
   *drink cigarettes*
   ‘smoke cigarettes’

b. Kàn ñū sīgāārī!
   *Neg drink cigarettes*
   ‘Don’t smoke cigarettes’

But Buli also has the NLC. Consider (94), which is an NLC because the absence of negation does not result in an affirmative command. In fact, the resulting strings are ungrammatical as complete sentences (95).

94. Sīgāārī ñūkkā kà dē!
   *cigarettes drink-NM Neg here*
   “No smoking here”

95a. *Sīgāārī ñūkkā*
   *cigarettes drink-NM*
   Intended: “smoke!”

b. *Sīgāārī ñūkkā dē!*
   *cigarettes drink-NM here*
   Intended: “smoke here!”

For as yet unknown reasons, a locative in (94) is necessary but the location can be made more precise.

29 Many thanks to Abdul-Razak Sulemana for data and discussion.

30 The plain imperative verb cannot appear in this construction (with or without negation):
As with the other languages, we see that Buli NLCs involve nominalizations. So let us take a quick look at some of their properties. First of all, the nominalizing suffix –ka appears on the verb. Buli has no overt Case morphology, so one cannot check the effect of nominalization on the object of the deverbal noun, but the effect of nominalization can be seen in the word order: Buli is VO, but when a nominalization has happened, the order is OV:

97a. \( \text{Asouk dʒʊ yénní} \)
\( \text{Asouk burn house.DEF} \)
`Asouk burned the house'

b. \( \ast \text{Asouk yénní dʒʊ} \)
\( \ast \text{OV} \)
Intended: ‘Asouk burned the house’

98a. \( \text{yénní dʒʊká} \)
\( \text{OV}_{\text{NMN}} \)
`The burning of the house'

b. \( \ast \text{dʒʊká yénní} \)
\( \ast \text{V}_{\text{NMNO}} \)
Intended: 'The burning of the house'

As expected, in the NLC, we necessarily get the \( \text{OV}_{\text{NMN}} \) order (99). The object cannot follow the nominalized verb (100):

99. \( \text{sígāārī nūkkā kà-dē!} \)
\( \text{cigarettes drink-NM Neg-here} \)
“No smoking (here)”

100. \( \ast \text{nūkkā sígāārī kà-dē!} \)
\( \text{drink-NM cigarettes Neg-here} \)

So what we have is a nominalization that serves as command but only if it is negated.
One may wonder about the apparent necessity of a locative: ‘dē’ (“here”), or the more complex locative in (96). I do not know what this is due to but what is important is that a locative is equally necessary when we have an NLC with a plain noun:

\[ \]
\[ i. \ast \text{nū sigaari kà-dē} \]
\( \text{drink cigarettes neg-here} \)

\[ ii. \ast \text{Kàn nū sīgāārī kà-dē} \]
\( \text{not drink cigarettes not-here} \)
101. Bāāsā  kà *(dē)!
   dogs not here
   ‘no dogs here’

So even though the obligatory presence of a locative remains mysterious, the fact that the same mystery exists with an NLC with nouns shows some consistency.

IX. Just one more attempt

We saw that we cannot remove negation from the NLC and retain the remnant as a command. What we have not yet tried is substituting the negation with something else and see if the result can be a command. If such a something else exists, we might be able to understand the NLC better by exploring whether and how negation plays a similar role as its substitution in forming a command\(^{31}\). Consider (102), and its paraphrases in (103):

102. Smoking cigars, on the balcony!\(^{32}\)

103 a. If you want to smoke cigars, you must/will do it on the balcony
   b. If there is to be any cigar-smoking, it must/will happen on the balcony

We can see a similar phenomenon with nouns, which as we saw, also show the NLC (104a,b). Now imagine a party where many of the guests are likely to bring dogs. Then, one can say (104c) with the meaning of (104d):

104a. No dogs!
   b. *Dogs!
   c. Dogs, on the porch!
   d. If you have brought a dog, you must/will put it on the porch.

The same holds for the Dutch deverbal noun command:

105a. Geen gepraat!
   b. *gepraat!

---

\(^{31}\) In this context, I should mention the fact that in English, only seems to trigger a similar phenomenon as the NLC:

i. No eating solid foods! Only drinking liquids!

If only decomposes into negation and another element (eg "other than"), as in von Fintel and Iatridou (2007) then maybe (i) reduces to the NLC. (Similarly for No more eating solid foods!) However, some of the languages discussed (e.g. Turkish, Hungarian) do not permit only with this effect. Unfortunately, there is no space to discuss this variation here.

\(^{32}\) The comma after smoking represents a small break that is required. Also, the intonation has to have a particular contour.
What we see above, is that the form of the nominalization that appears in the NLC can appear without negation, as long as another constituent is provided that specifies the conditions (location, time) under which the action in the nominalization is permitted. One way to achieve that could by with a covert permission modal, accompanied by a covert only. Another way would be a universal deontic modal: the set of situations involving talking/honking etc is a subset of the set of situations involving the balcony, Queen’s day etc. This would also have the desired result of permitting talking only on the street, honking only on Queen’s day etc.

Compare the above to (107a), a sign by an escalator, the intuitive analysis for which is (107b) (Halliday 1970, Partee 1992):

107a. Dogs must be CArried
   b. [All acceptable situations s: s is a situation in which there is a dog](s is a situation in which a dog is carried)

Could it be that (108a) is amenable to a similar analysis and should be viewed as (108b)?

108a. Smoking cigars, on the BALcony
   b. [All acceptable situations s: s is a situation in which there is a smoking of cigars](s is a situation in which the smoker is on the balcony)

The tri-partite structure of (107a,b) is provided by focus and the deontic modal. (108a) also has a focus structure, so an analysis parallel to (107b) might be warranted even though there is

\[\text{In parallel to (107a), there is also (i), which has a different meaning, (Halliday 1970). Similarly, in parallel to (108), we have (ii).}
\]

ia. DOGS must be carried
   b. [All acceptable situations s: s is a situation in which one is in this place](s is a situation in which a dog is carried)
   b'. [All acceptable situations s: s is a situation in which something is carried](s is a situation in which a dog is carried)

iia. Smoking ciGARS on the balcony.
no overt modal. After all, its interpretation is clearly modal: *smoking, if it is to happen, must happen on the balcony*. So the conclusion that a covert modal must be postulated in (108a) seems rather unavoidable.

Could it be that the expression stating the conditions under which the action is permitted (as in (108)) satisfy a need of this modal structure that is satisfied by negation in the NLC? For example, maybe negation contributes the tripartite structure necessary for the (covert) modal, the way the locative (or temporal etc) conditions do in (107) ?

Without spelling out the modal structure involved, nor the syntax-semantics mapping, and keeping in mind that ‘no’ is a symmetric determiner, (109a) could be seen as (109b,c):

109a. No smoking (here)!
   b. [All acceptable situations s: s is a situation in which one is here](s is not a smoking situation)
   c. The intersection of the set of smoking situations with the set of acceptable situations is the null set.

So in the absence of negation, the relevant nominalization, or rather the modal associated with it, will either need to find a different interpretative structure, as in (108) or remain uninterpretable.

   In short, from this perspective on the NLC mystery, negation is one of the ways of satisfying the need to "set up" the modal's tripartite structure.

   Now let’s see whether this view is supported by the crosslinguistic picture. Like English and Dutch, Russian also seems amenable: the nominalization in question is ungrammatical without negation, but becomes grammatical (and modalized) when another constituent provides the conditions of acceptability:

110a. ni-kak-ogo          guljanije     s sobakoj!
     No                 walk-NMN-NOM with dog.INSTR
     ‘No walking with a dog’
   b. *Guljanije          s sobakoj!
     walk-NMN-NOM with dog.INSTR
     intended: ‘Walk with the dog!’

b. [All acceptable situations s: s is a situation in which one is on the balcony](s is situation in which one smokes cigars)

34 To my knowledge, Partee (1992) was the first to explicitly propose a tripartite structure for negation, though her paper mentions precursors of the relevant insight. Jackendoff 1972 discussed association with negation, which is also tripartite partition. Thanks to Roger Schwarzchild for this reminder.

35 Note the paraphrase with an existential modal ("acceptable").

36 This discussion mirrors somewhat that in Carlson 1989 and other works that show that generic sentences need the overt expression of what Carlson calls the 'locus of genericity': i. *John smokes a cigarette
ii. When John is nervous, he smokes a cigarette
c. Guljanije sobakoj — (tol’ko) vo dvore
walk-NMN-NOM with dog.INSTR only in yard
‘Walking with a dog, only in the yard!’

As would be expected, the genitive on the determiner and nominalized verb are gone, as there is no negation to trigger the Genitive of Negation.

In Hebrew, this is also possible. However, one has to be careful to remove the (negative) existential copula altogether, and not just replace it with the affirmative one, as in (111c):

111a. klav-im ba-gina bilvad!
dog-PL in.the-garden only
"Dogs, in the garden only!"
b. jimuj ba-telefon ba-mirpeset bilvad!
use.NLMZ in.the-phone in.the-balcony only
"Using phones, on the balcony only!"\(^{37}\)
c. * yej jimuj ba-telefon ba-mirpeset bilvad!
EXIST use.NLMZ in.the-phone in.the-balcony only
Intended: "Using phones, on the balcony only!"

In Hungarian this is also possible, but unlike in Hebrew, the affirmative copula can optionally stay --though its presence affects the word order, as in (d), or requires a long break, as in (e):

112a. Nincs kutya-sétál-tat-ás!
Neg-EX dog-walk-CAUS-NOM
‘No walking with the dog!’
b. *kutya-sétál-tat-ás!
dog-walk-CAUS-NOM
Intended: ‘walk with the dog!’
c. kutya-sétál-tat-ás csak a park-ban!
dog-walk-CAUS-NOM only the park-INE
‘Walking with a dog, only in the park!’
d. csak a park-ban van kutya-sétál-tat-ás!
only the park-INE COP dog-walk-CAUS-NOM
‘Walking with a dog, only in the park!’
e. kutya-sétál-tat-ás --- csak a park-ban van!
dog-walk-CAUS-NOM --- only the park-INE COP
‘Walking with a dog, only in the park!’

But things are harder with Turkish. With the NLC on plain nouns, the paradigm can be duplicated. That is, removal of negation is damaging but substitution of negation by a locative condition makes the command resurface:

\(^{37}\) In which case one wonders whether these are not pragmatically induced commands, like the ones discussed in section VI.
113. köpek-ler, balkon-a!
dog-PL balcony-DAT
"dogs, to the porch!"

But in Turkish, the result is different from the other languages we have seen so far. Removing the negation and introducing the conditions of acceptability results in ungrammaticality (with, or without the affirmative copula):

114a. *sigara iç-mek, balkon-da!
smoke-NOML balcony-LOC
b. *sigara iç-mek var, balkon-da!
smoke-NOML VAR balcony-LOC
c. *balkon-da sigara iç-mek var!
balcony-LOC smoke-NOML VAR

The same result as in Turkish holds in Buli as well. The equivalent of Smoking, on the balcony is not possible:

115. *Sigāārī ɲūkkā vērāndā wā pō
cigarettes drink-NM balcony DEM inside

So reducing NLC to negation creating a tripartite structure, is, not, in an obvious way at least, an easy solution for the crosslinguistic picture. Yet, maybe future research will find more benefits in this path.

X. Discussion

NLCs present us with two interrelated questions: Where does the command force come from? Why is negation necessary for the command interpretation?

The form of these two questions contain certain presuppositions. I called the construction in question a ‘command’, and not a ‘prohibition’. If we call it a prohibition, the question of why the negation is necessary would not be mysterious, of course: no negation, no prohibition. But where would the directive force come from? The negations used in the languages discussed in this paper do not have a modal or directive meaning in general.\(^{38}\)

Neither do the nominalizations involved in the NLC express a command in and of themselves. If they did, they would not need the presence of negation to become a command; they would express an affirmative command all by themselves. So calling NLCs "prohibitives" does not help.

Consider the case of imperatives. Imperatives are viewed with the following default assumption: the modal force is associated with the verb ---semantically or pragmatically,\(^{38}\)

\(^{38}\) Unlike some prohibitive markers described in van der Auwera 2010, which come from verbs meaning ‘stop’, ‘refrain from’ etc
depending on the theory. So negated imperatives, with all the interesting questions that these bring along (see fn. 2), will have the directive force scope over negation, and the process from thereon is supposed to be compositional. So on the hypothesis that (116a,b) below are equivalent, and the assumption that there is no modality in the negative determiner, the modal force must be associated with the nominalization or with a covert modal. But if that is the case, then the question of why negation is necessary for the modal meaning is mysterious.

116a. Don’t walk on the grass!
   b. No walking on the grass!

Another presupposition hidden in the term ‘command’ is that the directive force, however it is achieved, is strong/universal. This means that the universal force would scope over negation, the way one would assume happens in (116a), in order to yield the appropriate meaning. But this conclusion is not obvious for the NLC. It could very well be that the NLC contains an element with existential force which scopes under negation. The net effect would be the same, as a universal scoping over negation is equivalent to an existential scoping under it. It might prove fruitful to try this path, though, because with the exception of Greek and Buli, the other languages that we saw might carry the negation-over-existential somewhat on their morphological sleeve: English, Dutch and Russian use a negative determiner which is negation over and existential determiner, while Turkish, Hungarian and Hebrew use a negated existential copula. However, if the modal existential force is the existential contained in the negative determiner or negated copula, then that brings us very close to saying that the modality itself is located in the negative determiner and negated copula, a position that seems hard to defend, given the many non-modal uses of these items39.

So even though the NLC may well prove to be a ‘negated permission’, as opposed to a ‘command’, this hypothesis also faces many difficulties, not the least of which is, again, the necessary presence of negation, a question which would show up in a different form if NLCs are negated permissions. More specifically, if No smoking! is a command, the question is why Smoking! is not a command as well. On the other hand, if no smoking! is a negated permission, the question is why Smoking! is not an affirmative permission. Either way, the obligatory presence of negation remains a mystery. So on the assumption that most would call (116a) a command, I chose to call (116b) a command as well, with the caveat that I cannot exclude that we are dealing with an existential which scopes under negation.

39 One might imagine the following argument: the quantificational force is in the negative determiner or negated copula but the modal itself (sans quantificational force) is elsewhere/lower. This would be some sort of negative existential closure of a modal variable. However, it would still have to be explained why the existential closure of the variable would have to be negated. Alternatively, one might try for a covert NPI modal. This would capture the obligatory presence of negation. But defending the position that such a covert item exists in so many different languages (and why it would need a nominalization as argument) seems rather a daunting task and I will not attempt it in the current paper.
II. Summary

I hope to have shown that the phenomenon of Negation-Licensed Commands exists and has some cross-linguistic stability. Despite differences in language-particular properties, several unrelated languages have nominalizations which become commands in the presence of negation. Along the way, I also attempted but mostly failed to reduce the phenomenon of NLCs to a few other phenomena. So success is quite moderate for now.

REFERENCES