

In the 19th century, the two groups clearly contrasted in that predicatively used abstract nouns took the instrumental in the vast majority of instances, as opposed to concrete nouns. The spread of the instrumental, according to Røed, may be presented as follows:

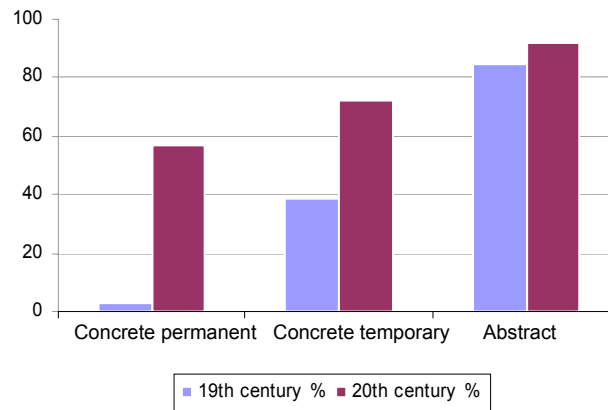


Figure 1. Spread of the instrumental with copular predicate nouns in the 19th and 20th centuries (Røed 1966).

As Nichols (1981) has shown, in the 20th century a number of lexico-semantic classes show clear preferences for one of the alternative cases in predicate position:

Predicate nouns favouring the nominative

- Nouns of nationality
- Evaluative nouns: *дурак* ‘fool’, *красавица* ‘beauty’, *весельчак* ‘merry person’
- Semantically bleached (empty) nouns used with modifiers: *человек* ‘person’, *мужчина* ‘man’, *девушка* ‘girl’.

Predicate nouns favouring the instrumental

- Nouns of occupation, status and function: *учитель* ‘teacher’ *председатель* ‘chairman’
- Abstract and deverbal nouns: *цель* ‘aim’ *причина* ‘reason’ *занятие* ‘occupation’
- Kinship terms

Another line of investigation has been the impact of *grammatical factors*, namely the effect of tense/mood on the diachronic shift from nominative to instrumental and on the synchronic variation between the two cases. Patokova (1929) and Borkovskij (1963) claimed that the spread of the instrumental in early Old Russian was more noticeable with the past tense copula (in particular the pluperfect), than with other copular forms. Røed’s data indicate that the instrumental was firmly established with the future in copular constructions in the 19th century and slightly increased in use in the early 20th century (78% and 88% respectively, although the calculations are based on relatively small numbers). Nichols pointed out that the preference for the instrumental with predicate nominals is greater in the future than in the past (with the present the instrumental on predicate nominals is ungrammatical), particularly for predicate nouns with copulas it means that variation is possible primarily in the past tense where lexicosemantic factors have some impact on morphosyntactic choices, while in the future these factors are irrelevant (Nichols 1981: 152).

Since Potebnja (1899) and Ovsjaniko-Kulikovskij (1912), there has been a tradition of distinguishing the predicate cases on the basis of their *pragmatic properties*. The general view is that the nominative is used to denote permanent properties of a subject, whereas

occasional, non-typical properties are associated with the instrumental. A number of covert factors may be associated with these semantics. Nichols (1981) points in particular to two pragmatic factors, which she generalizes as covert tense-aspect parameters: i) marked relative tense and ii) implicit change of state. The former signals the “departure in tense from their immediate context”. The latter implies that the reported state is the result of some recent change and formerly did not hold (Nichols 1981: 155-156). Timberlake (2004) points out that the instrumental on predicate nouns limits the state “in time-worlds” (as in *Он доказывает, что Пушкин в последние годы жизни был монархистом*_{<INSTR>} ‘He attempts to show that Puškin in the last years of his life was a monarchist’; *Брат две зимы подряд был в Туле репетитором*_{<INSTR>} *у мальчиков Лопухиных* ‘Brother worked two winters in a row in Tula as the coach for Lopukhin boys’). The nominative is used with temporally unrestricted states (e. g. identifications), meaning that the statement is generally true (*Ведь он был член*_{<NOM>} *Политбюро* ‘After all he was a member of Politbureau’). The instrumental is also used to indicate the fact that the individual in question, not others, fits a certain definition (*Ланцелот был самым храбрым рыцарем*_{<INSTR>} *из всех, кто собирался за Круглым столом* ‘Lancelot was the bravest knight among those who gathered at the Round Table’), whereas the nominative is used when the subject is “presumed known and the predicative subject contributes little, the communicative weight carried by the adjective” (*Он был всесторонне талантливый человек*_{<NOM>} ‘He was a man of many and varied talents’) (Timberlake 2004: 286-288).

Analysis

We investigate the expansion of the predicate instrumental with the copula *быт’* ‘to be’ over the 19th and 20th centuries. The relevant factors are evaluated on the basis of statistics derived from a corpus of 30 million tokens of fiction and non-fiction texts created between 1801 and 2000 (originally compiled by Adrian Barentsen, University of Amsterdam).

As a number of researchers have shown, each of the predicate cases may be triggered by a set of heterogeneous factors. However, these factors may conflict, as in (2a,b), where a noun of occupation takes different case marking with respect to the general sentence context; or in (3a, b) where a noun denoting a temporally unrestricted property takes the nominative, unless the modal meaning triggered by the structure (subjunctive clause) supersedes the lexical semantics.

(2a) Она **была** **учительниц-а**, очень хорошая, умная девушка.
 She was teacher-NOM.SG very nice clever girl
 ‘She was a teacher, a very nice and clever girl’

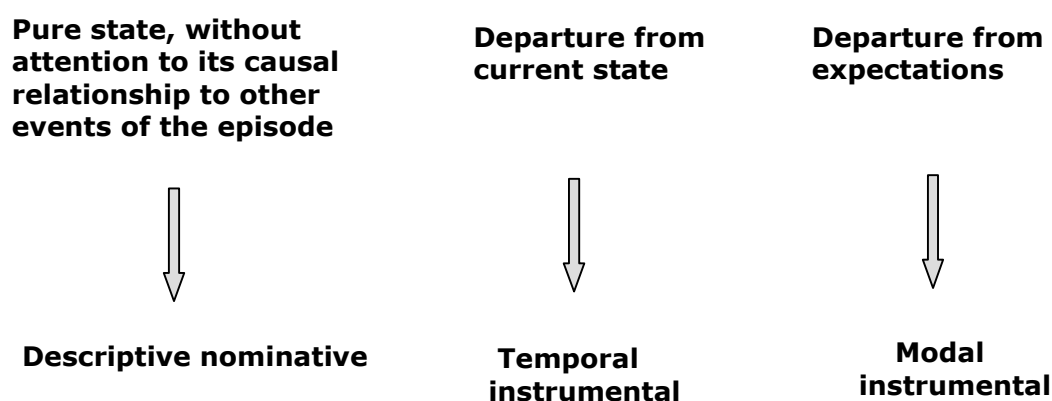
(2b) Кутузов **был** **сельск-им** **учител-ем** два года.
 Kutuzov was village-INSTR.SG teacher-INSTR.SG two years
 ‘Kutuzov was a village teacher for two years’

(3a) Он **был** **француз**.
 He was Frenchman [NOM.SG]
 ‘He was a Frenchman.’

(3b) Ах, если **бы** он **был** **француз-ом!**
 Oh if particle [SBJV] he be-PST Frenchman-INSTR.SG*
 ‘Oh, if he were a Frenchman!’

**был* plus *бы* realizes subjunctive mood.

To pin down these factors under appropriate headings, as well as to evaluate their significance in different time periods, we employed a general framework proposed in Timberlake 1986 and further specified in Timberlake 2004. The decisive issue, according to Timberlake, is the relationship between the predicated state and possible or expected states. The state that holds, with no indication of any limitations of this state either from a temporal or modal perspective, triggers the nominative. If a reported state represents departure from some previous state (results from the previous state), or an actual state contrasts with the state which is expected and holds despite expectations, then it is marked by the instrumental which falls into two types, *temporal instrumental*² and *modal instrumental*, subject to the nature of restrictions applied. In short, the distribution of predicate cases within this framework may be presented as follows:



These senses can be illustrated by the following examples from our corpus:

Descriptive nominative

(4a) Она **была вдов-а**, бездетна и довольно богата (Turgenev)
 She was widow-NOM.SG childless and rather rich
 ‘She was a widow, childless and rather rich.’

(4b) Кроме того, он **был** прям-ой и честн-ый **грубьян** (Dovlatov)
 Besides he was direct- NOM.SG and honest- NOM.SG boor[NOM.SG]
 ‘Furthermore, he was a straightforward and honest boor.’

Temporal instrumental

(5a) Бопре в отечестве своем **был парикмахер-ом**, потом в Пруссии .
 Bopre in homeland his was hairdresser-INSTR.SG then in Prussia
солдат-ом (Puškin)
 soldier-INSTR.SG
 ‘In his homeland, Bopre was a hairdresser, then in Prussia he was a soldier.’

(5b) В юности Регина **была** типичн-ой советск-ой
 In (her) youth Regina was typical-INSTR.SG Soviet-INSTR.SG
школьниц-ей (Dovlatov)
 schoolgirl-INSTR.SG
 ‘In her youth, Regina was a typical Soviet schoolgirl.’

² Indicating the relationship of the predicated state to other events in the text, “this sense of the instrumental is not purely temporal, but has some modal flavour as well” (Timberlake 1986: 142).

Modal instrumental

(6a) ...если б она **была мужчиною**, она бы наделала
if particle [SBJV] she was man-INSTR.SG she particle [SBJV] did
за вас тысячу глупост-ей (Tolstoj).
for you thousand silly.thing-GEN.PL
'If she were a man, she would do all sort of silly things for you'

(6b) ...разнесся слух, что Энн **была не так-ой преданн-ой**
came gossip that Ann was not such-INSTR.SG devoted-INSTR.SG
жен-ой, как считалось (Strugackie).
wife-INSTR.SG as was.considered
'...the rumour came that Ann was not so devoted a wife as it was considered'

In the 19th century the instrumental had already been firmly established as a predicate case in copular constructions, which appeared consistently under certain structural and semantic conditions³:

Structural conditions

- Copular in the infinitive
- Copular in the future
- Copular in the non-indicative mood

Lexical semantics

- Inanimate nouns
- Certain animate nouns which clearly denote temporary states (e. g. *свидетель* 'witness')

Sentence or contextual semantics:

- Temporal phrase *Он был прежде полков-ым доктор-ом*
He was formerly regiment's-INSTR.SG doctor-INSTR.SG
'Formerly, he was a regimental doctor.'
- Restricting adjunct or modifier *В таком наряде они были геро-ями*
In such attire they were heroes-INSTR.PL
'In such attire they were heroes.'
- Indication for the change of state in the broad context *Он красавц-ем был.*
He handsome.man-INSTR.SG was
'He was a handsome man.'
(There is an indication in the context that the state is not actual anymore)

Beyond these conditions, few predicate nouns had instrumental marking. The nominative also had two domains to which the instrumental normally was not admitted:

- Semantically bleached nouns *Он был хорош-ий человек*
He was good-NOM.SG man[NOM.SG]
'He was a good man.'

³ To avoid subjectivity, we consider here conditions that have clear overt exponents, either within a sentence or in the adjacent context. Equally, instances which did not include these exponents and could be classified only on the basis of speaker's intuition were not included in neither of these groups.

- Nouns of nationality *Он был немец*
He was German[NOM.SG]
'He was a German.'

The conditions that trigger the instrumental clearly fall into one of the two groups, depending on which kind of specification (restriction) they impose on the predicated property. Most factors that disfavoured subject-predicate noun agreement by the early 19th century may be classified under Timberlake's headings. Consequently, we can arrange factors that specified the scope of the predicated characteristic as follows:

Temporal instrumental

- Copula in future
- Certain animate nouns which clearly denote temporary states (e. g. *свидетель* 'witness')
- Temporal phrase
- Restricting adjunct or modifier
- Indication of a change of state within a broader context

Modal instrumental

- Copular in the non-indicative mood
- Negated copula

In the first half of the 19th century the future, imperative, subjunctive and infinitive contrast with the past in that the first three conditions strongly favour the instrumental, whereas the past tense copula allows significant variation in case marking, as presented in Table 1:

Form of the copula	Total numbers	% instrumental
Future	58	93
Imperative and subjunctive	32	81
Infinitive	61	97
Past	328	54

Table 1. Predicate nouns with the copula (1801-1850)

With the past tense copula, the choice is conditioned by semantic factors. First, predicate nouns split depending on animacy: the proportion of instrumental inanimate nouns is very much the same as with imperative, subjunctive, future or infinitive:

	Total numbers	% instrumental
Animate nouns	216	38
Inanimate nouns	121	78

Table 2. Animate and inanimate predicate nouns with the copula (1801-1850)

Second, with animate nouns case marking was to a large extent determined by the presence or absence of factors that restricted the scope of predication (predicated characteristic) by establishing a temporal framework within which a given state holds⁴, such as nouns which denote temporary states (*свидетель* 'witness'); qualifiers (e. g. *уже* 'already', *еще* 'yet'); temporal phrase (e. g. *в прошлом году* 'last year'); restricting adjuncts (e. g. *в институте*

⁴ cf.: "...the instrumental in this usage indicates that the inception of the state represents a significant departure from the prior state of affairs and, further, that it is a necessary development from the circumstances that obtain locally around the narrated time." (Timberlake 1986: 142).

‘at the institute’, as in *Элиза была моим лучшим другом в институте* ‘*Eliza was my best friend at the institute*’); and, finally, indication of the change of state in the broad context. Characteristics specified in one of these ways require the instrumental, which in this case occurs just as often as with inanimate nouns, future, imperative, subjunctive or infinitives.

	Total numbers	% instrumental
Animate nouns, specified	78	83
Animate nouns, unspecified	102	16

Table 3. Animate predicate nouns with the copula (1801-1850). Specified and unspecified characteristic

In other words, in the early 19th century the predicate instrumental dominated with all forms of the copula except for the past tense, where nominative-instrumental variation was conditioned semantically. States specified in terms of their modal properties or temporal restrictions triggered the instrumental, unspecified, indefinite states triggered the nominative.

This variation continued until the middle of the 20th century without significant change. In the second half of the 20th century, however, use of the instrumental with predicate nouns increased dramatically at the expense of the nominative for animate nouns denoting unspecified, indefinite states. Statistics derived from the corpus for this group show similar frequencies for the three periods (1801-1850, 1851-1900 and 1901-1950), and significant increase in the second half of the 20th century.

	Total numbers	% instrumental
1801-1850	102	16
1851-1900	136	32
1901-1950	122	32
1951-2000	140	87

Table 4. Animate predicate nouns with the copula (1801-2000). Unspecified characteristic

One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the significance of the differences amongst the mean values for the four time periods. The results are summarised below

One-way ANOVA: instrumental % versus Period

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Period	3	0.0014592	0.0004864	32.33	<0.001

Individual 95% CIs For Mean Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	
1801-1850	5	0.002034	0.001787	(---*---)
1851-1900	5	0.006015	0.004703	(---*---)
1901-1950	6	0.003540	0.002903	(---*---)
1951-2000	3	0.027540	0.006415	(---*---)

0.000 0.010 0.020 0.030

The extremely low p value (<0.001) indicates that *at least one* of the means is significantly different from the others. The 95% confidence intervals for each mean are shown in the

graphic. It can be seen that these intervals overlap for the three early time periods, indicating negligible difference amongst the occurrence of the instrumental for these periods. That of the latest period, however, shows no overlap with the early three, suggesting that the occurrence of the instrumental is higher. The probability of this conclusion being wrong is < 5%. A level of $p = 0.05$ (5%) is generally accepted as the cut off value for significance in linguistics.

With the spread of the instrumental within the group of animate predicate nouns associated with unspecified characteristics, late 20th century Russian has reduced the nominative-instrumental variation in predicate nouns to the minimum and consequently reduced the role of semantics as a factor that may account for case marking on predicate nouns. In other words, for the different semantic conditions the proportion of the instrumental became similar, thereby indicating their reduced relevance.

	Total numbers	% instrumental
Inanimate	85	93
Animate, past, specified	84	98
Animate, past, unspecified	122	87

Table 5. Animate predicate nouns with the copula under different semantic conditions (1951-2000)

A drastic change occurred under conditions where, in earlier periods, the instrumental had hardly been tolerated. In particular, it is generally believed that semantically bleached (empty) nouns, such as *человек* ‘person’, *женщина* ‘woman’ and *девушка* ‘girl’ when used with modifiers (e.g. *она была добрая женщина* ‘she was a kind woman’) favour the nominative (Nichols 1981: 152; Timberlake 2004: 288). This state, however, held until the middle of the 20th century. In the second half of the century a dramatic change occurred, with the instrumental becoming to be not only totally acceptable but also dominant. As our statistics for *человек* ‘person’ show, the numbers for the instrumental in this group for 1951-2000 period are similar to those in all other groups of predicate nouns.

	Total numbers	% instrumental
1801-1850	93	5
1851-1900	165	11
1901-1950	122	45
1951-2000	136	90

Table 6. *Человек* ‘person’ in predicate position (semantically bleached usage)

Conclusions

Alternative case marking on predicate nouns with the copula *был* was to a large degree conditioned by semantic and structural factors until the middle of the 20th century. In the second half of the 20th century the instrumental spread to domains formerly occupied by the nominative. This change replaced multiple rules of variations with a single overall rule (though with some exceptions, such as nouns of nationality which maintain the earlier state of Russian morphosyntax). In our view, semantics had only a subsidiary role in this morphosyntactic process, supporting variation at some stages, while ultimately being ousted in favour of a single rule, namely instrumental case marking on predicate nouns.

The shape of the nominative-instrumental shift indicates that Russian is moving from a semantically conditioned to a syntactically determined model for predicate nominals. This change is almost complete for predicate nouns.

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