

## REVIEWS

Nikita Mixajlov, *Tvoritel'nyj padež v russkom jazyke XVIII veka (Instrumental case in eighteenth-century Russian)*. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2012. 300pp. [*Studia Slavica Upsaliensia*, 47.]

Reviewed by Nerea Madariaga

This book is a version of the PhD thesis defended by Nikita Mixajlov at the University of Uppsala in December 2012. It is written in Russian but includes a brief English summary at the end of the book (pp. 291–96).

The author offers a very detailed description of the uses and variants of the instrumental case in the 18th-century Russian literary language. As the author states, it is based on the impressive amount of approximately 11,300 examples including an instrumental case, and 2,400 examples of other grammatical cases, from a specific corpus of forty authors belonging to different genres: poetry, drama, literary prose, letters, memoirs, and learned tracts.

The book displays the structure of a dissertation. In chapter 1, the author defines the goals, planning, and methodology of the study, introduces his sources, describes the morphology of the instrumental case in the 18th century, and mentions some problems in classifying the types and subtypes of the instrumental case, mostly from the point of view of its various meanings.

The following three chapters (2 to 4) are entirely dedicated to describing the various uses of the instrumental case in the corpus selected for the study, as well as to reviewing other grammatical variants or alternative structures with the same or similar semantic value as the instrumental case. In order to describe the very high number of examples examined in this thesis, the author mainly follows Mrázek's (1964) classification: three major syntactic uses give their titles to the three chapters, namely argumental, adverbial, and adnominal uses of the instrumental case in the 18th century. As the author himself states, there are only two respects in which he does not follow Mrázek's description: (i) unlike Mrázek, he analyses the instrumental case headed by a preposition at the same level as bare instrumental case, and (ii) he

differentiates the instrumental case governed by verbs from the instrumental case governed by the corresponding deverbal nouns.

Chapter 2 deals with argument (the author uses the term “non-adverbial”) uses of the instrumental case. First, predicative instrumental case in the 18th century is examined in structures including designative verbs, copular verbs with the present, past, and infinitive copula *byt’* ‘to be’, and with no copula. For designative verbs the author classifies the uses of instrumental according to the meaning of the corresponding verbs (specifically designative verbs, like *nazvat’ svoim synom* ‘to call (someone) one’s own son’, verbs of transformation like *stat’ ljubimcem* ‘to become the favorite’, verbs of appearance or result like *javit’sja bezdel’nikom* ‘to turn out to be a lazy person’; and verbs of frequent state or property like *byvat’ dušoj kompanii* ‘to be the life and soul of the group’). As in the other chapters and sections, the author also compares the specific predicative use of the instrumental case with its “competitors” or competing variants, the so-called second cases (i.e., the same case encoding a nominal / adjectival secondary predicate and its antecedent in the sentence, be it nominative, accusative, or any oblique case). Next discussed is the instrumental phrase in the function of subject of a passive structure. This is also compared to the alternative resources to express a passive subject, i.e., the prepositions *ot* ‘from’ + genitive case and *čerez* ‘through’ + accusative case. The last argument structure analyzed in this chapter is the instrumental phrase in the function of object of a verb, once again in comparison with alternative expressions, such as the accusative and dative object cases. In this section, the instrumental case is described mainly according to the semantics of each group of verbs that requires an instrumental object, such as verbs expressing possession, governing or ruling, or that something is moved, and others.

Chapter 3 examines adverbial uses of the instrumental case, classified according to the semantics of the instrumental phrase, and includes the following sections: instrumental case designating an instrument (literally or metaphorically) and similar meanings such as means of transport or materials. Another adverbial use is the instrumental case of manner, divided into the following subtypes: instrumental of manner, tautological instrumental case (expressions like *vidom ne vidano* ‘lit. not seen with the sight’, meaning ‘very infrequent or surprising’), instrumental of comparison, and instrumental of manner headed by the preposition *s* ‘with’. In these sections, the author

compares each of the semantic uses of the adverbial instrumental phrases with competing expressions, which make use of other cases and/or prepositions. The instrumental case denoting cause is also compared to other syntactic resources, mainly various prepositions combined with genitive or dative cases. A similar description is provided for the instrumental case of space, with or without prepositions, which is compared to other alternative expressions. Finally, the instrumental case of time and the instrumental of goal are analyzed, once again compared to other variants.

Chapter 4 investigates adnominal instrumental constructions, that is, instrumental case required by comparatives, regular adjectives, and nouns. The first use is the instrumental case modifying comparative adjectives and adverbs, which can convey the meaning of measure or restriction.

Afterwards, the author describes short and long adjectives combined with instrumental phrases, and finally in this chapter, the author accounts for the instrumental case associated to nouns, namely, to deverbal nouns first, and then to non-deverbal nouns. This last subsection includes the analysis of the bare instrumental case that restricts a quality, and the preposition *s* 'with' + instrumental case denoting a feature.

Finally, chapter 5 is the conclusion. the author finds that the instrumental in 18th century Russian undergoes a sort of "desemantization," in the sense that, on the one hand, in this period the instrumental becomes definitely established as the grammatical case of non-verbal predication, the unique case encoding passive subjects, and a case commonly marking certain types of objects, independent of the original instrumental meaning of this case. On the other hand, this desemantization also becomes manifest in the adverbial uses of the instrumental; as the author argues, this is because, in the 18th century, the instrumental undergoes the definitive loss of many of its adverbial functions as a bare case, and becomes replaced by different prepositional phrases.

A series of final *addenda* are offered at the end of the book: the sources used in the study, a list of abbreviations, dictionaries and additional sources, a section of references, and an English summary.

## Evaluation

This research will be welcome in the field of descriptive linguistics of Russian, as it fills a significant gap in the study of the evolution of grammatical cases in Russian. Works in the Soviet period, such as Borkovskij (1968, 1978), Borkovskij and Kuznecov (2004 [1963]), Lomtev (1954, 1956), as well as earlier works (Potebnja 1958 [1888], Buslaev 2009 [1858]), or more recent ones (Krys'ko 1997, 2000, 2001, 2006, Uspenskij 2002), analyze the evolution of Russian grammar, including grammatical case, mostly from the earliest texts until the 17th century. Large books by grammarians such as Peškovskij (2001 [1938]), Šaxmatov (2001 [1941]), and Švedova (1970) examine mostly examples from the 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, virtually none of these works is specifically concerned with the 18th century.

This gap becomes even more striking given that, as the author correctly states, the 18th century is crucial for understanding the formation of so-called “national” or Modern Russian. If Middle Russian was the period when most changes in the historical grammar took place (as analyzed by the authors mentioned in the previous paragraph), the 18th and 19th centuries are crucial for the history of the language, namely, they determine the literary Russian language as we know it today. Incidentally, I take here the notions of “historical grammar” and “history of the language” in the usual sense, meaning that Middle Russian is the period when most changes in grammatical case took place in the real spoken language, while the 18th century was the time when some structures became part of the literary language and others were established as fossilized expressions and phraseologisms. In the case of the constructions with instrumental phrases, many changes had taken place in the previous centuries, but in 18th-century literary texts we can see the last examples of old instrumental uses in decline, while new uses appear as definitely established.

Mixajlov's thesis is a good compilation work, and is very systematic; all the types of instrumental phrases are described according to a pre-established plan: function and meaning of the specific use, classification into subtypes, together with the corresponding examples, and analysis of alternative or competing variants. It is a very detailed and exhaustive piece of work, in which every single use of the instrumental case in the chosen texts is included; in addition, sometimes, the

author presents the examples verb by verb, genre by genre, and even author by author.

In this evaluation, several caveats will be made in order for the reader to understand what can be found and what cannot be found in this book. The main caveat is to warn the reader about the nature of this study: it can be ascribed to the classic Russian (and then Soviet) tradition of descriptive linguistics, namely, description of the history of the literary language. The reader will find here almost no reference to historical grammar, no cross-linguistic comparison, no pretension to contribute to or refine any linguistic theory, but just the description of some specific literary uses of the Russian language in a certain period.

The descriptive tradition followed by this study explains the very profuse and detailed presentation of the data, describing in the same way and at the same level what would be very different things from the viewpoint of other linguistic traditions. Let us consider a few examples: for a formal syntactician, prepositional phrases (PPs) in which the P assigns instrumental case might not be studied on par with bare instrumental noun phrases (NPs), as PPs and case-marked NPs display different structural properties; a functional syntactician would probably not consider calques from other languages (*ot* + genitive, from Greek or Old Church Slavonic, and *čerez* + accusative, from French or Polish/Ukrainian, as the author himself acknowledges), as (equal) competing variants of the native instrumental case in the function of a passive agent; finally, a historical grammarian who finds just two examples of the use of the instrumental case denoting a building material in very stylized 18th-century literary texts would hardly consider that this use was still alive (from the point of view of historical grammar, it would have been lost long before that time in real spoken language).

Someone expecting to find in this book a work on historical linguistics with a solid theoretical background may find it not so easy to follow because of its very descriptive character, which presents the reader with very profuse data and little or no explanation (there is no global explanatory hypothesis formulated within any current linguistic theory, be it functional or formal). A reader, even one who can read Russian, but is not familiar with the evolution of grammatical case in Russian, may simply feel overwhelmed by the huge amount of linguistic uses, semantic types, and subtypes, often given verb by verb and author by author.

Some readers may consider a shortcoming of this thesis the fact that the only attempt to explain the change of the instrumental case in the 18th century, Mrázek's (1964) hypothesis of the desemantization of the instrumental, which he very briefly introduces in only one paragraph in the introduction (pages 29–30, plus fn. 28), and repeated in another single paragraph in the conclusion (page 271), while the linguistic data take up more than 200 pages of the book. However, no further reference except Mrázek (1964) and very briefly Lutin (2008) is given, no definition of the process of desemantization or of semantic change in general, and no examples in other languages of the world or of other similar phenomenon in Russian. Yet there exist a number of works dedicated to semantic change, among many others the chapter by Eckart (2011) on grammaticalization and semantic change in the *Oxford Handbook of Grammaticalization*, founded on previous work by Eckart and other authors. It would also be interesting to find at least a very brief mention of whether this happens with other Russian cases too, and in other languages.

The very little space dedicated to proving the hypothesis, as compared with the detailed presentation of the data, might lead the reader to question whether the hypothesis offered in the book is a wrong explanation for the data. For the argument and predicative uses of the instrumental, the data offered in this book suggest not a desemantization but a simpler and more common phenomenon, namely, the classic process of grammaticalization, which includes the notion that something already grammatical becomes "more grammatical" (see Kuryłowicz 1975 [1965]), as happens with the Russian instrumental, which from being a lexical case marker becomes a structural case marker. The grammaticalization of the instrumental in these uses was not necessarily preceded by a desemantization, at least not in historical Slavic, and mostly took place before the 18th century. The grammaticalization of the instrumental predicate case probably took place already in Old Russian, and the instrumental of passive subjects had been grammaticalized already in prehistoric times (Borkovskij 1978). This conception is probably due to the abovementioned fact that the author focuses on the history of the literary language, so that finding a few examples of the very literary (in Russian) *ot* + genitive passive subject, which the author himself admits is a calque from Old Church Slavonic or even Greek, means for him that the instrumental had not yet become estab-

lished (in the literary language) as the unique marker of passive subjects.

As for the non-argument uses of the instrumental, not knowing exactly what the author or, before him, Mrázek (1964) means by desemantization, the reader might think that the data presented by the author reflect not a process of desemantization but just the opposite. In fact, the data presented in the book show that the instrumental in this period loses the most recently added peripheral semas (or even calques from other languages), and preserves mainly its original Indo-European instrumental uses. In this sense, the original semantic use of the instrumental is reinforced, not desemantized.

Related to this, this work gives very interesting details about competing variants and the replacement of some of them but, again, the author does not explain what he assumes about how historical change happens, or how and why a competing variant was replaced by another one. This central issue has been treated by many authors, notably by Kroch (1989 and subsequent work) and Yang (2002). In this respect, the assumptions made in the book are loose: for example, on page 191, the author states that the instrumental case expressing cause loses some semantic values because it had too many of them. What does this mean? Why and when did they become so many as to be lost, and how many are too many in order to trigger change?

A final *desideratum*: the author provides a brief presentation of the situation of most specific uses in Old Russian, and almost always tells us how they developed in later or contemporary Russian. However, historical linguists would like to read a few words on the original semantics and functions of the case in earlier stages, ideally on its Indo-European origin, but if not, at least some comparison to other Slavic languages, which is totally absent in the book. I think this absence can be related to the strict framework in which the work was written, namely the Russian tradition of describing the history of the literary language in great detail. However, mentioning the Indo-European origins and a little comparison with other Slavic languages could make clearer for the reader what is old and what is an innovation, as well as the original and typical values of the instrumental case.

To sum up, despite the above reservations, this work is very valuable for scholars involved in the study of the Russian literary language, as well as for Russianists working within a specific theoretical framework. They can find here abundant material on the development

of grammatical case in Russian to be explained, which they can put together with other complementary descriptive works about other Russian cases or other periods. This is crucially so if we take into account that, as mentioned before, this thesis partially fills a gap regarding the situation of the Russian grammatical case in the 18th century.

The book can also be interesting for Russianists studying the literary language of the 18th century, and for those who want to interpret correctly the grammatical uses of the instrumental phrases and their competing variants, or to know how the instrumental case in Russian differed in the 18th century from the present-day language. On the other hand, historical grammarians will not find here a generalized explanation of change, of how or why competing variants coexist or replace one another, or a global explanation of the development of grammatical case. Typologists are not provided with any cross-linguistic data, even comparison with other (East) Slavic languages. Generative linguists working on diachronic syntax will find no structural explanation, or references to structural positions or syntactic features, and functionalists, no generalization to understand the nature, function, and change of the instrumental case from a global point of view.

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