

УДК 81'362

## **Prepositional – Case Constructions with Preposition “OT” in Modern Russian Language: Structural – Semantic Aspect**

**Mohammad Mohammadian Souteh (Iran)\***  
*Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod  
23 Gagarin, Nizhny Novgorod, 603950, Russia*

Received 14.03.2014, received in revised form 12.05.2014, accepted 29.05.2014

---

*In this article different function of preposition “OT” in modern Russian language is described as prepositional-case constructions. These constructions have various forms that depend on their meaning and structure. Author has analyzed fourteen various structural-semantic types of prepositional-case constructions with preposition “OT” that are modifications of principle invariant meaning of this constructions. The purpose of our article – Analyze of prepositional-case constructions with preposition “OT” in modern Russian language: structural-semantic aspect, detect and describe main semantic classes of usage of prepositional-case constructions with this preposition. In this paper is used descriptive method and method of analyze of dictionary definitions. In conclusion conception of proposed study consists in description of meanings and types of usage of prepositional-case constructions with preposition “OT” depending on lexical, morphological and syntactical factors.*

*Keywords: prepositional-case constructions, Russian language, preposition OT, semantics, English language.*

---

The study of Russian, a highly inflectional language, requires a sound understanding of the use of grammatical cases, prepositions and prepositional constructions with the oblique cases. There are a great number of contextual variants in the semantics of the Russian grammatical cases, but all the specific contextual meanings of any case can be reduced to a common denominator.

Prepositions in Russian as auxiliary part of speech, are used for word junction, furthermore, they subordinate certain words to the other ones. Prepositions, like other words in Russian can be mono- and polysemantic. Preposition “**от**” is a polysemantic one and it is used only in Genitive

case. Their semantics is interpreted by syntactic relations expressed by means of prepositions. The research represents principal meanings of the preposition.

The principal function of genitive case is the expression of the noun phrase modifier. The Genitive case always indicates the extend of the participation of the given object in a given situation. It signals the degree of objectification of the entity in a given context and it presents a thing or a person as somehow limited or even completely eliminated. The genitive case, as do the nominative and the accusative cases belong to the grammatical group of cases. The primary

function of the grammatical case is syntactical, but grammatical cases may also occur in secondary adverbial functions such as an accusative case of time. The grammatical cases in Russian language represent a large number of various meanings and, in conjunction with certain prepositions, the number of meanings increases greatly. The number of prepositions in Russian is increasing. The new prepositions are formed from the other parts of speech. Prepositions fulfill an important function. They segment and define the spectrum of meanings which are expressed by the grammatical cases. The differences between each of contextual meanings are determined either by the grammatical or by the lexical composition of the phrase in which the preposition occurs. The genitive case is by far the most frequently used and is the most complex of the oblique cases; its use encompasses more than one hundred prepositional and preposition less constructions (Ryan, 2008: 4).

In conjunction with prepositions the genitive case greatly increases its number of meanings. When used with prepositions it can denote place, directions of movement, time of actions, cause and reason as well as a number of other relationships. A preposition is a part of speech which expresses the relationship of one word to another. Russian preposition governs a noun or pronoun in an oblique case. Prepositions can be non-derivational and derivational (Ryan, 2008: 50).

Russian is exceedingly rich in prepositions. Only the most common ones can be considered here, but the basic concepts underlying the use of prepositions will be covered. Each preposition governs at least one grammatical case; that is, the noun or pronoun following it (its object) must have the appropriate case ending. When learning any new preposition not listed here, be sure to learn which case(s) it governs. Those prepositions that are followed by more than one case have correspondingly different shades of meaning;

such prepositions will be discussed after those more closely bound to a single case (Kemple, 1993: 42).

Prepositions can indicate various types of relations between words. For example, they may indicate location (*in* the room), direction (*to* the store), time (*before* dinner), cause (*from* fear), manner (*by* bus), purpose (*for* reading), and many other relations. In general, the meaning of a preposition, and the type of relation it indicates, is dependent on the context. For example, in the sentence *He returned from his trip*, the preposition *from* indicates a directional relation, while in the sentence *He is tired from his trip*, the same preposition indicates a causal relation, this difference being determined by the lexical meaning of the predicates used. Similarly, changing the object of a preposition may change the type of relation expressed, e.g., *He lived in Boston* (location), *He lived in luxury* (manner), *He lived in the Stalin era* (time).

In English, where case is reflected only in a few personal pronouns, and variation is limited to the choice between the nominative and the accusative cases, all prepositions require their object to be in the accusative case (e.g., nominative *she*, but following a preposition, accusative *her*: at *her*, by *her*, for *her*, in *her*, near *her*, with *her*, etc.). In Russian, by contrast, the noun or pronoun following a preposition can occur in whichever of the six cases is required by the preposition (though the nominative is rare). Therefore, it is important for the student of Russian to learn the case(s) that a given preposition governs. Some prepositions govern only one case, while others may govern two or more cases—and express correspondingly different meanings.

It is also important to keep in mind that close correspondences between English and Russian prepositions are rare. On the one hand, the same preposition in English may be used in several different meanings, which in Russian

are expressed by a different preposition each. For example, the English preposition *for* is rendered by six different Russian prepositions in the following phrases. *a gift for Dad* (*подарок для папы*), *closed for repairs* (*закрыто на ремонт*), *for the first time* (*в первый раз*), *thanks for everything* (*спасибо за всё*), *respect for parents* (*уважение к родителям*), *for this reason* (*по этой причине*). On the other hand, some meanings of English prepositions are not expressed in Russian by a preposition at all, but, may be expressed by a Russian case form alone. (Levine Schaum's, 2009: 67).

It is worth devoting a separate chapter to Russian prepositions, and the rendering of English prepositions into Russian. For one thing, knowledge of prepositions in a foreign language tends to be a good indicator of command of that language in general. More importantly, the meanings of Russian prepositions coincide with the meanings of their most common English equivalents only to a limited degree. Russian prepositions are also extremely precise in their meanings. The English-speaker must therefore think particularly carefully about the meaning of the English preposition in a given context before rendering it into Russian. Moreover, some of the most widespread English prepositions (e.g. *for*, *of*, *to*, *with*) are often not rendered in Russian by any preposition at all, since their meaning may be implicit in the use of a certain Russian case. Attention must also be paid to the fact that some common Russian prepositions are capable of governing more than one case and that they have different meanings when they are used with different cases (Offord & Gogolitsyna, 2005: 333).

### Prepositions Governing the Genitive Case

Prepositions governing the genitive case are the most numerous. Prepositions may be subdivided as follows:

**Primary:** *от* ‘from’, *до* ‘as far as’ etc.

**Adverbial:** *близ* ‘near’, *вдоль* ‘along’ etc.

Prepositions derived from nouns (e.g. *в пользу* ‘in favour of’, *на счёт* ‘on account of’) and from verbs (*исходя из* ‘concluding from’ etc.).

Preposition **OT** is always followed by the genitive case.

Preposition “**OT**” is one of the richest original prepositions according to its semantic opportunities and according to syntactic model of Russian language. This preposition practically presents all types of possible syntactic relations (subject, object, definitive, adverbial, complementary). It makes constructions with complex syncretic meaning easily; prepositional-case form of noun with preposition “**OT**” joins verbs, nouns, adverbs, category of state words.

Analyzing materials from Ryan N. «Russian genitive», Pulkina I.M. «A Short Russian Reference Grammar», James S. Levine Schaum's «Outline Russian Grammar» and Terence Wade. A «Comprehensive Russian Grammar», we classified principal meanings of preposition **от** as follows:

#### 1. A starting point for a movement (source), point of departure:

Used with a noun denoting the starting point of motion (note: When used in this meaning, the preposition **от** often occurs with a verb of motion that has the prefix **от-**)

*Виктор отошёл от стола.*

Victor moved away from the table.

*Лодка отчалила от берега.*

A boat moved away from the shore.

*Нина уехала от сестры.*

Nina moved out of her sister's place.

#### 2. An indication of direction:

The distance from a point (note: The distance may be expressed either by **за** + accusative case or **в** + prepositional case, as shown in the first two examples below.)

*Аэропорт находится за десять километров от города.*

*The airport is located 10 kilometers from the city.*

*Он жил в двух кварталах от Кремля.*

*He lived two blocks from the Kremlin.*

### 3. A starting point in space when measuring distance between two points:

From one place to another (note: In this meaning the preposition **от** + genitive case usually is combined with the preposition **до** + genitive case.)

*От моего дома до моря десять километров.*

It is ten kilometers from my home to the sea.

### 4. A starting point in time:

**ОТ... ДО...** is used when the starting point in time is strictly defined

*От заката до рассвета*  
from sunset to sunrise

*Слеп от рождения*  
blind from birth

### 5. A starting point in counting:

*Эта девочка научилась считать от одного до десяти.*

This girl learnt to count from one to ten.

*В яслях дети от года до трёх лет.*

In the nursery there are children from one to three years of age.

### 6. Specification of date:

*Это письмо от первого марта.* This is a letter of the first of March.

*Это резолюция от пятого мая.* This is a resolution of the fifth of May.

### 7. An object from which the action proceeds:

*От высокого здания падала длинная тень.*

The tall building casts a long shadow.

*От роз в этой вазе шёл прекрасный запах.*

There was a wonderful aroma from the roses in this vase.

### 8. A person from whom the action proceeds

*Я получила письмо от друга.*

I received a letter from my friend.

*Лена узнала от Олега, что в понедельник будет семинар.*

Lena found out from Oleg that the seminar will take place on Monday.

*Нина получила подарок от сестры.*

Nina received a present from her sister.

### 9. An indication of parentage:

*Иметь детей от кого-либо*

to have children by someone

*Это телёнок от этой коровы и от этого быка.*

This calf is by this bull and out of this cow.

### 10. The cause for action:

**От** is used to both physical and emotional reasons and in both literary and everyday speech.

*Вечером мать заснула от усталости прямо на стуле.*

Towards the evening mother fell asleep on her chair from weariness.

*Увидев красивую куклу, девочка вскрикнула от радости.*

A girl cried out for joy on seeing a beautiful doll.

*От слёз у Нины красные глаза.*

Nina's eyes are red from weeping.

*От волнения Анна не могла говорить.*

Anna could not speak for nervousness.

Note. To indicate an external cause, the following prepositions are used: (1) **из-за** (**из-за дождя** не состоялась экскурсия; **из-за шума** не мог заснуть; **из-за тебя** у меня неприятности); (2) **от** (**всё высохло от солнца**; погибло **от пожара**; заболел **от потрясения**; растрепались волосы **от ветра**;

*от жары* разболелась голова); (3) *с* (*с похвал* вскружилась голова, *с похмелья...*).

Some prepositions can be replaced by others: *от похвал* вскружилась голова (instead of *с похвал*), or *от шума* он не мог заснуть (instead of *из-за шума*).

The prepositions *из-за* and *благодаря* have different shades of meaning; the cause expressed by a noun preceded by the preposition *из-за* produces an undesirable action while the cause expressed by a noun preceded by the preposition *благодаря* gives a positive effect: *Из-за засухи* погиб урожай. *Благодаря дождям* будет хороший урожай. *Из-за твоего* опоздания мы не успели закончить работу в срок. *Благодаря твоей помощи* я уже закончил работу.

To indicate a cause expressing the state of a person, certain emotions or feelings, the prepositions *от*, *с*, *из* are generally used.

The preposition *от* is usually employed to denote the state of a person:

Мальчик запрыгал *от радости*. *От возмущения* и *обида* у него выступили на глазах слёзы. Ребёнок дрожал *от страха*. Он побледнел *от испуга*. Девочка плакала *от горя*.

The meaning of the preposition *с* (*со*) is identical to that of the preposition *от*, but the former preposition is less frequently used.

The cause indicated by the preposition *из* is generally a feeling or inclination impelling the agent to act in a certain manner: Он совершил убийство *из ревности*. Она это сделала *из любви к детям*.

To indicate a cause rising from some internal quality of a person the preposition *по* is generally used: Сделал это *по рассеянности*, *по небрежности*, *по глупости*, *по невнимательности*.

Besides *по* is used in the expressions: пропустить занятия *по болезни* ‘to miss

lessons through illnesses, *по уважительной причине* ‘for good reasons’.

Человека, который рискует жизнью *из тщеславия* или из любопытства, или из алчности, нельзя назвать храбрым. *Из-за шума* идущего ливня ничего не было слышно (Т.), Когда солнце поднимается над лугами, я невольно улыбаюсь *от радости* (М. Г.), Мать задыхалась *от волнения* и чувствовала – надвигается что-то новое (М. Г.), Лицо его стало грустным *от переживаемых воспоминаний* (Арс.), Всё мне показалось молодым и чистым *благодаря присутствию* Лиды и Мисюсь (Ч.), *От радости* вобудыханье спёрло (Кр.), Выпьём, добрая подружка Бедной юности моей, Выпьём *с горя*. Где же кружка? Сердцу станет веселей (П.)

## 11. The purpose of cure:

To indicate something to counter or protect against (NOTE: This meaning is sometimes expressed by the preposition *против* + genitive case, as indicated below.)

Таблетки *от головной боли*  
tablets for headache

Врач прописал лекарство *от бронхита*.  
A doctor prescribed medication for bronchitis.

У нас на окнах есть сетки *от мух*.  
We have fly screens in the windows.

## 12. For the purpose of protection:

Many of them convey figuratively the sense of movement *away from* something.

Очень важно защищать глаза *от солнца*.

It is very important to protect one's eyes from the sun.

Только это лекарство *избавляет* меня *от головной боли*.

Only this medicine can rid me of a headache.

Она всегда *отказывается от моих приглашений*.

She always turns down my invitations.

**13. A state of person:**

*Быть свободным/независимым от кого-либо или от чего-либо*

To be free/independent from someone or from something

*Нина отличалась от других девочек своим умом.*

Nina differed from other girls in (because of) her intelligence.

**14. An indication of a part belonging to something**

*Я потеряла пуговицу от моего платья.*  
I lost a button from my dress.

*Вот ключ от вашей комнаты.*  
Here is the key to your room.

*Где крышка от этой коробки?*  
Where is a lid from this box?

**COMMON IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS:**

*Время от времени*  
from time to time

*День ото дня*  
from day to day

*От моего имени*

on my behalf

*От всего сердца*

with all one's heart

*Быть в восторге от кого-либо/чего-либо*

To be delighted with someone/something

*Быть без ума от кого-либо/чего-либо*  
to dote upon someone/something

Conception of proposed study consists in description of meanings and types of usage of prepositional-case constructions with preposition “**OT**” depending on lexical, morphological and syntactical factors. This work gives a deep analysis of the preposition OT in modern Russian language. As the result of this analysis different meaning of the preposition OT and its usage in modern Russian language have been specified. Various structures and situations where this preposition is used have been considered. Practical application of this article is aimed to help English-speaking students studying Russian use the preposition OT properly.

**References**

1. Ryan N. Russian genitive: its forms and usage. Comparative study of Genitive case function in English and contemporary standard Russian. – 2nd ed. St. Petersburg, Zlatoust, 2008. 112 p.
2. Brian Kemple. Essential Russian Grammar. New York, Dover publications, 1993. 105 p.
3. James S. Levine Schaum's Outline Russian Grammar, 2nd ed. United States of America: McGraw-Hill, 2009. 368 p.
4. Derek Offord & Natalia Gogolitsyna. Using Russian: A guide to contemporary usage. United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 493 p.
5. Pulkina I.M. A Short Russian Reference Grammar. Moscow, Rusky Yazik. 1993. 355 p.
6. Terence Wade. A Comprehensive Russian Grammar. United Kingdom, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2011. 596 p.
7. John Murray & Sarah Smyth. Intermediate Russian: a grammar and workbook. London and New York, Routledge, 2011. 217 p.

## **Предложные конструкции с предлогом «от»**

**в современном русском языке:**

**структурно-семантический аспект**

**Мохаммад Мохаммедиян Сутех (Иран)**

*Нижегородский государственный университет*

*им. Н.И. Лобачевского*

*Россия, 603950, Нижний Новгород, пр. Гагарина, 23*

---

*Статья посвящена изучению различных функций предлога «от» в современном русском языке на примере предложных конструкций. Формы таких конструкций разнообразны и зависят от их значения и структуры. Автором статьи были проанализированы четырнадцать различных структурно-семантических типов предложных конструкций с предлогом «от», которые являются модификациями главного инвариантного значения данных конструкций. Целью нашей статьи служит анализ предложных конструкций с предлогом «от» в современном русском языке, их структурно-семантический аспект, определение и описание основных семантических классов использования предложных конструкций с данным предлогом. В данной работе использовались описательный метод и метод анализа словарных дефиниций. Концепция предложенного исследования заключается в описании значений и типов использования предложных конструкций с предлогом «от» в зависимости от лексических, морфологических и синтаксических факторов.*

*Ключевые слова: предложные конструкции, русский язык, предлог «от», семантика, английский язык.*

---