

Title: Sweating Blood: The Instrumental Case with Body Parts and Functions

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This paper deals with the motions or functions of body parts – and extensions thereof – in clauses of low transitivity in Czech and Russian, namely in those clauses which involve an instrumental “object” as opposed to an accusative direct object. It links the notion of individuation described by Hopper and Thompson (1980) as a parameter of transitivity with that of inalienable possession as developed by Levine (1980). Both concepts refer to an object’s “distinctness...from the agent”; in this view, we expect to find an instrumental object in an utterance like *on dvigal nogoj* ‘he moved his [own] leg’, as opposed to the accusative in a clause where a subject is acting on another being, as in *medsestra dvigala nogu pacienta* ‘the nurse moved the patient’s leg’.

Similarly, when a non-body part moves in tandem with the person performing the action, then it will typically be found in the INST. Clothing is often used as an extension of the body: *Galja trjasla rukoj/košel’kom* ‘Galya shook her hand-INST/purse-INST’ (Levine 1980: 9). Similar parallels can be found in Czech, as in *točil veslem ve vodě jako rybím ocasem* ‘turned the oar-INST in the water like a fishtail-INST’ (Czech National Corpus). Furthermore, there seems to be an extension of the principle in the case government of Czech and Russian verbs expressing secretion or emission of bodily fluids or other bodily functions, as in R. *potet’ krov’ju* ‘sweat blood-INST’ and *dyšat’ ogněm*.

The paper demonstrates that these principles apply consistently to a considerable number of verbs expressing movement of body parts and other objects.

References:

- Hopper, Paul J., and Sandra A. Thompson. 1980. “Transitivity in grammar and discourse.” *Language* 56.2: 251-299.
- Levine, James S. 1980. “Observations on ‘Inalienable Possession’ in Russian.” *Folia Slavica* 4: 7-24.