Nina Dobrushina

THE VERBLESS SUBJUNCTIVE IN RUSSIAN

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The Russian subjunctive particle *by* can be used in constructions that lack any finite verb form, including constructions involving infinitives, predicative adverbs or adjectives, and nouns. The properties of these constructions are compared, and a conclusion is made that verbless subjunctives share a common semantic component, namely a wish or necessity. A survey of the development of subjunctive verbless constructions with predicative adverbs and adjectives shows that the evolution of the optative meaning took place during the last two centuries.

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1. Introduction

Most frequently, the Russian subjunctive is morphologically identical to the indicative past tense. It is marked analytically by the subjunctive particle *by* (*b*) [3]:

*On **by** ujexa-l*
he **SUBJ** come-PST.M.SG
'He would leave / He would have left'.

Apart from past tense forms, the subjunctive particle *by* (*b*) occurs in combinations with other grammatical word classes. Namely, it is used with infinitives (a), predicative adverbs and adjectives (further referred to as predicatives) (b), nouns (c), and very occasionally with converbs and participles.

(a) *Jemu **by ujexa-t'***
        he.DAT **SUBJ** come-INF
'He would come'.

(b) *Mne **nado by** v Moskv-u*
        I.DAT need.ADV **SUBJ** in Moscow-SG.ACC
'I need (to go) to Moscow'

(c) ***V Moskvu by**!*
    in Moscow-SG.ACC **SUBJ**

The peculiarity of these constructions is that they lack any finite verb form, and yet make complete sentences. My count shows that in the subcorpus from 1970 up to the present these forms are distributed as follows:

Tab. 1. The distribution of subjunctive forms in the Russian National Corpus from 1970.

past tense	90%	(829)
infinitive	6%	(56)
predicative	3%	(24)

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[3] The Russian construction consisting of a verb and the particle *by* is referred to as conditional in some works on Russian (Garde 1963, Hacking 1998, Hansen 2010). The term subjunctive, on the other hand, is widely used in typological studies for a category that is used in subordinate clauses, like conditional protasis and complement clauses and expresses irrealis functions (cf. Palmer 2001).

noun	1% (10)
total	917

The Russian subjunctive particle occurs frequently in texts. However, it is confined to a few types of context. For example, *by* is never used with present forms, short participles[4], or imperatives: **jedet* (go-PRS) *by,*ubita* (PART.PST.F) *by, *ujezzhaj* (go-IMP) *by*. The Russian subjunctive constructions without a finite verb (*verbless constructions* below) have never been considered together as one construction. Constructions with the infinitive – relatively frequent – were analyzed in some works on the subjunctive or the infinitive, while constructions with predicatives and nouns are hardly ever mentioned (for example, they are not discussed in the survey on Russian mood forms in Hansen 2010; cf. Garde 1963).

The aim of this paper is to show that Russian verbless constructions with the subjunctive particle are semantically distinct from the regular subjunctive with past verb forms. I argue that, verbless subjunctive constructions became associated with expressing a wish in contemporary Russian, thus acquiring the properties of the optative mood.

This research is based on data from the Russian National Corpus (further referred to as "the corpus" or "RNC"), and most counts were made in the subcorpus of written texts from 1970 to the present (further "modern written texts").

In Sections 2, 3, and 4, I describe three types of verbless constructions with the particle *by*: those with infinitives (2), with predicatives (3), and with nouns (4). In Section 5, these three constructions are compared.

2. Subjunctive Infinitive

The Russian infinitive has a wide range of main clause uses with modal meanings, for example:

Jemu odn-omu ne spravit's'a

he.DAT single-SG.M.DAT NEG manage

'He would not be able to manage this alone.'

The infinitive is frequently used with the particle *by*. Most often, the subjunctive infinitive is used independently (a), but it can also be a part of the conditional construction (b):

(a) *Jemu by zhi-t' v 19 vek-e*

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[4] Very rare examples of the usage of *by* with participles and imperatives still occur in RNC.

he.PL.DAT SUBJ live-INF in 19 century-LOC.SG

'He would be better off living in the 19th century.'

(b) ***Zhi-t' by*** *emu v 19 vek-e, by-l*

   live-INF SUBJ he.PL.DAT in 19 century-LOC.SG be-PST.M.SG SUBJ

by gusar-om

SUBJ hussar-INSTR.SG

'If he would have been born (lit. would have been living) in the 19th century, he would have become a hussar.'

The infinitive with the particle *by* is semantically different from the infinitive without it. The subjunctive infinitive expresses a positive meaning, expressing a wish (a) or necessity (b). Often, it is difficult to decide whether a particular occurrence expresses wish or necessity, since these meanings are very close and can be set apart only in context and by considering intonation.

(a) ***Lezhat' by, smotret'*** *na more i **popivat'** holodnoe vinco.* = ***Khotelos' by lezhat', smotret'*** *na more i **popivat'** holodnoe vinco.* [Vadim Krejd. Georgij Ivanov v Jere // «Zvezda», № 6, 2003]
(b) *Ej **by pokajat'sja*** *materi: vinovata, a ona molchit.* = *Ej **by sledujet pokajat'sja*** *materi: vinovata, a ona molchit.* [I. Grekova. Perelom (1987)]

There are also rare examples of contexts where the subjunctive infinitive denotes counterfactual situations without any additional modal components. As shown in Dobrushina (2012), these constructions originate from the apodosis of conditional sentences:

*Razve tebe ne povezlo, chto ty vyshla zamuzh za menja? Inache **byt' by** tebe zhenoj kamenshhika.* *[Vladimir Shahidzhanjan. 1001 vopros pro JeTO (№№ 501-1001) (1999)] = **Jesli by ty ne vyshla za men'a zamuzh**, byt' by tebe zhenoj kamenschika.*

According to my counts in modern written texts, 97 percent of independent uses of the subjunctive infinitive express wish or necessity, and only 3 percent represent modally neutral counterfactuals.

Tab. 2. Semantic distribution of the independent subjunctive infinitive

Type of construction	Quantity of examples in the sample
subjunctive infinitive with positive meaning (wish or necessity)	97% (1396)
subjunctive counterfactual infinitive without a positive meaning	3% (37)
	in total 1433

The subjunctive infinitive can also be used in conditional clauses and in complement clauses.

In conditional clauses, the subjunctive infinitive semantically corresponds to its independent occurrences. When used in protasis, it has a clear positive meaning, expressing wish or desire. Its uses in apodosis are similar to the counterfactual infinitive without a positive meaning (Dobrushina 2012):

__Povidat' by__ syna, mozhno umirat' spokojno.
Jesli by ne sluchajnost', __ne vidat' by__ jemu bol'she syna

The subjunctive infinitive in complement clauses occurs with the conjunction *chtoby* − a fusion of the complementary *chto* and the subjunctive particle *by* (Brecht 1977). It is used in purpose clauses and in complement clauses of the purposive type with predicates that belong to the domain of wish and necessity: *sledit' za tem, stremit's'a k tomu, byt' napravlennym k tomu, byt' zainteresovannym v tom, dobivat's'a togo, mechtat' o tom, pretendovat' na to, nastaivat' na tom…*

The infinitive in subordinate clauses is thus also mainly used in contexts that imply the meaning of wish or necessity.

What might be the source of the positive meaning in subjunctive infinitives? This question is discussed by Fortuin (2000), Dobrushina (2012), and Knyazev in the press. It was shown that neither the infinitive nor the subjunctive particle expresses a positive meaning on its own. An analysis of the uses of the infinitive without the particle *by* shows that bare infinitives do not express wish. Its typical meaning is imminence, necessity, or impossibility (Shvedova 1980, Maurice 1996, Bonch-Osmolovskaya 2003, Plungian 2005, and Nikitina 2008). A comparison of examples (a) and (b) shows that the bare infinitive construction can be used as a categorical inducement directed to the addressee or as an expression of necessity without any emotional attitude on the part of speaker (a), while the subjunctive infinitive construction expresses the speaker's desire concerning the fulfillment of the situation (b).

(a) **Sobrat' *vse knigi i szhech'!***

(b) **Sobrat' by** *vse knigi i szhech'!*

Alone, the subjunctive particle *by* does not convey wish. When this particle occurs in its usual combination with the past tense, it expresses a wide range of irreal meanings, wish being among them. The meaning of wish is usually rendered by the particles *khot', esli, vot,* or by their combination:

Vot jesli by *on* **rodi-l-s'a** *v 19 vek-e!*
PART if SUBJ he be.born-PST.M.SG-REFL in 19 century-LOC
'If only he were born in the 19th century!'

The meaning of the positive meaning – and specifically the expression of wish – is then a property of the whole subjunctive infinitive construction, rather than of either of its two components.

3. Subjunctive predicative adjectives and adverbs

The subjunctive particle can also go together with non-verbal elements. The most frequent cases are constructions with predicatives. This includes combinations with adverbs, comparatives, and adjectives that are mainly used as predicates.

Most predicatives can be used in verbal subjunctive constructions:

Nado bylo by *vstretit'sja*
Rad byl by *povidat'sja*
Bez nego **nel'z'a bylo by** *nachat' doklad*
Prijatno bylo by *poznakomit'sja s nim*

But not all of them can combine with the subjunctive particle without a verb:

Nado by *vstretit'sja*
Rad by *povidat'sja*
*Bez nego **nel'z'a by** *nachat' doklad*
*??***Prijatno by** *poznakomit'sja s nim*

Below I provide a list of predicatives that occur without a verb (3.1) and consider the semantics of these constructions (3.2).

3.1. Predicatives occurring in verbless constructions

As my research shows, the ability of the predicative to combine with the particle *by* is only partially predictable from its semantics. There are predicatives with similar meanings that differ in their ability to be part of verbless constructions (cf. *nuzhno by* vs. **neobkhodimo by*).

A survey of the Russian National Corpus (modern written texts) was conducted to compile a list of predicatives that may be used in such contexts. The result is presented in List A.

List A

bystree, vporu, dolzhnyj, zhelatel'no, interesno, luchshe, mozhno, nado, ne grekh, ne hudo, neploho, ne ploho, nuzhno, ohota, pobol'she, pobystree, pora, poskoree, rad, skoree, khorosho

The corpus also shows the relative frequency of verbal and verbless usages of these predicatives (Table 3). In order to count the occurrences of verbal constructions, three queries were used:

byt' 'be' + *by* + predicative (*bylo by pora, byl by rad*)
predicative + *byt'* 'be' + *by* (*pora bylo by, rad byl by*)
predicative + *by* + *byt'* 'be' (*pora by bylo, rad by byl*)

Verbless constructions were collected through the following query:

predicative + *by (pora by, rad by)*

Tab. 3. Verbal and verbless constructions with predicatives: frequencies in the NRC (modern written texts)

predicative	verbless construction (occurrences)	verbal constructions (occurrences)	verbless constructions (percentage)
okhota	3	0	100
pora	303	4	99
pobol'she	47	5	90

nado	1579	320	83
poskoree	9	2	82
khorosho	1198	275	81
ne grekh	11	3	79
vporu	10	5	67
ne khudo	32	17	65
pomen'she	8	5	62
skoree	70	53	57
neplokho, ne plokho	267	236	53
luchshe	439	491	47
rad	123	182	40
nuzhno	49	107	31
dolzhnyj	320	757	30
zhelatel'no	5	23	18
interesno	36	230	14
mozhno	201	3271	6

In order to better define the special properties of these words, I also compiled a list of some predicatives that are not used in verbless contexts (List B). This list cannot possibly be exhaustive, since most predicatives are never used both with *by* and without verb, but it gives an idea of words that do not occur in verbless constructions.

List B

vazhno, vazhnee, vidno, greh, dostatochno, zhal', izvestno, nevozmozhno, neladno, neobhodimo, neohota, neponjatno, obidno, polozheno, pravil'nee, prijatnee, strashno, trudno, trudnee, tjazhelo, udachno, huzhe, chestnee, jasno

Note that, for some words in this list, one or two occasional verbless examples are found in the corpus:

*A vot chemu **nel'zja by ne nauchit'sja** u Stalina: on s interesom vyslushival, kakie ljudskie poteri u protivnika, i nikogda ne sprashival o svoih.* [A. I. Solzhenicyn. Na krajah (1994-1995)]

3.2 Semantics of verbless constructions

An analysis of subjunctive verbless constructions with predicatives shows that they denote desirable hypothetical situations.

3.2.1 Wish and necessity

A comparison of the two lists of predicatives (List A with predicatives that allow verbless constructions, and List B with predicatives that are not used without verb) shows a clear semantic opposition. All predicative adverbs and adjectives that can be used without a verb imply a positive value of a situation and express wish or necessity:

List A
bystree, vporu, dolzhnyj, zhelatel'no, interesno, luchshe, mozhno, nado, ne greh, ne hudo, neploho, ne ploho, nuzhno, ohota, pobol'she, pobystree, pora, poskoree, rad, skoree, horosho

The predicatives that are not used without a verb are semantically heterogeneous.

List B comprises both words with a positive meaning:
vazhno, vazhnee, dostatochno, neobkhodimo, polozheno, pravil'nee, prijatnee, udachno, chestnee, jasno
and words with a negative meaning:
grekh, zhal', nevozmozhno, neladno, neokhota, nepon'atno, obidno, strashno, trudno, trudnee, t'azhelo, khuzhe

Is the positive meaning conveyed by verbless constructions, or is it a lexical property of predicatives? This may be answered by looking at occasional verbless contexts with the predicatives that do not have a lexical meaning of wish or necessity and that are typically used with a verb. If verbless contexts involving such predicatives have a positive meaning, we may conclude that this meaning is a property of the construction.

In the modern written corpus, there are examples of verbless constructions for the following predicatives:

nel'z'a (95 examples with copula, 2 examples without copula), *stydno* (28 examples without copula, 1 example with copula), *zdorovo* (98 with copula, 2 without copula), *polezno* (68 with copula, 2 without copula), *prosche* (73 with copula, 5 without copula).

Consideration of the verbless usages of the words *nel'z'a* and *stydno*, which normally imply a negative meaning, shows that they convey a meaning of necessity:

A vot chemu **nel'zja by ne nauchit'sja [=sleduet nauchit's'a]** *u Stalina: on s interesom vyslushival, kakie ljudskie poteri u protivnika, i nikogda ne sprashival o svoih.* [A. I. Solzhenicyn. Na krajah (1994-1995)]

S teh por bol'she takih knig v ruki ne beru. **Stydno by** *avtoram* **svodit' [=dolzhno byt' stydno]** *starye schety.* [Viktor Korshunov: Dlja nas nash teatr - hram (2002) // «Vitrina chitajushhej Rossii», 2002.10.25]

A comparison with ordinary verbal contexts shows that the latter are counterfactual and do not express necessity:

Vot esli by on popal v golovu povara, togda ob jetom **nel'zja bylo by pisat'**... [Fazil' Iskander. Sandro iz Chegema (Kniga 3) (1989)]

Eshhe god nazad ej **stydno bylo by idti** *peshkom dazhe takoe korotkoe rasstojanie v jetom gorode.* [Natalija Medvedeva. Ljubov' s alkogolem (1988-1993)]

These observations are supported by examples of the subjunctive predicative *pomen'she*. It is used both with the verb and without it (8 examples without verb, 5 examples with verb). The difference between these sentences is similar to the one discussed for *nel'z'a* and *stydno*: verbless constructions express necessity.

— *Stado est' stado,* **pomen'she by rassuzhdat'** *s nimi o tom i o sem.* [Il'ja Bojashov. Put' Muri (2007)]

On govoril primerno sledujushhee: «U vas slishkom mnogo talanta, to est' umenija obrazno pisat', nahodit' jepitety i t.d. **Pomen'she by** *talanta* — *bylo by luchshe.»* [Anatolij Efros. Professija: rezhisser (1975-1987)]

Constructions with a verb express counterfactuality without additional evaluative components:

Esli by ne bylo vozmozhnosti poluchit' za takuju zhe rabotu v 3-4 raza bol'she, pritjazanij **bylo by pomen'she**. [Sergej Maksimovich. Bezrabotnaja strana (2001) // «Argumenty i fakty», 2001.06.06]

When used without a verb, predicative adverbs with a negative meaning thus acquire the meaning of necessity.

The reverse approach – analyzing verbal uses of predicatives that frequently occur without a verb – does not give any interesting results because the semantics of wish and necessity are inherent to these words. Since constructions both with and without a verb have a positive meaning that is rendered by the predicative, this provides no information about the constructions themselves. For instance, the predicative *pora* is used without a verb in 99% of its occurrences. Occasional examples of uses involving a verb exhibit the same meaning of wish or necessity:

Il'je Iosifovichu, s bogatym ego proshlym, **pora bylo by zadumat'sja [=sledovalo zadumat's'a]**, *no bespechnost' ego byla stol' velika, chto spohvatilsja on tol'ko v den' suda…* [Ljudmila Ulickaja. Kazus Kukockogo [Puteshestvie v sed'muju storonu sveta] // «Novyj Mir», 2000]

Nam tozhe **pora bylo by ujti [=khotelos' ujti / sledovalo ujti],** *no Ejhler, poproshhavshis' s hozjainom, potjanul menja za ruku kuda-to vbok.* [Ksenija Buksha. Ernst i Anna (2002)]

Verbless constructions with predicatives thus express wish or necessity, while the meaning of verbal constructions depends on the semantics of a predicative. Subjunctive verbless constructions with predicatives thereby share semantics with the subjunctive infinitive.

3.2.2 Hypotheticals

Verbless constructions with predicatives, unlike constructions involving a verb, are not used to denote counterfactual situations (situations referring to the past and known not to come into existence).

Moshno bylo by *poprosit' [***mozhno by poprosit'***] studentov, no oni ujexali.*

Jesli by on prishel k vlasti, to polovina strany **dolzhna byla by** *okazat's'a [***dolzhna** *okazat's'a] v tur'me*

Meanwhile, verbal constructions are unlikely to be used if the situation is explicitly hypothetical, i.e., if it can be realized in the future.

- Kogda my pojedem?
*- **Mozhno by [***mozhno bylo by]** zavtra, ja svobodna.*

Ja pojedu sprashivat' razreshenija u otca. On dolz`hen by razreshit' [*dolzhen byl by razreshit'].

Yet there are many contexts where verbless construction can be substituted with verbal ones and vice versa, since the degree of irreality is unspecifiable:

*Iz etoj istorii **nado by [nado bylo by]** sdelat' drugoj vyvod.*

We can conclude that subjunctive verbless constructions typically have a hypothetical meaning (situations that can come into existence in the future), while the constructions with verbs usually imply that the situation is counterfactual (did not take place and will never take place). This contrast is often neutralized, since many contexts are not specified from the point of view of a degree of irreality. The contrast between hypothetical and counterfactual meanings correlates with the form, since the past is known to frequently be cross-linguistically associated with counterfactuality (see Palmer 2001: 203-221 for further references).

4. Subjunctive nouns

Apart from infinitives and predicatives, verbless subjunctive constructions occur with nouns.

 ***Sigaretu by** mne sejchas.*

The corpus shows that there are three typical constructions with a subjunctive particle and noun:

- genitive NP
- accusative NP
- locative prepositional phrases

These constructions express wish or necessity and convey a positive meaning.

Molochka by jemu! = Nuzhno / khochu, chtoby jemu dali molochka

Vracha by s'uda! = Nuzhno / khochu, chtoby s'uda priveli vracha

V armiju by teb'a! = Nuzhno / khochu, chtoby teb'a zabrali v armiju

Exceptions to this are discussed below in Section 5.

5. Verbless constructions with infinitives, predicatives, and nouns: a comparison

Above, I considered three different types of verbless subjunctive constructions. Do they constitute a class with common features clearly distinguishing them from other subjunctive constructions? In this section, I compare the subjunctive constructions involving infinitives, predicatives, and nouns with respect to their semantics (5.1), illocutionary force (5.2), and syntax (5.3).

5.1 Semantics

The most important feature shared by all three constructions is a positive meaning, more specifically the semantics of hypothetical wish and necessity. As shown above, verbless constructions of all types consistently express this meaning:

Povidat' by *syna.*
Nado by *k synu.*
K synu by.

Importantly, this property is fully consistent only in verbless subjunctive constructions. A finite subjunctive involving the past tense may also express desire or wish, but only in combination with certain particles or when this interpretation is contact-induced. Compare (b), which expresses wish, and (c), which expresses a counterfactual situation.

(a) **Lish' by okonchilas'** *vojna, a tam vsjo budet horosho… [Vasil' Bykov. Boloto (2001)]*
(b) *Ruki sudorozhno cepljajutsja za privychnuju sosedku.* **Ne razluchili by…** [E. S. Ginzburg. Krutoj marshrut (1990)]
(c) *Ty by s nimi pogovoril zaranee.* **Ne razluchili by.**

The question then is whether verbless subjunctive constructions can be considered a separate optative mood. The main counterargument is that there are several cases when the verbless pattern does not convey wish or necessity. Some of them were mentioned above; I list them again.

1) While the most frequent meaning of an independent infinitive is wish or necessity, another semantic type was mentioned in Section 2. This is the subjunctive counterfactual infinitive without a positive meaning:

Ne vidat' by jemu bol'she syna, da pomogla sluchajnost'.

As is shown by Dobrushina (2012), these constructions ideally correspond to the uses of the subjunctive infinitive in conditional apodosis. All occurrences of subjunctive counterfactual infinitives may be interpreted as apodosis of conditional construction. Unlike the protasis with a subjunctive infinitive, the apodosis does not express positive meaning. The semantics of these constructions result from a compositional combination of the meaning of the infinitive (imminence, 'to be') with the meaning of the subjunctive particle (irrealis mood):

Ne vidat' by jemu bol'she syna, jesli by ne pomogla sluchajnost'.

In a recent paper by Sergey Say (in press), it was suggested that these constructions undergo a development into constructions with copula.

2) In modern texts, verbless predicatives are only used in contexts conveying a meaning of wish or necessity. But in 19th-century texts there are different examples, including conditional and other hypothetical constructions, without any particular evaluative meaning.

*Eto, pozhaluj, i stoit otvetit', dazhe **nel'zja by ne otvetit'**, esli najdetsja dlja jetogo otveta prijut v kakoj-nibud' redakcii.* [V. G. Korolenko. Pis'ma 1879 g. (1879)]

*Oni ochen' slaby, no najdutsja koe-kakie epizody, koe-kakie podrobnosti, kotorye mne **zhal' by schitat'** naveki ischeznuvshimi, i potomu ja postarajus' ih sobrat'...* [P. I. Chajkovskij. Perepiska s N.F. fon-Mekk (1878)]

*Glavnaja veshh', **ne obidno** by, kaby ezheli ja tam naschet vina ili prochih delov byl zamechen.* [V.A. Slepcov. Vecher (1862)]

I suggest that verbless subjunctive constructions developed during the last several centuries from purely hypothetical contexts (which does not exclude that in some contexts they have the meaning of wish or necessity) to an expression of wish or necessity. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that uses of verbless subjunctive predicatives were more frequent in the 19th century, according to the NRC. Table 4 shows the relative frequencies of several predicatives in random

samples from the 19th century and at the end of 20th century. The quantity of verbless subjunctive constructions notably decreased. For example, *pora* dropped from 6 to 0.7 percent and *nuzhno* decreased from 0.6 to 0.1 percent.

Table 4. Frequency of subjunctive verbless constructions with predicatives in the 19th and 20th centuries

	Before 1900, percentage of total occurrences (and absolute occurrences)	Total occurrences before 1900	Modern written texts, percentage of total occurrences (and absolute occurrences)	Total occurrences in modern written texts
pora	6% (279)	4,672	0.7% (303)	44,520
nuzhno	0,6% (1200	19,847	0.1% (49)	38,812
rad	3.5% (269)	7,647	2% (123)	5,963
mozhno	1.7% (720)	41,555	0.2% (201)	118,229
nel'z'a	0.06% (14)	23,751	0.006% (2)	31,224

In other words, there are no examples of verbless predicatives without a positive meaning in the contemporary corpus, and the diachronic survey shows that a specialization of the meaning of these constructions towards wish or necessity took place over the last two centuries.

3) The third exception concerns nouns with a subjunctive particle under negation and the conjunction *jesli* ('if'). These constructions usually constitute a protasis of conditional clauses. They are not associated with any particular meaning. For example, the situation is positive in (a), but negative in (b):

(a) ***Jesli by ne mama**, men'a ne spasli by nikakie vrachi.*
(b) ***Jesli by ne vojna**, on zakonchil by universitet.*

These examples are formally specified: the noun may only occur in the nominative, unlike other constructions with subjunctive nouns.

The observations made about the development of verbless predicative forms make it seem sensible to look closely at the examples of the subjunctive noun constructions in the 19th century.

Occurrences where the subjunctive noun does not express wish are easily found. In the following sentence, *Obiteli by pol'za* means '[If we sent the novice to Samokvasovy,] it would be beneficial to the charterhouse', thus revealing the hypothetical meaning. If this example is not classified as dialectal, then it is a manifestation of a similar way of development.

― *Obiteli **by pol'za**, matushka, ― molvila kaznacheja. ― Samokvasovy ljudi bogatye, a grehi u pokojnika byli velikie…* [P. I. Mel'nikov-Pecherskij. V lesah. Kniga vtoraja (1871-1874)]

5.2 Illocutionary force

All verbless subjunctive constructions with a meaning of wish and necessity considered above are most often used independently as a separate utterance, and usually belong to the stretch of discourse with either a speaker or a hearer overtly present – if not both. In most cases, they clearly have a certain illocutionary force. According to Searle's classification, these belong to the class of expressives, or speech that expresses the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition.

― *O, Gospodi, ― krotko vzdohnul Zamkov, ― vam **zhit' by** v devjatnadcatom veke.* [Leonid Zorin. Mednyj zakat (2007) // «Znamja», 2008]

― *Krossovki oni nazyvajutsja, ― podskazala vdova. ― **Zapomnit' pora by**.* [Roman Senchin. Eltyshevy (2008)]

*Muzejnaja zhe veshh'! Ejo **v Ermitazh by**!* [Ju. O. Dombrovskij. Fakul'tet nenuzhnyh veshhej, chast' 2 (1978)]

These constructions do not normally occur in texts that tend not to express emotions. Save one exception, all subjunctive verbless predicatives listed in the table below occur significantly more frequently in fiction than in academic texts.

Table 5. Relative frequencies of subjunctive verbless predicatives in fiction and academic texts (modern written texts).

	Fiction		Academic	
	P by (percentage of two constructions)	*P bylo by*	*P by* (percentage of two constructions)	*P bylo by*
neplokho	138 (77%)	42	3 (3%)	6
mozhno	93 (10%)	883	9 (2%)	380

nuzhno	21 (49%)	22	3 (17%)	15
khorosho	610 (91%)	58	44 (94%)	3
nado	970 (88%)	140	29 (53%)	26
dolzhnyj	115 (34%)	220	9 (7%)	110

Therefore, subjunctive verbless constructions usually occur in independent utterances where the speaker presents his or her opinions and emotions. This implies that they can hardly be used in subordinate clauses.

5.3 Syntax

Of all verbless constructions, subjunctive infinitives are most commonly found in dependent clauses. Subjunctive infinitives can be used in conditional clauses, in complement clauses, and in purpose clauses. Using the infinitive in protasis in conditional constructions, which comprises about 3 percent of all occurrences, is less frequent than using the ordinary subjunctive form (*by* + past tense), which makes up roughly 10 percent.

Table 6. Distribution of constructions with subjunctive infinitive

Construction	*Examples in the sample*
Independent clause	86% (1,451)
Apodosis of CC	7% (124)
Protasis of CC	3% (49)
Other	3% (53)
	Total 1,677

Uses of the subjunctive infinitive in complement clauses cannot be included in this table, since in this case the subjunctive particle is part of the complementizer *chtoby* and its frequency cannot be directly compared to that of other subjunctive infinitive uses. The infinitive is used in complement clauses with predicates expressing wish, intention, and necessity:

*Ja **stremlus'** k tomu, **chtoby popast'** v universitet.*

Verbless constructions with predicatives show constraints in how they are used in subordinate clauses. Interestingly, they are hardly ever used in subordinate clauses that require the subjunctive, namely conditional clauses with *jesli* and complement clauses with *chtoby*[5]*:*

*Esli **by mozhno bylo**, ja by zavodil mashinu ne vyhodja iz doma.*
Esli **by mozhno, ja by zavodil mashinu ne vyhodja iz doma.*

*Hochu, chtoby **mozhno bylo zavodit'** mashinu ne vyhodja iz doma.*
Hochu, chtoby **mozhno zavodit' mashinu ne vyhodja iz doma.*

There are occasional examples of this kind, but they are all grammatically peripheral or obsolete:

*Ja podkladyvaju v nee palki potolshhe, **chtoby mozhno** potom sidet' ne podkladyvaja.* [Vladimir Solouhin. Tret'ja ohota (1967)]

*Esli **by mozhno**, nado bylo by novyj jazyk izobresti vmesto russkogo.* [P.N. Krasnov. Ot Dvuglavogo Orla k krasnomu znameni (kniga 2) (1922)]

This is in conformity with the claim made in Section 5.1 that the subjunctive verbless predicatives have shifted from the general hypothetical meaning to the more specified meaning of wish or necessity.

At the same time, there are subordinate clauses that do not restrict the usage of verbless subjunctive predicatives. For example, complement clauses with realis complements allow for the verbless subjunctive predicatives as its predicate:

*Ja podumal o tom, **chto nuzhno by** kupit' mashinu*
*Ja podumal o mashine, **kotoruju nuzhno by** kupit'*

Table 7 shows that the predicatives *nado, mozhno, nuzhno,* and *pora* hardly ever occur after the subjunctive-taking conjunctions *jesli* and *chtoby* without a verb, but can be used with these conjunctions with the copula *bylo.* The ratio between verbless and indicative verbal constructions involving *chto, kotoryj,* and *kogda* correlates with the general ratio of verbless and verbal constructions for the given predicative (cf. Table 3). The adverb *pora* is almost never used with a copula (the ratio is 99:1), and its distribution in subordinate clauses reflects this fact: it does not

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[5] This restriction does not concern the particle *ne to chtoby* (*Ne to chtoby nuzhno, no mozhno*), because it does not contain a marker of subjunctive.

occur with the subjunctive-taking conjunctions *jesli* and *chtoby,* but is compatible with *chto*. The adverb *nado* is more often used without a verb (the ratio is 83:17), so its distribution in indicative-taking subordinate clauses is clearly biased towards verbless constructions. On the contrary, *mozhno* prefers to be used with a verb (6:94), and in indicative-taking subordinate clauses it is biased towards usage with a verb.

Table 7. Verbal and verbless constructions with predicatives in subordinate clauses: frequencies in the NRC (modern written texts)

Predicative	*Verbless*	*Verbal*
jesli		
pora	0	
nado	0	11
nuzhno	0	4
mozhno	1	120
chtoby		
pora	0	
nado	0	3
nuzhno	0	2
mozhno	2	423
chto (complement clauses only)		
pora	36	
nado	123	9
nuzhno	6	1
mozhno	5	35
kotoryj		
pora	0	
nado	10	8
nuzhno	1	3
mozhno	11	122
kogda		
pora	0	
nado	2	1
nuzhno	1	1
mozhno	1	9

The fact that subjunctive verbless predicatives are not used in subordinate clauses that usually take the subjunctive shows that they exhibit fewer properties of prototypical subjunctives (past tense + *by*) than the subjunctive infinite. The latter is used in all types of subjunctive-taking clauses without restrictions:

*Jesli **by imet'** mashinu, mozhno bylo by uexat'.*
*Ja streml'us' k tomu, **chtoby imet'** mashinu.*

Thus, subjunctive constructions without a verb are not homogenous from the point of view of their relatedness to the prototypical subjunctive. Subjunctive constructions with nouns are almost never used in any types of subordinate clauses. Still, conditional clauses seem less ungrammatical than complement clauses.

*?Jesli **by** jemu **molochka,** on by vylez iz-pod shkafa.*
Khochu, **chtoby mne **molochka**.*

6. Conclusion

This analysis of Russian subjunctive constructions without verbs showed that these all share a clearly identifiable meaning of wish or necessity.

It was also shown that verbless predicatives shifted from a wider hypothetical meaning to a more specified meaning of wish and necessity. While verbal constructions with subjunctive predicatives behave as usual for the subjunctive mood, their verbless counterparts show many indications of developing towards a separate new mood. First of all, these predicatives are the only Russian words that have two 'forms' of a subjunctive mood – with the verb and without it. More importantly, these forms differ semantically, denoting a counterfactual situation and hypothetical wish, respectively. They do not occur in subordinate clauses that demand the subjunctive, such as conditional clauses and subjunctive complements, but can be used in indicative clauses instead. The tendency not to be used in the subordinate clause is more pronounced with subjunctive nouns.

Subjunctive infinitive constructions share with predicatives the semantics of wish and necessity, but their usage in subordinate constructions is not similarly restricted.

The main finding of this paper is thus the evolving optative constructions in modern Russian. Though they exhibit different properties, they all have a common formal pattern – a subjunctive particle without a verb. The absence of the past marking underlies the hypothetical meaning of these constructions. I suggest that their optative meaning has developed by diverging from verbal

constructions. The latter are not confined to expression of counterfactual situations and cover hypothetical situations as well. Verbless subjunctives have developed their own meaning, changing from a general hypothetical into a more specific optative.

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