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Preconditions and Triggers of the Development of the North Russian Possessive Perfect

This paper investigates the development of the North Russian *be*-perfect that consists of a possessive PP subject, an indeclinable participle, and a nominative object, as exemplified in (1), with a focus on the role of several crucial innovations as the preconditions and triggers of the given phenomenon.

- (1) *U Šrki privedeno svoja nevesta*
 at Šrka:PP_{GEN} brought:Part.N.SG own fiancée:NOM.F.SG
 ‘Šrka has brought his own fiancée’

Indeclinable participial predicates first appeared in Old Russian in the 11th century and were frequently found regardless of regions and genres. Nominative object marking in impersonal environments was well established in Old North Russian at latest in the 12th century. These two factors must have served as important conditions for the voice shift by causing ambiguity in the syntactic structure of the originally passive construction. However, they cannot be the direct trigger of the voice shift. The reanalysis of a nominative argument combined with an indeclinable participle as a surface object did not take place until at least the 16th century. I argue that the gradual change of the argument status of the adjunctive adessive/locative *u*+Gen phrase to a base-generated agentive subject via a high applicative causer/benefactive stage, motivated by the phrase’s semantic ambiguity, was the trigger of the voice shift.