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# When The Moment Does Not Last: A Few Words On *Moment*-Constructions in Russian

## Abstract

The article is devoted to constructions with the noun 'moment' (MC) in modern Russian. Our corpus study shows that Russian *moment* is mainly used in certain constructions. We focus on its four main types; each of them determines the semantics of the noun *moment*. While the word originally designated an instant, a precise moment (*moment vzryva* 'moment of explosion'), it also designates a long temporal period with very vague boundaries (*na dannyj moment* 'currently, at today's time') or loses its temporal meaning altogether in order to designate a particular aspect of the situation (*ličnyj moment* 'personal moment') which places it in the domain of argumentative vocabulary. Some of these constructions are characterized by a certain degree of fixity. The paper describes both syntactic and semantic features of each of the four models through the three centuries of evolution of the MC in modern Russian.

## Keywords

Russian, semantics, lexis, constructions, lexicalization, diachrony, corpus study

## 1. Introduction

Under the term *construction*, we understand a syntactically linked lexical phrase denoting a certain semantics. One usually speaks of verbal constructions, with a verb and its arguments (such as *to do my best*), or of prepositional ones (e.g. *in the future*) or also of adjectival (e.g. *happy about it*) constructions. Less common are nominal constructions (such as *no way*). This may be because nouns generally have fewer arguments and are usually used themselves as arguments of a verb or a preposition.

Since constructions have their own semantics, the semantics of nouns making them up can vary depending on close context. It is possible for a noun to take on a meaning which deviates quite far from its initial meaning. This is particularly true of constructions with Russian *moment*.

The noun *moment* is one of the most used nouns at the beginning of this century (Ljaševskaja & Šarov 2009)<sup>1</sup>. Its frequent usage caused it to progressively extend its semantics. *Bol'šoj tolkovyj slovar'* (BTS 2000) explains its usage in three meanings: i) the noun *moment* with a noun in Genitive case designates the time at which an action or a process begins (*nabljudat' moment vosxoda solnca* 'to observe the sunrise'); ii) with Genitive or Determinative, *moment* designates a time period of development of something (*tekuščij, nastojaščij, dannyj moment* 'the present, current, this moment'), and iii) *moment* points to a particular aspect of an event or a circumstance (*Pri provedenii reformy ne učteny ves'ma suščestvennye momenty* 'The reform failed to take into account several highly significant factors') (BTS 2000, *moment*).

Based on its Latin origin (*momentum*), dictionaries define *moment* as designating an instant, a very brief time period, which places *moment* very close to Russian *mig* and *mgnovenie* ('instant'), and their proximity is often mentioned (see also Ožegov & Švedova). However, the semantics of this trio is not identical. These nouns have not yet received an in-depth description in terms of synonymy like items described by the *New Dictionary of Synonyms* (Apresjan 2004).

We intend here to make a detailed description of syntactic constructions with Russian *moment* as well as to follow its dynamics through the Russian National Corpus from the 18th to the 21st century.

## 2. Materials and methods

Our study is based on the Main corpus of *Russian National Corpus* (henceforth Russian corpus). This corpus represents an overview of texts belonging to diverse genres and styles manifesting the usage of words in contemporary Russian. Moreover, it may reveal possible functional changes over the duration of the last three centuries. The working corpus was extracted by automated random selection both from the beginning (18th and 19th centuries; 785 occurrences) and the ending (the 21st century; 575 occurrences) samples of the Main Corpus.

<sup>1</sup> It ranks at the 99th position (of 1001st nouns) in the Russian Dictionary of frequency.

**Table 1.***Numbers of occurrences in a working corpus*

Time period	1700–1799	1800–1869	...	2015–2018
occurrences	49	736	—	575

The paper is structured as follows: Section 3 discusses semantic particularities of each of four *moment*-constructions (MC) presented before. Section 4 is devoted to quantitative data and to the dynamics of the semantics of MC over time. Section 5 presents conclusions.

### 3. Semantics of moment-constructions

To provide a deeper analysis of the noun *moment* in modern Russian, let us examine syntactic constructions where it usually appears. Our data processing identified four main constructions most frequent with Russian *moment*:

- (i) *moment* enters into a prepositional phrase with *v* and *na* and a determinative;
- (ii) *moment* is followed by a Genitive;
- (iii) *moment* enters in a relation with a verb;
- (iv) *moment* is accompanied by an adjective.

#### 3.1. V / Na Det moment (*v dannyj moment* ‘at the moment’)

According to our data, the most frequently used construction with *moment* is a prepositional phrase. A complementary search on collocations of 3-grams “prep + adj + *moment*” in Russian corpus shows that, with an exception with *do* in *do poslednego momenta* ‘until the last moment’, in the twenty first positions we exclusively find prepositions *v* and *na* with Accusative case: *v / na dannyj moment* ‘at the moment’, *v poslednij, nastojaščij, nužnyj, sledujuščij, opredelennyj m.* ‘at the last, present, right, next, definite moment’, *na segodnjašnjij m.* ‘for the time being’, *v kritičeskij, rešajuščij, izvestnyj, rešitel'nyj m.* ‘at a critical, decisive, certain, crucial moment’, *na tekuščij, nastojaščij m.* ‘now, currently’, *v kritičeskie, raznye momenty* ‘at critical, different moments’, and so on. In such constructions *moment* mostly has a temporal meaning, like in other constructions with

Accusative case (*v ètu sekundu* ‘at this very second’, *na sledujuščee voskresen'e* ‘the following Sunday’, *v tot den'* ‘on that day’).

**Table 2.**

*Corpus search by 3-grams “prep + adj + moment” (top 10)*

№	Occurrences	Ratio n-gram, %	Documents	3-grams “prep + adj + moment”	Translation
1	2257	<b>23.24</b>	1486	v dannyj moment	<i>at the moment</i>
2	1252	12.89	940	v poslednij moment	<i>at the last moment</i>
3	1017	<b>10.47</b>	835	v nastojaščij moment	<i>at present, currently</i>
4	757	<b>7.80</b>	642	na dannyj moment	<i>for the moment</i>
5	469	4.83	417	v nužnyj moment	<i>at the right moment</i>
6	205	2.11	154	v sledujuščij moment	<i>in the next moment</i>
7	201	2.07	189	do poslednego momenta	<i>until the last moment</i>
8	156	1.61	134	v opredelennyj moment	<i>at a certain point</i>
9	132	<b>1.36</b>	108	na segodnjašnjij moment	<i>for the time being</i>
10	131	1.35	124	v kritičeskij moment	<i>at a critical time</i>

Table 2 presents the top ten of 3-grams collocations ‘prep + adj + moment’ used in the Russian corpus. This sample shows a possible “specialization” of the prepositional MC. Almost half of the uses (43%) are represented by four models: *dannyj* and *na dannyj moment* (31%), *v nastojaščij moment* (10%) and *na segodnjašnjij moment* (1%). All these constructions are semantically very close. Furthermore, they manifest an evident tendency to lexicalization. While *dannyj* and *ètot* have very close semantics and can be viewed as synonymous (as in *dannyj / ètot predmet*), in MC they are not. For example: we can say *V ètot moment on vsë ponjal* but not *\*v dannyj moment on vsë ponjal* ‘At that moment, he understood everything’. In conjunction with *moment*, *ètot* leads the noun to its initial semantics of an instant while *dannyj* conducts it to a time period interpretation. Therefore, *v dannyj moment* becomes semantically close to *v nastojaščeje vremja* pointing out a current time period. The *moment* becomes consequently synonymous to *vremja* ‘time’.

Thus, the components of these constructions semantically combine perfectly well; the adjectives *nastojaščij*, *segodnjašnjij* and *dannyj* denoting the present moment just as the noun *moment* denotes a moment that can really refer only to the present instant. The semantics of these MCs does not point out “the moment”, a *punctual instant*, but has a more extended meaning of a longer time

period. In terms of Constructional Grammar, we deal here with purely idiomatic “constructions” whose meaning cannot be deduced from the combination of meanings of its components and which are characterized by a certain degree of fixity.

Nevertheless, in prepositional constructions *moment* does not always carry on the semantics of a longer period. In similar contexts, with the adjective *poslednij* ‘last’, *moment* is not synonymous to *vremja* ‘time’ and indicates on the contrary a short instant (*v poslednij moment* ‘at the last moment’ vs. *v poslednee vremja* ‘last time’).

The semantics of a short, punctual instant can appear with other determinants, like adjectives (*poslednij* ‘last’, *nužnyj* ‘necessary’, *sledujuščij* ‘next’, *opredelennyj* ‘certain’, *kritičeskij* ‘critical’) and pronouns (*ëtot* ‘this’, *takoj* ‘such’, *kakoj-to* ‘some moment’ ‘moment’).

### 3.2. (Prep) moment G (*s momenta roždenija* ‘from the moment of birth’)

When *moment* is followed by a genitive noun, this construction can denote either an event, a state, or a process. Depending on the case, the interpretations of *moment* will be different. For example, when the construction denotes an event, we find mostly deverbal nouns formed from perfective verbs. Here are some examples from the 21st century: *moment probuždenija* ‘the moment of awakening’, *prosvetlenija* ‘of enlightenment’, *pojavenija* ‘of emergence’, *vstreči* ‘of encounter’, *otkrytija* ‘of discovery’, *zapuska* ‘of launch’, *pokupki* ‘of purchase’, *sotvorenija* ‘of creation’, *začatija* ‘of conception’, *roždenija* ‘of birth’, *publikacii* ‘of publication’, *oplaty* ‘of payment’, *snjatija* ‘of withdrawal’, *sokrytija* ‘of concealment’, *sžatija* ‘of compression’, *vzryva* ‘of explosion’, *ubijstva* ‘of murder’...

In this sample, most nouns, and in particular the deverbal nouns ending by *-ie*, denote an instantaneous event and often bear inchoative semantics (cf. inchoative prefixes *po-* and *za-*). The words *probuždenie* ‘awakening’, *publikacija* ‘publication’ or *zaključenie* ‘conclusion’ mark change in a process where a new state is established after a previous state. So, one is awakened after a sleep, a text is published after a manuscript version, or a conclusion is reached after a process of deliberation that precedes it. The same semantics also characterizes such nouns as *vsreča* ‘meeting’, *pokupka* ‘purchase’, *ubijstvo* ‘murder’, *načalo* ‘beginning’, *vychod* ‘exit’, *perexod* ‘transition’, *vzryv* ‘explosion’. In combination with the words of this group, *moment* focuses on a brief time period of transition from one state to another. It is often a punctual instant. The semantics of *moment* can thus be schematized as a point from which a new state begins.

*Moment* can also be used in collocation with other nouns. With words denoting states, *moment* designates the time of a certain state. There are collocations like: *moment myšlenija* ‘a moment of reflection’, *bolezni* ‘of illness’, *pereživanija* ‘of anxiety’, *uspokoenija* ‘of tranquility’, *tišiny i garmonii* ‘of stillness and harmony’, and so on. With these nouns, there is no indication of the beginning or of a punctual instant specific to the original moment semantics. Here *moment* is close to non-telic nouns such as *sostojanie* ‘state’ (*sostojanie myšlenija* ‘thinking state’, *sostojanie bolezni* ‘state of disease’, *sostojanie tišiny i garmonii* ‘state of calm and harmony’). Here, the meaning of *moment* implies a longer duration, the time period of a certain state.

With event nouns, MC denotes the duration of a certain process: *moment prazdnika* ‘during celebration’, *m. obsuždenija* ‘during discussion’, *m. literaturnyx sporov* ‘during literary debate’, *m. trenirovki* ‘during exercise’, *m. tvorčestva* ‘during creative process’, *m. sozidanija* ‘during creation’, *m. opasnosti* ‘moment of danger’, *m. povestvovanija* ‘during narrative’, *m. krizisa* ‘during crisis’, *m. čtenija* ‘during reading’... where the ‘moment’ will last the duration of this process. As a result, *moment* still deviates from its initial semantics of punctual instant.

Thus, these semantic groups of nouns in Genitive constructions connect *moment* to its temporal meaning of a short instant or of a longer time period, similar to what we could observe in prepositional constructions. However, there are some nouns with which temporal interpretation is less obvious. They indicate by themselves a certain process with an obvious temporal dimension, like chronological time, lifetime, or duration of a story: *moment vremeni* ‘moment of time’, *žizni* ‘in life’, *prostoja* ‘of downtime’, *moment rasskaza* ‘moment of a story’, *čexovskoj «Čajki»* ‘of Chekhov’s “The Seagull”’, *čtvërtoj časti* ‘of the fourth part of...’, etc. Here *moment* focuses on a particular point or points in the process and might be close to the meaning of an *aspect*, a particular instance of something, especially when it is used in plural. This can be observed on the top of bi-gram search in the Russian corpus: *momenty žizni* ‘moments of life’, *vremeni* ‘of time’, *istorii* ‘of history’, *boja* ‘of battle’, *razvitija* ‘of development’, *inercii* ‘of inertia’, *tvorčestva* ‘of creativity’, *otčajanija* ‘of despair’, *opasnosti* ‘of danger’, *perexoda* ‘of transition’, *dviženija* ‘of movement’, *vdoxnovenija* ‘of inspiration’, *bytija* ‘of being’, *dejtviija* ‘of action’, *krizisa* ‘of crisis’, and so on. Though the temporal interpretation is still possible, the non-temporal meaning for some occurrences (like *momenty istorii* ‘moments of history’) are preferable (cf. “certain points, questions of the history”).

The semantic deviation of *moment* from its temporal to a non-temporal meaning can also be observed in the verbal constructions below.

### 3.3. V moment (*nastupil moment* ‘the moment has come’)

The third type of constructions considering here involves verbs. In these constructions, *moment* can also have a temporal meaning (an instant or a time period), and can appear in position of a complement or a subject. Only a dozen collocations are frequently used in these constructions.

Constructions occurring with *moment* can be organized in three groups. **The first group** includes verbs that indicate that the word *moment* is understood as a linear and continuous process, like a time (as already mentioned previously), which we find in the following constructions:

- 1) *V moment*: *vyžadat' m.* ‘to bide your time’, *žadat' momenta* ‘to wait for the moment’, *(ne) upustit' m.* ‘(to seize) to miss the moment’, *propustit' m.* ‘to miss the mark’.

Semantically speaking, here *moment* is getting closer to the words like *vremja* ‘time’, *slučaj* ‘occasion’: cf. *upustit' slučaj* ‘to miss the chance’ / *vremja* ‘time’, *žadat' (udobnogo) slučaja* ‘to wait for an opportunity’, *vyžadat' vremja* ‘to bide time’.

**In subject position**, *moment* is usually found in postposition to the predicate. In the predicate function, we often find the verbs *nastupat' / nastupit' / nastat'* ‘to come’ and *podospet'* ‘to arrive’ with inchoative temporal semantics:

- 2) *Moment V*: *nastupit m.* ‘there will come a time’, *nastal m.* ‘the moment has come’, *nastupaet takoj m.* ‘there comes a point’, *podospel m.* ‘the moment has arrived’.

Such word order with a predicate in anteposition brings constructions with *moment* closer to constructions of the type *nastupila vesna* ‘the spring has arrived’, *vzošlo solnce* ‘the sun has risen’, *vernulsja Petja domoj* ‘Peter came home’... which introduce some event, and an event usually contains a temporal dimension. Canonical order with a subject anteposition (SVO) is very unusual here: cf. *??moment nastupit, nastal, nastupaet, podospel*... In these constructions, *moment* is often accompanied by a modifier or a subordinate with *kogda*:

- 3) *Nastupit moment, kogda vse ob ètom zabudut.*  
‘There will come a day when everyone will forget about it.’

The **second group** brings the semantics of *moment* closer to the nouns of **material objects**, of artefacts. Thus, *moment* can be grasped, chosen, touched, stopped or even returned to:

- 4) *V moment: sxvatit' m.* 'to grasp', *ulovit' m.* 'to catch', *vybrat' m.* 'to select', *prikosnut'sja k ètomu m.* 'to touch', *ostanovit'sja na ètom m.* 'to dwell on', *vozvrašat'sja k ètomu m.* 'to return to the moment'.

And finally, the **third group** treats the noun *moment* as **an aspect of a fact**, often the object of a discussion or mental operation:

- 5) *V moment: obsuždat' ètot m.* 'to discuss this point', *progovarivat' takoj m.* 'to talk about this point', *raz"jasnjat' nekotorye m.* 'to clarify some points', *vosprinimat' takie m.* 'to perceive these points', *otmetit' momenty* 'to note points', *pomnit' m.* 'to remember this moment', *perežit' ètot m.* 'to experience this fact', *sčest' m. podxodjaščim* 'to find this moment appropriate', *ètot m. ne otrabotali* 'this moment was not worked out'.

And these "moments" carry positive connotations:

- 6) *V moment: radovat'sja momentu* 'to enjoy the moment', *ljubovat'sja momentom* 'to admire the moment', *naslaždat'sja momentom* 'to savor the moment'; *èti momenty zavoraživajut menja* 'these moments fascinate me'.

*Puskat' nekotorye problemy na samotëk, drugie rešat', no otvlečënno. Načat' radovat'sja momentu, smotret' na žizn' spokojno, a ne kak na boleznennoe sostojanie.* [kollektivnyj. «Veseluxa» na 11 tysjač znakov (2015.03.14)]

'To let some problems go, to solve others, but in a distracted way. Begin to *enjoy the moment*, to look at life calmly, not as a painful condition.' [Collective. "Fun" for 11 thousand characters (2015.03.14)]

### 3.4. Adj moment (*opasnyj moment* 'dangerous point')

Finally, the fourth type of constructions includes an adjective. Here we find again the temporal semantics, as an instant (especially with *è* + Accusative phrase) and as a time period as a part of prepositional and verbal phrases which we studied above as well as other constructions. Some of them, like *perelomnyj* 'turning point' and *ključevoj moment* 'key point', tend to lexicalization.

It is very interesting to notice that in adjective constructions, *moment* develops other, non-temporal, meanings. Its semantics becomes close to the meaning of ‘aspect’ or ‘side’, in particular with determinative (*dannyj* ‘this’) or modal (*nužnyj* ‘necessary’) adjectives and some evaluative adjectives like *interesnyj* ‘interesting’, *suščestvennyj* ‘essential’, *nastoljaščij* ‘real’, *vospitatel’nyj* ‘educational’, *položitel’nyj* ‘positive’ and some other.

But larger context is often needed to determine what the exact meaning of *moment* is. Compare:

- 7) *Èto proizošlo v samyj neožidannyj moment.* → ‘instant’  
 ‘It came at the most unexpected moment’
- 8) *Neožidannym momentom bylo ego priznanie.* → ‘point, episode’  
 ‘The unexpected point was his confession’

Regarding these examples, the role of predicates is very important. In various contexts, *moment* accompanied by an adjective tends to define a large spectrum of abstract meanings. Among them, we can find the following:

- *Meaning of ‘aspect’*: **ponimat’** *religioznye, duxovnye m.* ‘understand the religious, spiritual aspects’, **tam est’ očen’ važnye m.** ‘there are some very important points’...
- 9) *Narod, kotoryj sozdal takuju pogovorku, rassmatrival žizn’ za predelami svoego fizičeskogo suščestvovanija — i èto odin iz važnejšix momentov čelovečeskogo bytija voobščë.* [A. Danilova, G. Gupalo. Jurij Norštejn: Opjat’ zabyli čeloveka // 2016]  
 ‘The people who created such a saying considered life beyond their physical existence – and this is *one of the most important aspects of being human* in general.’ [A. Danilova, G. Gupalo. Yuri Norštejn: Forgotten Man Again // 2016]
- *Meaning of ‘question’*: **otsylka k dalëkomu istoričeskomu m.** ‘reference to a distant historical question’, **prixodim k očen’ suščestvennomu m.** ‘come to a very significant point’...
- 10) *Èto krajne važnyj moment, na kotoryj Burd’e obraščæet vnimanie.* [A. Bikbov, S. Naranovič, “Gosudarstvo — èto illjuzija” (2017.05.31).]  
*This is an extremely important point to which Bourdieu draws attention.* [A. Bikbov, S. Naranovich, “The State is an Illusion.” (2017.05.31)]

- Meaning of 'event, episode': **u menja est' interesnyj ličnyj moment** 'I had an interesting event in my life'; **samyje važnye m. prošedšego goda** 'the most important events of the past year'...
- 11) *Čto čuvstvovali oni na vokzale, kogda im prišlos' uspokaivat' ego — tak on rydal. Ne raz lovil on sebja na tom, čto vo vremja dramatičnyx momentov vdruk sovsem kak postoronnij slyšal svoe xixikan'e, smex.* [«Volga», 2016]  
 'What they felt at the train station when they had to comfort him – how much he was sobbing. More than once he caught himself that *during dramatic events* suddenly quite as an outsider he heard his giggle, his laughter.' [“Volga”, 2016]
- Meaning of 'phase, period': **informacija o samyx rannix m. suščestvovanija Vselennoj** 'information about the earliest periods of the universe's existence', **vyxod enciklopedii otmetil očen' važnyj m.** 'the release of the encyclopedia marked a very important phase'...
- 12) — *Tovarišči pisateli! Nastal trudnyj moment v vašej žizni.* [A. Titov. Obščezit'ie pisatelej // «Volga», 2015]  
 '— Comrade writers! A *difficult period in your life has come*.' [A. Titov. Dormitory of Writers // “Volga”, 2015].
- Meaning of 'case, occasion':
- 13) *Xotja byvajut interesnye momenty: v 2015 godu ja povetil kartinku «Lolita» na Nevskom (...)* [Afiša Daily, 2018]  
 'Although *there are interesting cases*: in 2015, I hung a picture of Lolita on Nevsky (...)' [Afiša Daly, 2018]

Nevertheless, this list of possible meanings of *moment* is far to be exhaustive. In some cases, the semantics of *moment* puts it apart from the meaning of existing abstract items in Russian, and it becomes very difficult to find any close synonym. This is what we see in the following examples:

- 14) — *Teper' Ol'ga obed ne skoro nam prigotovit, — i lomaja ves' vospitatel'nyj moment, ja zaržal.* [A. Klepakov. Opekun // «Volga», 2016]  
 '“Now Olga won't soon make us lunch,” and *breaking the whole educational moment*', I laughed.' [A. Klepakov. The guardian // “Volga”, 2016].
- 15) *Odna polovina govorila, čto v transgendere voobšče net nikakogo osvoboždajuščego momenta, on davit na ženščinu eščë sil'nee, potomu čto, kak izvestno, transgenderne ljudi často gendernyj displej kak by utrirujut.*

[N. Nazarova. «Byl li Lenin feministom ili vse-taki seksistom». (23.03.2017)]  
 ‘One half said that *there is no liberating ‘moment’ at all in being transgender*, it puts even more pressure on women because, as we know, transgender people often a little exaggerate gender display.’ [N. Nazarova. “Was Lenin a feminist or still a sexist”. (23.03.2017)]

- 16) *Okolačivalsja to v odnoj, to v drugoj komnate. (...) v konce koncov, Lukač prijutilsja v kabinete Marksa, gde zavedoval Rjazanov. **Političeskaja pozicija nesomnenno s pravymi momentami** <...>. Kak filosof on izvesten kak uklonist.* [M. Nesterenko. *Ideologija i filologija*. (2017.05.16)]  
 ‘He hung around in one room or the other. (...) eventually Lukács took refuge in Marx’s office, where Ryazanov was in charge. *The political position is undoubtedly with right-wing ‘moments’* <...>. As a philosopher he is known as an evader. (M. Nesterenko. *Ideology and philology*.’ (2017.05.16))
- 17) *Otveču i eščë na odin vopros: počemu my ob"javljaem o partii imenno sejčas, za tri dnja do vyborov. Potomu što **pol'zuemsja medijnym momentom**. Sejčas daže Pervyj kanal ne smožet ob ètom promolčat' (...).* [«Snob», 2018]  
 ‘I will also answer another question: why we are announcing the party now, three days before the elections. Because *we are taking advantage of the media ‘moment’*. Now even Channel One will not be able to keep silent about it (...).’ [‘Snob’, 2018]

In these constructions, the noun *moment* has obviously extended its semantics by gaining more abstract value. Contrarily to syncretic process guided by economy principle (cf. *vannaja komnata* → *vannaja*), the *moment* constructions go in the revert direction by decomposing and focusing some abstract notion denoting by an adjective.

See the following examples found in our corpus:

- 18) *Vytjagivat' samye interesnye momenty* → *samoe interesnoe*  
*Pereživat' perelomnyj moment* → *perelom*  
*Ètapnyj moment* → *ètap*  
*Vospitatel'nyj moment* → *vospitanie...*

In such analytical collocations occurring in the 21st century, *moment* is currently filling a semantic gap in Russian abstract lexicon. Here, the initial meaning of time has completely moved on the periphery.

## 4. Discussion and conclusions

In this study, we have taken into consideration the four most used constructions with *moment*, which are:

1. **(Prep) moment G** (*s momenta roždenija* ‘from the moment of birth’), which indicates the starting point of a phenomenon marked by the genitive;
2. **V / Na Det moment** (*v dannyj moment* ‘at the moment’) with a determinative pronoun or adjective, which indicates a particular instant;
3. **V moment** (*nastupil moment* ‘the time has come’, *ne upustit' moment* ‘to seize the moment’), where *moment* serves as an argument of the verb (subject or complement) and also denotes a period of time;
4. **Adj moment** (*opasnyj moment* ‘dangerous moment’), which may belong to Type 2 or Type 3 constructions above, but where *moment* develops a particular meaning.

According to the NKRJa, *moment*-constructions have been gradually undergoing changes over the past three centuries. Thus, if, at the beginning of the 18th century, Type 1 constructions with the genitive indicating the starting point of a phenomenon clearly prevailed (48% of all uses), at the beginning of the 21st century, Type 2 constructions became dominant, along with *V Det moment* (49%) and *Na Det moment* (15%) which make up the majority of uses (64%). Type 2 constructions, as well as those of Type 4 with an adjective (*ličnyj moment* ‘personal moment’) appeared in the corpus only since the twenties of the 19th century, probably under the influence of the French language<sup>2</sup>. In these constructions we observed the rapid loss for *moment* of its original temporal meaning (Lat. *momentum*) in favor of a more general abstract sense. The noun *moment* became a part of argumentative vocabulary, and in this vein, Type 2 constructions *v / na nastojaščij moment* are gradually tending to the lexicalization.

Semantically speaking, the not-temporal meaning of *moment* brought it closer to nouns such as *aspect*, *épizod*, *ètap* (*žizni*) which becomes *moment* (*žizni*). At the same time, *moment* takes more borrowed meaning than *tema*, *vopros*, *process*, probably filling a semantic gap in the Russian argumentative lexicon. As we could observe, *moment* serves in more analytic discourse collocations (cf. *vytjagivat' samye interesnye momenty* → *samoe interesnoe*). In any collocations with

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Julien, animé dans ce moment d'une force surhumaine, tordit un des chaînons de la chaîne qui retenait l'échelle. (Stendhal, Rouge et Noir, 1830, p. 358) (→ ‘at this moment’) | Ceci dit, ceci prouvé, il faudra agir. Ce sera le moment psychologique où Hamlet philosophe au lieu de faire. (Clémenceau, Vers réparation, 1899, p. 182) (→ ‘the psychological moment’) (TLF, *moment*).

preposition, verb or adjective, *moment*-constructions tend to figment and idiomaticity. And finally, throughout centuries, *moment*-constructions gained in usage in non-literary texts with a bigger predominance in the 21st century (82% vs. 18% for literary texts) compared to the 18th century data (72% vs. 28% respectfully).

To sum up, despite the fact that modern dictionaries still define the first meaning of *moment* as the temporal meaning of 'a very short period of time' (BTS), the corpus data certify that this meaning of *moment* is not the most used in Modern Russian. Semantic proximity of *moment* to the words *mig* and *mgnovenie* turns out to be only occasional. All these particularities of the Russian *moment*-constructions should be taken into account while dressing its 'lexicographic portrait'.

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