

Slovene 2016 vol.5 N1, pages 114-125

---

## Notes on the word form je 'is' in old Russian and old church slavonic literature

Zholobov O.

Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kremlevskaya 18, Kazan, Russia

---

### Abstract

A study of the so-called zero-forms of the present tense 3rd person singular and plural (without inflectional -tb) in the birch bark manuscripts has once again attracted the attention of researchers to this grammatical phenomenon. Andrey Zaliznyak established the zero-forms usage positions and their range and functions, and he arrived at the conclusion that they are Novgorod dialectisms. Analysis of the Old Slavonic and written sources of the Russian Southwest found similarities with the Novgorod birch bark manuscripts, so the zero-forms should be considered Proto-Slavic dialectisms, inherited by different Old Russian dialects and tracing back to the injunctive and the conjunctive, its later substitute. At the same time, data correlation showed the narrowness of the birch bark manuscripts' discursive range. A. Zaliznyak discovered several je 'is' word forms in a supposedly enclitic function. He noted, however, that there was a lack of material for drawing final conclusions. The present paper provides evidence of the je word form usage in the function of Wackernagel enclitics in different sources, especially in the 11th century Sinaiskii Paterik (Pratum spiritual), where, as it turns out, this type of enclitic was closely related with an interrogative sentence type, not always functioning as a link-verb and meaning a non-factive action of supposition. The je word form is also used widely in a non-enclitic position, where it has a non-actual, primarily gnomic, present tense meaning.

---

### Keywords

Generalization, Gnomic present tense, Injunctive, Je word form, Non-actual present tense, Non-factive meaning, Verbal enclitics, Zero-forms present tense