Subject of Subordinate Clause as Object with Verbs of Perception, Thought, and Communication in Old Russian

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Abstract
This paper describes the Old Russian construction involving verbs of perception, thought, and communication. In this construction, a single semantic argument corresponds to two syntactic constituents: a direct object and a finite subordinate clause, the subject of which is coreferential with the direct object of the main clause. The Old Russian construction is seen as an instantiation of

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a cross-linguistic option in the argument structure of these verbs (above all, of the perception verbs), that is, to take the subject of the subordinate clause as the direct object.

Key words
verbs of perception, thought, and communication; subject of subordinate clause as object of matrix verb

Verbs of perception, thought, and communication occur in different syntactic constructions. These verbs take some predication as a main argument, but the subject of the predication may also be attached to them as a direct object, in which case the predication is expressed by a nominal or non-finite verb form. The resulting constructions are double accusative, accusative with participle and accusative with infinitive (accusativus cum infinitivo). The alternative model is one in which the subject of the subordinate clause is attached directly to its subject position. The model with subordinate finite clauses has the tendency to displace constructions with non-finite verb forms [ЗАЛИЗНЯК 1981: 25; COLEMAN 1985: 327; HARBERT 1977: 136].

In Old Russian, perception verbs most often require subordinate finite clauses, cf. the Kievan Chronicle: Глѣбъ же оуэри въ же ндѣть на нѣ Мѣстиславъ ‘Gleb saw Mstislav coming against him’, lit. ‘Gleb saw that Mstislav is coming against him’ [ПСРЛ II: 363.27–28]; слышавъ въ же ндѣть сватъ е Дюрги въ Русь ‘having heard that his co-father-in-law Yuri was going to Rus’ [ПСРЛ II: 455.22] and many others. The subject of the perceived action in these cases is the subject of the subordinate clause.

Quite often, verbs of perception in Old Russian texts govern the accusative with participle:

ѹзрѣша Половци идущь
see.3pl.past Cuman.nom.pl come.partc.pres.acc.sg
полкъ пристроишасѧ противу
regiment.acc.sg poise.3pl.past against

‘The Cumans saw the regiment coming, and are poised against it’ [ПСРЛ I: 172.3–4]. See further examples in [ПОТЕВЯ 1958: 308–316].

More rarely, a double accusative is observed with verbs of perception:

а ныне слышу боленоу сестроу
and now hear.1sg.praes sick. acc.sg sister. acc.sg

‘I hear that my sister is sick’ [ЗАЛИЗНЯК 2004: 158].

The use of the accusativus cum infinitivo was alien to medieval Slavic languages. At the same time, in Old Church Slavonic as well as in Old Russian texts, primarily chronicles, one encounters a peculiar construction, similar in part to the accusativus cum infinitivo. The construction involves a verb of perception, thought, or communication; its single semantic argument corresponds to two
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syntactic constituents: a direct object and a finite subordinate clause, the subject of which is coreferential with the direct object of the main clause.²

Several examples of the construction in question have been found in the Old Church Slavonic translation of the Gospel:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{соседи же и иже и } & \quad \text{neighbour.NOM.PL VRTCL and this.NOM.PL he.ACC.SG.CL} \\
\text{видели быху прежде } & \quad \text{see.PARTC.PAST.PL be.3PL.PAST.COP before that.COMP} \\
\text{слепъ бы } & \quad \text{blind.NOM.SG. be.3SG.PAST}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{oи оун видоносе и ои теорунте аутон то протерон оти } & \quad \text{the neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind’ Gospel of John 9: 8;} \\
\text{видѣвъшѧ Марию ѣко быдро въста } & \quad \text{see.PARTC.PAST.PL Mary.acc that.COMP quickly rise up.3SG.PAST}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ісусъ же видѣвъ- } & \quad \text{Jesus.nom prtcl} \\
\text{съмѣлъ отвѣща } & \quad \text{intelligently answer.3PL.PAST}
\end{align*}
\]

In all three places cited here, the Slavonic translation follows the Greek text closely, rendering all the words in their original order.

But the construction under consideration is attested not only as syntactic borrowing in translations. It occurs in original Slavic texts as well. In Old Russian texts, constructions with the subject of the subordinate clause

² The defining property of accusativus cum infinitivo is precisely the presence of two syntactic arguments (a direct object and an infinitive) corresponding to a single embedded predication, in contrast to predicates such as to force/encourage/ask somebody to do something, which have two distinct semantic roles [Harbert 1977: 123–136; Bolkestein 1979: 20–22; Злотницкая 1981: 16–24; Pinkster 1990: 126–128; Schoof 2004: 71, 105, 149–150, 162–163]. The verb of perception can govern simultaneously a direct complement and a subordinate clause, the subject of which differs from the direct object: кнѣзъ же зорѣвъ радѣющи · оже хотѣть крѣпко животъ свои ѣдати · и не поеха ‘the prince having seen their formation that they would fight hard for their lives, did not ride out’ Novgorod First Chronicle, f. 93v. Here, the direct object realizes the object of immediate perception, whereas the subordinate clause expresses the mental conclusion: the prince had seen the formation of the men of Novgorod and concluded that they would fight hard.
as the direct object of the main verb are rare. Most often the construction is used with verbs of visual perception. Here is an example from the Kievan Chronicle:

\[
\text{сё же видимо полки Половецки.}
\]

prtcl prtcl see.1pl.past regiment.acc.pl Cuman. acc.pl

\[
\text{же множество соутъ}
\]

that.comp numerous.nom.pl be.3pl.praes

‘we saw that the Cuman regiments were numerous’ [ПСРЛ II: 640.16].

The subject of the perceived action or state in such a construction typically is not overtly explicated in the subordinate clause. Being attached as the direct object to the main verb, it becomes thematized, while the subordinate clause is the focus component of the utterance. This may be shown, for example, in the context of the Galician Chronicle:

\[
\text{видевъ люди своего нео постигъ.}
\]

see.partc.past.nom.sg subordinate.acc.pl refl.poss.acc.pl that.comp

\[
\text{чесо}
\]

were.drunk

‘[Daniel of Galicia] saw that his subordinates were drunk’, lit. “saw his subordinates that [they] were drunk” [ПСРЛ II: 758.24].

The meaning of the proposition is not that Daniel of Galicia saw his soldiers, but that he saw that they were drunk. The focus of the speaker is not the subject, but rather his condition, yet nonetheless the subject is placed in the main clause. Similarly, in the context of the Primary Chronicle:

\[
\text{съглядѣла кольдникъ.}
\]

see.1sg.past convict.acc.pl

\[
\text{же вси в сапозѣ}
\]

that.comp be.3pl.praes all.nom.pl

\[
\text{въ}
\]

in boots

‘I made out that all the convicts are in boots’ [ПСРЛ I: 84].

It is important that the convicts were shod in boots: on this basis the speaker concluded that they can not be forced to pay tribute.

The direct object of the verb видѣти can serve not only as the subject but also as the object of the subordinate clause predicate. However, the only reliable example, from the Galician Chronicle, is observed in an impersonal subordinate clause, and the object depends on the infinitive, which does not refer to directly observable actions:

\[
\text{видѣвъ же Кремѣнець и грады}
\]

see.partc.past.nom.sg prtcl Kremenets. acc and city.acc.sg

\[
\text{Даниловъ ибо невозможно приятой ему}
\]

Danilov.acc.sg that.comp impossible take.inf he.dat.sg

‘having seen that he can not take Kremenets and Danilov city’ [ПСРЛ II: 786.12].
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Apparently, in the following context of the Kievan Chronicle according to the Hypatian codex, the direct object of the main clause also refers to an object, but not the subject of the predicate of a subordinate clause, whilst the subject of the subordinate clause is indefinite-personal (Izyaslav’s enemies):

и видивше Изаляславчи кнѧзѧ своѥго и Logoожанѡ. вже бєс пакости суть переьти и дашасѧ [ПСРЛ II: 292.25–27]. However, in the same context, in the Laurentian Chronicle the direct object refers to the subject of the subordinate clause: и видѣвши Изаляславци кнѧзѧ своѥго. и Logoожанѡ. вже (и вже is not in the Radzivilovskii and Academy codices) бєс пакости суть переьти.

In the Teachings of Vladimir Monomakh — а се въ повѣдаю· дѣти моѡ труда свої· вже сѧ есмь тружалъ· пути дѣ и лов ъ [ПСРЛ I: 247] — the direct object труда may not be the subject of the predicate сѧ есмь тружалъ if the clause is attributive (‘I will tell you about those works that I have undertaken’) or specifying (‘I will tell you about the works, namely, those I undertook’).

In oblique case with an adjective denoting quantity, the coreferential subject is overtly expressed:

и видивше Половци сторожи Изаляславлн вже мало и есть [ПСРЛ I: 298.19–20]; here вже seems to be a secondary replacement of the original вже, but the participle passive переьти may be original, and the reading of the Hypatian codex a corruption.

The above-considered construction is also used with the verb слышати, cf. in the Galician Chronicle: саўшиак же Данилъ рѣчи ихъ вже полнъ сѹть лєсти ‘Daniel, having heard their speeches <and having felt> that they are full of lies’ 790.28. Here, the verb слышати is semantically complex, implying both auditory and mental perception: Daniel had perceived the speeches by ear and realized that they were false (cf. footnote 2 above).

The specificity of the construction comes through clearly in comparison with apparently similar contexts, where the direct object points to the immediate source of information, as in an example from Рцела: сь слышавъ ела Гєкѣца иако таше великъ илау нѧтъ и ре <...> Никоклѣс какоу тиоо іатроу лєго-
ντος, ὅτι ἔχει δύνασθαι (var. λέγοντος ἔχειν δύνασθαι), 'he heard a bad doctor, how he said that he had great strength, and answered' Archive codex 93.1 [ΠΕΛΑ: 799]. Here, the predicate of the subordinate clause does not disclose new unpredictable information. This context indicates only the direct perception of the action-process. In contrast to the construction described above, such contexts are possible in modern Russian, and the subordinate clause is introduced with the conjunction как ‘how’ (слышал врача, как он говорил... ‘I heard how the doctor spoke...’), while the construction under discussion has no exact equivalent in modern languages, and in translation the clause is introduced with the conjunction что ‘that’ (see examples above). The same distinction is observed in German, cf. the example cited by Potebn’a [1958: 299] from the Deutsche Grammatik of J. Grimm: “ich hörte den vogel, wie er singt (audio avem canentem),” ‘I hear the bird singing’ — the direct perception of the speaker is implied (in the ancient and some modern European languages the accusativus cum participio is used in such situations) and “ich hörte, dass der vogel singt (audio avem canere)”, ‘I hear the bird sing’ — the immediate perception by the listener is not implied (in the ancient and some modern European languages the accusativus cum infinitivo is used in such situations).

With verbs of auditory perception and communication in Old Russian, the direct object can denote not only the immediate but the remote object of perception [ПОТЕБЯ 1958: 295–299; КРЫСЬКО 2006: 161–162]: слышалъ есмь мужество ваше ‘I heard about your bravery’ Pskov Third Chronicle (Псков. Лет. II: 83–84), etc., see [СРЕЗНЕВСКИЙ III: 438]; і яко ов'єддаша нємці новгородськй полкъ. новгородьскї полкъ. новгородская армия ‘When the Germans learned of the Novgorod regiment, they ran across the river’ Novgorod First Chronicle, f. 147; написаа маліха, і яко тон оєн іїц моєго ‘he wrote about Malik that he killed my father’ History of the Jewish War of Josephus, 355d 34–35 (different in the Greek original) [ИИВ: 86], etc. As A. A. Potebn’a has pointed out [ПОТЕБЯ 1958: 299], the accusative of distant object is a necessary precondition for the emergence of the accusativus cum infinitivo construction. Analogically, it is a prerequisite for the use of the direct object denoting the subject of the subordinate clause:

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{а} & \text{Мьстислава} & \text{пок'єддаша} & \text{вже} & \text{поге'єль}.
\end{array}
\]

and Mstislav.ACC tell.3PL.PAST that.COMP go.3SG.PAST

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{с} & \text{Телебуга} & \text{на} & \text{Лвовъ}
\end{array}
\]

with Telebuga.INSTR to LVOV.ACC

‘they told about Mstislav, that he was gone with Telebuga to Lvov’ Volyn Chronicle [ПСРЛ II: 900.2–3].

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3 The accusativus cum infinitivo εδεικυσεν εξοφυλλακη seems to render the reading of certain Greek copies λέγοντος ἔχειν δύνασθαι.

4 The conjunction яко here introduces not a subordinate clause, but rather direct speech, i.e., it performs the function of an opening quotation mark.
This same construction may depend on verbs of thinking:

\[
\text{мнѧще} \quad \text{ирода} \quad \text{воѧ} \quad \text{єго}. \\
\text{think.partc.praes.nom.pl} \quad \text{Herod.acc} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{soldier.acc.pl} \quad \text{he.gen}
\]

‘thinking that Herod and his soldiers were afraid’ (different in the Greek original) History of the Jewish War of Josephus, 361b 26–27 [ИИВ: 99]:

\[
\text{мнѧста} \quad \text{єго} \quad \text{съплю} \\
\text{think.3dual.past} \quad \text{he.gen} \quad \text{sleep.1sg.pres}
\]

‘they thought that I was asleep’ Lobkovskii Prologue from the 13th century [СДЯ XI–XIV, 5: 93].

But the remote object often becomes the indirect object of the matrix verb, cf. in the Kievan Chronicle: и слъша ѡ братьи своєи ѡже шли соѹть на Половци ‘and he had heard about his brothers that <they> had come forth against the Cumans’ [ПСРЛ II: 645.6]; in the Galician Chronicle: слъша ѡ братьє си и ѡ дѣте и ѡ гнѧгини своєи. ⁡исъшли сѹть из Рѹское землѣ в Лѧхь ‘having heard about his brother and children and his wife that <they> had left the Rus’ land for Lyaks’ [ПСРЛ II: 787.19]. In contrast to the construction with the direct object, such contexts are possible in modern Russian: он услышал о своих братьях, что они пошли на Половцев, etc.

The subject of an indirect question may also be in direct subordination to the main verb:

\[
\text{не вѣдѧхѹ кн҃зѧ юрьє ѡесть} \\
\text{not} \quad \text{prince.acc.sg} \quad \text{Juri.acc where}
\]

‘they did not know where prince Jurii was’ Novgorod First Chronicle f. 161.

Exactly the same construction is found in ancient languages, as inmuch as the use of the accusativus cum infinitivo, typical with the verb meaning ‘to know,’ is not possible with an indirect question, cf. ancient Greek: ὅστις ποθ’ ὑμῶν Λάιον τον Λαβδάκου κάτωδεν ἀνδρὸς ἐκ τίνος διώλετο ‘Every one of you who knew because of which man Laius, the son of Labdacus, perished…’ Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus 216 [ЖЕЛТОВА, ЖЕЛТОВ 2007: 101].

In Old Russian the construction with the subject of the subordinate clause as the direct object of the main verb was not bookish: it is found primarily in chronicles, usually with the Eastern Slavic conjunction вже (only in the Galician Chronicle, in which the author stylizes his text under the influence of Church Slavonic, is the literary conjunction іако used in this construction).

The Old Russian construction with the subject of the dependent predication as the direct object of the main verb resembles the accusativus cum infinitivo in living European languages not only in structure but also in function. It also often occurs after verbs of perception, above all with the visual. This
resembles the situation in German [Harbert 1977: 121–122], French, and Spanish; in Italian the accusativus cum infinitivo is used most often without any restriction after the verb *videre* ‘see,’ while its use after verbs of auditory perception is stylistically limited [Schwendener 1923: 8, 12] and the use in other positions is specific to literary language. As in Old Russian, in colloquial Italian the subject of the accusativus cum infinitivo is in explicit dependence on the main verb as its object, while in Latin the object of the main verb is the entire accusativus cum infinitivo [Schwendener 1923: 3].

Old Russian material confirms that a characteristic feature of verbs of perception, thought, and communication in Indo-European and some non-Indo-European languages was the ability to subordinate the subject of the dependent predication as a direct object [Сердобольская 2005]. This feature had different manifestations, including the described Old Russian construction.

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