



Subject of
Subordinate
Clause as Object
with Verbs of
Perception,
Thought, and
Communication
in Old Russian¹

Субъект
в зависимой
предикации
в роли объекта
при глаголах
восприятия,
мысли и передачи
информации
в древнерусском

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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

¹ This work was supported by ОИФН РАН (project “Синтаксический анализ древнерусских текстов” within the program “Генезис и взаимодействие социальных, культурных и языковых общностей”).

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 оузри уже идеть на нь Мѣстиславъ** ‘Gleb saw Mstislav coming against him’, lit. ‘Gleb saw that Mstislav is coming against him’ [ПСРЛ II: 363.27–28]; **слышавъ уже идеть свать ѣ Дюрги в 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:

оузрѣша see.3PL.PAST	Половци Cumani.NOM.PL	идущь come.PARTC.PRES.ACC.SG
полкъ regiment.ACC.SG	пристроншася poise.3PL.PAST	противу against

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

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

<i>a</i>	<i>ныне</i>	<i>слышю</i>	<i>болену</i>	<i>сестроу</i>
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

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:

сѣсѣди же и иже и
 neighbour.NOM.PL prtcl and this.NOM.PL he.ACC.SG.CL
 видѣли бѣахъ прѣжде ꙗко
 see.PARTC.PAST.PL be.3PL.PAST.COP before that.COMP
 слѣпъ бѣ
 blind.NOM.SG. be.3SG.PAST

οἱ οὖν γείτονες καὶ οἱ θεωροῦντες αὐτὸν τὸ πρότερον ὅτι τυφλὸς ἦν ‘the neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind’ Gospel of John 9: 8;

видѣвъша марію ꙗко адро вѣста
 see.PARTC.PAST.PL Mary.ACC that.COMP quickly rise up.3SG.PAST
 ꙗ изиде
 and go.out.3SG.PAST

ἰδόντες τὴν Μαριὰμ ὅτι ταχέως ἀνέστη καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ‘having seen Mary that she rose up quickly and went out’ Gospel of John 11: 31;

іс же видѣвъ- и. ꙗко
 Jesus.NOM prtcl see.PARTC.PAST.NOM.SG he.ACC.SG that.COMP
 съмъисльно отъвѣща
 intelligently answer.3PL.PAST

καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ὅτι βουνεχῶς ἀπεκρίθη ‘and Jesus, seeing that he answered intelligently’ Gospel of Mark 12: 34 [ГРКОВИЪ-МЕЈЦОР 2010: 192].

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; ЗАЛИЗНЯК 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: *кнѣзь же ѡзрѣвъ радъ ихъ · оже хотѣтъ крѣпко животъ свои ѡдати · и не поуха* ‘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:

СЕ	ЖЕ	ВИДНХОМЪ	ПОЛКИ	ПОЛОВЪЦЬКИИ.
PRTCL	PRTCL	see.1PL.PAST	regiment.ACC.PL	Cuman. ACC.PL
УЖЕ	МНОЗИ	СУТЬ		
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:

ВИДИВЪ	ЛЮДИ	СВОЯ.	ТАКО
see.PARTC.PAST.NOM.SG	subordinate.ACC.PL	Refl.POSS.ACC.PL	that.COMP

ИСПИИСА
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:

СЪГЛАДАХЪ	КОЛОДНИКЪ.	УЖЕ	СУТЬ	ВСИ
see.1SG.PAST	convict. ACC.PL	that.COMP	be.3PL.PRAES	all.NOM.PL

В САПОЗЪ
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:

ВИДИВЪ	ЖЕ	КРЕМАНЬЦЬ	И	ГРАДЪ
see.PARTC.PAST.NOM.SG	PRTCL	Kremenets. ACC	and	city.ACC.SG
ДАНИЛОВЪ.	ТАКО	НЕВОЗМОЖНО	ПРИАТИ	ЕМОУ
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].

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	видише	Изыславчи	кнѣзѧ	
and	see.PARTC.PAST.NOM.PL	Izyaslav's.supporter.NOM.PL	prince.ACC.SG	
своего	и	Логожанты.	уже	бес
REFL.POSS.ACC.SG	and	habitants.of.Logożsk.ACC.PL	that.COMP	without
пакости	суть	перешали.	и	дашасѧ
harm	be.3PL.PRAES.COP	take.PARTC.PAST.PL	and	surrender.3PL.PAST

'and Izyaslav's supporters, having seen that their prince and the habitants of Logożsk were taken unharmed, surrendered', where суть перешали is a predicate in active voice, that is "took" [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** **Изыславчи кнѣзѧ своего.** **и Логожанты.** **ѧже** (**ѧже** is not in the Radzivilovskii and Academy codices) **бес пакости** **суть** **перешати.** **и дашасѧ** [ПСРЛ I: 298.19–20]; here **ѧже** seems to be a secondary replacement of the original **уже**, but the participle passive **перешати** may be original, and the reading of the Hypatian codex a corruption.

In the *Teachings* of Vladimir Monomakh — **а се въ повѣдаю· дѣти моя** **трудъ свои· уже сѧ есмь** **трусалъ· пути дѣла и ловы** [ПСРЛ I: 247] — the direct object **трудъ** may not be the subject of the predicate **сѧ есмь** **трусалъ** 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:

видише	Половци	сторожи	Изыславчи
see.PARTC.PAST.NOM.PL	Cumans.NOM.PL	guard.ACC.PL	of.Izyaslav
уже	мало	и	естъ
that.COMP	few.NEUTR.NOM.SG	they.GEN	be.3SG.PRAES

'The Cumans, having seen that the guard detachment of Izyaslav was of small number' [ПСРЛ II: 425.20–21].

The above-considered construction is also used with the verb *слышати*, cf. in the Galician Chronicle: слышав же Данилъ рѣчи ихъ ѧко полны суть лъсти '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 *Pčela*: **Съ слышавъ** **зла** **лѣвца** **ѧко глше** **великѣ** **силоу** **имѣ** **и рѣ** <...> Νικολῆς κακοῦ τινος ἰατροῦ λέγο-

ντος, ὅτι ἔχει δύναμιν (var. λέγοντος ἔχειν δύναμιν), ‘he heard a bad doctor, how he said that he had great strength, and answered’³ Archive codex 93.1 [ПЧЕЛА: 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 höre 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 höre, dasz 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 [ПОТЕБНЯ 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 тако оубѣдаша нѣмци новгородскѣи полкъ. повѣгоша за рѣкою* ‘When the Germans learned of the Novgorod regiment, they ran across the river’ Novgorod First Chronicle, f. 147; *написаа малнха. тако тои оуби ѿца моего* ‘he wrote about Malik that ‘he killed my father’⁴ *History of the Jewish War* of Josephus, 355d 34–35 (different in the Greek original) [ИИБ: 86], etc. As A. A. Potebn’a has pointed out [ПОТЕБНЯ 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:

а	Мѣстислава	повѣдаша.	уже	пошелъ.
and	Mstislav.ACC	tell.3PL.PAST	that.COMP	go.3SG.PAST
с	Телебугою	на	Лвовъ	
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].

³ The accusativus cum infinitivo *великѣ силѣу имѣ^{ти}* seems to render the reading of certain Greek copies *λέγοντος ἔχειν δύναμιν*.

⁴ The conjunction *і* 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:

МНАЩЕ **ИРОДА** **И** **ВОА** **ЕГО.**
think.PARTC.PRAES.NOM.PL Herod.ACC and soldier. ACC.PL he.GEN

ТАКО **ОУЖАСОШАСА** **СТРАХОМЪ**
that.COMP were afraid fear.INSTR.SG

‘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];

МНАСТА **МА** **ТАКО** **СЪПЛЮ**
think.3DUAL.PAST me.ACC that.COMP 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 слыша в братъи своен уже шли соуть 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: **слыша в братѣ си и в дѣтѣ. и в гнагини своен. тако вышли соуть из Роуское землѣ в Лахы** ‘having heard about his brother and children and his wife that <they> had left the Rus’ land for Lyakhs’ [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:

НЕ **вѣдахоу** **кнѣза** **юрѣа** **кдѣ** **естъ**
not know.3PAST.PL prince.ACC.SG Jurii.ACC where be.3PRAES.SG

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

Exactly the same construction is found in ancient languages, inasmuch 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 Λάϊου τὸν Λαβδάκου κάτοιθεν 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 **уже** (only in the Galician Chronicle, in which the author stylizes his text under the influence of Church Slavonic, is the literary conjunction **так** 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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