

From Subject to Subjectivity: Russian discourse markers basing on the adverbial participle *govorja* ‘speaking’

In Russian exist several metatextual discourse markers conveying speaker’s stance that base on the adverbial participle *govorja* ‘speaking’, such as *koroče govorja* ‘in short (lit. shortly speaking)’, *čestno govorja* ‘frankly speaking’, *mjagko govorja* ‘putting it mildly’ etc. Some of them, among them *koroče govorja*, even appear in eroded forms, e.g. *koroče*. As the covert subject of the Russian adverbial participle (henceforth AP) clause is coreferent with the first argument of the matrix clause (1), we are dealing with the replacement of the subject by an expression of speaker’s stance, i.e. of subjectivity (2). Our aim is the describing the way from subject to subjectification these collocations take in order to gain a better understanding of subjectification in general.

- (1) Ø_j *Govorja* *s molodymi literatorami*, *on_j utverždal*,
 Ø_j speak-AP with young writers he_j claim-3SG.PST
čto suščestvennoj raznicy meždu nim i Puškinym ne bylo.
 that there was no significant difference between him and Puškin.
 (Ju. N. Tynjanov. *Maloletnyj Vitušnikov*.)
 ‘While speaking with young writers, he claimed that there was no significant difference between him and Pushkin.’
- (2) *Čestno govorja*, *Miša* *glupen’kij*.
 frankly speak-AP Miša-NOM stupid-ADJ.NOM.SG
 ‘Frankly speaking, Misha is a bit stupid.’

Up to the 15th century, the AP, which was then still developing out of the short form of the participle, (cf. Birzer 2010: 25-39), and aorist forms of *govorit* ‘speak’ and its equivalents *glagolati* ‘speak’ and *rešči* ‘speak’ were used mainly in formulaic pleonastic expressions with other verbs of saying, introducing direct speech (3).

- (3) ... *Bogu pomolisja*, (P) Ø_j (X) *glagolja*: “*Pomozi mi, Gospodi Bože moj...*”
 (Q)”
 God-DAT pray-3SG.PST speak-AP Help me, Lord my God
 ‘He prayed to God, speaking: “Help me, God my Lord” ‘
 (Letopisnaja povest’ o kulikovskoj bitve)

Via Old Church Slavonic, these constructions, borrowed from Greek, had come into Russian (cf. Růžička 1963: 163-167). The covert subject of the AP clause is coreferent with the subject of the matrix clause. The item introducing direct speech and the utterance belong to different sentences. In the most frequent construction (there are only few Old Russian texts in the 1st person, and we found no evidence of the 1st person author introducing direct speech they had delivered themselves), the narrative preceding the direct speech (a) and the speech act (b) stem from different authors, namely the writer / speaker of the whole text (a) and a semantic actant of the writer’s / speaker’s utterance (b) (cf. Borkovskij 1979: 429; 430). The originally contextual information ‘X is saying Q. X is not the author of P; the writer / speaker is author of P.’ becomes gradually integrated into the meaning of the AP and leads to the AP functioning like a marker of different authorship. The different authorship of P and Q is stressed by inserting deictic adverbs (such as *tako* ‘so’, *si(ce)* ‘so’) into the AP clause (cf. also Borkovskij 1979: 427)).

In the next step, the semantics of the respective items (P, *govorja* / *glagolja* / *rešči* / *reče si(ce)* / *tako*, Q) changes to ‘the speaker thinks that P can be interpreted as Q’. The semantic component ‘speaking’ and the actants it implies are bleached out. Quite interestingly, the aorist *reče* ‘he/she spoke’ and the deictic adverb *si* ‘so’ univerbate in many cases, when used in this meaning (5). On the syntactic level, the item introducing the speaker’s evaluation (formerly introducing the direct speech) has lost coreference with the subject of the matrix clause (APs) respectively is no more part of a sequence of verb forms with the same subject (aorist forms), has therefore lost clause status and may be classified as *vvodnoe slovo* (cf. Stecenko 1972: 122).

- (4) *Dobre byvaet*: *komu_i roditi, tomu I kormiti mladenca, ili popečenie o nem iměti* (P),

well be-IPF.3SG.PRS who gives birth also has to feed the baby or to be in charge of it,
 Ø_j sirěč': *kto tružalsja zělo I bolěžnoval o sem, tomu dostojno I sovětovati o takovyh*
 (Q).
 so speak-AP who worked hard and cared much is entitled to judge.
 'As it is just: who gives birth also has to feed the baby, or to be in charge of it, to put it in
 other words: who worked hard and cared much is entitled to judge.'

Between the 15th and 18th centuries new constructions for introducing direct speech arise (cf. Borkovskij 1979: 425-428), and of the items introducing the speaker's evaluation only those containing *govorja* remain. At the same time, the selection restrictions for *govorja* slacken, as it forms collocations not only with deictic adverbs, but with a restricted number of manner adverbs (e.g. *čestno* 'frankly', *koroče* 'in short', *kstati* 'by the way', *mjagko* 'mildly', *inače* 'in another way' etc.). All collocations express the speaker's stance to Q. The collocations may form a sentence with the clause representing the semantic actant Q, i.e. the item occurs in another sentence than its former matrix clause (representing P). Due to lack of space, we cannot discuss all collocations, so we will discuss just one of them, *koroče govorja* 'in short' (lit. 'shortly speaking'). It appears in the construction "P, *koroče govorja*, Q" and its semantic content may be explicated as 'P consists of a multitude of information pieces. The speaker thinks that Q is the essence of P.' (5). *Koroče govorja*, just as *čestno* / *sobstvenno* / *točnee* / *kstati govorja* undergoes phonetic erosion, as a result only the manner adverb remains, which conveys, however, the meaning of the whole collocation (6).

- (5) *Éto bylo v dekabre 94-go, nakanune načala voennoj operacii. Sel v graždanskij džip i poechal k čečencam, k Dudaevu, posmotret', čto na samom dele proischodit. Vernulsja v Moskvu i rasskazal v Kremlje o tom, čto ne videl nikakich živych ščitov iz ženščin i detej, prikrývajuščich pulemety Dudaeva* (P). *Koroče govorja, oproverg informaciju, postupavšuju v Kreml' ot ministra oborony* (Q). (Daeš' «vesti s polej» (2003) // «Soveršenno sekretno», 2003.04.08)
 'It was in December 1994, on the eve of the military operation. He took a civil jeep and drove to the Chechens, to Dudaev, to see what was really going on. He returned to Moscow and reported in the Kremlin that he had not seen living protective shields of women and children who protected Dudaev's machine guns. In short, he refuted the information that had been sent to the Kremlin by the minister of defence.'
- (6) *Za šest' let kurenija v organach dychanija nakaplivaetsja ne menee kilogramma različnyh smol. Éto edva li ne edinstvennoe, čto ob "edinjaet kuril'sčikov i kuril'sčic. Kardinal'no različajutsja ne tol'ko psihologija i fiziologija privykanija, no i uroven' negativnyh posledstvij. Ne govorja uže o pričinach, pobuždajuščich zakurit' i brosit' (P). Koroče, u kurjaščich ženščin vsě gorazdo ser'eznee, čem u mužčin* (Q). (Anna Varšavskaja. Dym dlja dam (2002) // «Domovoj», 2002.09.04)
 'Within six years of smoking no less than one kilogramme of tar accumulates in the respiratory system. This is almost the only thing that unites male and female smokers. Not only the psychological and physiological side of the addiction differs significantly, but also the degree of the negative effects. Not to speak about the reasons that evoke the wish to start or stop smoking. In short, for female smokers everything is much more serious than for male ones.'

To conclude, the development of speaker's stance markers from AP clauses containing a covert subject takes the following steps: 1) APs of *verba dicendi* as marker of direct speech with the semantics 'X is saying Q. X is not the author of P; the speaker is author of P.'; direct speech forms a sentence of its own; 2) bleaching out of the semantic component 'speaking'; loss of the corresponding syntactic arguments; 3) loss of coreference between the covert subject of the AP and the first argument of the matrix clause; 4) AP loses clause status; 5) collocation of the former AP and a restricted number of manner adverbs; all collocations conveys speaker's stance to Q; 6) collocation forms sentence with Q; 7) phonetic erosion of the collocation; remaining manner adverb conveys meaning of the whole collocation.

References

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