

## **Analysis of the Accusative with Infinitive to Declarative Sentences after the Verbs of Saying in Ancient Greek Language**

The present paper discusses a syntactic change caused by the language contact between Ancient Greek (AG) and Semitic languages. It re-examines the accepted description of the analysis of an infinitival complement with an accusative direct object after the verbs of saying, i.e. the accusative with infinitive (AcI), to declarative subordinate sentence introduced with the conjunctions ὅτι or ἵνα.

In the classical Attic dialect, verbs of saying admitted primarily the AcI, which could have been freely exchanged for a declarative clause. Since the first century CE, the infinitival complement is said to have been gradually displaced in the spoken Greek language by its analytical counterpart because of the strong penchant of the spoken language for parataxis and the intrinsic tendency of the AG language to resolve the non-finite verbal forms. This syntactic change is said to have surfaced for the first time in the Synoptic Gospels (SG), allegedly written in the popular speech of Palestinian Jews, in the second half of the first century CE.

However, linguistic evidence other than New Testament (NT) does not attest to this change before the late antiquity with the exception of Septuagint (LXX), i.e. the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible dating from the third century BCE, and other Judeo-Christian literature. At the same time, the special grammars of the NT language hold that the LXX translation language incontrovertibly determined the NT forms of reported speech. Since reported speech represents an alternative grammatical unit to cope with the alignment of the verbs of saying and their complements, the displacement of the AcI can be understood also as a syntactic change caused by language contact.

This alternative explanation passed unnoticed up until now because of the traditional approach to study of the AG/NT syntax by grammarians, whose main concern lay with morpho-syntactic comparison of single parts of speech. Contrariwise, in this paper, reported speech will be adopted as a more suitable grammatical unit for analyzing the syntactic change at issue. Accordingly, my contention will be that the displacement of the AcI by declarative clauses in AG language indeed resulted from the language contact between AG and Semitic languages; however, since the Judeo-Christian literature represents a single case in point of its grammaticalization between the third century BCE and third century CE, I will claim that the change was not generally grammaticalized in AG language before the late antiquity.

On the basis of a study, where the forms of reported speech in the SG were compared with reported speech in other Greek written sources, I will argue that the AcI and declarative sentences were not freely interchangeable complements of the verbs of saying in AG language. My second argument will be that the AcI was displaced in the NT and other Judeo-Christian literature, because their writers, while consciously or unconsciously imitating the LXX translation language, replicated the forms of

reported speech of Semitic languages, which lack the AcI as a complement of the verbs of saying. Finally, since the spread of the change in the fourth century CE coincides with the progress of Christianity, whose dogma is grounded upon the Judeo-Christian literature, I will propose that this change was diffused in the wake of the political and cultural ascendancy of Christian Church to power.

All in all, the proposed paper not only exposes the past methodological deficiencies in dealing with syntactic change, but also shows that a syntactic change caused by language contact is a socio-cultural phenomenon, embedded in other social practices and institutions.

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