

The study of the participles of the Old Church Slavonic (On the Basis of the Gospel texts)

Yoshinori ONDA

This paper discusses the relationship between the diachronic change of a language, and the users of the language, taking up as an example the participles of Old Church Slavonic (OCS).

OCS is the oldest literary language in the Slavonic world, and was established by the Greek apostles Constantine-Cyril and his brother, Methodios, with the purpose of translating the Greek bible into Slavonic. Along with liturgical formulas, OCS propagated throughout the Slavonic world through the missionary works of the brothers, and was used as the common literary language in the Slavonic world for approximately two and a half centuries. With the beginning of the twelfth Century, OCS begins to reflect the characteristics of local dialects, and loses its coherence as a language. However, the local variants of OCS used in the respective areas as the Church Slavonic, and in case of Russia, the local variant as Old Russian (OR), played a role in the establishment of the common languages, thus wielding their influence to the present day.

By reviewing the history of Russian literary language with OCS as the starting point, one may observe a variety of linguistic changes. This includes the participles, which through changes in forms and usage were reorganized under paradigms such as converb (деепричастие) and participles (причастие) in modern Russian.

In OCS, participles derive from verbs, and have the same suffix with adjectives. Morphological distinction is made between the active and passive, present and past tenses, and participles are matched with nouns by gender, number, and tense. In addition, similar to adjectives, distinction is made between the short and long forms. Regarding the short and long forms, past studies tended to associate them with the expression of definiteness, based on their relationship with the Greek articles. However, considering the diverse usage of participles, definiteness by itself will not provide a sufficient explanation. This study attempts to explain the usage of participles and the distinction in the usage of short

and long forms, especially from the formal perspective. In order to achieve this, this paper took OCS Gospel texts such as Codex Marianus (Mar), Codex Zographensis (Zog), Codex Assemanius (Ass), and Savva's book (Sav), and created parallel texts based on the the electronic corpus, Corpus Cyrillo-Methodianum Helsingiense (CCMH). Comparison between the examples revealed that the participles that functioned as complements of perception verbs and those that stand for actions in dative absolute constructions were prone to be used in the short form. Based on this finding, the author hypothesized that participles in predicative usage take the short form, and confirmed this theory by presenting through parallel texts examples where the participles and predicative verbs appear concurrently.

Regarding the participles with predicative usage, the author found examples where participles that should primarily be linked with nouns were used as if they were verbs, accompanied by conjunctions placed between the participles and the verbs. The author then analyzed these examples, considering this one of the earliest phenomenon in the diachronic change of the participles.

Participles with predicative usage and predicative verbs share similar usage and are easily confused. However, this paper reached the conclusion that the two were not unified into either form due to the orientation of the users of the language (the scribes) who strived to stay true to the original text, and that the structure in question came into being influenced both by the tendency to drift from and and the effort to stay true to the norm. Based on this finding, the author expects to proceed with the study of OR texts, and to clarify on a deeper level the relationship between the diachronic change of a language and the users of the language.