Argument clause constructions with ἀκούω in Classical Greek

Ottavia Cepraga

(Università per Stranieri di Siena)

State of the art

- The Stimulus of the perception verb ἀκούω can either be an individual entity (expressed by a genitive or accusative NP) or an entire clause, i.e. an argument (or complement) clause (Crespo 1984, Cristofaro 2006, Faure 2013).

- Argument clauses with ἀκούω in Classical Greek can appear in the following constructions:
  - Participial complement in the genitive (GENP) or in the accusative (ACCP)
  - Accusative and infinitive (ACI)
  - Finite clause introduced by ὅτι (HOTI) or ὡς (HŌS)
  - Indirect Interrogatives (INT; outside the scope of the present research; for ἀκούω as an embedding predicate for *wh*-clauses see Faure 2021)

- According to Dik & Hengeveld (1991) perception verbs can refer to four types of situations:
  - Immediate perception of individuals (IPI)
    e.g. *I hear the song.*
  - Immediate perception of state-of-affairs (IPSoA)
    e.g. *I hear you singing.*
  - Mental perception of propositional content (MP)
    e.g. *I hear that you have been singing (by your hoarse voice).*
  - Reception of the propositional content of a speech act (RP)
    e.g. *I hear (from someone) that you will be singing live tomorrow night.*

- Recent studies on both Homeric (Luraghi 2020) and Classical Greek (Van Rooy 2016) suggest that ἀκούω is used as an evidential marker – a widespread tendency for perception verbs (Aikhenvald 2004) – and that the different argument clause types may distinguish different evidential values (see Plungian 2010 for a classification, Joseph 2003 for evidentiality in PIE).

Research questions

- What is the frequency of each argument clause type in Classical Greek?
- Do argument clause constructions convey evidential values?

Method

Corpus: the works of Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon, Isocrates and Lysias

Tools: *TLG Online*

Investigated Parameters:

- Syntactic construction (Table 1.);
- Situation type according to Dik & Hengeveld's (1991) (Table 2).

Table 1. Argument clause constructions

1. GENP	111 (36%)
2. HOTI	58 (19%)
3. ACI	49 (16%)
4. HŌS	32 (10%)
5. ACCP	29 (9%)
6. INT	29 (9%)
Total	**308**

Examples

1. GENP :
   ἀκούσας οὖν **μου** ὁ Κριτίας ταῦτ **εἰπόντος**…ἔφη…
   'Then Critias, when he heard me say this, remarked…' (Pl. *Charm*. 157c)

2. HOTI:
   …ἐπειδὰν ἀκούσωσιν **ὅτι** τινός εἰσιν πόλεως πρόξενοι…
   '…once they have been told that they are "*proxeni*" of a certain State…" (Pl. *Leges* 642b)

3. ACI:
   ὅτε μὲν γὰρ ἀκούοιτε **τοὺς ἐν ἄστει τὴν αὐτὴν γνώμην ἔχειν**…
   'For as often as you heard that the people in the city were all of one mind,…' (Lys. 25.21)

4. HŌS:
   …ἀκούοντες **ὡς** οἰκίζοιτο πόλις καὶ λιμὴν εἴη.
   '…since they heard that a city was being founded and that there was a harbour.' (Xen. *Anab*. 6.6.3)

5. ACCP:
   …ἀκούσαντες **ἄλλο στράτευμα προσιόν**.
   '…when they heard that another army was on the way.' (Xen. *Cyrop*. 7.4.8)

Table 2. Situation types according to Dik & Hengeveld (1991)

	IPSoA	MP	RP
GENP	+	-	-
ACCP	+ (5)	+ (1)	+ (23)
ACI	-	-	+
HŌS/ HOTI	-	-	+

Discussion

- The most represented type of argument clause with ἀκούω is **GENP**, that always denotes an IPSoA (ex. 1): the participle clause always designates something that can be acquired through auditory perception. The majority of these participles are speech act verbs.
  - This result is consistent with the conclusions of Luraghi (2020) about Homeric Greek, based on Viberg's (2001) *Modality Hierarchy*: the genitive construction expresses a true sensory meaning.

- **ACCP** mainly expresses acquisition of knowledge via an intermediary (RP, ex. 5.), but it can also be used to express direct perception (IPSoA; in particular when the participle is a passive speech act verb, see Pl. *Prot*. 311e) and mental perception (MP) based on a sensory inference (see Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.11).
  - When **ACCP** expresses a RP ἀκούω has a cognitive meaning. The source of the information can be stated with a genitive NP or prepositional phrase.
  - The propositional content of the participial clause is deemed to be accurate and often refers to a fact that has already been mentioned.

- With **HŌS** (ex. 4) and **HOTI** (ex. 2) ἀκούω always expresses a RP and therefore has a cognitive meaning.
  - The source of the information can appear as a genitive NP or a prepositional phrase.
  - The dependent clause often reports the content of someone else's speech, thus making ἀκούω a quotative verb.

- ἀκούω with the accusative and infinitive (**ACI**; ex. 3) always has a RP meaning.
  - The source of the information is unidentifiable and the content of the proposition is not considered as accurate as that of HŌS/HOTI clauses.
  - In one case the Source is mentioned (as a genitive NP) but the information is clearly false (see Xen. *Hell*. 4.8.36).
  - Van Emde Boas *et al*. (2019: 621) gloss this construction as 'to be told (the rumor) that'.

Conclusions

Different constructions can convey different evidential values (see Plungian 2010: 37):

- GENP and ACCP are used to express a direct sensory evidence;
- ACCP expresses in one case indirect personal inferential evidence;
- in all the other cases ACCP refers to a reported information that is assumed to be accurate.
- Also HŌS, HOTI and ACI mark indirect knowledge.
- With the ACI construction the information is assumed to have the least degree of accuracy.

- The argument clause constructions with ἀκούω show different degrees of evidentiality and certainty:

GENP - ACCP - HŌS/HOTI - ACI

direct perception → indirect perception

certain knowledge → uncertain knowledge

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