

## THE SUBJECT OR THE FORMAL SUBJECT?

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the basic concepts of syntax proposals - concepts of subject and formal subject - their relationship and because of the differences in the approaches to the structure of the proposal in American and Russian Science school.

With regard to the subject and the formal subject to many a priori defined and still unclear. If you compare the Russian and the American tradition of the use of the term 'subject', you will notice significant differences. In American linguistics the term referred to the fact that in the Russian tradition is called "podlezhashhee". Due to the presence in the Russian case system, the subject here is understood as a category of semantics and "podlezhashhee" belongs to formal grammatical structure. The subject and the formal subject may coincide in form of expression, but often differ. Russian school grammar, as a rule, does not operate the notion of subject or approach him only occasionally, using mostly the term "podlezhashhee" (formal subject). University same grammar uses both terms - and the subject, and the "podlezhashhee" (formal subject).

Relationships the subject with the "podlezhashhee" (formal subject) are not easy. In different concepts they are represented differently not only depending on the view of the subject, but the formal subject. Determination of this relationship has to do with how researchers are looking at the structure of the proposal as a whole.

**Keywords:** Denotative subject, functional entity, subject to the basic structure, the formal subject, the grammar subject.

### INTRODUCTION

Revolutionary article Ch. Fillmore (Fillmore 1968) of cases (understood as specific roles or functions dependent names) however made some confusion in terminology (see also critical article on terminology in modern Linguistics Krifka 2007). There are languages such as Russian language in respect of which cases have been traditionally defined as formal marking by names certain relations. Case here is a grammatical category of a Word changes. In Russian, there are six cases and two cases-in English (subject and object).

In the Russian language is the main case and indirect cases. The main case performs the subject function, structurally linked with predicate to transfer grammatical value, predicative value. This function in Russian linguistics called "podlezhacheje-function'." Podlezhacheje'-term cannot be translated because the term "subject" (as it attempt to translate) in the Russian tradition means quite another concept related to semantic-pragmatic side proposals.

Because of the difference in terminology is not always clear what is being discussed is the problem of "podlezhacheje" or the subject problem?

What words have a claim on the role of the "podlezhacheje' in a sentence? (We may called "podlezhacheje' as formal subject). It is believed that there is a

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hierarchy of nomination name on the role of formal subject proposals and position the formal subject aims to take more concrete, more individual name (see Kibrik 1979). But, in fact, strongly any noun name may be formal subject. Here we can talk about primary and secondary functions prototypical, metaforical usages.

Proceeding from Aristotle's view that the proposal is a judgment and how the judgment has subject-predicate structure is not always applicable in all cases to specific languages. For example, in Russian, there are examples of both mononuclear proposals such as:

*Holodno. Vechereet. Zima.*

*It's cold. It's getting dark. It's winter. -*

and mononuclear proposals (no formal subject)

*Men nezdorovitsia. Jemu ploho. Tebe vyhodit. - I am fill bad. He is bad.*

*You go. etc.*

In the second case, the existence of the subject and its trait (subject-predicate structure) is not reflected in the grammatical structure (no formal subject).

What Western Linguistics, especially American Linguistics, equate the subject (of subject-predicate relations) and formal subject (formal expression of those relations), apparently due to a lack of proposals in English, with the structure of the second type.

### **THE PROBLEM OF THE SUBJECT IN THE WORKS OF LINGUISTS OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL**

The problem of the formal subject (or, as it is called, subject) in American Linguistics decide in terms of linguistic universals, sometimes attributing the universal nature of the properties of the formal subject in the English language.

However, the scatter of points of view on this issue is big enough. Some linguists consider this category (1) universal (Keenan 1976, Chafe 1976), other - non-generic (Lee-Thompson 1976, Schachter 1976, Noonan 1977, Van Valin-Foley 1980) (2) is purely grammatical (Noonan 1977) or grammatical + semantic (Keenan 1976, Chafe 1976, Schachter 1976, Lee-Thompson 1976). All linguists at the same time, or almost all, note the grammar nature of the formal subject, i.e. its relationship with the verb, concord with the verb, its role in grammatical processes, its constructive importance in the proposal.

M. S. Noonan notes two approaches in the American linguistics to the definition to formal subject:

1. the simplest notion of grammatical theory, distinguished from semantic and pragmatic concepts - agent or topic, undefinable only in terms of structure components (Johnson, Perlmutter, Postal);

2. grammatical relationships is secondary property proposals defined in terms of more elementary properties and relationships:
  - (a) grammatical relationships can be defined grammatically in terms of structural relations in the base or derived structure (Chomsky), or in terms of the types of syntactic properties of this element, and those of grammatical relations, of which it can be (Keenen);
  - (b) can be determined on the basis of some semantic or pragmatic criteria, i.e. functional definition (Chafe, Lee-Thompson) (see Noonan 1976).

E.L. Keenan attempts a universal definition of the formal subject based on samples of basic examples of proposals from different languages, where the identification of a formal subject is not in doubt, it defines many properties of the base of formal subject in this language; then you can identify the formal subject of nonbasic proposals (see Keenan 1976).

As already noted, universality of the formal subject is questioned by other linguists.

Formal subject (subject) is correlated with the concepts of agent, actor and topic. If the agent is one of the values, which the formal subject (the subject) may have, the relationship with the actor and topic mixed. They depend on how the authors understand the actor and topic.

P. Schachter understands the actor as a face, which is located in the centre of the events from the point of view of the speaker (see Schachter 1976), and R.D. Van Valin and W.A. Foley actor called behind the argument, causing, leading to and controlling the situation indicated by the predicate (Van Valin-Foley, 1980). The choice of the actor is not limited to choosing of a syntactic entity.

R.D. Van Valin and W.A. Foley offer reference-based grammar, in which there are two main systems of languages: 1) related to semantic (role) structure proposal, 2) associated with reference and pragmatic properties of named groups in a sentence. These authors distinguish between pragmatic peak and topic. Pragmatic peak stands out among the second group of languages and relates to the P. Schachter notion of actor. Topic they consider as the center of attention, it indicates the topic text and highlighted it at the first group of languages (Van Valin-Foley 1980, as well as Lee-Thompson 1976).

M. S. Noonan treats the topic somewhat differently. While agreeing with the definition of topic in topic-languages, S. Noonan distinguishes "orientation" as a point of view on whom the question is, that has to do with the starting position in the sentence. In languages such as English, orientation and formal subject (subject), usually one and the same, and in the Russian proposal the first place is intended for orientation, not for the formal subject. M. S. Noonan suggests merging orientation in Russian language with topic in topic-languages, entitled "orientation" on the

grounds that in both cases is allocated any entity for which something stated in the rest part of the predication.

The term “topic” this author uses towards orientation-subject (formal subject) (see Noonan 1976).

W. Chafe, in addition to the formal subject (subject) and topic, sees fit to allocate as separate category (1) givenness, (2) contrastiveness, (3) definiteness, (4) point of view, or empathy, that is included in the “package”, i.e., in what form is passed to the reported (see Chafe 1976). M. Krifka believes such a number of distinct terms redundant (Krifka 2007). Entities such as givenness and contrastiveness, are associated with the view of Czech linguists about the theme and, apparently, they are not considered separately. However, Chafe, unlike Czech linguists, defines these concepts with the position of the speaker and the hearer. Givenness is what is in the minds of hearer on the nomination of the speaker. Contrastiveness has the focus of contrast, i.e. the part marked as compared to any excerpt of the same discourse. In addition to the high-tone and strong accents so-called split proposals serve as an expression of this focus: *It was Ronald, who made hamburgers*. Definiteness is when the speaker believes that the listener realizes what is referred to in this situation an object and can be used as identified. Under the empathy is the ability to present itself to the world through the eyes of the beholder. Thus, Chafe considers separately some pragmatic entity, believing that they have independent significance in the use of language.

M. Shibatani consistently shared the subject (formal subject) and topic. Shibatani believes, that “subject is an argument of a lexical predicate” (release, Shibatani 1991, 103), “(a) it is a syntactic category resulting from the generalization of an agent over other semantic roles, (b) languages vary as to how far this generalization has taken place” (there is the same). Subject is not regarded as a sure universal category.

R. LaPolla, considering the variety of comprehension of the subject said problematic definition of the subject as sentence-initial noun phrase, as “Topichood is a pragmatic relation, not a syntactic one. Then There is no such structure as ‘topicalization’, as the ‘noun’ phrase becomes topicalized the subject..” (LaPolla 2016).

Questions of subject and formal subject, as well as other fundamental questions depend on language concept proposals in General. For example, recently developed ideas of grammatikalization, construction grammar, radical construction grammar.

The authors of the work “Construction Grammar and grammaticalization” N. Gizborn and A. Patten claimed: “The construction grammar framework allows us to model the changes predicted in grammaticalization theory” (Gizborn-Patten 2011, 102). This assertion, however, appears to be the author of a critical analysis of the compendium on grammatikalization a few brave (Lehmann 2013, 3). Lehmann

also believes, that in this work “the nature of grammaticallization as a reductive process has not been accounted for” (there the same).

Radical structural typology study grammar forms detected using cross-linguistically acceptable criteria relies on strict methodological commitment, the distribution method (see Croft 2013). In this analysis are not such global categories as classes of words and syntax relations but propositional functions (predicative, referential, modifying) (LaPolla 2016).

The logic of development of universal grammar leads to the study of language-specific features. It directs attention to the grammar of languages.

### VIEWS ON STRUCTURE OF PROPOSAL IN RUSSIAN LINGUISTICS

The Idea of Fr. Danesh on a three-level approach to the proposal had a great influence on the development of a modern syntactic theory in Russia. This approach implies distinction and dichotomy between semantic and communicative structures. However, not all linguists are showing solidarity with Danesh. Along to his approach, there is another approach to the study of the sentence semantic organization, which believes that the basis for proposals and thoughts, is the structure consists of two members. This grammatical structure is fully consistent with the communicative speech assignment because of the discrepancy between the logical and syntactical structures “eliminates the very basis of communication” (Kolshanskij, 1979, 319). From this point of view, the proposal may not be formal (“surface”) and semantic (“deep”) level it. The syntax structure is isomorphic to the logical. Unbundling utterance by levels led, according to G.V. Kolshanskij, to logically controversial approval of coexistence in one statement two - grammatical and semantic (and even, as we can see, three - and communicative). Actually the same syntactic approach is to describe the statement, respectively, with clear communication of his character. Within the framework of the concept the categories of subject and formal subject do not differ, they are equal and interchangeable.

A number of linguists adheres to similar points of view on the structure of proposals: V.G. Admoni, G.A. Zolotova. G.A. Zolotova acknowledges both symmetric and asymmetric structures. In sentences such as:

*Brat rabotaet. Bratu nezdorovitsya. U brata angina. Brata znobit. S bratom obmorok* (Brother works. Brother is not doing well. Brother have angina. Brother shivering. Brother fainting), etc. — the subject specified in forms with the subject meaning, there is a correspondence between the meaning and the form components. These structures are symmetrical and form the core of the language. In the periphery are ones with the not elementary nature of the relationship between components: *Kontrakt podpisivaetcyja ministrom. Kurenje vredno. Kurit vredno.* (The contract shall be signed by the Minister. Smoking is harmful. It is harmful to smoke.) —

“Subject position takes an object or action itself undergoing a predicative evaluation” (Zolotova, 1979, 20).

The separation of “superficial” and “deep” structures the proposal raises concerns and other type. V.G. Admoni notes that, on the basis of shape and asymmetry meaning syntactic structures, have sought to deny specifically presented in the speech of the superficial syntactic structures of any generalized grammar, i.e. syntax, meanings. He focuses on the fact that different phenomena - semantic, pragmatic and psiholingvistic - is firmly fixed in the system of grammatical forms. It is possible therefore sinonimy logical-grammatical types of proposals, but that does not mean their full semantic identities (see: Admoni, 1979).

You can use the notion “proposition” in the broad sense (as subject-predicate organization) and then within each of these propositions will be submitted to its subject, and these entities may materially differ. In other words, each utterance we deal with several subjects of a different plan, which may or may not be the same material (see: Shmeleva, 1995).

So, in connection with an ambiguous representation of the structure of the proposal as a whole, the question of the delimitation of the subject and the formal subject to be quite complicated.

### **DELINEATION OF THE FORMAL SUBJECT AND THE SUBJECT**

Thought on the delimitation of the subject and the formal subject has been clearly expressed in article V.N. Sidorov and I.S. Ilyinskaya back in 1949 (see: Sidorov, Ilyinskaya, 1949). In it, the subject is identified as active substance, and the formal subject stands out on formal criteria (first case of name with which is consistent verb). However, firstly, to be never exclude the semantic component, and secondly, the definition puts into question the formal subjecthood of so-called binominative proposals and proposals, in which the subject expressed by infinitive. E.V. Paducheva and V.A. Uspensky propose to introduce semantic criterion, in order to cover all occurrences of formal subject: the formal subject refers to something, and the formal predicate by itself does not mean anything, but merely attributes the sign to formal subject (Paducheva, Uspensky 1979, 351).

Trying to identify a formal subject, S.E. Nikitina faced with considerable difficulties; in interpreting this term, there is no consensus among linguists. However, S.E. Nikitina concluded that with respect to “surface structure” many linguists enjoy the term “podlezhashheye” (formal subject), and with all the differences in definition, refer it to approximately the same phenomenon. Relying on this provision, Nikitina gives something like the Pivot Table formal subject definitions, which sometimes consists of contradicting elements (see: Nikitina, 1979). Questionable right dimension of such a merger, moreover, itself a division of proposals on “superficial and deep” structure being questioned some linguists.

## IDENTIFICATION THE FORMAL SUBJECT WITH THE SUBJECT

G.A. Zolotova reviewing theory of the sentence members proposes to expand the scope of the term “podlezhashheye” (formal subject) (see: Zolotova, 1979), thus making it redundant, since then its content matches the content of the term “subject” (at least one of its species). For example, in the proposals:

*Na ulitsah ni dushi (On the streets not a soul).*

*Zvezd – bez scheta (Stars — without the expense).*

*Emu za sorok (He is for forty).* — the first component regarded as a subject= ‘podlezhashheye’ (which is more than formal subject). G.A. Zolotova proposes all sentences consist of two parts, on the basis that they reflect the structure of the judgement (also consists of two members). Meanwhile, in place of the subject/ ‘podlezhashheye’ it is possible a word and not of substantive nature:

*On the streets no soul. — Here not a soul.* — that contradicts the definition of G.A. Zolotova subject as substantial component of subject-predicate structure.

‘Podlezhashheye’ is identified with the subject of proposals from S.D. Katznelson and Y.S. Stepanov.

At the S.D. Katznelson as G.A. Zolotova, ‘podlezhashheye’ equal to subject and can be expressed in the noun of various cases forms.

Analyzing different types of languages, A.E. Kibrik finds that notion ‘podlezhashheye’ (formal subject) not relevant for all languages, as linked to particularly attracted by the structure of the language, it is not a generic, universal are the semantic roles of agent and patient (see: Kibrik, 1979).

Y.S. Stepanov distinguishes three types of proposals (Stepanov, 1979; see also: Stepanov, 1981):

1. *I-proposals*; the subject is identified with the speakers, accordingly, expressed by the flexion of the verb;
2. *locus - proposals*; subject cannot be identified with speaker, most often expressed by name of adverb character or by adverb (*On the yard it is cold, Here it is bored, With children of this age are difficult to*);
3. *classic nominative-verbal sentences* with subject that name in first case. (*Forest murmurs*).

The classical definition ‘podlezhashheye’ applied only to the third type, so, as Y.S. Stepanov, “more convenient” to use the term subject which means any ‘podlezhashheye’ is always grammatical, but not always, morphological (Stepanov, 1979). So, the subject here is the grammatical ‘podlezhashheye’. Formulated “podlezhashheye to rule”, whereby the role of the subject in elementary sentences can claim multiple names of more specific, concrete.



### TRADITIONAL AND ADVANCED THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE FORMAL SUBJECT

Although there is quite a stable tradition in Russian grammar constitutes 'podlezhashheye' a name in the first case, have long felt the desire to expand the traditional boundaries of the 'podlezhashheye' (see: Popov 1974). It arises in connection with the difficult through the interpretation of some of the proposals. As the 'podlezhashheye' consider the genitive name, when quantitative words are in the predicate role: "We can say that this form going into the core of the proposals and expressing the subject meaning is converging on their grammatical roles with the 'podlezhashheye' submitted by first case" (Kostinskij 1969, 56). The logic here is: nouns in the genitive case:

*Gribov t'ma.* – *There are a lot of mushrooms.*

*Jablok net.* – There are no *apples*, etc. - perform similar functions and can therefore be considered as 'podlezhashheye'; without them, there is no proposal. In such a case, you can speak on the 'podlezhashheye' and in infinitive proposals (*Mne vyhodit' - I must go out*), and in a number of other proposals. The logical conclusion of this desire, as has already been noted, received from G.A. Zolotova and S.D. Katznelson, considered like 'podlezhashheye' all indirect forms of subject.

N.Y. Shvedova considers it necessary to distinguish between the meaning of the subject in the 'podlezhashheye', which is included in the structural schema, and determinants, which are out of structural schema: "The meaning of the subject, which is in 'podlezhashheye' does not match the meaning of the subject, which is in the determinants: 'podlezhashheye' as a schema component is much less specific but more generally" (Shvedova, 1973, 69). Generalization is created by the unique combinations of the schema structural components, but the combinations with determinants may vary, creating different shades of meaning.

Linguists considering the proposal as multidimensional unit determine 'podlezhashheye' on formal grounds, consistently featuring it from the subject as semantic structure component.

Appears to be a serious argument in favor of W. Chafe a semantic value of 'podlezhashheye'. W. Chafe advocates meaningful characteristic of 'podlezhashheye,' since if verb concordance changing in such a way that to mark 'podlezhashheye', it may be assumed that it has the value, which would be worth tagging (see Chafe 1976) (a similar viewpoint: Skoblikova, 1976; 1990). First of all we retrieve the information about the 'subject', the other information should be somehow calculated (Chafe, the same).

You can still argue that in English and some other languages there are "bogus" 'podlezhashheye-s' having no content, but marked by verb concordance. In Russian language the "game of cases" and words order "break down" the solidity of the 'podlezhashheye' meanings to several independent functions, and there is a need



to identify them, but it is observed also in English and other languages (compare: active and passive constructions).

In the Russian tradition quite steadily striving to attribute the subject meaning to the ‘podlezhashheye’, although the ‘podlezhashheye’ has it not always the case. Compare:

*Menia bjot lihoradka - Me beats fever,*

*Men nraivitsia etot chelovek - I love this man.*

## CONCLUSION

You can still suggest that the ‘podlezhashheye’ is a function of the subject in the sentence, and relates primarily to the denotative subject (based on a multidimensional understanding of sentence) or predicative source trait. Not coincidentally Keenan when determining the ‘podlezhashheye’ turned to base proposals. In basic proposals ‘podlezhashheye’ corresponds to subject as the denotative category. Of course, the denotative subject is a purely denotative semantic category and ‘podlezhashheye’ is a grammar membership. But it is in basic sentences ‘podlezhashheye’ expresses denotative subject. So ‘podlezhashheye’ is not a purely conventional and surface function. It is a function of the subject in basic sentences. This becomes the meaning of the model that includes the noun in first case, and persisted even when the model with this noun is filled with content that does not comply with the model meaning. The situation occurs that you can compare with when soldier dons general form; he does not become General, but in this form he is like “General”. Conditions in the language when noun in the first case expresses the object is, as a rule, metaphorization: object, without ceasing to be the object, gets the subject “clothes”. To ‘podlezhashheye’ would have approached the term ‘the grammar subject’, understood as a form of noun in the first case with the proposal subject meaning in the model.

It can be stated that the question of the relationship between ‘podlezhashheye’ and subject raises many associated questions, it is therefore necessary to determine first of all look at the sentence structure as a whole, and then with the goals and objectives of the use of these terms. The emphasis in school doing on formal grammatical aspect and operate on the notion of the ‘podlezhashheye’ (formal subject). In high school students-philologists should be familiar with the various approaches to the proposal and various kinds of subject and understand how they relate to the ‘podlezhashheye’. For students who learn Russian as a foreign language is helpful to allocate denotative subject (it is called the real subject) and grammar subject, that is the ‘podlezhashheye’.

The question of the status and content of the ‘podlezhashheye’ is still unresolved, and the solution, apparently, will lie in the field of language typology.

But typological studies should be based on careful analysis of the specific languages and on this basis it is possible to make generalizations.

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