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The complex sentence in British and Czech grammar

THE COMPLEX SENTENCE IN BRITISH AND CZECH GRAMMAR

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0. Owing to its manifold character, the multiple sentence lends itself to different approaches, which may result in different analyses. This presumably applies even more if we consider descriptions of the multiple sentence not in one, but in two or more languages. In this case the differences in approach may be due not only to a different view of identical language facts, but also to differences between the languages under consideration.

In what follows I shall attempt to outline some distinctions in the treatment of the multiple sentence between British and Czech grammar, basing my account on *A comprehensive grammar of the English language* (Quirk et al. 1985) and *Mluvnice češtiny 3 Skladba* (A grammar of Czech 3 Syntax. 1987). Apart from being the most comprehensive contemporary grammars of English and Czech, respectively, these grammars are to a large extent representative of British and Czech grammatical theories in general. *A comprehensive grammar of the English language* (CGEL henceforth) continues a series of grammars by the same authors, started in 1972 by *A grammar of contemporary English,* while the Czech grammar (*MČS* henceforth) has been a large-team project incorporating the work of the leading Czech scholars.

Within the limited scope of the present paper, attention will be paid to the general theoretical framework devised by the two grammars to accommodate the different types of multiple sentence, with special reference to the complex sentence.

1. The multiple sentence is usually classified into the compound and the complex sentence according to whether the constituent clauses are in the relationship of coordination or subordination.

1.1 This classification of the multiple sentence is adhered to in *CGEL* (Chapter 13 "Coordination" and Chapter 14 "The complex sentence"), but not in *MČS*. The latter regards the syntactic relations between the clauses

of a multiple sentence as an expression of the respective interpropositional relations, which may be of the following kind: (a) external interpropositional relations, involving (i) semantic parallelism between propositions, and (ii) semantic dependence between propositions; (b) incorporation of one proposition in the position of a participant in another proposition; (c) intersection of propositions; (d) fusion of propositions; and (e) relating a proposition to the content of a nominal expression. On the other hand, where two clauses express one proposition, the sentence is an analytic (biclausal) form of one proposition (pp. 443 ff.).

Within this general framework, parataxis and hypotaxis are shown to be characteristic of particular types of interpropositional relations, although each type appears to be expressed by both paratactic and hypotactic devices. Nevertheless, within one type of interpropositional relation one of these modes of clause connection is central and the other peripheral.

Thus type (a) (i) semantic parallelism between propositions largely coincides with the compound sentence, type (a) (ii) semantic dependence between propositions is realized by subordinate adverbial clauses, and type (b) incorporation of one proposition into another is realized by nominal clauses.

Of the remaining types of interpropositional relations, type (e) relating a proposition to the content of a nominal expression is realized by adnominal relative clauses (postmodifying appositive clauses being treated together with nominal clauses, cf. p. 509). Types (c) and (d) are of minor importance.

Intersection of propositions involves apo koinou constructions: a coreferentially identical participant operates in two propositions in different semantic roles, e.g. *He saw Charles coming (He saw Charles + Charles was coming)*. In Czech this construction can also take the form of two finite clauses: *He saw Charles as he was coming.*

Fusion is an overlapping construction whose most frequent form is a verbless clause: *Charles returned home ill (Charles returned + Charles was ill)*. Fusion realized by a finite clause is illustrated by *Charles returned the same as we had known him.*

1.2 Leaving aside the superordinate framework of interpropositional relations[1] as specific to *MČS* (specific also in the sense that previous Czech grammars, cf. Šmilauer 1969, Bauer and Grepl 1975, Kopečný 1962, Svoboda 1972, do not work with it), the treatment of the multiple sentence in *CGEL* and *MČS* may be described as follows.

Both grammars distinguish the compound sentence, based on parataxis,

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[1] Admittedly, this is a simplification which has to be made for the sake of comparison. The fact that the framework of interpropositional relations is superimposed on the paratactic or hypotactic relations will appear from the discussion of the complex sentence.

and the complex sentence, based on hypotaxis. From the foregoing account, three principal types of subordinate clauses appear to be distinguished in *MČS:* adverbial, nominal, and adnominal relative. On the other hand, *CGEL* divides subordinate clauses into nominal, adverbial, and comparative.

Analogous classification is thus found in the case of nominal and adverbial clauses, but the third type of subordinate clauses essentially differs. Against adnominal relative clauses in *MČS,* the English grammar has comparative clauses.

1.2.1 The inclusion of adnominal relative clauses in the complex sentence in *MČS* is based on the definition of the complex sentence as a grammatical structure composed of more than one clause (p. 443). *CGEL,* on the other hand, excludes them because a complex sentence is defined as a sentence containing one or more clauses as its immediate constituents. Accordingly,

(1) You can borrow my car if you need it

is a complex sentence in which *if you need it* functions as an adverbial, whereas

(2) You can borrow the car that belongs to my sister

is regarded as a simple sentence, since here the subordinate clause is not an immediate constituent of a sentence or clause, but operates at the level of a phrase (p. 719 Note [a]). Consequently, clauses functioning as modification of noun phrases are not treated together with other subordinate clauses under the heading of the complex sentence, but in the chapter on noun phrases (Chapter 17), specifically in the section on postmodification (pp. 1244 ff.).

1.2.2 As regards comparative clauses, *CGEL* singles them out as a separate type of subordinate clause (pp. 1127—1146) in which a proposition expressed in the matrix clause[2] is compared with a proposition expressed in the subordinate clause with respect to some standard of comparison. Comparison is further specified as comparison of nonequivalence (with the comparative element: *more ... than*), comparison of equivalence *(as ... as),* comparison of sufficiency and excess *(enough* and *too, so ... (that), such .... (that)*). Major attention is paid to clauses with the comparative element and structures with ellipsis.

In *MČS* comparisons of nonequivalence and equivalence are treated under adverbial clauses of degree and intensity (pp. 497—498), and comparisons of sufficiency and excess under adverbial clauses of effect (pp.

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[2] The matrix clause is defined as the superordinate clause minus its subordinate clause (p. 991).

485—487). Of comparisons of nonequivalence *MČS* includes only the type

(3) It happens more frequently than you think (p. 498).

The type

(4) Jane is healthier than her sister

is not discussed in the complex sentence but in morphology (*Mluvnice češtiny 2 Morfologie*, pp. 79—80).

One of the reasons why comparative clauses receive more attention in English than in Czech grammar may be sought in the particular language facts. Owing to the paucity of inflections in the noun and most pronouns, elliptical constructions in English which lack a finite verb may leave the underlying structure unclear. Significantly, comparative constructions occur in elliptical rather than nonelliptical form (cf. p. 1130). Ellipsis in the subordinate clause can usually be taken to a different degree, which gives rise to a number of elliptical constructions and/or pro-form substitutions, facilitated systemically by the existence of the verbal pro-form *do*.

In Czech, problems of this kind generally do not arise because even if the elliptical construction contains only a houn phrase, that alone suffices to indicate the underlying structure, cf.

(5) (a) He loves his dog more than his children (p. 1132)
    (b) Má psa raději než své děti (than he loves his children)
    (c) Má psa raději než jeho děti[3] (than his children love his dog)

1.2.3 Another major difference in the treatment of the complex sentence between *CGEL* and *MČS* involves the concept of clause. *MČS* conceives the complex sentence as consisting of finite clauses,[4] i.e. the concept of the clause is based on the presence in the structure of a finite verb.

On the other hand, *CGEL* defines the clause more broadly, recognizing three main structural types of clauses (pp. 992—997): (a) finite clauses whose verb element is finite, (b) nonfinite clauses whose verb element is nonfinite, and (c) verbless clauses. Nonfinite and verbless structures are recognized as clauses on the ground that their internal structure can be

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[3] Here the distinction between the object and the subject function of the noun *děti* is indicated by a different possessive, but in most nouns and pronouns the syntactic function is apparent from the case ending, cf. *He loves his dog more than Jane* (a) *Má psa raději než Jana* (than Jane loves his dog); (b) *Má psa raději než Janu* (than he loves Jane).

[4] Marginally, the function of a finite clause may be taken over by a verbless clause equivalent, e.g. *Pokyn písařce a ta se beze slova zvedla a vytratila se ven. A motion of the hand, and the typist silently rose and left the room* (p. 443).

analysed into the same functional elements that are distinguished in finite clauses, cf.

(6) (a) Knowing my temper, I didn't reply
    (b) I know my temper
(7) (a) Although always helpful, he was not much liked
    (b) Although he was always helpful, he was not much liked

The nonfinite part of (6) (a) is analogous to (6) (b) in that both contain a direct object, and similarly (7) (a) and (7) (b) display the same elements (conjunction, time adjunct and subject complement) except the subject and the copula (p. 992).

The broader concept of clauses on the one hand, and inclusion of sentences with clausal postmodification of noun phrases among simple sentences on the other hand, result in a less distinct boundary between the simple and the multiple sentence in English grammar, cf. a simple sentence like (2), and a complex sentence like (8):

(8) I asked to go (p. 995)

In Czech grammar the boundary between the simple and the complex sentence is essentially clearcut. With the exception of complex sentences containing a verbless clause equivalent (cf. Note 4), the distinction between the simple and the multiple sentence is determined in terms of the number of finite verb forms.[5] Hence (2) is a complex sentence and (8) a simple one.

Regarding nonfinite verb forms as clauses, moreover, tends to obscure an important functional aspect of these forms, viz their condensing force. This aspect of nonfinite forms has been demonstrated against the background of Czech, which has a less condensed sentence structure, by such outstanding Czech scholars as V. Mathesius (1961, pp. 171—179), J. Vachek (1955), and J. Hladký (1961).

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[5] This raises the question of the boundary between a compound sentence and a multiple predicate (coordination of predicates). Again the solution differs in *CGEL* and *MČS*. While *MČS* assigns the distinctive role to shared complementation of two (or more) verbs in the case of a multiple predicate, and to different complementation in the case of a compound sentence (p. 445), *CGEL* limits coordination of clauses to instances where there are no shared elements, i.e. not even the subject, e.g. *The winter had come at last, and snow lay thick on the ground* (p. 946). All other instances are treated as coordination of predicates (*Peter ate the fruit and drank the beer*, p. 948), coordination of predications (*You must take the course and pass the examination*, p. 949), or verb phrase coordination (*I washed and ironed the clothes*, p. 929). In accordance with regarding nonfinite verb forms as clauses, coordination of these forms is subsumed under coordination of clauses (*I've asked him to come this evening, or (to) phone us tomorrow*, p. 946). In Czech grammar the first three instances would be regarded as compound sentences, and the last two as coordination of clause constituents, the predicate and infinitival object, respectively.

1.3 Proceeding now to the two types of subordinate clauses which appear to be essentially analogous in *CGEL* and *MČS,* we shall nevertheless observe certain differences in the subclassification.

1.3.1 Leaving aside nonfinite and verbless nominal clauses (for reasons explained in 1.2.3), *CGEL* distinguishes nominal *that*-clauses (pp. 1049— 1050), e.g.

> (9) I noticed that he spoke English with an Australian accent

nominal *wh*-interrogative clauses (pp. 1050—1053), e.g.

> (10) How the book will sell depends on the reviewers

nominal *yes-no* and alternative interrogative clauses (pp. 1053—1054), e.g.

> (11) Do you know whether the banks are open?
> (12) I asked them if they wanted meat or fish

nominal exclamative clauses (pp. 1055—1056), e.g.

> (13) It's incredible how fast she can run

and nominal relative clauses (pp. 1056—1061), e.g.

> (14) I eat what I like

All the five types of nominal clause are presented at the same level of hierarchy.

MČS makes a basic distinction between content clauses realizing enunciative propositions (pp. 503—518) and nominal relative clauses which realize descriptively denominating propositions (pp. 518—520). Under the term content clauses *MČS* groups together the dependent forms of·the basic communicative sentence types (declarative, interrogative, imperative, and optative). These are further divided according to whether they are introduced by a conjunction or a relative.

The primary distinction between content clauses on the one hand, and nominal relative clauses on the other hand, reflects the fact that content clauses represent a constituent of the superordinate clause as a whole, whereas nominal relative clauses are in fact integrated into the super-ordinate clause through an unexpressed general antecedent, inherent in the relative. Thus the immediate constituent of the superordinate clause is the antecedent with respect to which the relative clause operates as a postmodifier, cf. *I eat what I like* [I eat that (which I like)] — *I can't imagine what they will do* [I can't imagine (what they will do)].

Content clauses introduced by a relative are called content relative clauses. This term is somewhat misleading in that it tends to obliterate

the clear distinction between content clauses on the one hand, and nominal relative clauses on the other hand. It is used as a superordinate term covering both dependent interrogative clauses *(He asked who ..., when ..., where ...)* and noninterrogative content clauses introduced by the same expressions *(I know who ..., when ..., where ...,* p. 503). In *CGEL* both indirect questions, cf. (15), and the type illustrated by (16) are subsumed under nominal *wh*-interrogative clauses.

(15) She asked me who would look after the baby
(16) I'm not sure who has paid

Inclusion of type (16) among *wh*-interrogative clauses is based on the fact that it resembles *wh*-questions semantically in leaving a gap of unknown information, represented by the *wh*-element (p. 1051). Calling clauses like (16) subordinate *wh*-interrogative may of course also be objected to, but it has at least the advantage of avoiding the association with nominal relative clauses.

Another difference in the treatment of nominal clauses between *CGEL* and *MČS* consists in the subtype of nominal exclamative clauses in English, as against dependent imperative and optative clauses in Czech. This difference appears to be due to different language facts. A dependent imperative clause largely corresponds to an infinitive in English, cf.

(17) (a) Poručil svým lidem, aby ho následovali (p. 513)
    (b) He ordered his men to follow him (literally: that they should follow him)

However, this correspondence is not mentioned in the discussion of nominal infinitive clauses (pp. 1061—1063, 1067).

As regards exclamative clauses, in Czech they do not constitute a distinct sentence type, whereas optative sentences do, which is reflected in the subclassification of content clauses. In English the situation is exactly the opposite: the exclamative sentence constitutes a separate sentence type, whereas the optative sentence does not.[6]

1.3.2 The treatment of the last type, subordinate adverbial clauses, is in many respects analogous in the two grammars. Not only is the semantic classification of adverbial clauses largely identical, but also particular subtypes are described in a similar way. For example, in the discussion of temporal clauses both *CGEL* and *MČS* mention instances like

(18) I was playing the piano, when there was a knock at the door

MČS (p. 473) describes the subordinate clause in this type as pseudo-

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[6] As I attempted to show in Dušková (1991), possible candidates for optative sentence types in English are instances with the subjunctive *(Long live the Republic!)* and *may (May you be happy!)*.

temporal for it does not denote a temporal circumstance. The content structure and the grammatical structure display a reversed relationship. *CGEL* (p. 1084) moreover draws attention to the obligatory final position of this type of temporal clause and its climactic, dramatic effect.

As regards differences, there are some concerning particular types of adverbial clauses, and one difference of a more general character.
1.3.2.1 A notable distinction involves the type called comment clauses in *CGEL* (pp. 1112—1118), the central type of which is illustrated by (19):

(19) There were no other applicants, I believe, for that job

This type of clause has marginal occurrence in Czech, hence there is no ground for treating it as a special type in grammar.

The other types of comment clauses, represented by (20) and (21), are treated elsewhere in *MČS*.

(20) I'm working the night shift, as you know
(21) What was more upsetting, we lost all our luggage

Type (20) is discussed in subordinate content clauses as a reversal of the syntactic relationship between the two clauses (p. 507), cf.

(22) (a) Jak vidíte na první pohled, jeho stav je velice vážný
     (b) As you can see at first sight, his condition is very serious
     (c) You can see at first sight that his condition is very serious

Type (21) of comment clauses coincides with nominal relative clauses and is again peripheral in Czech.
1.3.2.2 A more essential difference in the treatment of adverbial clauses between *CGEL* and *MČS* concerns the general framework within which they are presented. In *CGEL* they are classified like adverbials into four broad categories of syntactic function: adjuncts, subjuncts, disjuncts, and conjuncts (pp. 1068—1074). While subjuncts and conjuncts are rarely realized by clauses, the disjunct function, besides the primary adjunct function, appears to be fairly common in adverbial clauses.

The distinction between adjuncts and disjuncts is defined as follows: "adjuncts denote circumstances of the situation in the matrix clause, whereas disjuncts comment on the style or form of what is said in the matrix clause (style disjuncts) or on its content (content or attitudinal disjuncts)" (p. 1070). Syntactically, this distinction is reflected in the applicability of the focusing devices. In general, only the adjunct clauses can be focused by a focusing device (cleft sentence, variant of pseudocleft sentence, question, negation, and focusing subjunct), cf (23) (a) and (b):

(23) (a) It's because they are always helpful that he likes them
     (b) *It's since they are always helpful that he likes them

The same conjunction often introduces both a disjunct and an adjunct clause, e.g. temporal *while* introduces an adjunct clause, cf. (24) (a), whereas concessive *while* introduces a disjunct clause, cf. (24) (b) (p. 1070).

> (24) (a) He looked after my dog while I was on vacation
>   (b) My brother lives in Manchester, while my sister lives in Glasgow

In *MČS*, distinctions of this kind are largely dealt with in terms of the interpropositional relations. Thus concessive *while* is discussed under semantic parallelism between propositions, specifically under the relationship of contrastive comparison (p. 465). As was pointed out in 1.1, the interpropositional relationship of semantic parallelism is primarily realized by paratactic devices. On the other hand, temporal *while* is described in temporal clauses, which realize one of the types of the interpropositional relationship of semantic dependence (p. 475).

Clauses of reason are treated in a different way. They are all subsumed under the interpropositional relationship of semantic dependence, which is primarily realized by subordinate adverbial clauses. Reason is characterized as expressing three different relationships: (a) one-directional connection between cause and effect; (b) reason (motivation) accounting for people's behaviour; and (c) justification of a mental inference, i.e. reason in the sense of argumentation (p. 481). It is this last type that disjunct reason clauses fall under, cf. (25).

> (25) (a) Muselo ho to hrozně bolet, protože se mu v očích objevily slzy
>   (b) It must have been exceedingly painful, because tears came to his eyes

Somewhat surprisingly, this use of *because*-clauses, which might be classed with content disjuncts, is not mentioned in *CGEL* (Direct and indirect reason relationships, pp. 1103—1107), indirect reason relationship being demonstrated by style disjunct *because*-clauses, cf. (26).

> (26) Vanessa is your favourite aunt, because your parents told me so (p. 1104)

Reason clauses may be considered from yet another point of view. The classification of *because* clauses as adjuncts on the one hand, and of *as* and *since* clauses as disjuncts on the other hand, is based on syntactic differences involving focusing devices. However, focusing devices can elicit only the rheme, not the theme. Significantly, *because* is the sole reason conjunction that can be used in an elliptical answer, cf. (27).

> (27) Why didn't you tell me? — Because /*since /*as I was afraid

In other words, *because* alone introduces an unknown reason, whereas both *as* and *since* introduce clauses expressing a known, presupposed reason. As a result, they are inherently thematic, which is what makes focusing devices inapplicable.

2. In conclusion, we may ask whether a comparison of theoretical grammars of different languages has any justification. As I have attempted to show in the foregoing paragraphs and elsewhere (Dušková in press), such a comparison may be profitable in two respects. First, it brings out language specific facts; obviously, differences in grammatical description are primarily due to what is being described. This aspect has only subsidiary value since differences in language facts are more readily discovered by direct comparison of the language facts themselves. More importantly, different views of similar language facts, emanating from within different languages, enhance our understanding of the language facts, insofar as the views issuing from within the other language may capture aspects that otherwise remain unnoticed.

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PODŘADNÉ SOUVĚTÍ V BRITSKÉ A ČESKÉ GRAMATICE

Článek srovnává pojetí souvětí v *A comprehensive grammar of the English language* a 3. dílu *Mluvnice češtiny Skladba*. Ukazují se některé zásadní rozdíly rázu koncepčního a některé dílčí rozdíly, které jsou rovněž zčásti koncepční povahy, zčásti však vyplývají ze specifičnosti jazykových jevů. Česká mluvnice nadřazuje syntaktickým vztahům parataxe a hypotaxe sémantické vztahy mezi propozicemi, anglická mluvnice pak klasifikuje příslovečné věty vedlejší stejným způsobem jako příslovečné určení, především na adjunktní a disjunktní. V základním třídění vedlejších vět je shoda pouze u vět obsahových, substantivních vztažných a příslovečných; k tomu anglická mluvnice přiřazuje věty srovnávací, které se v české gramatice přiřazují k příslovečným, kdežto česká gramatika jako další typ vedlejších vět uvádí adnominální věty vztažné. V těchto rozdílech se projevuje odlišné pojetí věty jednoduché a souvětí. V anglické mluvnici se za podřadné souvětí považují pouze případy, kdy je vedlejší věta konstituentem na úrovni věty, nikoliv na úrovni substantivní fráze. Naopak pojetí podřadné věty je v anglické mluvnici širší: *clause* zahrnuje též jmenné tvary slovesné a neslovesné útvary. Rozdíly vyplývající z jazykových odlišností se projevují hlavně u vět srovnávacích a podtypu adverbiálních vět *comment clauses*. Srovnání mluvnic dvou různých jazyků může přispět k zjištění jazykových odlišností a v případě obdobných jevů k zachycení aspektů, které v přístupu z pozic jednoho jazyka mohou zůstat nepovšimnuty.