
THE MINIMAL COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCE HIERARCHY

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the problem of the study of the subsystem of such type of the Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence as a minimal compound-complex sentence. The authors analyze the formal structure of the multiple compound-complex sentences and try to build up the structural models hierarchy of Minimal Compound-Complex Sentence.

Key words: Multiple Compound - Complex Sentences, composite sentence, minimal compound-complex sentence, coordinate clause, subordinate clause, paratactic and hypotactic complexes

1. INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on the problem of the formal structure of such type of the Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence as a minimal compound-complex sentence. The compound-complex sentences are the constructions combining coordinate and subordinate clauses, and this makes them peculiar structures, which special features are revealed in the formal structure.

A Minimal Compound-Complex Sentence is considered to be a combination of two complexes: paratactic and hypotactic complexes that can be closed, including only one block, and open that is consisting of two blocks [1]. Analysis of criteria makes it possible to single out seven types of a Minimal Compound-Complex Sentence [2]. So, the compound-complex sentence obtains complicated structure and has the variety of its types.

2. METHODS

Methods of the analysis are determined by the objectives of the research, a theoretical and practical concept, type of the material under study. In this work we used several types of the analysis: communicative and contextual method, the transformation of quantitative analysis, and research methods of combinatorial potential of the Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence, worked out by K.I. Rakova [3]. Combinatorial modeling of the Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence excludes the loss of constructions of rare occurrence in our research. In the work we also used descriptive method to describe syntactic structures by means of construction comparison and elicitation of its peculiarities.

3. MAIN PART

A composite sentence is a well-versed syntactic phenomenon in linguistics, but mostly hypotactic and paratactic types have been under close study [4- 6]. Constructions combining coordinate and subordinate clauses in one structure have become the object of thorough investigation only in recent decades [1, 2, 7, 8]. The research of Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence has been done from different sides – temporality [7], modality [8] and in different genres of literature [9-11]. We analyze the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence as an integration of two parts: a minimal hypotactic and minimal paratactic complexes falling into definite constituents referred to as blocks [1, 2].

Several levels of various structure sentences constitute the hierarchy of minimal compound-complex sentence.

The established basic model of the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence is a three-clause sentence including two parts – hypotactic and paratactic complexes. In this model paratactic complex consists of only one subject-verb unit, which is represented by a block, that is why it is considered to be a minimal paratactic complex. And hypotactic complex exists in the form of a non-extended minimal model (a two-parted construction). The principal and the subordinate clauses form a minimal (non-extended) hypotactic complex that equals to a hypotactic block, i.e.:

Harmony was the soul of our companionship, and the diversity and contrast that subsisted in our characters drew us nearer together [12].

This example demonstrates the minimal hypotactic block unable to further extension (*Harmony was the soul of our companionship*), and a non-extended hypotactic complex (*and the diversity and contrast that subsisted in our characters drew us nearer together*). The principal and the subordinate clauses form a minimal (non-extended) hypotactic complex that equals to a hypotactic block.

This structure is considered to be the basic model of the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence, and it takes the first level in the entire hierarchy of minimal compound-complex sentences.

However, it is worth mentioning that the above-stated construction represents the closed-structured sentence not being able to further extension. Our aim is to detect all possible minimal constructions with the structure both able and unable to further extension in their different combinations which make up a system of the minimal units of Multiple Compound-Complex Sentences.

Depending on its ability to expand Compound-Complex Sentences are considered to be:

- constructions with extended paratactic complex
- sentences with hypotactic complex, which is able for further extension
- constructions with further extension of both paratactic and hypotactic complexes, and
- sentences containing hypotactic blocks united with coordination links.

The expansion can take place in paratactic complex, where the multiplication of blocks extends in linear manner, as well as within hypotactic complex which is enlarged owing to a) extending of syntactic perspective, b) branching of subordinate clauses on one of the subordination layers. We can embody a system of minimal compound-complex sentences in a hierarchy consisting of seven levels, taking into consideration a range of the following criteria:

- a) the number of predicative clauses,
- b) availability of two types syntactic link combination,
- c) the type of syntactic complex (paratactic and hypotactic),
- d) the expansion of syntactic complex (minimal or extended),
- e) the nature of dependence within hypotactic complex (types of subordination) [2].

A hypotactic complex can be non-extended consisting of only a minimal (two-clause) block unable to extension and minimal extended block comprising three clauses. The minimal extended hypotactic complex is characterized by a specific arrangement of its clauses, based on different types of subordination: consecutive, parallel and non-parallel.

The analysis of the sentences taken from the novels by English and American writers of the XIX-XX-th centuries proves that sentences, in which minimal extended hypotactic complex is based on hierarchical subordination, prevail, i.e.:

I am blind and cannot judge of your countenance, but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere [12].

This example illustrates one independent paratactic clause (*I am blind and cannot judge of your countenance*) and three hypotactic clauses organized in a consecutive relationship (*but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere*).

The sentences of this type take the next level in our hierarchy. We define this kind of sentences as the second type of the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence.

A paratactic complex can be non-extended consisting of only one block and minimal extended one comprising two blocks. A four-clause construction is a kernel sentence for Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence with minimal non-extended hypotactic complex and minimal extended paratactic complex combining two paratactic blocks (clauses), i.e.:

This frequently took place, but a high wind quickly dried the earth, and the season became pleasant than it had been [12].

This four-clause sentence serves as an example to the minimal extended paratactic complex including two blocks (*This frequently took place, but a high wind quickly dried the earth*) and a non-extended hypotactic complex (*and the season became pleasant than it had been*) comprising the principal and the subordinate clauses. In this sentence two blocks of the paratactic complex precede the hypotactic complex. The analysis of the sentences proves that such arrangement is the most typical for the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence with the extended paratactic complex where the constructions with post-positional order of hypotactic complex dominate.

Such sentences take the next level in our hierarchy of the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence. These sentences take the third place in the system.

There are cases when we can witness a simultaneous minimal expansion of paratactic and hypotactic complexes. In this case a five-clause construction, containing two blocks of paratactic complex and three-clause hypotactic complex, the constituents of which are based on one of the types of subordination (consecutive, parallel and non-parallel), is considered to be a kernel sentence.

Sentences, in which hypotactic complex is built up on non-parallel subordination basis – is a frequent phenomenon for the type of minimal construction under study, i.e.:

The colleges are ancient and picturesque; the streets are almost magnificent; and the lovely Isis, which flows beside it through meadows of exquisite verdure, is spread forth into a placid expanse of waters, which reflects its majestic assemblage of towers, and spires, and domes, embosomed among aged trees [12].

This Compound-Complex Sentence includes the two-clause paratactic complex (*The colleges are ancient and picturesque; the streets are almost magnificent*) and a minimal extended hypotactic complex (*and the lovely Isis, which flows beside it through meadows of exquisite verdure, is spread forth into a placid expanse of waters, which reflects its majestic assemblage of towers, and spires, and domes, embosomed among aged trees*) comprising three clauses – one main and two dependent organized in a non-parallel relationship. This example demonstrates the multiplication of blocks extension in linear manner and branching of subordinate clauses.

The sentences of this type take the next level in our hierarchical system of the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence, and we define this kind of sentences as the fourth type of the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence.

A peculiar type in the hierarchical system of the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence is a construction combining minimal hypotactic complexes. Such sentences can be characterized by a vast range of models, which can be embodied in the following list:

- a minimal construction combining two minimal hypotactic complexes only;
- a minimal sentence uniting two minimal hypotactic blocks and an non-extended paratactic complex;
- a minimal construction including two minimal hypotactic blocks and an extended paratactic complex.

A minimal construction uniting two minimal hypotactic complexes can be realized in three possible modifications:

- a) a four-clause sentence combining two minimal hypotactic blocks unable to further extension;
- b) a five-clause sentence that unites a minimal hypotactic block unable to further extension and a minimal extended block comprising three clauses three parts of which are based on one of the types of subordination: consecutive, parallel and non-parallel;
- c) a six-clause sentence including two minimal extended hypotactic blocks, three parts of which are united by one of the types of syntactic links.

The analysis of the sentences shows that the most frequent construction from the above-listed is a four-clause sentence combining two minimal hypotactic blocks unable to further extension, i.e.:

One or two stiff gales and the springing of a leak are accidents which experienced navigators scarcely remember to record, and I shall be well content if nothing worse happen to us during our voyage [12].

This four-clause sentence unites two minimal non-extended hypotactic blocks – 1) *One or two stiff gales and the springing of a leak are accidents which experienced navigators scarcely remember to record*, 2) *I shall be well content if nothing worse happen to us during our voyage* by the means of a coordinated conjunction *and*.

Such sentences take the next level in our hierarchy of the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence. These sentences obtain the fifth place in the system.

The sixth type is a model organized on the combination of hypotactic blocks and a paratactic complex unable to further extension. This type can be realized in the following constructions:

- a five-clause sentence combining two minimal hypotactic blocks unable to further extension and one paratactic clause;

- a six-clause construction uniting a two-clause minimal non-extended hypotactic block, a three-clause hypotactic block three parts of which can be linked by one of the types of subordination (consecutive, parallel and non-parallel), and one paratactic clause;

- a seven-clause sentence consisting of only one subject-verb unit of paratactic complex and two three-clause hypotactic blocks able to further extension.

The analysis of the sentences proves that the most frequently used construction among the above-mentioned is a five-clause sentence uniting two minimal non-extended hypotactic blocks and one paratactic clause unable to further extension, i.e.:

No wood, however, was placed on the earth which formed the floor, but it was dry; and although the wind entered it by innumerable chinks, I found it an agreeable asylum from the snow and rain [12].

The sentence under study includes a combination of two minimal hypotactic blocks unable to further extension (1- *No wood, however, was placed on the earth which formed the floor*, 2 - *and although the wind entered it by innumerable chinks, I found it an agreeable asylum from the snow and rain*) which frame one paratactic clause (*but it was dry*).

But we should remember that a five-clause sentence is not the only possible construction for this type of expansion as the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence combining one paratactic clause unable to further extension and two minimal hypotactic blocks, can include three-part hypotactic blocks linked by one of the types of subordination: consecutive, parallel and non-parallel.

We define the seventh type of the Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence as the model that unites a combination of hypotactic blocks and a paratactic complex open for further extension; it can be represented in the following possible constructions:

- a six-clause construction of a sentence combining two minimal hypotactic blocks unable to further extension only and a range of two paratactic clauses;

- a seven-clause sentence consisting of two-clause paratactic complex and two multi-type hypotactic blocks – one is non-extended, the other is a three-clause block, the constituents of which are based on one of the types of subordination: consecutive, parallel and non-parallel;

- an eight-clause construction uniting the blocks of a two-clause extended hypotactic complex and two extended paratactic blocks parts of which are linked by one of the types of subordination.

The study of the sentences of this type shows that six-clause sentences have the widest distribution, i.e.:

At first I perceived that he tried to suppress his emotion; he placed his hands before his eyes, and my voice quivered and failed me as I beheld tears trickle fast from between his fingers; a groan burst from his heaving breast [12].

In this example we see two extended complexes – hypotactic and paratactic. Two blocks of the paratactic complex (1 - *he placed his hands before his eyes*, 2 - *a groan burst from his heaving breast*) alternate two minimal hypotactic blocks unable to further extension (1 - *At first I perceived that he tried to suppress his emotion* At first I perceived that he tried to suppress his emotion, 2 - *and my voice quivered and failed me as I beheld tears trickle fast from between his fingers*).

4. CONCLUSION

The Multiple Compound-Complex Sentences, being a type of a composite sentence, which includes three and more predicative clauses linked by the means of parataxis and hypotaxis takes the same layer in syntactic hierarchy as compound and complex sentences.

The analysis of the minimal constructions of the Multiple Compound-Complex Sentences combining coordinate and subordinate clauses in one structure or hypotactic blocks united with coordination links, proves that composite hypotaxis and multilevel parataxis are peculiar features of these sentences. The study of the structural models hierarchy of minimal Compound-Complex Sentence demonstrates the multistep system of constructions.

Notwithstanding the variety of models, the most frequently used constructions are the sentences including minimal hypotactic complex unable to further extension or the blocks of the same type in combination with one or two paratactic clauses.

5. RESULTS

To summarize, the minimal constructions of the Multiple Compound-Complex Sentences of all described types are characteristic for English and American literature of the XIX-XX-th centuries. Having analysed and compared the constructions, we can establish that in spite of the composite structure the Multiple Compound-Complex Sentences such constructions tend to simplification.

The Minimal Multiple Compound-Complex Sentence obtains the same features characteristic of any composite sentence based on the use of parataxis and hypotaxis: availability of two types syntactic link combination, minimal number of predicative clauses linked by subordinating and coordinating conjunctions.

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