

# THE VARIABILITY

## OF SYNTACTIC MEANS FORMING COMPLEX SENTENCES

### LA VARIABILIDAD DE LOS MEDIOS SINTÁCTICOS FORMANDO ORACIONES COMPLEJAS

Allakhverdiyeva Farida Muhammadali

E-mail: [farida.muhammedali@mail.ru](mailto:farida.muhammedali@mail.ru)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-0534-1447>

Azerbaijan University of Languages, Baku, Azerbaijan.

Suggested citation (APA, seventh ed.)

Allakhverdiyeva, F. M. (2025). The variability of syntactic means forming complex sentences. *Universidad y Sociedad*, 17(5). e5390.

#### ABSTRACT

Complex sentences play a very important role, allowing authors to weave intricate information structures, enrich details, and orient reader emphasis through syntactic variation. But despite extensive studies, crucial questions remain unanswered regarding the hierarchical relationship between main and subordinate clauses, the criteria for distinguishing subordinate units, and principled classifications of clause types. We find that the choice and integration of subordination markers—ranging from explicit conjunctions and relative pronouns to non-finite constructions and instances of asyndeton—are based on typological, functional, and cognitive factors. Predicative subordinate clauses exhibit particularly strong integration with main clauses, often blurring syntactic boundaries and fulfilling multifunctional functions as complements or modifiers. Cross-linguistic comparisons demonstrate that languages draw on different primary resources (case morphology in agglutinative systems versus conjunction-based strategies in analytic languages) and that register and modality further modulate marker preferences. These results have important theoretical and pedagogical implications as they suggest that language teaching should emphasize a wide repertoire of subordinate resources (including non-finite forms and unpunctuated structures) to foster learners' syntactic flexibility and discourse coherence.

**Keywords:** Variability of syntactical means, Syntactical relationship, Components of complex sentences, Principal and the subordinate clauses.

#### RESUMEN

Las oraciones complejas desempeñan un papel muy importante porque permiten a los autores tejer estructuras de información intrincadas, enriquecer los detalles y orientar el énfasis del lector mediante la variación sintáctica. Pero a pesar de los extensos estudios, aún quedan preguntas cruciales sin resolver sobre la relación jerárquica entre las cláusulas principales y subordinadas, los criterios para distinguir las unidades subordinadas y las clasificaciones basadas en principios de los tipos de cláusulas. Encontramos que la elección e integración de marcadores de subordinación “que abarcan desde conjunciones explícitas y pronombres relativos hasta construcciones no finitas y casos de asíndeton” se basan en factores tipológicos, funcionales y cognitivos. Las cláusulas subordinadas predicativas presentan una integración particularmente sólida con las cláusulas principales, difuminando a menudo los límites sintácticos y cumpliendo funciones multifuncionales como complementos o modificadores. Las comparaciones interlingüísticas demuestran que las lenguas se basan en diferentes recursos primarios (morfología del caso en sistemas aglutinantes frente a estrategias basadas en conjunciones en lenguas analíticas) y que el registro y la modalidad modulan aún más las preferencias de marcadores. Estos resultados tienen importantes implicaciones teóricas y pedagógicas pues sugieren que la enseñanza de lenguas debería enfatizar un amplio repertorio de recursos subordinados (incluyendo formas no finitas y estructuras sin puntuación) para fomentar la flexibilidad sintáctica y la coherencia discursiva de los estudiantes.

**Palabras clave:** Variabilidad de los medios sintácticos, Relación sintáctica, Componentes de oraciones complejas,

## INTRODUCTION

In the field of linguistics, it is acknowledged that a complex sentence consists of more than one simple sentence or clause (component). Unlike compound complex sentences, in subordinate complex sentences, one clause is dependent on the other; in other words, the subordinate clause serves a syntactic function within the main clause (Meltzer, 2022). From this perspective, the clause that is grammatically independent is referred to as the main clause, and the clause that is subordinate to it is known as the subordinate clause. When discussing subordinate complex sentences in English, scholars emphasize that such sentences form a single unit semantically, grammatically, and intonationally. One or more clauses are subordinated to another clause, typically through subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns/adverbs, or occasionally without any connectors, depending on the syntactic construction (Kozuev & Dzharkinbaeva, 2021). It has been also pointed out that some issues remain unresolved. These primarily concern the hierarchical syntactic relationships within subordinate complex sentences, including:

1. The issue of semantic and grammatical independence between the main and subordinate clauses;
2. The criteria for distinguishing subordinate clauses from other components of the sentence;
3. Principles of classification of subordinate clauses.

Furthermore, the variability of the syntactic means that make up complex sentences is a multidimensional phenomenon that involves typological, functional, and cognitive aspects. Therefore, a complex sentence is characterized by the presence of at least two juxtaposed or subordinate sentence units (clauses) that interact on semantic and prosodic levels (Dunn, 2023). To clarify this definition, we consider the following distinctions:

- **Means of Coordination:** Markers such as coordinating conjunctions (e.g., “and,” “but,” “or”) that link equivalent clauses without a hierarchical relationship.
- **Means of Subordination:** Elements such as subordinating conjunctions (e.g., “because,” “although”), relative pronouns (e.g., “who,” “which”), and relative adverbial markers (e.g., “where,” “when”), which introduce dependent clauses.
- **Sentences Without Explicit Connectives:** Paratactic constructions where dependency is inferred by position or intonation.

From a semantic point of view, the functions of the subordinate clause (completive, causal, concessive, etc.) determine the hierarchy and coherence of the sentence complex. These categorizations have received empirical

support in recent corpora, where the frequency of each type varies significantly according to register and discourse modality (Liu et al., 2025).

Typological research has shown that the availability and preference of syntactic means for marking subordination differ widely across languages. For example, in English, subordination is based primarily on conjunctions and relative pronouns, while in agglutinative languages (e.g., Turkish, Azerbaijani), case morphology and adverbial suffixes play a fundamental role (Rufat, 2024). Furthermore, freedom of word order can compensate for the absence of explicit markers, as is the case in Eastern Russian varieties. Comparative studies of English, Mandarin, and Arabic have shown that the use of relative clauses varies not only in form but also in their discourse function: in English, they predominate for specification, in Mandarin for thematisation, and in Arabic for information expansion (Owens et al., 2024). This typological variability has direct implications for language learning, as it forces learners to recalibrate their syntactic strategies according to the target language.

In addition, the rise of corpus linguistics and the availability of computational tools have prompted proposals for more refined syntactic metrics (Alzaidi et al., 2025; Morozov et al., 2022). Recent work has even incorporated syntactic network analysis, measuring node centrality and the density of connections between clauses. Longitudinal studies in L1 and L2 acquisition reveal that both indices correlate with communicative competence, but they present different developmental curves: depth stabilizes first, while ratio continues to increase with more advanced exposure (Zhang et al., 2022)

Thus, the purpose of this article is to address the variability of syntactic connectives that generate complex subordinate clauses. Starting from the distinction between a main clause—which directly participates in the event—and a subordinate clause—which does so indirectly—the aim is to explore the mechanisms that allow for variation in the construction of these sentences. In particular, it will investigate how different types of markers (conjunctions, relative pronouns, non-finite forms, etc.) facilitate this variability and contribute to the semantic and structural integration between the main and subordinate clauses. To achieve this objective, examples from different languages and textual registers were compiled, identifying the main subordinate connectives and their variants. Based on empirical analysis, the variability of the connectives is analyzed, indicating that predicative subordinate clauses show stronger syntactic integration with the main clause than other types of subordinate clauses. The difficulty of delimiting the boundary between the main clause and

the subordinate clause in constructions where the subordinate clause functions as a predicative complement (or subject), without clear punctuational separation, was also addressed.

## DEVELOPMENT

Both English and Azerbaijani, the classification of subordinate clauses varies in number and type, as we will discuss in more detail next. Subordinate clauses in English complex sentences generally fall into three major categories: 1) noun clauses (subject, object, complement); 2) relative clauses (attributive); and 3) adverbial clauses (of time, cause, condition, etc.). O. Musayev notes that in English, subordinate clauses may be linked to the main clause in two primary ways: (a) through subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns, or relative adverbs; or (b) without any explicit conjunctions (Musayev, 2007, p. 421). For example: 1) I didn't hear what Harry said. She told me in her letter that her husband taught English at the Grammar school (Braine); 2) I should like to see where you live, John (Galsworthy). He is the man who showed me your photo, sir. That is the main reason why I couldn't visit you yesterday; 3) She belongs to the man we saw yesterday (Voynich). I think you will find everything all right in the flat (Maugham).

Another noteworthy issue concerns the position of subordinate clauses in English. According to the linguistic literature, subordinate clauses can appear before or after the main clause. For example (Nuriyeva, 2007):

- When we were in the taxi, she gave me another long book.
- As they entered, they saw Dorian Gray (Wilde).
- If I have done anything to offend you, I beg you to forgive me (Maugham).
- I was greatly solitary when I was young.
- Ali suggested that Ahmad should go home for a while.

When forming a subordinate complex sentence, intonation also plays an important role. English grammars often highlight this feature, and it can be generally expressed as follows:

- When the main clause precedes the subordinate clause, both components are typically pronounced with a falling tone. For example: I was at home when he came.
- When the subordinate clause comes first, it is pronounced with a rising tone, while the main clause that follows is pronounced with a falling tone. For example: When Yalchin came, Vugar was working in the garden.

Musayev, unlike other grammarians, points out another significant point: in Modern English, the subordinate clause can even appear in the middle of the main clause, i.e., between its components. In this case, it is usually separated by commas. For instance: 1) Next day, though I pressed him to remain, Stroeve left me. 2) His voice, when he spoke to his client, was dry but not unsympathetic (Christie, 1984). M. Qansina states that subordinate clauses function similarly to components of simple sentences. That is, they can act as the subject, predicate, object, attribute, or various types of adverbial modifiers of the main clause (Musayev, 2007, p. 421). Examples include:

- Whether they will come or not depends on circumstances (Subject).
- I do not know how long I shall stay (Object).
- That is what we agreed on (Predicative).
- The house that faces ours is shaded by an immense lime tree (Attributive).
- A year went by before we met again (Adverbial).

Qansina further emphasizes that subordinate clauses may be functionally synonymous with simple sentence components, giving rise to synonymous constructions. For example: 1) He told me how he had lived at the seaside → He told me about his life at the seaside; 2) We met where the roads crossed → We met at the crossing of the roads. Previously, we noted that subordinate clauses are connected to the main clause through various means. Qansina, however, stresses that even prepositional phrases in simple sentences can serve a similar function and help connect clauses (Musayev, 2007, p. 325). For example:

- We thought of how we should settle the matter → We thought of it.
- I am surprised at what you have told me → I am surprised at your words.
- I cannot tell you anything about your program except that I do not agree with some of its points.

In some cases, subordinate clauses can also be joined to the main clause through adverbial expressions. For example: In the village, we always slept with the windows open, even when it was cold → even in cold weather. Some linguists argue that the terms "main clause" and "subordinate clause" are merely conventional labels; what is considered the main clause may not actually be the sentence's primary syntactic unit. For instance: What he learnt was that they had never arrived. The subordinating relationship established between clauses in complex sentences typically follows a fixed syntactic pattern derived from the simple sentence structure (Bayramova, 2011). Notably, a

subordinate clause can never act as the naming element (i.e., a naming structure or nominal phrase), though the main clause may. Grammarians have also identified the following key features of predicative constructions in subordinate complex sentences (Kachalova, 1982):

- The type of syntactic relationship (coordination vs. subordination);
- The presence of predicative meaning;
- The obligatory or facultative nature of the predicative construction;
- The presence and type of linking elements (e.g., conjunctions);
- The positional regularity of the components.

Subordinate clauses, particularly in their function of adding detail and completeness to an idea, are crucial in achieving a richer syntactic structure, thereby contributing to greater expressive depth. Compare:

- He told me of their arrival.
- He told me that they had arrived.
- He told me that they would arrive.
- He was exhausted for want of sleep.
- He was exhausted, because he had not slept the whole night.

Regarding the relationship between the clauses in a complex sentence, O. Musayev observes that when all subordinate clauses perform the same grammatical function, they are generally linked by the conjunction “and,” with each being directly related to the main clause. For example: 1) I very well know I am a weak, light, girlish creature, and that he is a firm, grave, serious man (Dickens); 2) Do you remember the day when I kissed your hand, and when you so piteously begged me “never to do that again?” (Musayev, 2007, p. 422).

When subordinate clauses perform different grammatical functions, typically only one is directly linked to the main clause, while the others further specify or qualify it. For instance: 1) When a small sum of money which he brought from London came to an end, he suffered from no dismay (Maugham); 2) When we arrived a day earlier at the inn where my friend—the waiter—lived, I was shown up to a nice little bedroom (Dickens). Finally, regarding the classification of subordinate clauses, both O. Musayev and M. Qansina identify three main types of syntactic connectors (linking devices) used to form subject clauses (Musayev, 2007, p. 31): 1) Conjunctions: that, if, whether; 2) Conjunctive pronouns: who, what, which and

3) Conjunctive adverbs: when, where, how, why. Examples are:

- That he will come is certain.
- That he is a madman goes without saying.
- Whether he talked or not made little difference to my mood (Goodreads, 2019).
- Who broke the glass remained unknown.
- What I do ask you is to love me and have faith in love.
- Why she left him is a mystery.
- How he managed to do it is more than I can tell.

Sometimes, subject clauses are introduced by anticipatory “it”:

- It is strange that he did not come at all.
- It was known where Strickland was staying.
- It is a different matter whether we need it.
- It is good luck that she is still alive.

Predicate clauses are typically introduced by conjunctions and serve as complements within the main clause structure. Subordinate clauses of this nature function as one of the essential members of the main clause. A predicative subordinate clause is introduced by various grammatical means, including conjunctions (that, whether, if, as if), conjunctive pronouns (who, what, which), and conjunctive adverbs (when, where, how, why). These structures can be observed in sentences such as “The trouble is that I have lost his address,” “The question is whether they will be able to help us,” “That was what she wanted to find out,” and “The question is where we can live in peace and freedom.” In each case, the subordinate clause serves to complete the meaning of the predicate in the main clause.

A subordinate clause that functions as a complement to the main clause is referred to as a complement clause. These clauses often serve as objects to verbs and are essential for completing the meaning of the main clause. Complement clauses are introduced into the main clause through the same grammatical means as predicative clauses: conjunctions (that, if, whether), conjunctive pronouns (who, what, which), and conjunctive adverbs (when, where, how, why). Examples of complement clauses functioning as verb objects include “He told me that he would come,” “He asked us what we thought of it,” “Stroeve asked him if he had seen Strickland,” “I don’t know whether he is at home or not,” “We told him where things were,” “Sam asked her how the new arrival was,” and “She wanted to know why he had done it.” In these constructions, the complement clauses provide the necessary information to complete the meaning initiated by the main clause



verb, demonstrating their crucial role in English sentence structure (Verkhovskaya, 1980).

These complement clauses can also be linked by simple juxtaposition, as demonstrated in examples such as "I know you are not baking today" and "I wish I had a dress like hers." In English, prepositional complements also exist and serve important grammatical functions. These can be seen in constructions like "I am sorry for what I told you yesterday," "We are not satisfied with how she has done it," and "He was interested in what she wore." Regarding word order, complement clauses usually follow the verb they complement but can sometimes appear at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis or stylistic purposes. For instance, "What happened then, I don't remember" and "He is very shy, she thought" illustrate this flexibility. Furthermore, complement clauses may or may not be separated from the main clause by a comma, depending on the specific construction and context (Ivanova et al., 1982).

Another important aspect of complement clauses relates to certain verbs that express demand, advice, suggestion, consent, or command. In such cases, the verb in the subordinate clause is typically formed using *should* + infinitive, regardless of tense. These verbs include: to demand, to insist, to advise, to recommend, to order, to suggest, and to propose. Examples of this construction include "He suggested that the question should be discussed at the meeting," "He demanded that the goods should be sent by aeroplane," and "The doctor insists that he should go to the south in the autumn."

A relative (attributive) clause, which functions as a modifier to a noun in the main clause, is introduced by either relative pronouns (*who*, *which*, *that*) or relative adverbs (*where*, *when*). This can be observed in sentences such as "He was thinking of Sadie Villiers, who was a white girl," "He told them about his prayer which the Lord had answered," "There was a cool freshness in the air and a peaceful silence that was foreign to him," and "I remember the day when I went to school." Musayev (2007) categorize attributive clauses into two main types: restrictive (limiting) relative clauses and descriptive (non-restrictive) relative clauses. Restrictive clauses provide essential information to identify the noun they modify, as seen in examples like "I met the boatman who had taken me across the ferry," "The letter that I received yesterday was most welcome," and "The only person I've seen is Rose Waterford."

In contrast, non-restrictive clauses add supplementary information that, while useful, is not essential for identification. An example of this type is "Tom, who was a naughty boy in his childhood, became a serious man." Even if the

descriptive clause is removed, the meaning of the main clause remains unchanged, which is the defining characteristic of non-restrictive clauses. Some grammarians also recognize appositive attributive clauses, which are typically introduced by *that*, and sometimes by *how* or *why*. These clauses provide additional information about a noun in a way that explains or renames it. Examples include "The idea that it could be done in a very simple way did not occur to me," "The thought that the child might catch cold troubled her," "I have no idea how I am going to get in touch with them," and "He refused to tell me the reason why he had not accepted my invitation" (Kachalova, 1982).

Adverbial clauses are categorized differently by various grammarians. According to O. Musayev, there are 9 types, while others list 8. These clauses serve important functions in expressing temporal, spatial, causal, and purposive relationships within complex sentences. Time clauses are introduced by temporal conjunctions such as *when*, *while*, *as*, *after*, *before*, *till*, *until*, *as soon as*, and *since*. These clauses establish temporal relationships between actions in the main and subordinate clauses. Examples include "When we arrived at the station, we called a porter," "After they had unpacked, they went to the restaurant," "As soon as he received her telegram, he went to London," and "We have not had any news from him since he left Baku." Additionally, time clauses can express future actions, as in "I shall do it when I return" and "I'll stay here until he comes."

Time clauses may imply actions occurring simultaneously or consecutively depending on the conjunction used. The conjunction *while* often indicates simultaneous actions, as demonstrated in "We sat on the porch while the evening was deepening into night." However, *while* can also introduce contrasting ideas, as in "While I agree with most things he says, I can't accept all his statements." The conjunction *before* typically indicates sequential actions, as shown in "Some months went by before they met again" and "Before he locked the door, he walked through the rooms." Adverbial clauses of place are introduced by *where* and *wherever* and denote location or direction. Examples include "I like to spend my leave where I can shoot," "He went where the doctor sent him," and "Wherever he went, he was welcome." These clauses can also appear with prepositions before them in specific contexts to provide more precise spatial relationships (Nuriyeva, 2007).

According to O. Musayev's classification of subordinate clauses in complex sentences, causal clauses function as adverbials of cause within complex sentences. These clauses are connected to the main clause by conjunctions

such as because, since, as, for the reason that, on the ground that, seeing that, and considering that. Examples of causal clauses include "As there were no porters, we had to carry the luggage ourselves," "He walked quickly because he was in a great hurry," "As the day was clear, we decided to climb the mountain," and "Since you insist, I shall go with you." Purpose clauses function as adverbials of purpose within complex sentences and are connected to the main clause by specific conjunctions, particularly that (in order that, so that). Examples include "Close the window so that it will be warm in the room" and "I gave him the textbook so that he would learn his lesson." In such sentences, especially in negative constructions, will (not), would (not), and should not may be used, regardless of the tense of the main clause. This is illustrated in sentences like "He came into the room quietly so that the children would not wake up (should not wake up)" and "I'll ring him up at once so that he will not wait for me (he should not wait for me)."

Purpose clauses may also include can or could + infinitive, even when the main clause is in the past tense. This flexibility allows for various temporal relationships between the main and subordinate clauses. Examples of this usage include "I shall write the letter immediately so that you can send it off today," "He drew a plan of the village so that she could find his house easily," "The invitations were sent out early that the delegates might arrive in time for the conference," "We packed the instruments carefully lest they be broken during transportation," and "I shall write the letter immediately in order that you may read it before I send it off."

Result clauses function as adverbials of result within complex sentences and are introduced by conjunctions such as so that, so...that, and such...that. These clauses convey the outcome or consequence that stems from the action presented in the main clause. Examples include "He went to the lecture early so that he got a good seat," "She sat behind me so that I could not see the expression on her face," and "It is so simple that a child can understand it." These constructions demonstrate how result clauses establish clear cause-and-effect relationships between actions or states.

Concessive clauses function as adverbials of concession and express a contrast or opposition to the main clause while acknowledging that the main action still occurs despite this obstacle. Such clauses are introduced by conjunctions including though, although, as, even if, even though, however, whoever, whatever, whichever, no matter what, and no matter how. Examples of concessive relationships include "Though (although) it was only nine o'clock, there were few people in the streets," "Don't

change your plans whatever happens," "Don't believe him no matter what he says," "However much I try, I cannot pronounce that word properly," "Late as it was, we still continued our way," and "Even if he were here, he couldn't help us" (Bayramova, 2011).

Conditional clauses function as adverbials of condition and establish hypothetical or conditional relationships between the main and subordinate clauses. These clauses are introduced by conjunctions such as if, unless, suppose, supposing, provided, and on condition that. Examples demonstrate various types of conditional relationships: "If I see him tomorrow, I shall ask him about it," "I shan't be able to buy this television set unless I win a large sum of money," "You may take this book on condition that you don't keep it too long," and "We can deliver the machine in December provided (that) we receive your order within the next ten days."

Manner clauses function as adverbials of manner within complex sentences and describe how an action is performed or how a state exists. These clauses are typically introduced by as, as if (as though), that (so, such). Examples illustrate different aspects of manner: "You answer as if you did not know this rule," "He played so well that everybody admired him," "The aeroplane was flying at such a height that we could hardly see it," "He speaks as if (as though) he knew this question very well," "They walked slowly up the stairs as if (as though) they were carrying something heavy," "I remember the story as if (as though) I had just read it," and "He described the town as if (as though) he had seen it himself."

Comparative clauses function as adverbials of comparison within complex sentences and establish relationships of similarity, difference, or degree between elements. These clauses are introduced by conjunctions such as as though, than, as, as...as, not so...as, as if, the more...the more, and the more...the less. Examples of comparative relationships include "I haven't lived in a big town for a long time as you have," "The son was returning with even more success than the community had hoped for," "The more he reflected on the idea, the more he liked it" (Galsworthy), and "The more she knows him, the less she'll love him" (London).

These constructions demonstrate how comparative clauses can express proportional relationships and degrees of comparison. It is worth noting that among Azerbaijani scholars, only O. Musayev has identified the comparative clause as an independent type of subordinate clause. Other grammarians such as Kachalova (1982) have not considered it separately, instead classifying such clauses under the category of manner clauses. Additionally, none

of the aforementioned authors include clauses introduced by patterns like the more...the more or the more...the less in their classifications. As noted at the outset of this study, subordinate clauses are essential in clarifying the meaning of statements. From this perspective, it is not difficult to see the advantages of O. Musayev's classification system.

#### Some observations

As we have seen, subordination establishes an essential hierarchical relationship in the formation of complex sentences: The subordinate clause (SC) depends syntactically and semantically on the main clause (MC), performing functions such as subject, object, complement, or adverbial. This dependence, far from being governed by a single mechanism, is materialized through a broad and diverse set of syntactic devices—from explicit subordinate clauses to non-finite clauses or structures without connectors—that allow the dependency to be marked and the logical or temporal relationships between propositions to be nuanced. Thus, what at first glance seems like a simple definition evolves into a panorama of surprising variability, where the choice of a marker or the form of the subordinate clause responds to historical factors, register, cognitive processing, and discursive function.

The syntactic arsenal of subordination encompasses major categories of mechanisms. For example, explicit subordinate clauses (that, because, although, if, when, etc.), which clearly signal the semantic relationship and dependency of the SC. Relative pronouns and adverbials (who, which, where, when) serve the dual function of introducing the clause and playing an internal role (subject or object) while simultaneously connecting to an antecedent in the CM. Furthermore, non-finite or verbless clauses (infinitives, -ing/-ed participles, verbless constructions), whose variations in subject control, tense, and degree of integration offer more compact syntactic options. Finally, cases of zero marking (asyndeton), where the absence of a connective (e.g., "The book you recommended") implies even tighter integration and is often associated with informal styles or high discursive cohesion.

This variability unfolds along several interrelated dimensions. In the choice of subordinate clause, semantic subtleties (because vs. since vs. as), register differences (whilst vs. while), and diachronic specialization processes provide nuances of meaning and tone. Regarding the structural form of the CS, the distinction between finite and non-finite clauses is due to factors of subject control, temporal precision, and level of information independence: non-finite clauses are frequently used for backgrounding and concise stylization in formal contexts, while finite

clauses offer flexibility of topic and time. The position of the SC (initial, medial, or final) determines the prominence of the content and the procedural load, and the degree of embeddedness determines the cognitive limits of processing. Furthermore, each CS can serve various syntactic functions within the MC—nominal, adjectival, or adverbial—and reduction and ellipsis strategies increase linguistic economy at the expense of greater dependence on context.

Among the strengths of this syntactic richness are its expressiveness and semantic precision: the breadth of subordinate clauses and non-finite forms allows for the encoding of causal, temporal, and modal relationships in great detail, as well as for managing the flow of information through the preposition or postposition of discursive fragments. Likewise, this variability enables stylistic adaptation to formal or colloquial registers, enhances communicative efficiency through compact clauses, and offers fertile ground for grammatical innovation. From a discourse perspective, the choice of subordinate clause devices contributes to textual coherence and the management of thematisation and focus of information.

#### CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that the variability of the syntactic means that make up complex sentences is not a one-dimensional phenomenon, but rather the result of the interaction of typological, functional, and cognitive factors. It was found that subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns and adverbials, as well as non-finite constructions or constructions without explicit markers, offer a wide repertoire of mechanisms for signaling semantic and grammatical dependencies between clauses, allowing nuances of cause, time, condition, concession, purpose, result, manner, comparison, or restriction to be expressed. Comparative studies have also shown that the availability and preference of these markers vary significantly by language—for example, the central role of case morphology in Azerbaijani versus the preponderance of conjunctions in English—and by register and discourse modality, which directly impacts second language learning and use strategies.

In terms of didactic application and future research, these results prompt a rethinking of both the teaching of complex syntax and the design of linguistic analysis tools. From a pedagogical perspective, the teaching of complex sentences should emphasize not only the correct selection and placement of different connectives, but also the management of information through the variation of finite, non-finite, and asyndetic forms, to promote textual coherence and discursive economy. Thus, it is worth delving

deeper into the diachronic variability of these markers, their effects on cognitive processability, and the relationship between the position of the subordinate clause (initial, medial, or final) and informational prominence. Likewise, it would be fruitful to explore in more detail the emerging syntactic networks in oral and written texts of different genres, in order to more accurately model how the choice of one device or another contributes to expressiveness and communicative effectiveness.

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