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Criteria for Subordination in Slovenian Multi-Clause Sentences

The article explains and demonstrates criteria for subordination and points out that not all criteria can be applied to all constructions considered subordinate, so it is better to posit that there are different degrees of dependency instead of only subordination and coordination: the more criteria for subordination a particular construction fulfils, the more subordinate it is.

Keywords: syntax, clause, sentence, degree of dependency, conjunction

1. Introduction

This article[1] discusses the term subordination, as it appears in multi-clause sentences. The term is meaningful but only if defined based on a number of criteria, as constructions understood as subordinate or coordinate are too variegated to be classified into only two categories. It is expected that not all subordinate constructions will meet all the criteria for subordination, which demonstrates that subordination and coordination[2] must be considered prototypical relationships that are not fully realised; however, they appear in a great majority of concrete constructions.

This topic has already been the subject of a Slovenian article, that is, Gabrovšek (2021). The current article thus repeats some of its findings but also significantly expands, supplements, and corrects them. New criteria have been added, and those found to be irrelevant are excluded.

Most modern studies of subordination and coordination find that the line between the two is unclear and that many constructions cannot be classified clearly as

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[2]   Criteria for coordination are the subject of another study with the same methodology.

instances of subordination or coordination (Шведова 1980: 462; Quirk 1985: 920; Виноградов 2001: 579; Cristofano 2003; Fabricius-Hansen & Ramm 2008: 7; Holler 2008: 187; Žele 2016a: 87, 2016b: 32; Smolej 2018; Belaj & Tanacković Faletar 2020: 16). I concur with this opinion and treat subordination as a continuum of similar relations, which are based on fulfilling or nonfulfilling of criteria for subordination. My approach is thus similar to the one described by Lehmann (1988, 1989) and Cristofano (2003: 20).

Any two clauses joined in a multi-clause sentence always depend on each other to some extent, or they would not be joined and would appear on their own as separate sentences. I thus understand coordination and subordination as extremes, and most relationships are in-between, some closer to coordination, others to subordination.

1.1. Methodology

The paper is primarily based on structuralism (Toporišič 2004; Žele 2001, 2016a), complemented by the theory of generative grammar (especially Cristofano 2003; Haiman & Thompson 1984; and Lehmann 1988) and partly by cognitive grammar (Langacker 2008; Belaj & Tanacković Faletar 2020). Emphasis is placed on the study of a large number of corpus examples as this is the only way to study in detail the properties of all types of subordination for a given language.

The definition of criteria for subordination has been derived several times, in particular by Haiman and Thompson (1984: 511), where seven criteria are given, and Lehmann (1988), where six criteria are given: the articles deal with several languages and therefore not all criteria can be applied to all languages, which is to be expected. Cristofano (2003: 20) also points out the importance of having more criteria for determining subordinates:

> [a]s a result, any parameter chosen to distinguish between subordination and non-subordination will combine with a number of other parameters, yielding a variety of possibly very different clause linkage (sub)types. […] Thus, it is quite evident that any distinction drawn on the basis of a single parameter, such as embedding, will leave aside a number of significant features of the relevant clause linkage types.

As these studies examine several languages, it is to be expected that there will be fewer criteria, as they look for common features of subordination, while the study of one language allows for more criteria that are more specific.

From the perspective of cognitive grammar, as developed by Langacker (2008), the Croatian multi-clause sentence is studied by Belaj and Tanacković Faletar (2020). Here, the application of primarily semantic criteria is shown to be more appropriate for the study of coordination, where there are fewer structural connectives, while subordinate clauses are also strongly structurally connected.

Several of the criteria discussed in this article and the cited discussions also point to another important feature of subordination: they do not behave in the same way but within the whole, they are divided into subtypes, each of which has its own properties, and these properties do not overlap completely. The important thing is that a sufficiently large part of the properties overlaps for them to be understood as a single type.

The purpose of the criteria is primarily practical: to determine where in the system of the complete Slovene multi-clause sentence a particular example belongs, which allowed us to create a system of the complete Slovene multi-clause sentence (Gabrovšek 2023b). In doing so, we also checked the fulfilment of the criteria for subordination in those cases that are not otherwise perceived as subordinate, as it turns out that such relations can also fulfil some of the criteria for subordination.[3]

Virtually every discussion notes that one of the fundamental properties of subordination is asymmetry (i.e., hierarchy) (Cristofano 2003; Langacker 2008: 415; Belaj & Tanacković Faletar 2020: 171), as opposed to coordination, which is supposed to be an example of symmetry, but these discussions also note that coordination is at least partially asymmetric (Langacker 2008: 415; Gabrovšek 2023b). This criterion is therefore not a sufficiently precise indicator of subordination. This is also the reason why many of the criteria in this discussion are structural, e.g., relativity and the obligatory use of a conjunction, and therefore easily identifiable. A given example may or may not have a conjunction – so we are not concerned with whether it could have one since this is already a transformation that at least partially changes the meaning of the whole sentence. Some criteria are primarily semantic (collocability) but most are structural-semantic, e.g., valency. This is understandable since subordination (and syntax as a whole) is a structural as well as a semantic phenomenon.

1.2. Methodology of searching for examples

Examples are taken from Gigafida 2.0, a corpus of Slovenian standard language. Most examples include a footnote with the CQL query code, which allows the query to be reproduced. Examples found at random or by searching for individual conjunctions are an exception.

2. Criteria for subordination

If a multi-clause sentence is to be studied comprehensively, a number of criteria must be considered. A multi-clause sentence encompasses at least two clauses, which, to some extent, are semantically and structurally complete units on their

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[3]   We did the same with the criteria for coordination.

own, so the bond between the clauses is far more complex than the bond between two words in a phrase. The focus is on the criteria that can be determined as formally and clearly as possible and fit an analysis of corpus materials, as independently from an individual's interpretation as possible.

As expected, only rare subordinate relationships fulfil all the criteria for subordination. Based on the number of fulfilled criteria for subordination and coordination, the degree of dependency in an individual relationship can be measured. From the criteria for subordination and coordination, I derive the thesis that it is better to posit that there are different degrees of dependency in the connection between two clauses instead of only subordination and coordination.

It should be stressed that this article lists the criteria valid for the extremes of subordination (with the exception of certain criteria, such as collocability): a construction meeting all the criteria for subordination represents the highest degree of dependency or a prototypical instance of subordination, a construction meeting most but not all of the criteria for subordination is less subordinate but can still be considered subordinate. A construction meeting all the criteria for coordination represents the lowest degree of dependency or a prototypical instance of coordination. Such constructions are rarely found in language, especially for the coordinate pole. Most constructions are "in-between", with a more or less clear tendency towards one pole. Such a result is to be expected and shows that the language system of a multi-clause sentence is too complex (with the complexity also indicated by the number of criteria) to be split into just two major units. Such an understanding avoids claims that some constructions are structurally subordinate and semantically coordinate (Haspelmath 2004: 35; Pogorelec 2021: 88). The criteria listed are valid for Slovenian multi-clause sentences.

The subject of study is always a conjunctive clause[4] (i.e., a clause introduced by a conjunction) in relation to its non-conjunctive counterpart as conjunctive clauses can be subordinated to non-conjunctive ones but not vice versa. Each subchapter represents one criterion for subordination. Each criterion is illustrated by at least one Slovenian example.

2.1. Valency

Valency is the characteristic or ability of a particular word to bind a particular/predictable number of arguments (Žele 2001: 13; Uhlik & Žele 2022: 38). Valency arguments, which are in these cases sentential arguments, must be expressed as they are structurally and semantically mandatory based on the predicate of the

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[4]   In the case of an asyndeton, this is the clause where a conjunction could be inserted by analogy to similar examples.

main clause. These arguments are constituents of the main verb (Lehmann 1988: 185). The same applies to valency-dependent clauses. In this context, subject valency stands out as the subject-predicate relationship is clause-forming and thus essential (with predictable exceptions) for the clause to be grammatically and structurally correct. The bond between a subject and predicate is thus tighter than a bond between a predicate and object (Žele 2017: 83, 88).

Subordinations that meet this criterion are the best case for the claim that the subordinate clause is the one whose profile is overridden at a higher level of grammatical organization (Langacker 2008: 415).

(1)

Kdor	*žel-i*	*darova-ti*	*več,*	*številk-o*	*poklič-e*
who.NOM.SG.REl	wish.IPFV.PRS.3SG	donate.IPFV.INF	more	number.ACC.SG	call.PFV.PRS.3SG

večkrat.
several times.ADV

'Whoever wishes to donate more can call the number several times.'

2.2. Collocability

As semantic co-occurrence or co-existence, collocability is based on semantic and grammatical meaningfulness, which enables verbs, adjectives, etc. to establish meaningful mutual semantic links through adjuncts in unpredictable free syntactic positions (Žele 2015: 99). Collocable subordinations are not structurally obligatory as their presence is motivated only semantically. These are adverbial and attributive clauses. Their role lies in specifying the circumstances of the headword (verb or noun) in terms of place, time, cause, manner, and property (this applies to modifiers).

(2)

Medtem	*ko*	*zajtrkuje-m,*	*opazuje-m*	*sončn-i*
while	when	have breakfast.IPFV.PRS.1SG	observe.IPFV.PRS.1SG	sun.ADJ.ACC.M.SG

vzhod.
rise.ACC.SG

'While I'm having breakfast, I'm observing the sunrise.'

2.3. Correlative

A correlative is a pronoun that is located in the main clause, reveals the function of a dependent clause, and acts as a bridge between the main and dependent claus-

es.[5] The relationship between a main clause and a dependent clause is only established through a correlative (Žele 2017: 88; Gabrovšek & Žele 2019: 488; Gabrovšek 2023a: 45).

(3)

Kdor	*išče,*	***ta***	*najde.*
who.NOM.SG.REL	seek.IPFV.PRS.3SG	this.NOM.M.SG	find.PFV.PRS.3SG

'**He** who seeks will find.'

(3a)

Kdor	*išče,*	*najde.*
who.NOM.SG.REL	seek.IPFV.PRS.3SG	find.PFV.PRS.3SG

'Whoever seeks will find.'

The correlative is the only word revealing the sentence-element function of a dependent clause as the correlative shows the appropriate case or adverbial value, which the dependent clause is unable to express (Žele 2017: 90; Piper 2018: 95; Žele & Krajnc Ivič 2020: 299; Pogorelec 2021: 34; Gabrovšek 2023a). Structurally, a correlative is obligatorily present alongside every dependent clause but is not always expressed (3a), although it can always be inserted. It is only mandatorily expressed in the prepositional cases (i.e., only with an object and some adverbial clauses), such as *temeljiti na tem, da* 'to be based on the fact that'. All this shows how a dependent clause cannot stand alone: its role and meaning are only assigned by a superordinate clause with a verb at its centre and a correlative as a head to which the dependent clause attaches. Thus, a dependent clause needs a correlative in order to exist.

In adverbial clauses, the importance of correlatives diminishes, though they are still systemic (*tam, kjer* 'there where'; *tako, da* 'so that'; *zato, ker* 'because'). In some cases, the correlative and conjunction can form a conjunctive phrase (*zato, ker* > *zato ker*; *kljub temu, da* > *kljub temu da* 'despite the fact that').[6] This points to a diminished role of the correlative and thus to a lower degree of dependency. A correlative is therefore a strong linking instrument with a function similar to that of a conjunction, though this function is more structural and formal (it shows what kind of dependent clause there is), while the role of a conjunction is more semantic. A clause that has a correlative in the main clause also has a sentence-element role in

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5 With some exceptions (Orešnik 1992: 157; Žele 2017), the importance of correlatives has not received enough attention. The reason probably lies in the fact that they are often unexpressed.

6 In Slovenian, clauses (with the exception of certain conjunctions) are separated by commas. If the comma is located between *zato* and *ker*, *zato* is considered part of the main clause, and if the comma is located before *zato*, *zato* is considered part of the conjunction in the dependent clause (Gabrovšek & Krvina 2022: 578).

that clause and is valent or collocable in relation to the main clause. The composition of a two-clause complex sentence can be shown as: main clause predicate + correlative (can be omitted) + subordinate clause.

For compound sentences, the rule is that there can be no backward anaphora (Quirk 1985: 922; Orešnik 1992: 73; Haspelmath 2004: 35). It seems that a correlative in the role of a backward anaphora is very common in complex sentences (Gabrovšek 2023a): it is not always obligatory but is certainly more frequent than in the role of an anaphora. A correlative in a backward anaphora role is prototypical, while a correlative in an anaphora role is an exception. A correlative thus announces the content, but the pronoun has too wide a meaning, so the dependent clause makes it more concrete. The same applies to a dependent clause preceding the main clause (5). The position of the main clause thus has no (major) role in the placement of the correlative: there is a strong tendency to place it before the conjunction, i.e., before the dependent clause. Even in referential terms, the behaviour of typical subordinate sentences is exactly opposite to that of typical coordinate sentences.

(4)

Včasih	*naredi-m*		*kaj,*	*kar*	*ga*
sometimes	do.PFV.PRS.3SG		what.ACC.SG	which.NOM.SG.REL	he.ACC.SG
malo	*razjezi.*				
little	make angry.PFV.PRS.3SG				

'Sometimes I do something that makes him a little angry.'

(5)

T-o,	*da*	*ohrani-m*	*mirn-o*	*glav-o,*
this.NOM.N.SG	that	keep.PFV.PRS.1SG	calm.ACC.F.SG	head.ACC.SG
ne	*bo*	*reši-l-o*	*vs-eh*	*problem-ov.*
not	be.IND.FUT.3Sg	solve.LPT.N.SG	all.GEN.M.PL	problem.GEN.Pl

'The fact that I can keep a cool head will not solve every problem.'

(6)

Najlepše	*je*	*tu,*	*kjer*	*živ-im.*
beautiful.ADV.SUP	be.IND.PRS.3SG	here	where.ADV.REL	live.IPFV.PRS.1SG

'The most beautiful place is where I live.'

2.4. Restrictive function of conjunctive clause

A dependent clause narrows the meaning of the word it refers to. While this narrowing (restrictive function) is more commonly observed in attributive clauses (Sovrè 1939; Cazinkić 2000: 31), it is a defining element of other dependent clauses

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as well: in example (7), the predicate of the main clause refers only to people who do not work and not, for example, to those who jump, cry, etc. This also applies to sentence elements expressed as words. The example *Vidim Janeza* 'I see John' excludes all "non-Johns". The same applies to example (8). All dependent clauses functioning as sentence elements are thus restrictive by definition (Fabricius-Hansen & Ramm 2008: 13).[7]

Due to the semantic intention of the main predicate, every dependent clause reversely restricts each concrete semantic use of that predicate. This mutuality is the most distinct in the subject-predicate relationship but is apparent and highly important in adverbial adjuncts. The relationship is thus bidirectional. As the dependent clause is part of the main clause and does not express stand-alone information, it functions as the theme or rheme in the sentence as a whole.

(7)

Kdor	*ne*	*dela,*	*naj*	*ne*	*je.*
who.NOM.SG.REL	not	work.IPFV.PRS.3SG	let	not	eat.IPFV.PRS.3SG

'He who does not work, neither shall he eat.'

(8)

Tam,	*kamor*	*boš*	*še-l,*	*precej*	*dežuje.*
there	where	be.IND.FUT.2SG	go.LPT.M.SG	much	rain.IPFV.PRS.3SG

'There is much rain in the place where you're going.'

This criterion relates to excluding roles in subordination: each role can only be filled once, and in the case of duplication, one of the "competitors" is relegated to a supplementary clause.[8] In example (9), there are two adjuncts of time, *na začetku* 'early' and *brž ko so se pojavili* 'as soon as they arise'. Since they cannot both perform the same function, the conjunctive clause is relegated to a supplementary clause, which means it adds new information about the adjunct of time without defining it.

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[7]   I claim non-restrictive attributive clauses do not exist, or at least they should be called differently. As I understand it, the term "non-restrictive dependent clause" is paradoxical as every dependent clause is restrictive by definition.

[8]   Supplementary clauses are constructions introduced by originally subordinating conjunctions but expressing additional, i.e. non-restrictive information (Gabrovšek 2019).

(9)

Konflikt-e	je	lažje	reševa-ti	na	začetk-u,
conflict.ACC.PL	be.IND.PRS.3SG	easy.ADV.CMPr	solve.IPFV.INF	on	begining.LOC.sg
brž	ko	so	se	pojavi-l-i.	
as soon as	when	be.IND.PRS.3SG	REFL.ACC	arise.LPT.M.PL	

'It is the easiest to solve conflicts early, as soon as they arise.'

2.5. A conjunctive clause refers to only one word in the other clause

A conjunctive clause refers to a verb or noun (this only applies to attributive clauses), i.e., only one word in the main clause. The dependent clause in example (10) relates only to the verb in the main clause. This criterion also applies to certain coordinate relationships.

(10)

Pred	glasovanj-em	je	pojasni-l,	da	zakon-a
before	voting.INS.sg	be.IND.PRS.3SG	explain.LPT.M.PL	that	bill.GEN.SG
ne	bodo	podpr-l-i.			
not	be.IND.FUT.3PL	support.LPT.M.PL			

'Before voting, he explained that they would not support the bill.'

2.6. A conjunction is mandatory

A conjunction is mandatory in subordination but not in most types of coordination (Quirk 1985: 923). An exception among valency-dependent clauses is direct speech (Haiman & Thompson 1984: 520), which has no conjunction and cannot have one (without conversion). However, direct speech is systemically convertible into clauses introduced by conjunctions. Many relationships can (despite possible ambiguity) be expressed without a conjunction,[9] whereas a conjunction is necessary in relative, attributive and adverbial clauses as well as supplementary clauses.[10]

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[9]   The reverse does not apply: a conjunction does not function outside of syntax (with rare exceptions of conversions). Thus, a conjunction requires syntax, but syntax does not necessarily require a conjunction.

[10]   This is also why examples like *Čarobne paličice ni, treba bo zavihati rokave.* 'There is no magic wand, we have to roll up our sleeves.' are classified as coordination (Gabrovšek 2023b: 299): although they are similar in meaning to adverbial dependent clauses, they fulfil most of the criteria for coordination and only a few for subordination, i.e. they are closer to the coordination pole. This again shows that each example should be studied on the basis of several criteria for subordination and coordination.

2.6.1. Relativity

Dependent clauses introduced by relative pronouns (*kdor* 'who(ever)', *kar* 'what', *kakor* 'as') are relative clauses. Their defining morpheme is -r, and their meaning refers to a noun, adjective, or adverb in the main clause, which establishes an even closer link between the two clauses. The dependent clause as a whole (with the exception of attributive clauses) refers to the predicate, while the relative morpheme refers to one of the nouns, adjectives, or adverbs in the main clause. The argument in the main clause and the argument expressed by the relative conjunction are the same. Repeating the argument with a relative pronoun is a strong connecting element. Relativity is typical of valent-dependent and collocable dependent clauses, while it is the rarest in adverb clauses of cause.

(11)

Kdor	*dela*	*na*	*t-em,*	*ga*	*ne*
who.NOM.SG.REL	work.IPFV.3SG	on	this.LOC.SG	he.ACC.SG	not
sme-mo	*ovira-ti.*				
must.IPFV.1PL	hinder.IPFV.INF				

'He who works on this must not be hindered.'

(12)

Tam,	*kamor*	*boš*	*še-l,*	*precej*	*dežuje.*
there	where	be.IND.FUT.2SG	go.LPT.M.SG	much	rain.IPFV.PRS.3SG

'There is much rain in the place where you're going.'

(13)

Poje-m	*le*	*toliko,*	*kolikor*	*lahko.*
eat.PFV.PRS.1SG	only	so much	as.ADV.REL	can.ADV

'I only eat as much as I can.'

2.7. A conjunctive clause cannot be interrogative

In a subordinate clause introduced by an interrogative word (*kaj* 'what', *kako* 'how', *ali* 'do/whether' etc.), the interrogative word converts into a conjunction, which makes it unable to continue its role as an interrogative word, and the terminal punctuation mark is either a full stop or exclamation mark. This rule causes a shift in argument roles, which is described under 2.10 Raising. This is one of the criteria that clearly shows the syntactic, and therefore, the semantic limitations of dependent sentences.

(14)

Vpraša-l	*naju*	*je,*	*kaj*	*namerava-va*
ask.LPT.M.SG	I.DAT.DU	be.IND.PRS.3SG	what.ACC.SG	intend.IPFV.PRS.2DU

poče-ti	*naslednj-e*	*jutr-o.*
do.IPFV.INF	following.ACC.SG	morning.ACC.SG

'He asked us what we intended to do the following morning.'

2.8. Arbitrary position of conjunctive clause

Due to hierarchisation (the main clause is (at least) structurally more important), the position of a dependent clause in relation to the main clause is relatively free: the dependent clause can precede the main clause (15), follow it (16) or split it in two (17, 18) (Lehmann 1988: 187). All sentence elements (i.e., including dependent clauses) in a clause are arranged according to the thematic structure.[11]

(15)

Kdor	*ne*	*dela,*	*naj*	*ne*	*je.*
who.NOM.SG.REL	not	work.IPFV.PRS.3SG	let	not	eat.IPFV.PRS.3SG

'He who does not work, neither shall he eat.'

(16)

Najlepše	*je*	*tu,*	*kjer*	*živ-im.*
beautiful.ADV.SUP	be.IND.PRS.3SG	here	where.ADV.REL	live.IPFV.PRS.1SG

'The most beautiful place is where I live.'

2.8.1. Embedding

A subordinate clause can be embedded into another clause, splitting the latter into two parts (Haiman & Thompson 1984: 514; Cristofano 2003: 23; Uhlik & Žele 2022: 122).

(17)

O	*dežel-i,*	*kamor*	*sem*	*še-l,*
about	land.LOC.SG	where	be.IND.PRS.1SG	go.LPT.M.SG

pravzaprav	*nisem*	*vede-l*	*nič.*
actually	be.IND.PRS.1SG.NEG	know.LPT.M.SG	nothing

'The land where I was going to was actually unknown to me.'

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[11]   In Slovenian, the thematic structure is the main principle of word order due to the use of cases. Although this is not true for all dependent clauses, e.g., attributive clauses always follow the main clause or are embedded.

2.8.2. Highlighted sentence element

The sentence element common to both clauses is highlighted at the start of a two-clause sentence as in the equation $x^2 + xy = x(x + y)$. This is a type of embedding.

(18)

Rastlin-a,	*če*	*ni*	*negova-n-a,*	*neha*	*rodi-ti*
plant.NOM.SG	if	be.IND.PRS.3SG.NEG	tended.F.SG	stop.PFV.PRS.3SG	bear.PFV.INF

plod-ove.
fruit.ACC.PL

'If the plant is not tended to, it stops bearing fruit.'

2.9. Altered word order in conjunctive clause

In complex sentences and most compound sentences, a clitic string immediately follows the conjunction.[12] The latter thus has the power to alter the word order in the clause it introduces. In Slovenian, a clitic string follows either the first sentence element[13] or the conjunction. All subordinating conjunctions alter the word order in the dependent clause by placing the clitic string immediately after the conjunction. The inability of a dependent clause to stand alone is also shown in its inability to arrange its own word order. A conversion shows the dependent clause as a stand-alone clause.

(19)

Očita-l-i	*so*	*mi,*	***da***	***naj***	***bi***	*jema-l*
reproach.LPT.M.PL	be.IND.PRS.3PL	I.DAT.SG	that	let	COND	take.LPT.M.SG

podkupnin-o.
bribe.ACC.SG

'I was reproached for allegedly taking a bribe.'

(19a)

Jema-l	***naj***	***bi***	*podkupnin-o.*
take.LPT.M.SG	let	COND	bribe.ACC.SG

'I allegedly took a bribe.'

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[12]　As noted by Cristofano (2003: 68), this is not a universal criterion for subordination but it is certainly valid in Slovenian.

[13]　Which can also be expressed as zero; in such a case, the sentence starts with the clitic string.

(20)

Drema-l	*je*	*pred*	*televizorj-em,*	*ko*	*ga*
nap.LPT.M.SG	be.IND.PRS.3SG	in front of	TV.INS.SG	when	he.ACC.SG
je	*zbudi-l*	*zvonec*	*na*	*vrat-ih.*	
be.IND.PRS.3SG	wake up.LPT.M.SG	bell.NOM.SG	on	door.LOC.PL	

'He was napping in front of the TV when the doorbell woke him up.'

(20a)

Zbudi-l	*ga*	*je*	*zvonec*	*na*	*vrat-ih.*
wake up.LPT.M.SG	he.ACC.SG	be.IND.PRS.3SG	bell.NOM.SG	on	door.LOC.PL

'The doorbell woke him up.'

A corpus-based analysis showed that most coordinating conjunctions affect the word order (too), with the clitic string immediately following the conjunction (Gabrovšek 2024).[14]

(21)

Prv-a	*faz-a*	*bo*	*zaključe-n-a*	*do*	*julij-a,*
first.NOM.SG	stage.NOM.SG	be.IND.FUT.3SG	finished.NOM.F.SG	to	july.GEN.SG
a	*je*	*veliko*	*odvisn-o*	*od*	*vrem-ena.*
but	be.IND.PRS.3SG	much	dependent.NOM.N.SG	from	weather.GEN.SG

'The first stage will be finished by July, though much depends on the weather.'

(21a)

Veliko	*je*	*odvisn-o*	*od*	*vremen-a.*
much	be.IND.PRS.3SG	dependent.NOM.N.SG	from	weather.GEN.SG

'Much depends on the weather.'

Some coordinating conjunctions never alter word order, example (22).

(22)

Bi-l-o	*je*	*nevarn-o,*	*toda*	*prežive-l*	*sem.*
be.LPT.N.SG	be.IND.PRS.3SG	dangerous.NOM.N.SG	but	survive.LPT.M.SG	be.IND.PRS.1SG

'It was dangerous, but I survived.'

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[14] This is a good example of a criterion that also applies to some coordination structures, which is to be expected given the complexity of a multi-sentence system.

(22a)

Prežive-l	***sem***.
survive.LPT.M.SG	be.IND.PRS.1SG

'I survived.'

2.10. Raising

The one sentence element is located in a different clause as it should consider the valency and collocability of both predicates (Carnie 2010: 192). In interrogative two-clause sentences, the interrogative word moves to the initial position in the sentence as its interrogative function is lost in its conjunction role. The dependent clause is usually introduced by the conjunction *da* 'that' as the subordinating conjunction with the most general meaning. In example (23), *od kod* 'where from' refers to *prihajate* 'come' and not to *mislite* 'think'. This is because the verb *prihajati* 'to come' envisages an adjunct of place, and *misliti* 'to think' does not. In example (24), the noun *posojila* 'loans' refers to *vrniti* 'to return'.

(23)

Od	*kod*	*drugi*	*mislijo,*	*da*	*prihajate?*
from	*where*	other.NOM.PL	think.IPFV.PRS.3PL	that	come.PFV.PRS.2PL

'Where do other people think you come from?'

(24)

Posojila	*vemo,*	*da*	*se*	*praviloma*	*ne*	*vrnejo.*
loan.NOM.PL	know.IPFV.PRS.1PL	that	REFL.ACC	usually	not	return.PFV.PRS.3PL

'As regards loans, we know they are usually not repaid.'

2.11. A subordinating conjunction can be preceded by a conjunction, particle or adverb

If a conjunction, particle or adverb precedes the subordinating conjunction, it emphasises the whole clause (Uhlik & Žele 2022: 129). Examples of these types are *in da* 'and that', *samo ko* 'only when', *ravno ko* 'just when'. When a particle emphasises a conjunction, it also emphasises the whole clause, which demonstrates that a dependent clause is a single unit. Phrases in the form of particle/adverb + conjunction have the potential to become conjunctive phrases, e.g. *le da* 'except that', *samo da* 'except that', *tudi če* 'even if', *medtem ko* 'while'.

(25)

Ravno	*ko*	*so*	*si*	*ogledova-l-i*	*posledic-e*
just	when	be.IND.PRS.3PL	REFL.DAT	check.LPT.M.PL	result.ACC.PL

trčenj-a,	*je*	*pridrve-l*	*policijsk-i*	*avt-o.*
crash.GEN.SG	be.IND.PRS.3SG	speed.LPT.M.SG	police.NOM.SG	car.NOM.SG

'Just when they were checking out the results of the crash, a police car speeded to the scene.'

A coordinating conjunction cannot be preceded by a conjunction, particle or adverb constituting part of the conjunctive clause.

2.12. A conjunction can be followed by a subordinating conjunction

A subordinating conjunction can be placed after any conjunction as the rule of embedding applies to subordinate sentences, and a clause can be embedded immediately after the first word of the superordinate clause, so combinations of a subordinating or coordinating conjunction and a subordinating conjunction are possible and productive, though they do not form phrases as each conjunction introduces its own clause.[15]

(26)

Velja	*star-o*	*pravil-o,*	*da*	*dokler*	*se*	*nam*	*zemlj-a*
valid.IPFV.PRS.3SG	old.NOM.SG	rule.NOM.SG	that	until	REFL.ACC	I.DAT.PL	soil.NOM.SG

lepi	*na*	*škornj-e,*	*jo*	*pusti-mo*	*pri*	*mir-u.*[16]
stick.IPFV.PRS.3SG	on	boot.ACC.PL	she.ACC.SG	leave.IPFV.PRS.3PL	at	peace.LOC.SG

'We follow the old rule that while garden soil sticks to our boots, we leave it alone.'

2.13. A subordinating conjunction can consist of multiple words without being a multi-part conjunction

Subordinating conjunctions usually consist of only one part, but they may include multiple words. Multi-word conjunctions can specify a particular relationship in more detail as each word in the conjunctive phrase specialises the meaning in more detail. The phrase *medtem ko* 'while' expresses simultaneity in more detail than just the conjunction *ko* (when), see example (2).

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[15]   A multi-word conjunction, e.g. *kot da* 'as if', introduces only one clause.

[16]   [tag="Vd"]{2}

2.14. Multiple clauses can relate to the same main clause

A dependent clause can be a compound clause itself and relate to the same main clause as a whole. In compound sentences, clauses are linked linearly (i.e., only those positioned adjacent to each other), so this is not possible.

(27)

Vs-a	*vas*	*hoč-e*	*vide-ti,*	*kdo*
all.NOM.F.SG	village.NOM.SG	want.IPFV.PRS.3SG	see.PFV.INF	who.NOM.SG
je	*priše-l,*	*kaj*	*so*	*pripelja-l-i,*
be.IND.PRS.3SG	come.LPT.M.SG	what.ACC.SG	be.IND.PRS.3PL	bring.LPT.M.PL
kdo	*odhaja …*			
who.NOM.SG	leave.IPFV.PRS.3SG			

'The entire village wants to know who's come, what they've brought, who's leaving…'

(28)

Dodaja,	*da*	*je*	*porod-a*	*ni*	*strah*
add.IPFV.PRS.3SG	that	she.GEN.SG	birth.GEN.SG	be.IND.PRS.3SG.NEG	fear.NOM.SG
in	*da*	*se*	*ji*	*ne*	*mudi.*
and	that	REFL.ACC	she.DAT.SG	not	hurry.IPFV.PRS.3SG

'She adds that she isn't afraid of giving birth and that she's in no hurry.'

2.15. Sequence of tenses

In complex sentences, the tense of the dependent clause is based on the tense in the main clause (Belaj & Tanacković Faletar 2020: 166). The tense in the main clause places the entire sentence in the past, present, or future, i.e., it represents the absolute time.[17] In a dependent clause, the present tense expresses simultaneity or general validity, the past tense expresses anteriority, and the future tense[18] expresses posteriority. The tense in a subordinate clause thus does not represent the absolute time (for example, the present tense does not necessarily express the present time) but is instead relative to the tense of the main clause, expressing a relationship (Haiman & Thompson 1984: 519; Piper 2018: 108; Uhlik & Žele 2018: 214). Simultaneity can also be expressed by both clauses using the same tense, even if it is not the present tense. All permutations are possible, i.e., any tense can combine with any tense. This permutability is highly limited in coordinate sentences, which is why

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[17]   Compared to the subordination, only simultaneity and sequence of events are possible in the coordination (Krvina 2019).

[18]   While the pluperfect also exists in Slovenian, it is hardly ever used, so it is not considered here.

we have listed here almost all the possible permutations in the Slovenian subordinations.

It is worth highlighting that the sequence of tenses in Slovenian is not defined as strictly as in some other languages, particularly Romance ones. This means that while tenses are indeed relative, the rules on how they follow each other and what each permutation means are not defined that sharply. The examples demonstrate that the same permutation can express multiple sequences of tenses.

2.15.1. Anteriority

Present + past

(29)

Misli-m,	*da*	*ste*	*naš-l-i*	*svoj-e*	*mest-o.*[19]
think.IPFV.PRS.1SG	that	be.IND.PRS.2PL	find.LPT.M.PL	ADJ.REFL.ACC	place.ACC.SG

'I think you've found your place.'

Past + past

(30)

Izkaza-l-o	*se*	*je,*	*da*	*pilot*
turn out.LPT.N.SG	REFL.ACC	be.IND.PRS.3SG	that	pilot.NOM.SG

ni	*ime-l*	*veljavn-e*	*licenc-e.*
be.IND.PRS.3SG.NEG	have.LPT.M.SG	valid.GEN.F.SG	licence.GEN.SG

'It turned out the pilot had no valid licence.'

2.15.2. Simultaneity

Present + present

(31)

Ker	*proces*	*poteka*	*v*	*celic-i,*
because	process.NOM.SG	take place.IPFV.PRS.3SG	in	cell.LOC.SG
mu	*reče-mo*	*celičn-o*		*dihanj-e.*
he.DAT.SG	say.IPFV.PRS.1PL	cellular.NOM.SG		respiration.NOM.SG

'As the process takes place in a cell, it is called cellular respiration.'

---

[19]   [tag="Gg.s.*"] []{0,3} [word="\,"] [word="da"] []{0,3} [tag="Gg.d.*"], negative filter [word="bi|bo|bo.*"]

This permutation is very common; in addition to the simultaneity of actions, it often expresses general validity.

Past + present

(32)

Po	*njihov-ih*		*obraz-ih*	*je*		*vide-l,*	*da*
after	their.LOC.PL		face.LOC.PL	be.IND.PRS.3SG		see.LPT.M.SG	that
komaj	*verjame-jo.*						
hardly	believe.IPFV.PRS.3PL						

'He could see in their faces that they hardly believed him.'

This permutation clearly shows that the present tense does not express a present time but rather simultaneity in the past.

Past + past

This permutation, in particular, shows how the sequence of tenses is not defined with much precision as it expresses simultaneity or general validity.

(33)

Ker	*v*	*hiš-i*	*ni*	*ime-l-a*
because	in	house.LOC.SG	be.IND.PRS.3SG.NEG	have.LPT.F.SG
centraln-e	*kurjav-e,*	*si*	*je*	*kuri-l-a*
central.GEN.SG	heating.GEN.SG	REFL.DAT	be.IND.PRS.3SG	burn.LPT.F.SG
na	*drv-a.*			
on	wood.ACC.PL			

'As she had no central heating in the house, she burned wood for heating.'

Present + future

(34)

Zakon	*bo*	*določi-l,*	*da*	*investitor*	*lahko*
act.NOM.SG	be.IND.FUT.3SG	stipulate.LPT.M.SG	that	investor.NOM.SG	can.ADV
prične	*prodaj-o*	*hiš-e*	*šele*	*po*	*pridobitv-i*	*dovoljenj-a.*[20]
start.PFV.PRS.3SG	selling.ACC.SG	house.GEN.SG	only	after	acquiring.LOC.SG	permit.GEN.SG

'The act will stipulate that an investor can start selling a house only after acquiring a permit.'

---

[20]   [word="bo|bo.*"][]{0,3}[tag="Gg.d.*"] []{0,3} [word="\,"] [word="da"][]{0,3} [tag="Gg.s.*"]

Future + future

(35)

Kriz-a	*ne*	*bo*	*končan-a,*	*dokler*
crisis.NOM.SG	not	be.IND.FUT.3SG	finished.ADJ.NOM.F.SG	until
bo	*v*	*Unij-i*	*25*	*milijon-ov*
be.IND.FUT.3SG	in	Union.LOC.SG	25	million.GEN.PL
brezposeln-ih.[21]				
unemployed.GEN.PL				

'The crisis will not end while there are 25 million unemployed people in the Union.'

2.15.3. Posteriority

Present + future

(36)

Pričakuje-mo,	*da*	*bo-mo*	*v*	*mesec-u*	*dn-i*
expect.IPFV.PRS.3PL	that	be.IND.FUT.3PL	in	month.LOC.SG	day.GEN.PL
pridobi-l-i	*gradben-o*	*dovoljenj-e.*[22]			
obtain.LPT.M.PL	building.ACC.SG	permit.ACC.SG			

'We expect that we will obtain a building permit within a month.'

Future + future

(37)

Vs-e	*bo-m*	*da-l*	*od*	*seb-e,*	*da*	*bo-m*
all.ACC.N.SG	be.IND.FUT.3PL	give.LPT.M.PL	from	REFL.GEN	that	be.IND.FUT.3PL
zdrža-l	*vs-o*	*tekm-o.*[23]				
hold out.LPT.M.PL	all.ACC.F.SG	match.ACC.SG				

'I'll try my best so that I'll hold out for the entire match.'

Future + perfective present

If a verb in a dependent clause is perfective, it can express posteriority even in the present tense (Toporišič 2004: 394), though this is not always the case.

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[21]   [word="bo|bo.*"] []{0,4} [tag="Vd"] []{0,3} [word="bo|bo.*"]

[22]   [tag="Gg.s.*"] []{0,3} [word="\,"] [word="da"] []{0,3} [word="bo|bo.*"][] {0,3}[tag="Gg.d.*"]

[23]   [word="bo|bo.*"][]{0,3}[tag="Gg.d.*"] []{0,3} [word="\,"] [word="da"][]{0,3} [word="bo|bo.*"][]
{0,3} [tag="Gg.d.*"]

(38)

Naredi-l-i	*bo-mo*	*vs-e,*	*da*	*pride*	*do*
do.LPT.M.PL	be.IND.FUT.3PL	all.ACC.N.SG	that	come.PFV.PRS.3SG	to

referendum-a.
referendum.GEN.SG

'We'll do anything for a referendum to take place.'

In clauses of purpose, simultaneity and posteriority are the norm regardless of the tenses of the predicates.

(39)

Na	*stol-u*	*se*	*je*	*nagni-l*	*naprej,*
on	chair.LOC.SG	REFL.ACC	be.IND.PRS.3SG	lean.LPT.M.PL	forward
da	*si*	*je*	*sezu-l*	*čevlj-e.*	
that	REFL.DAT	be.IND.PRS.3SG	take off.LPT.M.PL	shoes.ACC.PL	

'He leaned forward in his chair so that he took his shoes off.'

3. Multi-clause sentence system based on criteria for subordination

Given the diversity of criteria and the diversity of constructions forming multi-clause sentences, it is sensible to posit that there are different degrees of dependency between two clauses instead of only the coordination–subordination pair. The more criteria for subordination a particular construction fulfils, the more subordinate it is. It has been found that some criteria for subordination also apply to certain constructions normally considered coordinate, and some criteria for coordination also apply to constructions normally considered subordinate. There is no clear line between coordination and subordination but rather a continuous gradient. There are even differences among constructions usually deemed subordinate or coordinate: valency-dependent clauses depend on the main clause more than collocable dependent clauses do, and clauses of place depend on it more than clauses of cause do. The actual state can be approximated by splitting multi-clause constructions into a number of smaller units as regards the (non-)fulfilment of individual criteria.[24]

In my research on the Slovenian multi-clause sentence (Gabrovšek: 2023b), I applied all the criteria for subordination to all the main types of the Slovenian multi-clause sentence. If the criterion is fulfilled by the relationship, it receives 1 to 3 points, depending on its importance. The sum of all scores is 31: only the relative subject dependent clause fulfils all the criteria, but here the division is not so detailed as to be obvious. The criteria with the number of points are:

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[24]   Naturally, such units can be split into yet smaller parts.

1. Valency: 3

2. Subject valency:[25] 3

3. Collocability: 3

4. Correlative: 3

5. Restrictive function of conjunctive clause: 3

6. A conjunctive clause refers to only one word in the other clause: 3

7. A conjunction is mandatory: 2

8. Relativity: 2

9. A conjunctive clause cannot be interrogative: 2

10. Arbitrary position of the conjunctive clause: 2

11. Altered word order in conjunctive clause: 2

12. A subordinating conjunction can be preceded by a conjunction, particle, or adverb: 1

13. A conjunction can be followed by a subordinating conjunction: 1

14. Multiple clauses can relate to the same main clause: 1

The tables and graphs show the results, which clearly show that the degree of subordination is highest for arguments, while primary coordinations[26] do not meet any of the criteria for subordination. Supplementary clauses,[27] added propositions[28] and parentheses are between typical subordination and typical coordination.

We have excluded some criteria (embedding, raising, highlighted sentence element, subordinating conjunction can consist of multiple words without being a multi-part conjunction) from the graph because it is often difficult to determine whether a criterion is valid or not, or only valid for certain relationships. These criteria are still useful but not for a generalised analysis of larger groups of constructions, as it is done here, but rather for a more detailed analysis, as in Gabrovšek (2023b).

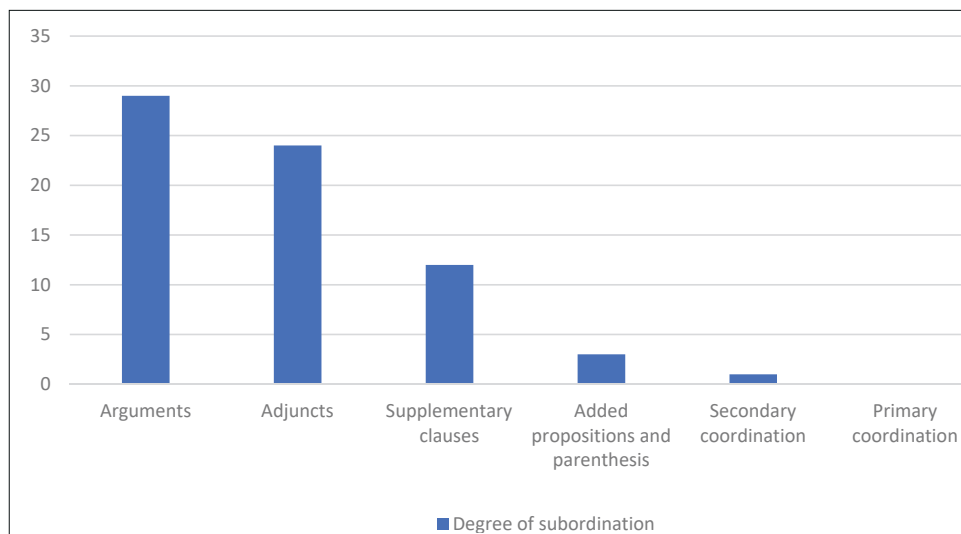[25]   Because of its importance, it is its own criterion.

[26]   These include conjunctive, disjunctive and adversative coordination, while secondary coordinations include causative and consequential coordination.

[27]   These are clauses that are introduced by originally subordinating conjunctions and express a typical coordinate relationship (Gabrovšek 2019, 2023b). In English, they partially overlap with non-restrictive attributive clauses.

[28]   Added propositions are two-clause sentences punctuated with a colon or semicolon. The second clause usually refers to the last sentence element of the first clause.

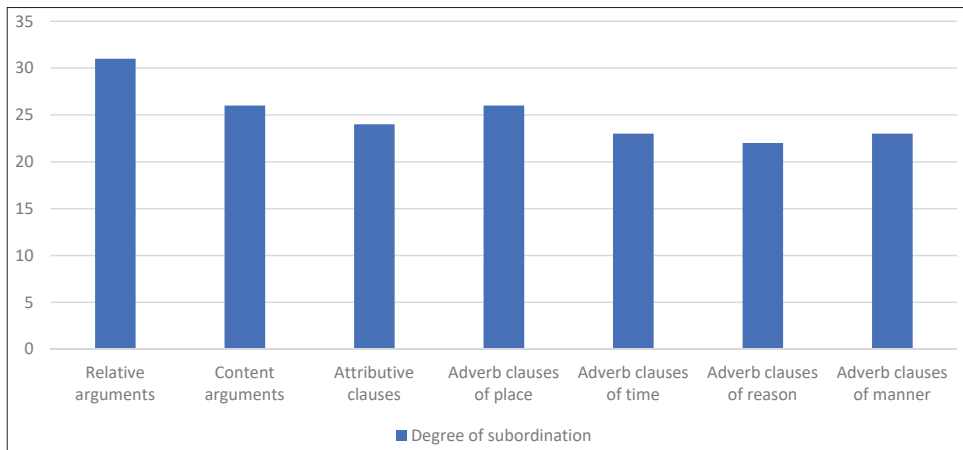*Table 1:* Criteria for subordination for all types of Slovenian multi-clause sentences

	Arguments	Adjuncts	Supplementary clauses	Added propositions and parenthesis	Secondary coordination	Primary coordination
1.	3	3	0	0	0	0
2.	3	0	0	0	0	0
3.	1	0	0	0	0	0
4.	3	3	0	0	0	0
5.	3	3	0	0	0	0
6.	3	3	2	2	1	0
7.	2	1	1	1	0	0
8.	2	2	2	0	0	0
9.	1	1	1	0	0	0
10.	2	2	2	0	0	0
11.	2	2	1	0	0	0
12.	2	2	2	0	0	0
13.	1	1	0	0	0	0
14.	1	1	1	0	0	0
sum	29	24	12	3	1	0

Graph 1: Degree of subordination for all types of Slovenian multi-clause sentences

Table 2: Criteria for subordination for all types of Slovenian subordinations

	Relative arguments	Content arguments	Attributive clauses	Adverb clauses of place	Adverb clauses of time	Adverb clauses of reason	Adverb clauses of manner
1.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
3.	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
4.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
5.	3	3	3	3	2	1	2
6.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
7.	2	2	1	2	2	2	1
8.	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
9.	2	0	1	2	1	0	1
10.	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
11.	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
12.	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
13.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
sum	31	26	24	26	23	22	23

Graph 2: Degree of subordination for all types of Slovenian subordinations

In Graph 2, the arguments from Graph 1 are divided into relative arguments and content arguments. Adjuncts are subdivided into attributive clauses and four main types of adverb clauses: each type can be subdivided into smaller categories. We see that the degree of dependency varies between types of subordination, but it is also clear that all subordinations meet most of the criteria for subordination.

4. Conclusion

The article has demonstrated the complexity of the multi-clause sentence system, which makes it sensible and necessary to study multi-clause sentences from the perspective of a number of criteria, both structural and semantic. The determination of these criteria, which is based on the existing literature and corpus-based research, allows for a more accurate understanding of the multi-clause sentence system, and, notably, clearly shows that the term subordination may be sensible but only as an extreme point of orientation.

Abbreviations

ACC – accusative; ADJ – adjective; ADV – adverb; CMPR – comparative; COND – conditional mood; DAT – dative; DU – dual; F – feminine gender; FUT – future tense; GEN – genitive; IND – indicative mood; INF – infinitive; INS – instrumental; IPFV – imperfective aspect; LOC – locative; LPT – L participle; M – masculine gender; N – neuter gender; NEG – negation; NOM – nominative case; PFV – perfective aspect; PL – plural; PRS – present; REFL – reflexive pronoun; REL – relative; SG – singular; SUP – superlative; 1 first person; 2 second person; 3 third person

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Kriteriji za određivanje subordinacije
u slovenskim složenim rečenicama

U članku se razmatraju kriteriji za subordinaciju u slovenskim složenim rečenicama koji su istraženi na korpusnoj građi. Fokus je na kriterijima neovisnim o individualnoj percepciji. Precizno definirani kriteriji olakšavaju klasifikaciju pojedinih tipova odnosa u sustavu slovenskih složenih rečenica. Smatramo da su najvažniji kriteriji za određivanje subordinacije: rekcija, pridruživanje, restriktivna funkcija zavisne rečenice i prisutnost korelata. Očekivano je da svi tipovi rečenica ne ispunjavaju sve kriterije za subordinaciju, što ukazuje na to da je binarna podjela na subordinaciju i koordinaciju neprecizna. Umjesto o takvoj podjeli, bolje je govoriti o različitim stupnjevima ovisnosti i povezanosti između dvije rečenice, koji se kreću od najvišeg stupnja ovisnosti na subordinativnom polu do najnižeg stupnja ovisnosti na koordinativnom polu.

Ključne riječi: sintaksa, rečenica, složena rečenica, stupanj ovisnosti, veznik

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