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CLASSIFICATION OF COMPLEX CONDITIONAL CONNECTIVES IN ROMANIAN

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Abstract: *This paper discusses what the specialized literature has called complex conditional connectives (CCCs), which express a more specific and restrictive type of condition as compared to the semantically unmarked 'if'. Our aim is to provide a complete inventory of these complex connectives in Romanian based on the classification of similar elements in languages such as English, Spanish, French or Italian.*

Key words: *CCCs, general features, classification.*

1. Introduction

Though the literature on conditionals is quite extensive, conditional structures other than *if*-clauses have traditionally attracted little attention from linguists. This is most definitely the case with what the specialized literature has called *complex conditional connectives* (Visconti 1996; Montolío 1999, 2000). According to Montolío (2000:143), this little interest in the study of other conditional connectives, and complex conditional connectives (henceforth CCCs) in particular, can be explained by the fact that they are generally considered to be completely parallel to *if*-clauses as well as equivalent to one another. Visconti (1996: 550), analysing contrastively the semantic and pragmatic properties of English and Italian CCCs provides a classification of these connectives within three categories: **hypothetical** (it. *nell'eventualita che (in cui), nell'ipotesi che, nel caso che (in cui), casomai, qualora, ammesso che, supponendo che, supposto che*; eng. *in the event (of) that, in case (that), given that, assuming (that) / supposing (that*); **positive restrictive** (it. *a condizione che, a patto che, nella misura in cui, nei limiti in cui, finché, in quanto, purché, sempre che;* eng. *on condition that, to the extent that, in so far as, as (so) long as, provided (providing) that*; **negative restrictive** (eng. *unless*). Montolío (1999:3701-3710) draws up a quite similar classification for Spanish CCCs: "**CCCs with nouns and verbs that create worlds**": *en el caso / supuesto, en la suposición / hipótesis / eventualidad de que* ' in the event (of) that, in case (that)', *suponiendo, imaginando* 'assuming (that) / supposing (that)'; **affirmative CCCs** *a condición de que* 'on condition that', *con tal de que, siempre que, siempre y cuando*

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'provided that, so long as'; **negative CCCs** *a menos que, a no ser que,* 'unless' *salvo / excepto que* 'except if'.

2. General features of CCCs

Contrasted with the non-marked conditional connective *if*, CCCs have a more complex morphosyntactic and lexical internal structure. This explains why they are more widely used in formal written registers than in oral ones, which definitely prefer *if*, for being considered a more economical conditional subordinating conjunction. According to Visconti (1996:553-557), the CCCs' lexico-semantic value can be represented along two axes which constitute the lexical entry of a connective: a) the logico-semantic meaning, truth-functional at the propositional level, is the result of two factors: a meaning of syntactic origin, which is assigned to a connective due to its lexico-syntactic categorization, and a meaning of lexical origin, which is determined by the specific lexical form which realizes the connective and the concepts with which it is associated; and b) the conventional meaning, which contains a set of features that are neither truth-functional nor determined by the context, conventionally attached to certain lexical elements within the CCCs. The conventional meaning contains two kinds of features: a set of general features, shared by several connectives and individual features, specific for one connective only. For instance, the general feature shared by the CCCs in the hypothetical category is *hypothesis* (consider *q*, the apodosis, in the framework considered by *p*, the protasis) and for the restrictive CCCs, this general feature is *condition*, *obligation*. As far as clause order is concerned, the great majority of conditional constructions introduced with CCCs invert the normal, unmarked order which characterizes prototypical *if* -clauses [if *p*, *q*], that is, CCC-clause order has to be related to the schema [*q* if *p*]. Unlike preposed protases, which tend to have discourse functions, these postposed protases function more like afterthoughts or justifications. The relation between *p* and *q* in a CCC structure is not one of cause, as is prototypically the case of conditionals, but rather one of *circumstance*. Thus, *p* represents „an a-posteriori specification that rectifies the content of the main clause, by stipulating the conditions under which *q* will or will not be carried out" (Montolio 2000:147). Also, unlike preposed prototypical *if*-clauses, the schema [*q* CCC *p*] is not iconic of a sequence of events, but rather of argumentational patterns. Their preference for postposing the protasis as well as their restrictive, exceptional character makes the information conveyed by a CCC-clause necessarily *rhematic*. This preference for an inverted order of the prototypical schema [if *p*, then *q*] also explains the inability of CCC-clauses to combine with the phoric *then* (*If it's sunny, then we'll go for a walk* → **Provided that / so long as it's sunny, then we'll go for a walk*) (cfr. Montolío 1999:146-148; 156-158). Conditional constructions introduced with CCCs are future-oriented, which makes them incompatible with non-prototypical, *non-predictive* (cfr. Dancygier 1998) conditional contexts (*Look, if you call this music, I'm Beethoven* →**Look, provided that you call this music, I'm Beethoven*; *My*

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husband, if I can still call him that, hates it →* *My husband, on condition that I can still call him that, hates it*). Also, CCCs rarely appear in counterfactual contexts which presuppose the creation of an impossible world (*If Columbus hadn't discovered America, the Indians would have been happier* → **Unless Columbus had discovered America, the Indians would have been happier*) (cfr. Montolío 1999:153-156).

3. CCCs in the Romanian linguistic tradition

The complex nature of CCCs has received some interesting analyses in languages such as English (Dancygier 1998), Spanish (Montolío 1999, 2000; Santana Marrero 2003), French (Dostie 1987), Italian (Visconti 1996). However, there is no equivalent study in Romanian. In fact, in our linguistic tradition, apart from incomplete inventories of complex conditional connectives, we find no agreement upon the status of complex subordinators of these elements. For instance, while earlier versions of Romanian grammars (GA 1954:214) consider elements such as *în ipoteza că* 'in the hypothesis in which' *cu condiția să* 'on condition that'*, numai să* 'provided that' or even *numai dacă* 'only if' as being CCCs, Avram (1986:228), or, more recently, GALR (2008:655) do not consider *în ipoteza în care* 'in the hypothesis in which', *în cazul în care* 'in the case in which' or *cu condiția să* 'on condition that' to be genuine complex subordinators because the presence of the definite article in the nouns they contain as well as the possibility of receiving other determiners (*în ipoteza fericită că* 'in the fortunate hypothesis in which', *în cazul neașteptat că* 'in the unexpected case in which') make them preserve semantic and syntactic individuality. Only their counterparts with indefinite nouns (*în caz că* 'in case') are analysed as complex conditional connectives. Conversely, GR (2013:418) does include *în caz(ul) că,* 'in the case in which' *în ipoteza că* 'in the hypothesis in which'*, cu condiția să* 'on condition that' among its inventory of complex conditional subordinators, whereas Gheorghe (2004:151) analyses elements including a relative pronoun, such as *în cazul / situația în care* 'in the case/situation in which'*, în măsura în care* 'to the extent that' as a type of „syntactic cliché" of interclausal linking which have a real good chance of becoming complex subordinators.

4. Classification of Romanian CCCs

Because of the controversy that these elements have raised in our grammatical tradition, it's only natural that we should not have a classification of CCCs in Romanian in the manner of those mentioned in our introduction. As our aim here is to resolve this shortcoming, we shall draw up a complete inventory of CCCs in Romanian within the three categories previously referred to.

The CCCs in **the hypothetical group**, which are characterized by the common feature of presenting *p* as a „framework" for *q*, then modalize *p* differently, according to the epistemic value of the abstract noun they include (*caz* 'case'*, ipoteză* 'hypothesis', *eventualitate* 'event', etc). Hypothetical CCCs, thus, form a scale

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of epistemic certainty from the highest to the lowest degree of probability: *în cazul în care (că)* 'in the case in which' → *în ipoteza în care (că)* 'in the hypothesis in which' → *în eventualitatea în care (că)* 'in the event that' (cfr. Montolío 1999:3709). Similar to *în cazul în care* are the complex subordinators *în situaţia în care* 'in the situation in which' and *în condiţiile în care,* 'in the circumstances in which' as the nouns *situaţie* 'situation' and *condiţiile* 'circumstances', which are part of these subordinating elements, share the epistemic value of the noun *caz* 'case': *Se poate face asta doar în cazul / situaţia / condiţiile în care datoriile sunt plătite la timp* 'This can be done only in case debts are paid on time'. *În condiţiile în care* 'in the circumstances in which' has not even been mentioned in any grammar study, although it is widely used in present-day Romanian with causal and concessive value, apart from the hypothetical one. *În cazul în care* 'in the case in which' has an alternative form, *în caz că* 'in case' which grammars consider as the specific conditional subordinator in Romanian. The list of hypothetical CCCs in Romanian can be completed, in the manner of the classifications referred to in our introduction, with elements such as *admiţând că, presupunând că, să admitem că, să presupunem că* 'assuming (that), supposing (that)' which include verbs (*admite, presupune* 'assume, suppose') which Montolío (1999:3710) refers to as "verbs that create worlds": *Presupunând că R=60%, atunci calculul este altul*. 'Assuming that R=60%, then the calculation is different'.

The group of positive restrictive CCCs introduce a condition that is "particularized" (Visconti 1996: 558) by the additional semantic contribution of the lexemes that are part of these complex connectives (*condiţie* 'condition, *măsură* 'extent' etc). This additional semnatic information can either indicate a necessary, strong condition (*cu condiţia să* 'on condition that') or a minimal, sufficient condition (*numai să* 'provided that'): *Explică-mi oricum, numai să fii convingător* 'You can explain it anyway you want provided that you are convincing', or a proportional correlation between the condition and its effects (*în măsura în care* 'to the extent that'): *Vă puteţi adresa primarului, în măsura în care nu găsiţi înţelegere aici* 'You can address the mayor, to the extent that you don't find any understanding here'. This condition can also acquire temporal values (*atâta timp / vreme cât, cât timp, câtă vreme* 'as long as' *odată ce* 'once'), such conditional constructions being paraphrased as [if during all this time *p*, then *q*]: *Nu vom discuta cu ei cât timp / atâta timp cât nu respectă aceste reguli* 'We won't discuss with them as long as they don't abide by these rules'; *Odată ce s-a declanşat boala, nu se mai poate face nimic* 'Once the disease starts, nothing can be done'.

The group of negative restrictive CCCs introduce exclusive conditions, specifying the only situation in which *q* will not be realized [*q* only if not *p*]. These two sets of restrictive CCCs, positive and negative, stand in complementary distribution, that is why their potential commutation entails a change in polarity (*I'll go with you provided you take me home afterwards* → *I won't go with you unless you take me home afterwards*)

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(Montolío 2000:145). The inventory of negative restrictive CCCs in Romanian includes elements which usually require negative consequents (apodoses): *fără să, decât dacă* 'unless'; *în afară de cazul când / în care* 'except if'): *Nu va veni fără să primească / decât dacă primeşte / în afară de cazul când primeşte aceste garanţii* 'He won't come unless he has these guarantees.

5. Concluding remarks

The study of what specialized literature has called *complex conditional connectives* (CCCs) has generally been less attractive to linguists if compared to the quite extensive work on conditional clauses introduced with *if*. Although an *if*-clause can appear in any context in which a CCC can and speakers clearly prefer to use the unmarked connector *if* even when the insertion of a CCC is possible, CCC constructions are not completely parallel to *if*-clauses, nor are these complex connectives equivalent to one another, as the general impression seems to be. The more complex morphosyntactic and lexical internal structure which these connectives possess in contrast to the non-marked *if*, makes them less abstract and more specific in meaning. Thus, the condition expressed by a CCC is more specific and restrictive as compared to the semantically unmarked *if*. The particular nature of CCCs not only makes their study in any language quite interesting from a grammatical, semantic and pragmatic point of view, but also significantly contributes to the overall understanding and defining of the complex concept of conditionality. Some valuable contributions to the study of CCCs have been made in languages such as English, Spanish, French or Italian. As the Romanian language does not even have a clear-cut classification of these subordinating elements, it is our belief that such endeavour, which has been the aim of our present article, not only fills a "gap" in our linguistic research field, but can also provide some interesting insights into the class of subordinating conjunctions.

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