THE PARATAXIS AND HYPOTAXIS SYSTEM IN THE SHORT STORY "MANHATTAN DAYS" *BY HERMIONE LEE*

Mădălina CERBAN*

Abstract: *The parataxis system refers to groups and phrases that are linked paratactically, namely they are given an equal status within complex sentences. Any members of the complex structures can serve the same function as the whole complex. Groups and phrases can be linked paratactically by apposition and by coordination. Appositions signal the semantic relations of elaboration while coordination expresses extending. Structures denoting enhancing are less common because their meanings are too specific to be expressed as a relationship between smaller units than clauses. The hypotaxis system gives unequal status, a structure functions as the dominant element and with the others functioning as dependents. In general, the dominant element has the same function as the whole complex, but this is not the case for the dependent elements. In this paper we discuss only the hypostasis system realized with the help of nominal groups and adverbial groups which are most used in our text. The first part of the article makes a short presentation of this system, and the second part analysis the parataxis and the hypotaxis system in the contemporary short story* "Manhattan Days" *written by the British writer Hermione Lee.*

Keywords*: logico-semantic relations, parataxis, hypotaxis, expansion, projection.*

I. The System of Taxis within Systemic Functional Framework

When we analyse a clause complex we take into consideration the ideational metafunction of language and the ways in which a clause can combine with further clauses in order to form a clause complex. In this paper we are not going to discuss the parts of a clause, but ranking clauses within systemic functional framework. In systemic functional grammar the main clause is called "primary clause" to which we can add a theoretically unlimited number of other "secondary" clauses. The most important difference between traditional approach and the systemic functional approach is that in the former case the combined clauses form a grammatical unit named "sentence", while in the latter case they do not form a new grammatical unit. Halliday considers that "the sentence is the highest unit of punctuation on the graphological rank scale and has evolved in the writing system to represent the clause complex as the most extensive domain of grammatical structure" (Halliday&Matthienssen: 2004, p.371).

According to systemic functional linguistics, clauses within complexes are interrelated grammatically in two systems, taxis and logico-semantic. Taxis is concerned with the interdependency relations between grammatical units forming a complex or between groups forming a group complex or between clauses forming a clause complex. Logico-semantic system is represented by two types of relationships: *expansion* which includes the meanings realized by conjunctions and *projection* which includes direct and indirect speech and thought.

When analysing the clause complexes relationships in a text the first step is to identify the boundaries between these clause complexes. In written cases there is no problem in identifying the boundaries due to the fact that they are signalled orthographically by full stops, in the case of sentences, commas or semi-colons

* University of Craiova, mcerban15@gmail.com

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between clauses. The second step is to determine whether a particular logico-semantic relationship (expansion or projection) holds between two clauses forming a complex or is a cohesive relationship between two clauses complexes. In this paper we will concentrate on the analysis of the system of taxis, pointing out that the hypotactic relations are, by far, more used than paratactic relations.

II. Analysis of the system of taxis in *Manhattan Days* by Hermione Lee

The second part of this paper is concerned of the structure of taxis in a short story written by Hermione Lee, namely Manhattan Days. We consider useful to give some details about the author and her work. Hermione Lee is a British writer, member of the British Academy and Royal Society of Literature and currently professor at New College of Oxford. This short story describes her experiences in New York during a fellowship at the Cullman Centre for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library in order to write a biography about Edith Wharton. She comments with humour her encounter with a taxi driver, her visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to Ground Zero, Central Park West for the inauguration of the Gates. From the beginning to the end of this short story the author emphasizes the differences between the American and the British people regarding political ideas, culture and so on.

In the following section we focus on identifying and analysing the types of relationships that are established between clauses in clause complexes throughout the short story.

In terms of types of causes, the author doesn't use too many uses simple structures. They are used especially for setting-up the action for each experience the author describes in this short story:

e.g. *I am here for ten months, away from home, family and academic job, on a fellowship at the New York Public Library.*
The bright, light apartment is on the 14th floor.
There's always a lot of noise at concerts and the theatre.
The gap between the Republicans at the convention and most New Yorkers seem gigantic.

From the total number of clause complexes this short story contains there are not too many complexes made up of only two clauses as illustrated by the following examples:

e.g. *I am very glad // that I didn't accept the offer of a much larger apartment on Roosevelt Island.*
When you leave New York, // you go to America.
I take a deep breath // and draw my lucky number, 13, a room with a view on to the lions standing guard outside the library and the Fifth Avenue.

The three-clause complexes become more numerous in the last part of the story, their number is higher than the proportion of the two-clause complexes:

e.g. *But it's no use// - while we treat American politics as tragedy,// in America British politics play as comedy.*
Some have finished their books, // some are going back to university duties, some are staying on in the city.

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As we continue analysing the remaining clause complexes, a constant feature of the story shapes through: the higher the number of clauses in a clause complex, the more numerous the instances are to be found. Thus, there are a lot of instances of four-clause complexes:

e.g. *His jokes go down extremely well: "I knew // I was in trouble [with my English] // when Arnold Schwarzenegger corrected me".*
Loudly she warns him: // "You are like // that poem by Emily Dickinson! // Because I had no time for Love, // Love had no time for me!"

Throughout the story clauses that are related mostly by hypotactic relationships, parataxis being less present. However, the most present type of clauses are the embedded one, and we can notice that the predominance of such types of relations helps to build up complicated structures. The style of this story is characterized by different structures and high variation.

In terms of means of linking, paratactic relations are signalled in most cases by conjunctions. The most frequently used are the conjunctions ***"and"*** and ***"but":***

e.g. *I walk towards it across Brooklyn Bridge[…], // **and** tears jump to my eyes with the sensational beauty of it.*
*I can't do much in my station in life, //**but** this makes me want to commit myself to a life in politics.*

Referring to punctuation used to signal paratactic relationships, commas and semi-colon are very rarely used.

The last part of our paper exemplifies the logico-semantic relations expressed by means of parataxis or hypotaxis. As we stated above, hypotaxis is more frequent. According to Halliday and Mathienssen (2004:377), there are two types of relationships which function in very different ways: expansion and projection.

1. Expansion

The three types of *expansion* identified in systemic functional linguistics are employed in the story:

a) In ***elaboration*** one clause expands another clause by restating in other words, clarifying it, specifying details, adding comments or examples. Such a clause does not add any essentially new element to the message, but gives supplementary information about what is already stated. In this story the author uses paratactic elaboration especially to describe the city, to express her feelings towards it.

e.g. *In the morning, New York seems half empty; // on the steps of the library there*
1 *=2*
were people crying.

On the other hand, hypotactic elaboration is represented by a relatively great number of non-defining relative clauses in the story which add extra information to an element in the message; most often such clauses are introduced by ***who*** *and* ***which:***

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e.g. *How could your leader, // **who** is clearly intelligent, // support our leader, // **who** is*

1 α *1* β 1 α

so dangerously stupid?

1 β

*…Charles and Camilla's marriage, an event // **which** leaves me cold*

A special characteristic of this text is represented by the fact that hypotactic elaboration is mostly expressed by non-finite clauses:

e.g. *I can hear the Friday evening string quartet // playing in the gallery above the main entrance hall*

the convention of seven hundred Santas // running to have their photograph // taken on the library steps outside my window; the man // yelling into his phone

b) An ***enhancing*** clause expands another by qualifying it with some circumstantial feature of time, place, cause, concession, condition, etc. Again both parataxis and hypotaxis are to be found, although the latter seem to be favoured:

e.g. *and groups of wooden chairs and herbs for everyone's use, // **where** I will spend a*

1 α

…great deal of time, // reading and drinking wine late into the evening

1 β

***If** the war is going according to plan, // someone needs to rethink the plan.*

1 β 1 α

c) ***Extension*** is used so that a clause expands another by extending beyond it; it provides new information, gives an exception to it or offers an alternative. Examples of both paratactic and hypotactic extensions can be found throughout the text:

e.g. - paratactic:

I never really 'get' the ballet, // but this is the place to learn about it.

- hypotactic

e.g. *I arrive on 1 September 2004, // while the Republican conference is going on far downtown.*

II. Projection

The relationship of projection is clearly different from that of expansion. The main difference is that projection is always an essential part of the meaning of the projected clauses that it is projected. At the same time, as we stated before, expansion does not change the sentence meaning radically.

The two options available for ***projection*** - locutions and ideas - may be exemplified with instances from the text; they are not very numerous, but there is an obvious preponderance of projecting locutions over ideas. Paratactic projection is more used throughout the story since almost all the author's opinions and other characters' opinions are quoted:

e.g. … and she blessed me: // 'May the rest of your day be so lucky.'

Philip says sadly: // 'I miss the bells.'

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The quietest and the most observant of all the fellows, a Spaniard and Russian speaking novelist, says to my wryly in my last week: // "Time is running".

Hypotactic projection (indirect speech) is used to render the content or only the idea of what was said. This type of projection is less employed by the author as paratactic projection is dominant throughout the story.

a) Locutions are the representation of the content of a verbal clause – what is said. Most of the examples are paratactic, with only few instances of hypotactic exemplification:

e.g. *Philip says // that he used to call those old men 'the generals'.*
I keep being told // that this year they are extreme

b) ***Ideas*** on the other hand refer to the representation of the content of a mental clause - what is thought; the projecting clause represents a process of cognition rather than a verbal one. There are no examples of paratactic ideas while instances of hypotactic ideas may be found in the following passages:

e.g. *Ellen […] thinks // that once they mattered to people;*

Conclusions

Drawing upon the data analysed, the main features of the short-story *Manhattan Days* by Hermione Lee in terms of relationships between clauses regard aspects as the numerous clauses are complex, which are sentences consisting of three or four clauses. They are more numerous than clause complexes made up of one or two clauses. Longer clause complexes have more exemplifications following the rule that the greater the number of clauses in a clause complex, the bigger the number of occurrences in the story.

In terms of the tactic relationships established between clauses within clause complexes, the author seems to favour hypotaxis, since hypotactic relations outnumber consistently paratactic relations. Paratactic relations are signalled most often by the system of conjunctions, ***and*** and ***but*** being the most frequently used.

Regarding hypotactic relations, they are usually placed before the dominant clauses due to the fact that the author wants to emphasize the circumstances in which the action is carried out. Although most of the clauses in this hypotactic relation are finite, there are numerous non-finite clauses, gerundial and infinitive clauses being most often employed.

The logico-semantic relations of expansion (elaboration, extension and enhancement) and projection (locutions and ideas) are expressed through both paratactic and hypotactic relations throughout the story. Elaboration seems to be realized mostly by hypotactic relations in terms of numerous non-defining relative clauses introduced by ***which*** or ***who***. In relation to extension, there is no preference for paratactic and hypotactic extensions, whereas hypotactic enhancement is slightly more used. Although not a constant feature, such clauses sometimes interrupt the dominant clause.

In the case of the logico-semantic relations of projection there is a noticeable preference for projecting locutions over ideas. Most of the locutions are projected in paratactic relations, while hypotactic relations cannot very frequently found in the text. On the other hand, the projection of the ideas cannot be noticed

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in constructions containing paratactic projection. Regarding hypotactic projected ideas, they can be noted in the text.

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