

## Similarities in the Syntactic Structure of the German and Croatian Language

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyse any potential similarities between the Croatian and German language and present them adopting a contrastive approach with the intent of simplifying the learning process in regards to the German syntactic structure for Croatian German as foreign language students. While consulting articles and books on the theories and methods of foreign language teaching, attention is usually drawn to differences between the mother tongue and the foreign language, especially concerning false friends etc. The same applies to textbooks, workbooks and how teachers behave in class. Thus, it is common practice to deal with the differences between the foreign language and the mother tongue but less with similarities. This is unfortunate considering that this would likely aid in acquiring certain grammatical and syntactic structures of the foreign language. In the author's opinion, similarities are as, if not more, important than differences. Therefore, in this article the existence of similarities between the Croatian and German language will be examined closer with a main focus on the segment of sentence types. Special attention is drawn to subordinate clauses as they play an important role when speaking and/or translating sentences from Croatian to German and vice versa. In order to present and further clarify this matter, subordinate clauses in both the German and Croatian language are defined, clarified and listed to gain an oversight and to present possible similarities between the two. In addition, the method to identify subordinate clauses in a sentence is explained as well as what they express, which conjunctions are being used for each type of subordinate clause in both languages and where the similarities and/or differences between the two languages lie.

**Keywords:** German and Croatian language, similarities in syntactic structure, subordinate clauses, main clauses, adverbial clauses, syntax

### I. Introduction

This paper will focus on analysing the possible similarities in syntactic structure of the Croatian and German language by presenting specific syntactical structures of both respectively. As the topic of Croatian and German syntax encompasses a wide range of research subjects, this paper will mainly focus on sentence structure, i.e. types of sentences of the mentioned languages. The rationale for selecting this topic is a personal interest as the author is in daily contact with German as foreign language (hereinafter: GFL) students and is privy to the shortcomings of textbooks and teaching methods. The author is of the opinion that similarities are not emphasized thoroughly enough in GFL lessons.

A stronger focus is placed on subordinate clauses because, as it turns out, they present difficulties for Croatian GFL students. Most problems occur in terms of identifying the type of adverbial clause and using them correctly in German, especially when it comes to choosing the correct conjunction.

Taking into account that each language follows its own set of rules, it is vital to point out the specifics to students in order to assist them in learning the desired language. Naturally, it is easier to learn languages which stem from the same origin, i.e. languages belonging to the same language family, for instance the Indo-European languages.

At first glance, the German and Croatian language respectively have little in common, but at second look similarities definitely do exist which could be helpful to foreign language students when considering the possibility of applying known rules from the mother tongue to the foreign language. By pointing out these similarities, certain aspects would presumably be more straightforward for the learner and perhaps add to their confidence level due to the fact that they already have

knowledge of specific structures from their mother tongue and are able to transfer them to the foreign language. Of course, differences should not be disregarded as they are also of great importance. Dependant on each students learning preference, some find it easier when focussing on similarities, others when focussing on differences; therefore, both needs should be satisfied in GFL and other foreign language lessons.

## II. The German and Croatian language

The German and Croatian language belong to the same large language family, i.e. the Indo-European language family. Consequently, they have certain common traits but also many differences especially in regards to dealing with the syntax of both languages. These differences make it especially difficult for Croatians to learn GFL. Unfortunately, in GFL lessons only the differences are normally pointed out, whereas the similarities are ignored, for the most part. As a result most students are familiar with basic distinctions as is the case, for instance, with the most striking one: the Croatian language does not possess determinatives, i.e. articles, whereas the German language has definite and indefinite articles. The Croatian language inflects nouns by adding a suffix; thus, posing a difficulty for German native speakers attempting to grasp the Croatian language.

Seeing as the German language system belongs to the West Germanic group, it morphologically is not only determined by article usage but also by declination of adjectives, a small number of grammatical cases (i.e. four) as well as regular and irregular verbs. The Croatian language system, on the other hand, belongs to the South-Slavic language group which has adopted the highly developed morphological system of the Proto-Slavic language. Throughout the course of history this ancient morphological system has been reduced yet these reductions bore no major impact on the declination or conjugation system.

Concerning linguistic typology, the German language belongs to the category of inflectional languages or rather inflective-analytic languages. Here a difference must be made between the "inner" inflection (root vowel changes, e.g. *gebe – gibst*) and the "outer" inflection (suffication, e.g. *Kind- Kinder*). Mixed forms of both, inner and outer inflection, also exist as is shown in the example of *Turm - Türme*. Inflections are not alike in all inflective word classes but rather are more pronounced in adjectives, verbs and pronouns than in nouns.

Adopted from the Proto-Slavic language, Croatian is a synthetic language which attempts to simplify the morphological system with its multitude of declinations and conjugations. The present-day Croatian language has maintained a small number of ancient language units and developed a grammar system with seven cases, definite and indefinite adjectives as well as a system of imperfect and perfect verbs, e.g. *jesti* (imperfect) and *pojesti* (perfect), meaning eat and eat up in English and *essen* and *aufessen* in German. The Croatian language possess a tripartite inflection system with noun, verb and pronoun inflection.

In regards to sentence structure (syntax), there are striking differences as well as similarities between the German and the Croatian languages which will be further examined in this paper. The Croatian language inherently follows the subject-predicate-object (SPO) rule. The indirect object is usually placed in front of the direct object but in general the word order in Croatian is relatively free. As word order follows the theme-rheme-structure, it can also appear as object--predicate-subject. As a general rule, the theme should be found at the beginning and the rheme at the end of the sentence. Whether a noun is definite or indefinite is not defined by definite or indefinite articles but rather depends on the positioning of the noun within the sentence. If the noun is placed at the beginning of the sentence (theme position), it is considered as definite; if it is at the end of the sentence (rheme position), it is regarded as indefinite.

Word order in the German language is much more clearly structured. The verb is in a central position and, due to its valence, requires a certain number of mandatory or facultative actants. Generally, the German word order also follows the SPO rule in declarative sentences which is determined by syntactic, morphological and communicative conditions. The indirect object comes before the direct object when using nouns, but vice versa if pronouns are used. Adverbials also follow rules, i.e. there is the TKML rule stating that the adverbial of time comes first, followed by adverbials of reason, adverbials of manner and adverbials of place at last. Of course, depending on the objective or emphasis of the entire sentence, adverbials may be placed in other positions (mainly at the beginning of sentences). It is possible to transform all adverbials into adverbial sentences which are then introduced by conjunctions indicating the type of adverbial clause they represent.

Concerning sentence structure (syntax), both languages follow the principle of the synthetic or inflective syntax which is common in all European languages. What's more, the German and the Croatian language, like all other European

languages, possess common categories of grammatical case, gender, mood and tense while non-European languages have other distinct categories.

In the Croatian language, the direct and the indirect object are distinguished. In a sentence, the direct object is usually placed in front of the indirect object and in the main word order, adverbials are placed in front or behind the verb finite verb. Sentences in the Croatian language are divided into independent and dependent complex sentences. According to Havkić, independent complex sentences can be strewn together without conjunctions yet conjunctions may also be used as in the German language. Hence, independent complex sentences are simply main clauses strung together, while dependent complex sentences are nothing but subordinate clauses. The difference between Croatian and German subordinate clauses is that the Croatian subordinate clauses stick to the main word order while the finite verb in subordinate clauses in German appears at the end of the sentence (cf. Havkić 2016:39).

### III. Types of sentences in the Croatian and German language

The distinction of subordinate clauses in the German language is based on the grammar book titled *Deutsche Grammatik* by Helbig G. and Buscha J. published in 1996, *Pregled gramatike njemačkog jezika/Deutsche Grammatik im Überblick* by Marčetić, T. issued in 2001 and *Lehr- und Übungsbuch zur deutschen Syntax* by Svoboda, M. issued in 2013. According to the authors, the German language distinguishes between simple (einfacher) and compound sentences (zusammengesetzter Satz). The latter consists of a combination of main and main clauses, named *Satzverbindung* by Helbig/Buscha as well as main and subordinate clauses, termed *Satzgefüge* by Helbig/Buscha. We speak of compound sentences if the sentence has at least two predicates.

Subordinate clauses can be further divided into subject and object clauses, predicative clauses (or simply "predicative") along with attributive and adverbial clauses. The latter can further be divided into adversative clauses (opposite), causal clauses (reason), concessive clauses (despite something), conditional clauses (condition), consecutive clauses (result), final clauses (purpose), modal clauses (manner), local clauses (place) and temporal clauses (time).

The distinction of sentences in the Croatian language is based on the grammar books titled *Gramatika Hrvatskoga jezika za gimnazije i visoka učilišta* by Silić J. and Pranjković I. published in 2007 and *Hrvatska gramatika* by Barić, E., Lončarić, M., Malić, D., Pavešić, S., Peti, M., Zečević, V., Znika, M.: issued in 1997. According to the mentioned literature, the Croatian language distinguishes between simple (jednostavne) and compound sentences (složene rečenice). The latter consists of main and main clauses, or main and subordinate clauses. As is the case with German, we speak of a compound sentence if it has at least two predicates.

Subordinate clauses can be further divided into predicative clauses, subject clauses, object clauses and adverbial clauses. Subordinate clauses relating to the noun or pronoun of the main clause are termed attributive clauses. Adverbial clauses are divided into *vremenske* (temporal clauses), *mjesne* (local clauses), *načinske* (modal clauses), *namjerne* (final clauses), *uzročne* (causal clauses), *pogodbene* (conditional clauses), *posljedične* (consecutive clauses) and *dopusne* (concessive clauses).

Ordinarily, in both languages compound sentences (main clause and subordinate clause) can be defined as sentences in which one sentence is embedded into the grammar structure of another sentence. The sentence into which grammar structure another sentence is embedded is labelled the main clause and the sentence being embedded into its grammar structure is termed the subordinate clause.

Subsequently, the subordinate clauses will be defined in more detail and examples in both the German and Croatian language will be presented in order to clarify just how the subordinate clauses are formed and used in both languages:

#### a) Subject clauses

In the German language subject clauses, in their role as subordinate clauses, replace the subject of the main clause. They are introduced by the conjunctions *dass*, *ob* or by an interrogative pronoun. Subject clauses are determined by the questions *wer* oder *was?* (who or what?). If the subject clause follows the main clause, the sentence begins with a correlative (cf. Svoboda 2013: 90):

Es ist schade, dass sie nicht gekommen ist.

Ob Gloria die Prüfung bestehen wird, ist nicht klar.

Instead of subject clauses it is also possible to use infinitive clauses (zu + infinitive construction) (cf. Marčetić 2001: 141):

Dass er die Prüfung bestanden hat, war ein wahres Glück.

Die Prüfung zu bestehen, war ein wahres Glück.

Subject clauses in the Croatian language are, in fact, subordinate clauses which replace the subject in the main clause and relate to the main clause in the same way that the subject relates to its predicate. In Croatian, subject clauses are further divided into relative subject clauses, relative-interrogative subject clauses and declarative subject clauses. The relative pronouns *tko*, *što*, *koji* and the conjunction *da* are used in subject clauses:

Tko čeka, taj dočeka.

Zna se da je ona preko veze došla do tog posla.

### Relative subject clauses

Relative subject clauses are compound sentences in which the subordinate clause is placed into the main clause by using relative pronouns or adverbs. Such subject clauses are very similar to the mentioned predicative clauses as they make it possible to insert relative pronouns and pronominal adverbs. The following pronouns and pronominal adverbs appear to take on the function of conjunctions:

(Onaj) tko ima, neka dijeli or Tko ima (onaj) neka dijeli;

(Oni) koji su dijelili, sretni su or Koji su dijelili (oni) su sretni;

### Relative-interrogative clauses

Relative-interrogative clauses are subject clauses in which the subordinate clause appears in the form of a question. Furthermore, they are reliant on passive forms of verbs or predicative expressions conveying a question, speech, thought, feeling or the like. Interrogative pronouns (*tko*, *koji*, *koja*, *koje*, *čiji* *čija*, *čije* and *što*), interrogative adverbs (*kako*, *kamo*, *kuda*, *odakle*, *gdje* and *kad*) or interrogative particles (*li* and *da li*) can be used to introduce relative-interrogative clauses:

Poznato je tko je opljačkao banku:

Nije rečeno čije je to dijete;

### Declarative subject clauses

Declarative subject clauses are subject clauses in which the subordinate clause is introduced by passive verb forms or predicative expressions conveying opinion, speech, feeling or the like. In such clauses *da* and *kako* are often used as conjunctions:

Priča se da bi opet mogao pasti snijeg na proljeće;

Nekad se mislilo da je dobro fizički kažnjavati učenike;

### b) Object clauses

Object clauses, in their role as subordinate clauses, replace the object of the main clause. They are introduced by the conjunctions *dass*, *ob* or by an interrogative pronoun. Object clauses are determined by the questions *wen* or *was?* (*whom?* or *what?*). If the main clause comes prior to the object clause, sentences do not begin with the correlative *es* but rather the correlative is always placed in mid-sentence. There are verbs that require the correlative *es* to be in the middle of the sentence as shown in these examples: *es ablehnen*, *es ansehen*, *es betrachten*, *es aufgeben*, *es aufnehmen*, *es empfinden* *als*, *es (nicht) ertragen*, *es halten für*, *es lieben/mögen/hassen/ (adverb+) finden*, *es nennen* (cf. Svoboda 2013: 91). If the object clause precedes that main clause, the correlative *es* is omitted.

In cases where the subject of the *dass*-sentence and the subject of the main clause are identical, it is possible to replace the *dass*-sentence with an infinitive clause. If the subject of the subordinate clause and the main clause is the correlative *es*, it is also possible to replace the *dass*-sentence by an infinitive clause. Generally speaking, infinitive clauses are "more elegant" than *dass*-sentences from a semantic perspective. (cf. Helbig/Buscha 1996: 671)

Ich weiß nicht, ob ich das wirklich kann.

Meine Professorin erwartet, dass ich die Prüfung morgen bestehe.

The mentioned definition of an object clause in the German language also applies to the Croatian language and they are formed just the same:

Nikad nije doznala što je bilo s njim.

This sentence is composed of the following two sentences:

Nikad nije doznala to.

To je bilo s njim.

The second sentence is embedded into the first sentence replacing the object to, thus, becoming the direct object of the sentence. When inserting the subordinate clause into the main clause, the demonstrative pronouns become relative pronouns. The pronoun to can be replaced by the conjunctions da, gdje, kako or the particle neka:

Tek sad student shvati da bi mogao pasti ispit.

Profesor zapovijedi studentu neka mu donese knjigu iz knjižnice.

At first glance, the subject and the object clause may seem to be relatively similar as far as content is concerned. In order to distinguish the two we ask the questions tko? (who?) or što? (what?) for subject clauses. Another indicator is: if there is no subject in the main clause of the compound sentence, it is a subject clause. The object clause can be distinguished by asking the question koga? (whom?) or što? (what?). Another indicator is: if there is a subject in the main clause of the compound sentence, it is an object clause.

### **c) Predicative clauses (or predicatives)**

In addition to subject and object clauses there is also the predicative clause in the Croatian language and the predicative in German. These subordinate clauses in the German language complete the Kopulaverb (linking verb) which, on its own, has little meaning. Only in connection with adjectives, nouns or subordinate clauses they form a complete sentence (cf. Helbig/Buscha 1996: 540)

Das Schlimmste ist, dass es draußen schneit.

Das ist, was mir am meisten Angst macht.

We can review the sentence by replacing the predicative with the correlative es: Das Schlimmste ist es. Another possibility is to ask the question: Was ist das Schlimmste? The answer would be the predicative dass es draußen schneit.

In Croatian, predicative clauses are embedded in the main clause and thereby replace the predicate:

Studij više nije što je nekad bio.

This sentence is composed of the following two sentences:

Studij više nije to.

To je studij nekad bio. (cf. Barić 1997: 467).

The predicative clause results from embedding the second sentence into the first sentence by attaching it to the predicate nije (negation of je) which occurs in both sentences.

### **c) Attributive clauses**

Attributive clauses are, in fact, subordinate clauses mostly referring to a noun in the main clause and acting independently of the verb valence. Attributive clauses are represented by subjunctive clauses with dass and subordinate clauses introduced by relative pronouns der, die, das etc.:

Sie möchte unbedingt die Prüfung bestehen, die sie letztes Jahr nicht bestanden hat.

Der Wunsch, dass sie die Prüfung bestehen wird, ist wirklich immens.

Infinitive clauses may be used to replace the attributive clause only in cases when the main clause and the attributive sentence have the same subject (cf. Marčetić 2001: 148).

Sie hat keine Hoffnung, dass sie die Prüfung je besteht.

Sie hat keine Hoffnung, sie jemals zu bestehen.

In the Croatian language, the attributive clause is a subordinate clause that is embedded in the main clause instead of its attribute. As an attribute it refers to the noun or pronoun:

To neugodno iskustvo bilo je zaboravljeno izjavom koja je osvanula u novinama.

This attributive-compound clause consists of the following two sentences:

To neugodno iskustvo bilo je zaboravljeno izjavom.

Izjava je osvanula u novinama.

The attributive clause results from embedding the second sentence into the first sentence by attaching it to the noun izjavom. This occurs in both sentences and can therefore be omitted when formulating an attributive clause which describes the noun in more detail. (cf. Barić 1997: 471-472)

#### **d) Adverbial clauses**

Adverbial clauses are sentences in which the adverbial is not represented by a word or a group of words but rather by a subordinate clause. We distinguish Adversativsätze (adversative clauses), Finalsätze (final clauses), Kausalsätze (causal clauses), Konzessivsätze (concessive clauses), Konditionalsätze (conditional clauses), Konsekutivsätze (consecutive clauses), Modalsätze (modal clauses), Lokalsätze (local clauses) and Temporalsätze (temporal clauses). (cf. Helbig/Buscha 1996: 680)

In the Croatian language, compound sentences in which the subordinate clause refers to the main clause in the same way the adverbial refers to the predicate, pertain to adverbial clauses (cf. Silić/Pranjković 2007:334):

Čim sam prvi put pao ispit izbacili su me iz fakulteta.

This adverbial clause consists of the following two sentences:

Tada su me izbacili iz fakulteta.

Prvi put sam pao ispit.

The adverbial clause results from embedding the second sentence into the first sentence where the adverbial of time tada used to be. In the Croatian language there are also different types of adverbial clauses: mjesne (locale/place), načinske (modal), usporedne (comparative), uzročne (causal), posljednične (consecutive), namjerne (final), uvjetne (conditional), dopusne (concessive), vremenske (temporal) (cf. Barić 1997:471).

#### **Adversativsätze (adversative clauses)**

In terms of adversative clauses in the German language, the action of the subordinate clause is in contrast to the action of the main clause. The adversative clause is introduced by the conjunctions: sofern, insofern, soweit, insoweit, während, wohingegen (cf. Svoboda: 110):

Während er gestern eine Prüfung schrieb, habe ich gefeiert.

Die Studierende schaffte jede Prüfung beim ersten Mal, wohingegen der Studierende immer mehrere Anläufe brauchte.

In Croatian there are compound sentences called suprotne rečenice (adversative clauses). They express a difference, separation or incompatibility of the main and subordinate clause. The conjunctions a, ali, nego, no, već are used to introduce them:

Veselili smo se ispitu, a professor ga je otkazao.

Napokon smo prošli kolokvij, ali uskoro moramo na završni ispit.

#### Kausalsätze (causal clauses)

According to Helbig/Buscha, the causal clause in the German language is further divided into the causal clauses of condition, concession, consequence and purpose. The causal clause gives a reason for an action in the main clause, can be determined by the question why? and is introduced with the conjunctions weil, da, zumal (cf. Helbig/Buscha 1996: 689).

Sie lernte viel, weil die Grammatik ihr schwer fiel.

Da sie viel nachzuholen hatte, kam sie im Unterricht nicht mit.

In the Croatian language, conjunctions are used in the causal clause and also yield a reason for the action in the main clause. Examples include: jer, što, kad, kada and budući da. In addition, according to style preference, other usable variations are: jerbo, pošto, gdje, zašto, bo, zato što, stoga što, uslijed toga što, zahvaljujući tomu što etc. (cf. Barić 1997:495-498):

Možda sam prošao ispit upravo zato jer sam slušao profesora na predavanjima.

Budući da sam na zadnjoj godini faksa, više me ne može niža iznenaditi.

#### Konditionalsätze (conditional clauses)

The conditional clause predicts a condition or consequence, can be determined by the question in which case? and is introduced with the conjunctions wenn, falls, im Falle, dass..., sofern, soweit as well as the facultative correlative so, dann (cf. Svoboda 2013: 108 and Marčetić 2001: 146).

Ich gehe morgen zur Sprechstunde, wenn du der Professor an der Uni ist.

Falls ich genug lerne, (so/dann) bestehe ich die Prüfung.

It is also possible to omit the conjunctions and construct a conditional clause without an introductory word:

Lerne ich genug, bestehe ich die Prüfung.

The conditional clause is termed pogodbeno or uvjetna rečenica in Croatian. The following conjunctions are used to introduce the conditional clause: ako, da, kad, li, ukoliko, samo ako, samo da, samo kad. In the Croatian language three types of conditional clauses are distinguished:

- Stvarne pogodbene rečenice (reality) – the action of the main clause will only take place if the condition of the conditional clause is realized. The conjunctions used in such sentences are ako and ukoliko:

Ako vam kopiramo materijale, morate platiti papir.

- Moguće pogodbene rečenice (possibility) – The action in the main clause will be realised if it is probable that the action in the subordinate clause also is achieved. The predicate of the subordinate clause is in the subjunctive and is always introduced with the conjunction ako:

Ako bi išao polagati ispit, prošao bih ga.

- Nestvarne or irealne pogodbene rečenice (unreality) – If the condition was possible, the realisation of the action in the main clause would be possible also. In such sentences the subordinate clause is mainly in the present or past tense and the conjunction used is da. The kondicional I or II (Konjunktiv I or II/subjunctive I or II) is applied in the main clause.

Da postoje duhovi, ja bih ti vjerovao.

#### Konzessivsätze (concessive clauses)

According to Helbig/Buscha, the reasoning mentioned for the subordinate clause does not yield the expected consequences due to the law of cause and effect. The concessive clause can be determined by asking the question despite

of what? and is introduced by the conjunctions obgleich, obwohl, obschon, obzwar, wenngleich, wenn auch, wenschon, wiewohl, ungeachtet, gleichwohl (cf. Helbig/Buscha 1996: 691):

Obwohl er keine Ahnung hatte, ging er zur Prüfung.

In the Croatian language the concessive clause represents a type of sentence where the expected result is not achieved, regardless of whether or not it meets certain conditions. The following conjunctions and adverbs are characteristic for this type of sentence: opet, ipak, ali, ali opet, no, pa opet, pa ipak. In addition, the conjunctions iako, ako i, ako, premda, makar, makar da, ma, mada, da, i da, da i, pa da i, koliko can also be used in a concessive clause (cf. Barić 1997:511-514):

Premda se nisu prewise pripremili za ispit, ipak su se odlučili otići i pogledati pitanja.

Makar se ti i ljutila, ne mogu ti dati dobru ocjenu.

### **Konsekutivsätze (consecutive clauses)**

The consequence expressed in the subordinate clause results from an action in the main clause, a particular level/quality of action in the main clause, or even the non-occurrence of an expected consequence (negative consecutive clause). The consecutive clause can be determined with the question what is the consequence? and is introduced by the conjunctions so dass, als dass, dass (cf. Helbig/Buscha 1996: 693):

Er kocht sehr gut, so dass man wirklich alles essen kann.

Er war in der vergangenen Woche bei einem Kochkurs, ohne dass er etwas dazugelernt hat. (Negative consecutive clause)

The definition of the consecutive clause in the Croatian language is identical to that in German. Conjunctions da, kako, te are used for consecutive clauses in the mentioned language (cf. Barić 1997:501-502):

Fakultet je toliko dosadan da svi redovno spavamo na predavanjima.

### **Finalsätze (final clauses)**

The final clause is dependent on personal matters and expresses an intention, purpose or goal. It can be determined with the question what is the purpose? and is introduced by the conjunctions damit, dass, auf dass. Another possibility is to form it with the infinitive clause um+...+zu (cf. Svoboda 2013: 110):

Der Professor gab den Studierenden eine Hausaufgabe, damit sie zu Hause üben.

Die Studierenden nahmen die Hausaufgabe mit, um damit zu üben.

In the Croatian language, the definition of the final clause corresponds to that in German and the conjunctions da, kako, li, neka are used to introduce it. Furthermore, the adverb zato or the expression radi toga are often used to introduce the final clause. In this case, the conjunction da is placed after these two words (cf. Barić 1997: 498-499):

Student požuri radi toga da prije profesora stigne u predavaonicu.

Student potrči da stigne na bus.

### **Modalsätze (modal clauses)**

In German, the modal clauses express the manner by which an action occurs in the main clause. It can be determined by asking how? Modal clauses are further divided into:

- Instrumentalsatz (instrumental clause): giving us information on the means being used in order to achieve a certain goal or eventual success.

- Modalsatz des fehlenden Begleitumstands (modal clause lacking attendant circumstance): against all expectations, the circumstance of the action in the main clause is not being realised in the subordinate clause. The conjunction used for this clause is ohne dass.

- Vergleichssatz/Komparativsatz (comparative clause): representing modal clauses in the proper meaning of the word, where the action in the main clause is not described by manner but by comparison. If two circumstances are compared by

establishing a parallel with one or more comparatives, we speak of a *Proportionalsatz* (proportional clause): Je mehr man lernt, desto besser die Note.

Conjunctions used in modal clauses are *indem*, *ohne dass*, *statt das*, *anstatt dass*. (cf. Helbig/Buscha 1996: 684).

Er bestand die Prüfung, ohne dass er gelernt hatte.

Er ging weg, ohne dass er uns etwas sagte.

Modal clauses lacking attendant circumstance can also be expressed by an infinitive clause but only if the subject in the main clause and the subordinate clause are comparable.

In the Croatian language, the definition of modal clauses is the same as in German. The conjunctions *kako*, *kao što*, *kao da*, *koliko*, *što* are used to introduce the modal clauses:

On je pisao kolokvij onako kako to rade svi studenti.

Pri tome nije prepisivao kako to čine svi ostali student.

The so-called correlative adverbs *tako*, *ovako*, *onako* also occur in modal clauses but they can be omitted as shown in the second sentence above. (cf. Barić 1997:483)

### **Usporedne rečenice (Vergleichssatz/comparative clause)**

In the Croatian language, the comparative clause is not part of the modal clause but rather acts as an autonomous adverbial clause. The action of the main clause is compared to the action in the subordinate clause (mostly in terms of quality). There are three categories of comparative clause (cf. Silić/Pranjaković 2007:340-341):

- comparison of equality (conjunctions *kao što*, *kako*, *kao da*):

Ove godine je vrijeme lijepo kao što je bilo i prošle godine.

- comparison of inequality (conjunctions *nego što*, *nego*, *nego da*):

Studenti su lošiji nego što su bili prošle godine.

- analysis of comparative clauses (conjunctions *što*, *kako*, *koliko*, *to*, *tako*, *toliko*)

Što sam više čitala, postajalo je sve jasnije.

The latter is comparable to the German *Proportionalsatz* (proportional clause).

### **Lokalsätze (local clauses)**

The local clause answers the question of where the action of the main clause occurs and refers not only to place but also to direction and extended areas of action. The modal clause is not introduced with subjunctions but rather with local adverbs *wo*, *wohin*, *woher*:

Das Universitätsgelände beginnt, wo das Krankenhausgelände endet.

Soweit das Auge reichte, (so weit) war die Dürre fortgeschritten.

If an antecedent is present in the main clause and the subordinate clause is introduced with *wo* to which it refers, it is not considered a local clause but rather an attribute clause. (cf. Svoboda 2013: 104):

Das Universitätsgelände beginnt dort, wo das Krankenhausgelände endet. (Attributive clause)

The local clause in the Croatian language also expresses where an action in the main clause takes place and gives information on direction and extended areas of action. The conjunctions *gdje*, *kamo*, *kud*, *kuda*, *otkud*, *otkuda*, *odakle*, *dakle* are used to introduce local clauses (cf. Barić et al. 1997: 480-482):

Uputila se na fakultet gdje ju je u kabinetu čekao profesor.

Živjela je u stanu odakle je imala lijep pogled na more.

### **Temporalsätze (temporal clauses)**

Temporal clauses express the time at which the action in the main clause takes place. In the German language further distinctions are made between the three categories of simultaneity, anteriority and posteriority.

The most common conjunctions for temporal clauses are *als* and *wenn*. *Als* is used if the action in the main clause happens once in the past, while *wenn* is used if the action in the main clause has occurred repeatedly or happens regularly (cf. Marčetić 2001: 142):

Sie hat ihre alte Schule besucht, als sie in Berlin war.

Wenn es schneit, gehe ich immer Skifahren.

Conjunctions used in temporal clauses of simultaneity are *während*, *indem*, *indes*, *indessen*, *solange*, *sobald*, *sowie*, *sooft*, *als*, *wie*, *wenn*, *nun*, for anteriority *nachdem*, *als*, *wenn*, *sobald*, *sowie*, *seit*, *seitdem* and for posteriority *bis*, *bevor*, *ehe*, *als*, *wenn*.

The definition of temporal clauses in the Croatian language is the same as in German. Temporal clauses are also divided into the subcategories of simultaneity, anteriority and posteriority. The conjunctions *kad*, *kada*, *dok*, *dokle*, *dočim*, *čim*, *jedva*, *tek*, *netom*, *pošto*, *kako*, *što* *otkada*, *otkako*, *kad* *god*, *dok* *god*, *dokle* *god*, *sve* *dok*, *samo* *dok*, *jedva* *što*, *tek* *što*, *istom* *što*, *netom* *što*, *nakon* *što*, *tek* *kad*, *poslije* *nego*, *prije* *nego*, *poslije* *nego* *što*, *prije* *nego* *što* are used in Croatian to introduce temporal clauses (cf. Barić et al. 1997: 486-494):

Bio je zadnji ispitni rok kad je konačno uspio položiti morfologiju.

Čim bude imao diplomu, dobit će posao u struci.

### **IV. Conclusion**

According to the above mentioned classifications, we can already see that the division of simple and compound sentences, subject and object clauses, predicative clauses (predicatives), attributive clauses and adverbial clauses is nearly the same in both the German and Croatian language. Furthermore, the subdivision of adverbial clauses into adversative clauses, causal clauses, concessive clauses, conditional clauses, consecutive clauses, final clauses, modal clauses, local clauses and temporal clauses is also not lacking in similarities.

Certainly slight differences do exist between the German and Croatian language as is proven in the example of subject clauses. In the German language there is one subject clause, whereas in the Croatian language the subject clause is further divided into relative subject clauses, relative-interrogative subject clauses and declarative subject clauses, as specified in the preceding paragraph. Object clauses are identical in both languages, they express the same information and are formed in a like manner. Both languages have the predicative clause, or predicative but a slight difference lies in the fact that, in German the predicative completes the linking verb while in Croatian the predicative clause replaces the verb of the sentence in the main clause.

A small difference can be noticed in the modal clause between the two languages, as there are subcategories of modal clauses in German language exist which do not appear in the Croatian language. In German, the modal clause is subdivided into *Instrumentalsatz* (instrumental clause), *Modalsatz des fehlenden Begleitumstands* (modal clause lacking attendant circumstance) and *Vergleichssatz/Komparativsatz* (comparative clause), which also includes a subcategory titled *Proportionalatz* (proportional clause). Nevertheless, the Croatian language also has a comparative clause and a proportional clause which are not part of, nor are they subcategories of the modal clause but rather represent a separate type of adverbial clauses.

Local clauses and temporal clauses are used identically in both languages and even the division into simultaneity, anteriority and posteriority of temporal clauses is present in both languages.

Concerning recognition of subordinate clauses, the same questions can be asked in both languages to identify them, considering that the function of the subordinate clauses is the same. With the exception of the conjunction *kako* for the object clause, in most cases even the conjunctions can be transferred (or translated) in a straightforward manner. In both

languages the subject and the object clause can be introduced by interrogative pronouns, kako also being one of them. The problem arises in Croatian object clauses, e.g. *Znala je, kako ću proći ovaj ispit* meaning: She knew (that) I would pass this exam. In this case, the interrogative pronoun *kako* does not function as an interrogative pronoun but rather as a conjunction and must be translated into German as *dass* or into that as shown in the English sentence above. Therefore, the proper German object clause would be: *Sie wusste, dass er die Prüfung bestehen wird*. For the most part, Croatian GFL learners have difficulties in this area as they translate *kako* with the German interrogative pronoun *wie*. As a result, the German object clause *Sie wusste, wie ich diese Prüfung bestehen wird* does not express the same content, as it means She knew HOW I would pass this exam.

In conclusion it can be stated that the German and Croatian language have much in common when it comes to syntactic structure, especially regarding sentence types. In the author's opinion it would be useful to introduce a more contrastive approach to grammar and textbooks alike in order to point out obvious similarities between the two languages. This would surely make it easier for GFL learners as they would recognize that they already possess an abundance of knowledge which can be transferred from their mother tongue to the foreign language, in this case German. Particularly, with regards to the types of sentences presented in this paper, it is easy to apply the structures from the mother tongue to the foreign language except in the case of object clauses, as mentioned in the paragraph above. Still, the questions asked to determine sentence type and conjunctions to be used with every respective type of sentence are indistinguishable. Thus, pointing out the similarities in this particular case would be advantageous as it can prove confusing when solely being exposed to the grammar structures of the foreign language without linking it to that which one already knows. This is especially the case in terms of the background of terminology for respective grammar structures of the foreign language seeing as though it is already poses a difficulty to learn.

As mentioned in the introduction, most GFL lessons/grammar books/textbooks constantly refer to the differences between the German and the Croatian languages which, of course, is justified as the difficulties are important and surely aid in preventing mistakes. Yet, it would seem just as important to mention as many similarities as possible for they can be of help in terms of broadening knowledge on the basis of what learners already have acquired. Students would simply have to link or transfer the knowledge from their mother tongue to the foreign language.

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