

Coordination and subordination, and the relationship between grammar and discourse

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1. Coordination, subordination, foregrounding and backgrounding

Coordination:

two clauses joined together in which both are fully finite and fully independent; neither is dependent on the other.

Foreground

That part of a narrative that advances the main story line, and builds sequentially on the foreground material that precedes it.

Subordination

two clauses, one of which is dependent on the other (larger) clause for some part of its interpretation.

Background

Material in a narrative that adds description, but does not contribute to the process of story telling directly, and is not necessarily temporally ordered.

Example:

There was once a man who lived alone in a hut in the forest.

He spent his time growing food to eat, **and carving wood into tools** to sell in the markets in the nearby villages.

Then, one day, a tall woman dressed in a long blue dress, followed by three cats and three dogs, **walked up to his hut.**

She greeted him, and told him why she had come....

2. Coordination and subordination:

(1) I came home, then fed the cat and watched some TV.

(2) [While whistling], I took [the letter [that you wrote]] [to post].

(3) [∅ Whistling], I took [the letter [∅ you wrote]] [to post].

(4) Dia masuk ke rumah, terus — duduk.
3SG enter ALL house and.then sit
'He entered the house and then ___ sat down.'

(5) Sesudah dia masuk ke rumah, dia duduk.
after 3SG enter ALL house 3SG sit
'After he entered the house, he sat down.'

- (6) Sesudah masuk ke rumah, dia duduk.
 after enter ALL house 3SG sit
 'After entering the house, he sat down.'

3. Complex cases

- (7) Kalau dia tidak datang, saya tidak ikut.
 if 3SG not come 1SG not accompany
 'If s/he doesn't come, I'm not going.'

- (8) Kalau dia, saya tidak ikut.
 if 3SG 1SG not accompany
 'If (it's) her/him, I'm not going.'

- (9) Kalau hujan, saya tidak ikut.
 if rain 1SG not accompany
 'If it rains, I'm not going.'

- (10) Kalau nasi, saya lebih suka.
 (if) rice 1SG more like
 'I prefer rice.'

- (11) Saya makan nasi yang di-masak ibu.
 1SG eat rice REL ACT-cook mother
 'I'm eating the rice that mother cooked.'

- (12) Saya makan yang di-masak ibu.
 1SG eat REL ACT-cook mother
 'I'm eating what mother cooked'

- (13) Apa yang di-masak ibu?
 what REL ACT-cook mother
 'What did mother cook?'

4. Ø

- (14) Saya pergi untuk makan nasi.
 1SG go COMP eat rice
 'I'm going to eat rice.'

- (15) [_S Saya pergi [_{COMP} Ø makan nasi]].

- (16) Sudah boarding, masih check-in!
 already boarding still check-in
 '(They're) already boarding (the aircraft)
 (and he's) still checking in!
 '(Even though they're) already boarding, (he's) still checking in!
 '(They're) already boarding (the aircraft) (and he's) still checking in!'

5. Conclusion?

Trust nothing and nobody!