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Supplementive Clauses in Resolutions

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The paper studies the form and function of supplementive adverbial clauses in written formal institutional discourse, taking the example of UNESCO documents. The analysis concentrates on the realization type, position and semantic role of supplementive clauses. The findings evidence that UNESCO resolutions are characterized by a high frequency of occurrence of homosemantic series of subjectless supplementive clauses in medial position. The functional interpretation of the quantitative findings accounts for the textual role of supplementive clauses and for the contextual tasks they perform in referring to the situational context of diplomatic discourse.

1 Introduction

The present paper investigates complexity in written formal institutional discourse and is a part of a larger study which analyses the form and function of subordinate clauses within the discourse of diplomacy. This contribution concentrates on the realization type, position, semantic and textual role of supplementive adverbial clauses taking the example of UNESCO documents. The high frequency of occurrence of adverbial clauses is considered to be one of the characteristic features contributing to the complexity of written formal institutional discourse, and in particular of legal language, where they are considered to serve, together with relative clauses, the primary concern for clarity and disambiguation (Hiltunen 1990: 85).

2 Material

Resolutions are legal instruments used by international organizations, e.g. the United Nations Organization, the European Union, for stating their decisions concerning the formation of future behaviour with regard to the internal administration of the respective organization and

the ordering of relations between independent states. There are two types of resolutions, namely preparatory resolutions dealing with administrative issues and elections, the majority of which perform the speech act of declaration, and executive resolutions stating decisions concerning the future behaviour of the organization, which perform directive speech acts and declarations.

Resolutions are typically represented by one-sentence texts of similar structure, which include an agentive subject followed by an optional series of adverbial clauses constituting the preamble component of the text and a sequence of finite predicates indicating the intended action or state. This investigation explores the form and function of the adverbial clauses forming part of the preamble component of resolutions.

The present corpus-based research analyses the 1999 ‘*Resolutions*’ volume of the records of the 30th General Conference of UNESCO. The language material includes 114 resolutions (26 preparatory and 88 executive resolutions), and the total size of the text under investigation is 45,000 words.

3 Supplementive clauses

Quirk and al.’s *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (CGEL) (1985) defines supplementive clauses as optional sentential circumstance adverbial participle and verbless clauses introduced without a subordinator which are characterised by a considerable indeterminacy as to their semantic role (CGEL: 1123). Supplementive clauses with a subject are referred to as absolute clauses, since they are not explicitly bound to the matrix clause syntactically, while in the case of subjectless supplementive clauses the implied subject, which according to the normal attachment rule is assumed to be identical with the subject of the superordinate clause, provides a link with the matrix clause.

The relationship between a supplementive clause and the main clause is considered to be loose and typically left indeterminate, generally indicating a circumstance that supplements the action or state in the main clause. The actual nature of the accompanying circumstance has to be inferred from the context and may imply a temporal, conditional, causal, concessive, or circumstantial relationship.

According to the CGEL (1124) and Biber et al.’s *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (LGSWE) (1999: 201), the meaning relation implied by supplementive clauses is affected by their position in the sentence, i.e. they are considered to indicate background information in initial position, parenthetical in medial position and supplementary in final position. In the case of *ing*-clauses an additional factor affecting the meaning of supplementive clauses is the semantics of the verb, i.e. verbs used dynamically tend to suggest a temporal link, and stative verbs a causal link. Adjective supplementive clauses refer to an attribute or state of the subject, though in relation to the action performed (CGEL 425).

The most common placement of supplementive clauses is considered to be final position, which is considered to be the unmarked choice, or initial position (CGEL: 1124, LGSWE: 830). Medial position, i.e. the position immediately after the antecedent functioning as implied subject of the adverbial clause, is considered to pose the most difficulties, as with this subjectless non-finite clauses may be indistinguishable from post-modifying participle clauses, except for *ing*-clauses containing auxiliary verbs or the verb *to be* and verbless adjective clauses (CGEL:1125). Furthermore, the LGSWE (830) reports that in its corpus the “occurrences of medial adverbial clauses are too rare for meaningful quantitative analysis”.

4 Findings of the analysis

As mentioned above, supplementive clauses constitute the preamble component of resolutions. The preamble states explicitly the motivation for the resulting action and may include intertextual reference to other documents or scene definition, i.e. the institutional, psychological or cultural dimensions of the context closely associated with the norms of interaction and interpretation necessary for adequate text processing (Hymes 1975, Biber 1994). The preamble is an optional element of executive resolutions, where the reiterative potential of the adverbial clauses is high; this reflects the tendency to state explicitly the motivation for the resulting action. In preparatory resolutions dealing with elections the reiterative potential of adverbial clauses is low. Consequently, 90.8% of the occurrences of all supplementive clauses are found in executive resolutions.

In accordance with some previous corpus-based research (CGEL, LGSWE, Povolná 2003), the main criteria applied to the analysis of the supplementive clauses in resolutions are realization type, semantic role, position and textual role with regard to FSP. It should be noted that these are regarded as interdependent.

As mentioned above, supplementive clauses are participle and verbless clauses. Table 1 summarizes the frequency of occurrence of realization types of supplementive clauses in the corpus under investigation.

Table 1 Frequency of realization types of supplementive clauses

Types of adv. clauses	Participle clauses		Verbless clauses
	<i>ing</i> -clauses	<i>ed</i> -clauses	adjective clauses
<i>Preparatory resolutions</i>	28	0	3
<i>Executive resolutions</i>	255	6	15
Total No	283	6	18
Total %	92.2	1.9	5.9

The majority of supplementive clauses take the form of *ing*-clauses, which are considered to be their most typical realization. According to the LGSWE (829) the register patterns of supplementive clauses and *ing*-clauses are very similar, and are associated primarily with written and preferably formal contexts. Instances of realizations of supplementive clauses by *ing*-clauses, *ed*-clauses and verbless clauses in the material are shown respectively in the following examples:

- [1] *Recognizing the need for international and intercultural understanding, and for education for peace, democracy, human rights and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, which has so much cultural diversity, urgent development needs and numerous possibilities for conflict, (R17. 40)*
- [2] *Convinced that the proposed International Adult Learners' Week will enrich International Literacy Day and strengthen its links to the larger adult learning movement to which it contributes, (R11. 34)*
- [3] *Mindful of the purposes and principles set out in UNESCO's Constitution, (R55. 89)*

The supplementive clauses in the corpus are all subjectless clauses. They are linked to the matrix clause via the implied subject, which is the subject of the matrix clause, in the case of UNESCO resolutions invariably 'The General Conference'.

As the function of the supplementary clauses in resolutions is to signal the motivation for taking a resulting action, the meaning relation they imply is considered primarily to be reason. In accordance with the CGEL hypothesis mentioned above, the adjective, *ed*-clauses and *ing*-clauses expressing a state are considered to express a pure reason relation (see Examples 1, 2 and 3 above). In many cases, though, the adverbials realized by *ing*-clauses with verbs used dynamically imply a reason and time relationship, which may indicate either simultaneity (Example 4) or sequence of events, typically signalled by the perfective form of the verbal element (Example 5).

[4] *Applauding the efforts made by the Haitian Government to further the building of democracy and national development, (R55. 89)*

[5] *Having examined the report submitted by the Director-General, in accordance with 29 C/Resolution 36, on the implementation of activities on the ethical, legal and societal aspects of cyberspace, (R37. 73)*

Table 2 shows the realization types of supplementary clauses in association with the spectrum of their meanings in the corpus.

Table 2 Realization types of supplementary clauses with regard to their semantic roles

Realization type	Semantic role		Total	
	Reason + time blends	Reason	No	%
<i>ing</i> -clauses with NP Co	192	28	220	71.7
<i>ing</i> -clauses with <i>that</i> -clause Co	57	5	62	20.2
<i>ing</i> -clauses with <i>to</i> -infinitive clause Co	0	1	1	0.3
<i>ed</i> -clauses with NP Co	0	3	3	1.0
<i>ed</i> -clauses with <i>that</i> -clause Co	0	3	3	1.0
adjective clauses with PP Co	0	13	13	4.2
adjective clauses with <i>that</i> -clause Co	0	5	5	1.6
Total No	249	58	307	-
Total %	81.1	18.9	-	100

The findings reported in Table 2 suggest that the percentage of occurrences of supplementary clauses expressing reason and time is considerably higher than the percentage of reason clauses and that all clauses expressing time and reason are *ing*-clauses. A relatively small number of the *ing*-clause realizations of supplementary adverbial clauses in the corpus (34 occurrences) are used to express reason, which reflects the fact that the majority of the verb forms are used dynamically. On the other hand, all verbless adjective clause and *ed*-participle clause realizations of supplementary clauses express reason relations. All types of clauses can take a noun phrase and *that*-clause complementation. Complementation by noun phrase prevails significantly in the case of *ing*-clauses, which is due to the fact that many of the noun phrases with abstract noun heads are nominalizations used for condensation purposes typical in formal written registers (CGEL: 1288-1289, Tárnyiková 1993: 80, Danet 1985), thus contributing to the lexical density of the text.

The supplementary clauses used in the preamble component of resolutions display a restricted spectrum of recurrent word combinations which establish formulaic patterns with a cohesive effect homogenizing the discourse (Beaugrande and Dressler 1981, Fowler 1991).

The frequency of occurrence of recurrent structures by semantic categories is presented in Table 3.

As the frequency of occurrence of structural patterns suggests, only some syntactic patterns display high reiterative potential. The structures with the highest frequency of occurrence perform the semantic role of reason and time blends and typically take the form of *ing*-clauses complemented by noun phrases, though the frequency of *ing*-clauses complemented by *that*-clauses is also relatively high. It is worth mentioning the relatively high frequency of occurrence of perfective *ing*-clauses expressing temporal sequence of events and reason relations.

The structures expressing reason are less numerous and generally show a lower frequency of occurrence, which reflects the semantic indeterminacy of a supplementive clause which resists strict categorization. It is further necessary to stress that 16 of the reason and time blends and 14 of the reason supplementive clauses, i.e. 67.7% of all the structural patterns, show low reiterative potential, i.e. they occur less than five times in the corpus.

Table 3 Recurrent patterns of supplementive clauses with regard to their semantic role

Reason + time blends		Reason clauses	
<i>Structural pattern</i>	No	<i>Structural pattern</i>	No
acknowledging + NP	5	appreciative + PP	1
acknowledging + <i>that</i> -clause	1	appreciating + NP	2
acting + PP	1	aware + PP	1
applauding + NP	1	aware + <i>that</i> -clause	2
confirming + NP	1	bearing in mind + NP	7
considering + NP	9	bearing in mind + <i>that</i> -clause	4
considering + <i>that</i> -clause	21	being of the opinion + <i>that</i> -clause	1
emphasising + NP	2	believing + NP	2
endorsing + NP	5	concerned by + NP	2
having examined + NP	29	conscious + PP	6
having considered + NP	10	conscious + <i>that</i> -clause	1
having taken note of + NP	3	convinced + PP	1
noting + NP	15	convinced + <i>that</i> -clause	3
noting + <i>that</i> -clause	18	having been advised + NP	17
reaffirming + NP	5	intending + <i>to</i> -infinitive clause	1
recalling + NP	54	mindful + PP	5
recalling + <i>that</i> -clause	10	mindful + <i>that</i> -clause	2
recognizing + NP	18		
recognizing + <i>that</i> -clause	4		
referring to + NP	7		
stressing + NP	5		
stressing + <i>that</i> -clause	3		
taking account of + NP	2		
taking into account + NP	5		
taking note of + NP	6		
taking into consideration + NP	2		
underlining + NP	1		
welcoming + NP	6		
Total No	249	Total No	58
Total %	81.1%	Total %	18.9%

It is worth comparing the syntactic realisations of supplementive clauses, including their more detailed semantic differentiation, with the functional differentiation of supplementive clauses as elements of the preamble component of resolutions shown in Table 4 below. Supplementive clauses signalling intertextual reference invariably take the form of *ing*-clauses, whose semantic role is to express reason and time relations. There are only six recurrent word combinations which may be used to refer to a previous text which provides the necessary information concerning the motivation for resulting actions (Example 6). The restricted set of patterns complemented invariably by noun phrases shows insignificant variation in wording. Half of the structures use the perfective form, thus signalling that consideration of the text to which the resolution refers is regarded as prior to the decision to undertake the resulting action (see Example 5 above).

Scene indication is signalled by 24 of the total 45 structures functioning as supplementive clauses, which reflects the greater semantic diversity of the structures indicating directly the background motivation of the addressor, as compared to those signalling intertextual reference (Example 7). All realization types of supplementive clauses containing both noun phrase and *that*-clause complementation are used to indicate the scene component.

Table 4 Functional differentiation of supplementive clauses as elements of the preamble component of resolutions

Function	Intertextual reference	Scene indication	Reference and scene
Structural pattern			
<i>Non-finite ing-clauses</i>	acting + PP endorsing + NP having considered + NP having examined + NP having taken note of + NP referring to + NP	applauding + NP appreciating + NP being of the opinion + <i>that</i> -clause believing + NP confirming + NP emphasising + NP having been advised + NP intending+ <i>to</i> -infinitive clause reaffirming + NP recognizing + NP recognizing + <i>that</i> -clause stressing + NP stressing + <i>that</i> -clause taking account of + NP taking into consideration + NP underlining + NP	acknowledging + NP acknowledging + <i>that</i> -clause bearing in mind + NP bearing in mind + <i>that</i> -clause considering + NP considering + <i>that</i> -clause noting + NP noting + <i>that</i> -clause recalling + NP recalling + <i>that</i> -clause taking into account + NP taking note of + NP welcoming + NP
<i>Non-finite ed-clauses</i>		concerned by + NP convinced of + NP convinced + <i>that</i> -clause	
<i>Verbless adjective clauses</i>		appreciative of + NP aware of + NP aware + <i>that</i> -clause conscious of + NP conscious + <i>that</i> -clause	mindful + NP mindful + <i>that</i> -clause
Total No (%)	55 (17.9%)	84 (27.4%)	168 (54.7%)

The highest proportion of supplementive clauses, realized by 15 structural patterns, may indicate both scene and/or intertextual reference, as illustrated in Example 8.

- [6] (intertextual reference)
Recalling Article II of the Statutes of the International Co-ordinating Council of the Programme on Man and the Biosphere, approved by 16 C/Resolution 2.313 and amended by 19 C/Resolution 2.152, 20 C/Resolution 36.1 and 23 C/Resolution 232.1 and 28 C/Resolution 22, (R015.13)
- [7] (scene indication)
Recalling that, since poetry is an art rooted both in the written text and in the spoken word, any action to promote it should be conducive to an intensification of international intercultural exchanges, (R34.70)
- [8] (scene indication and intertextual reference)
Recalling that the General Assembly in its resolution 53/184 “encourages the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to pursue its ongoing task of promoting throughout the United Nations system a greater awareness of the crucial relationship between culture and development, taking into account the diversity of cultures and the need to apply the recommendations of the Stockholm Conference”, (R27. 65)

As mentioned above, the meaning relation implied by supplementive clauses is affected by their position in the clause. The choice of position of optional sentential adverbials is strongly related to information structuring and theme-rheme development considerations and reflects to a great extent the demands the text type imposes on the text (Virtanen 1992: 336).

Table 5 summarizes the corpus findings concerning the position of supplementive clauses in association with their semantic category.

Table 5 Position of supplementive clauses in association with their semantic category

Position	Supplementive clauses		Total No	Total %
	<i>Time+reason</i>	<i>Reason</i>		
Executive resolutions				
Initial	0	0	0	0
Medial	221	55	276	89.9
Final	0	0	0	0
Prep. resolutions				
Initial	0	0	0	0
Medial	28	3	31	10.1
Final	0	0	0	0

The findings suggest that all supplementive clauses are used in medial position (Example 9), which is considered to be the marked untypical position for long clausal circumstantial adverbials (LGSWE: 830). Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that in formal institutional discourse, e.g. legal English, adverbial clauses are generally placed where they best serve the purpose of achieving clarity (Hiltunen 1990: 86).

- [9] *The General Conference,
Taking account of the urgent need for an adequate procedure for the evaluation of the
admissibility of draft resolutions submitted by Member States for its
consideration,
Requests that its President take the necessary steps to enable the Legal Committee to
review, as soon as possible and before its next ordinary session, Part XIV of
the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, in particular to ensure that
this Part contains objective and verifiable admissibility criteria for such draft
resolutions. (R87. 127)*

The supplementary clauses in medial position, i.e. the position immediately after the antecedent, provide background information which reflects the motivation of the addressor for taking the resulting action recorded in resolutions, thus making it coherent with the previous actions of the addressor. Since such information is contextually bound though irretrievable, the communication in the one-sentence texts of the resolutions is perspectived towards the result and if available the recipient of the action in the main clause. Therefore supplementary clauses are considered to belong to the thematic sphere of the sentence and to perform the function of diatheme (Firbas 1992, Svoboda 1989), i.e. their position in the sentence correlates with their FSP role. It is to be noted that these findings are in conformity with the findings reported in Chamonikolasová's research on loose elements, which states that loose sentence constituents function as rheme proper or diatheme (Chamonikolasová 1987: 99-101). The high percentage of rhematic elements reported by the study reflects the spoken colloquial character of Chamonikolasová's corpus.

The high reiterative potential of supplementary clauses, especially in executive resolutions, motivates the occurrence of series of supplementary clauses in resolutions.

The findings concerning the frequency of occurrence of series of supplementary clauses in medial position in association with their semantic role are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 Frequencies of series of supplementary clauses in association with their semantic role

Type of series	Homosemantic series		Heterosemantic series
	Reason+time	Reason	
Preparatory resolutions	3	0	1
Executive resolutions	26	0	18
Total No	29	0	19
Total %	59.2	0	38.3

Series of supplementary clauses appear with notable frequency in executive resolutions, i.e. 48 series of supplementary clauses in 88 executive resolutions. The very low frequency of occurrence of series of supplementary clauses in preparatory resolutions reflects the fact that all the occurrences of supplementary clauses in preparatory resolutions dealing with elections are instances of single adverbials clauses. The series of supplementary clauses are coordinated asyndetically by commas, which are used commonly to separate longer optional adverbials in initial and medial position (CGEL: 1627).

The absence of homosemantic series of supplementary clauses implying reason relation reflects their lower frequency of occurrence in the material. The higher frequency of occurrence of homosemantic series of reason and time blends is in conformity with the semantic indeterminacy of supplementary clauses.

The homosemantic and heterosemantic series of supplementive clauses in executive resolutions may include a considerable number of adverbial clauses, as in written language; in a highly specialized register like the register of diplomacy in particular, the addressee is expected to process the text without time limitations. In the corpus, 15 of the homosemantic series of supplementive clauses include two adverbials (Example 10), while the rest of the homosemantic and heterosemantic include up to nine clauses (Example 11). The order of supplementive clauses in the series seems to follow the importance or the logical sequence of the reasons given for taking the resulting action rather than grammatical considerations.

[10] *The General Conference,
Recalling 29 C/Resolution 88,
Having examined document 30 C/9,
1. Notes with satisfaction that (...) (R81. 123)*

[11] *The General Conference,
Mindful of the purposes and principles set out in UNESCO's Constitution,
Applauding the efforts made by the Haitian Government to further the building of
democracy and national development,
Noting, in spite of the progress that has been made, the persistence of a great many
political, economic and social difficulties standing in the way of even greater
progress,
Welcoming the substantial and effective measures UNESCO has already taken, and
the signing on 19 January 1995 of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the
Haitian Government and UNESCO,
Considering the efforts already made in accordance with 28 C/Resolution 17
appealing for support to Haiti,
Endorsing the report submitted by the Director-General in document 29 C/INF.1,
Considering that lasting democracy and sustainable development are intimately
linked,
Recognizing, therefore, the need to offer Haiti, the only LDC of the American
continent, special assistance,
Aware that a great many objectives still remain to be attained for full and total
application of the guidelines set forth in 27 C/Resolution 21,
Considering the conclusions of the Joint Haitian Government-UNESCO Commission
(April 1999),
1. Urgently appeals to the Member States of UNESCO (...) (R55. 89)*

As the above examples illustrate, homosemantic series of two supplementive clauses tend to express intertextual reference, while homosemantic and heterosemantic series of more than three clauses typically indicate both scene and intertextual reference.

5 Conclusions

The textual and stylistic importance of supplementive clauses in the text of resolutions is crucial for three reasons. Firstly, they indicate the preamble component of the text structure, which by its relation to the framing context and to the shared background knowledge of the participants typically assigns them to the thematic sphere of the sentences. Secondly, they serve as a basis for structural parallelism inside the text of individual resolutions and within the macro-text of the 'Resolutions' volume. Thirdly, since the medial position is considered to

be rare, and drawing on Virtanen's hypothesis that adverbial placement depends on text genre (Virtanen 1992), it is possible to claim that the genre of resolutions is characterised by the occurrence of homosemantic and heterosemantic series of supplementary adverbial clauses in medial position. In conclusion, it may be stated that the occurrence of loosely coordinated series of up to nine supplementary clauses implementing the preamble component of the text of resolutions is one of the major factors contributing to the complexity of the written formal institutional discourse under investigation.

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