

## SUPPLEMENTIVE CLAUSES IN UNESCO RESOLUTIONS

### Complexity in written formal institutional discourse

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## Complexity in written formal institutional discourse

- The advanced degree of specificity and complexity of written formal institutional discourse, and in particular of legal language, is due to the elaborate sentence structure with its numerous supporting clauses. Among the most important of them are relative and adverbial clauses, which indirectly serve the purpose of disambiguation by defining and qualifying various sentence elements. (Hiltunen 1990: 85)
- Written and spoken texts gain their complexity in different ways. In spontaneous spoken language much more of the meaning is expressed by grammar rather than by vocabulary; as a consequence, the sentence structure is highly complex. The complexity of writing lies in its density, the packing together of lexical content, but in rather simple grammatical frames. (Halliday 1985: XXIV)

## Material

- Resolutions are legal instruments used by international governmental organizations
- The corpus is based on the 1999 'Resolutions' volume of the records of the 30th General Conference of UNESCO
- The 1999 volume includes 114 resolutions
  - 26 preparatory resolutions dealing with administrative issues and elections
  - 88 executive resolutions stating decisions concerning the future behaviour of the organization
- Total size of the text under investigation - 45,000 words

## Structure of a resolution

- Resolutions are **one-sentence texts**, which include:
  - an **agentive subject** (indicating the addressor)
  - an optional series of **adverbial clauses** (constituting the preamble)
  - a sequence of **finite predicates** (indicating the intended action or state and optionally the addressee)

## Supplementive clauses

- Optional sentential circumstance adverbial participle and verbless clauses introduced without a subordinator which are characterised by a considerable indeterminacy as to their semantic role - a circumstance that supplements the action or state in the main clause (CGEL: 1123)
- The main criteria applied to the analysis of supplementive clauses:
  - realization type
  - semantic role
  - position
  - textual role

## Realization types of supplementive clauses

Types of adverbial 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
<b>Total No</b>	283	6	18
<b>Total %</b>	92.2	1.9	5.9

Table 1 - Frequency of realization types of supplementive clauses

## Realization types of supplementary clauses

- **Realization types frequency**
  - most typical realization – *ing*-participle clauses (92.2%)
  - *ed*-participle clauses are the least frequent (1.9%)
- **Distribution of realization types**
  - *ing*-participle clauses and adjective clauses appear both in executive and preparatory resolutions
  - *ed*-participle clauses occur only in executive resolutions

## Semantic role of supplementary clauses

- **reason relation** - adjective, *ed*-clauses and *ing*-clauses expressing a state
- **reason and time relationship** - *ing*-clauses with verbs used dynamically
  - simultaneity + reason – non-perfective form of the verbal element
  - temporal sequence + reason - perfective form of the verbal element

## Semantic role of supplementary clauses

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
<b>Total No</b>	249	58	307	-
<b>Total %</b>	81.1	18.9	-	100

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

## Semantic role of supplementary clauses

- **Frequency of occurrence and realization types**
  - clauses expressing reason and time show considerably higher frequency of occurrence than reason clauses - 81.1% vs. 18.9%
  - low frequency of *ing*-clauses expressing reason (the majority of the verbs are used dynamically) – 11%
  - all verbless adjective clause and *ed*-participle clause realizations of supplementary adverbial clauses express reason relations
- **Complementation**
  - all types of clauses can take a noun phrase and *that*-clause complementation
  - complementation by noun phrase (typically nominalizations) considerably prevails in *ing*-clauses

## Recurrent structural patterns

Reason + time blends		Reason clauses	
Structural pattern	No	Structural pattern	No
acknowledging + NP	5	bearing in mind + NP	7
considering + NP	9	conscious + PP	6
considering + <i>that</i> -clause	21	having been advised + NP	17
endorsing + NP	5	mindful + PP	5
having examined + NP	29		
having considered + NP	10		
noting + NP	15		
noting + <i>that</i> -clause	18		
reaffirming + NP	5		
recalling + NP	54		
recalling + <i>that</i> -clause	10		
recognizing + NP	18		
referring to + NP	7		
stressing + NP	5		
taking into account + NP	5		
taking note of + NP	6		
welcoming + NP	6		
<b>Total No</b>	218	<b>Total No</b>	35
<b>Total %</b>	86.2%	<b>Total %</b>	13.8%

Table 3 – The most frequent recurrent patterns of supplementary clauses with regard to their semantic role

## Recurrent structural patterns

- restricted spectrum of recurrent word combinations - 67.7% of all the structural patterns show low reiterative potential, i.e. they occur less than five times in the corpus
- the structures with the highest frequency of occurrence perform the semantic role of reason and time blends
- the most typical realization type is the *ing*-participle clause with NP complementation

Function	Intertextual reference	Scene indication	Reference and scene
<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
<b>Total No (%)</b>	55 (17.9%)	84 (27.4%)	168 (54.7%)

**Table 4 - Functional differentiation of supplementary clauses as elements of the preamble of resolutions**

## Functions of supplementary clauses in the preamble

- ❑ **Intertextual reference**
  - invariably *ing*-clauses with NP complementation which have the semantic role of reason and time blends
  - half of the structures use the perfective form, i.e. the consideration of the text to which resolution refers is regarded as prior to the decision
- ❑ **Scene indication**
  - all realization types of supplementary clauses with both NP and *that*-clause complementation which have the semantic role of reason and time blends
  - 24 of the overall 45 structures functioning as supplementary clauses, which reflects their greater semantic diversity
- ❑ **Intertextual reference and scene indication**
  - *ing*-clauses and verbless clauses with NP and *that*-clause complementation which have the semantic role of reason or of reason and time blends
  - the highest proportion of clauses – 54.7%

## Position of supplementary clauses

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

**Table 5 - Position of supplementary clauses is association with their semantic category**

## Position of supplementary clauses

**All supplementary clauses are used in medial position**

## Textual role of supplementary clauses

- ❑ As part of the preamble, provide background information which reflects the motivation of the addressor
- ❑ Make the text coherent with the previous actions of the addressor
- ❑ Since such information is contextually bound, though irretrievable, supplementary clauses belong to the thematic sphere of the sentence and function as diatheme

## Series of supplementary clauses

Type of series	Homosemantic series		Heterosemantic series
	Reason+ time	Reason	
<b>Preparatory resolutions</b>	3	0	1
<b>Executive resolutions</b>	26	0	18
<b>Total No</b>	29	0	19
<b>Total %</b>	59.2	0	40.8

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

## Series of supplementary clauses

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- **Semantic role and frequency of occurrence**
    - homosemantic series show higher frequency of occurrence than heterosemantic series
    - the highest frequency of occurrence show homosemantic series of reason and time blends
    - zero occurrence of homosemantic series of reason clauses
  - **Distribution**
    - notable frequency in executive resolutions
    - very low frequency in preparatory resolutions
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## Conclusions ...

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- The occurrence of loosely coordinated series of supplementary clauses implementing the preamble component of resolutions is one of the major factors contributing to the complexity of the written formal institutional discourse under investigation
  - The complexity of the texts is also due to the presence within the supplementary clauses of finite and non-finite complement clauses and nominalizations with heavy post-modification which contribute to the lexical density of the text
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## ... Conclusions

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- By their relation to the framing context and to the shared background knowledge of the participants supplementary clauses are assigned to the thematic sphere of the sentences and contribute to textual coherence
  - The recurrent patterns of supplementary clauses in the preamble establish formulaic patterns with a cohesive effect homogenizing the discourse
  - The occurrence of homosemantic and heterosemantic series of supplementary adverbial clauses in medial position is genre dependent
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