

SOME REMARKS ON PARTICIPIAL ADVERBIAL CLAUSES FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE

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1. Preliminaries. Considering the FSP function of the adverbial, Firbas (1992: 49ff.) pointed out that an adverbial may generally perform one of three communicative (dynamic) functions in the act of communication: it can be a transition proper oriented element (adverbials of indefinite time, sentence-modifying adverbials), it can convey a specification or a setting. The adverbials conveying a specification are successful competitors of the verb while those functioning as a setting belong to the thematic sphere of the given field, conveying background, concomitant information.

We shall focus on one realisation form of the adverbial, the participial adverbial clause. Given that “the size of each syntactic constituent, either clausal or nominal (given in number of words expressing it) is proportional to the amount of (cognitive) information it carries, as well as to its communicative importance in utterance as a whole” (Uhlířová, 1980: 278), clausal adverbials (including the participial ones) may be expected to exceed less extensive, non-clausal adverbials in the degree of communicative dynamism (CD). On the other hand, nonfinitization being a backgrounding or ‘dedynamizing’ (Bäcklund 1984: 179) device (ex. 1), participial adverbial clauses are less likely to occur in the rhematic section of the communicative field than finite clauses.¹

- (1) [Bats do not fly in the same direction for long. Therefore, if a moth hears a bat approaching about 100 feet away, its best policy is to fly off in the other direction.] That way it may get out of the bat's flight path *before it enters the detection range*. (GU8,1080)²

cf. ... it may get out of the bat's flight path *before entering the detection range*.

Therefore, two questions arise: first, what communicative functions are performed by participial adverbial clauses, and second, what are the factors that determine their function.

In determining the role of a given adverbial, the interplay of the three FSP (non-prosodic) factors operating in the written text is to be considered: the contextual factor,

¹ Cf. BÄCKLUND (1984: 179): “in clauses with a high degree of CD, abbreviation is normally not used and in clauses functioning as rheme proper it is normally blocked.”

² The data used for our analysis have been extracted from the British National Corpus. 16 texts from the written domain were selected for the analysis: texts assigned the value of ‘natural and pure sciences’, ‘social science’, and ‘arts’. Both books and periodicals were included. The bibliographic data following the examples refer to the code of the text in BNC and the sentence number in the text.

the semantic factor, and the factor of linear modification. In adverbials realized by clauses these factors are employed to a different degree. The placement of the adverbial clause in the thematic or rhematic section of the communicative field³ of the superordinate clause seems to be supported by several secondary factors.

2. Linear modification. The application of the factor of linear modification is constrained by two types of phenomena, both linked with the clausal form of the adjunct. "It is necessary to reckon with the fact that the rules of surface word order often are not exclusively conditioned by the type of participant in question [viz. the grammatical function of the English word order], but also by its surface shape. This concerns, first of all, the adverbials." (Sgall et al. 1986: 202) The question of shape involves the extent of the adverbial element. Firstly, due to processing pressure complex and lengthy adverbial clauses (as well as multiple adverbial clauses) tend to be excluded from initial and medial position with respect to the superordinate clause. The initial position is rarely occupied by more than one adverbial clause (of any structural type; ex. (2), with an infinitival clause functioning as a summative conjunct, followed by a participial style disjunct clause, is quite exceptional); if they do occur, they are typically embedded or coordinated (exx. 3 and 4, respectively).

- (2) *To summarize, broadly speaking* there are three main categories of such patients. (B30,869)
- (3) *If the rat does not run when given some signal ...*, the experimenter gives it an electric shock. (GU8,416)
- (4) *Applying that test, and bearing in mind that there are persons on the fringes of subversion that may make it difficult to "draw the line"*, the Commissioner has been satisfied that the Home Secretaries' warrants have always been justified. (ASB,1174)

According to *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (Quirk et al. 1985, *CGEL* henceforth), "... in clause structure, left-branching tends to be limited to two degrees of embedding. ... [a larger] extent of embedding becomes extremely awkward and indeed incomprehensible if the clauses are positioned initially in the sentence, where the length and complexity of the clauses contravenes the principle of end-weight"⁴ (*CGEL*: 1039).

Secondly, the possibility of initial placement of the adverbial subjectless clause is limited by the need for the subject of the participial clause to be recoverable from the immediately preceding context. Nevertheless, there is not always a contact link between the co-referential elements; ex. (5) illustrates a case of a distant link (cf. Hrbáček 1994: 47).⁵

³ The adverbial clause will be considered to represent a single communicative unit in relation to the superior communicative field. At the same time it represents a (subordinate) communicative field (cf. Svoboda, 1968).

⁴ I.e. the tendency for elements with a more complex, longer, 'heavier' structure to be placed towards the end of the clause (cf. *CGEL*: 1361ff.).

⁵ It may be noted here that although the subject is expressed in finite adverbial clauses and participial absolutes, its referent is frequently known from the preceding context or unique in the context generally shared by the writer and reader if the adverbial clause is sentence-initial, e.g., *That being so*, B can not be trying to deceive A. (J2K,1023), *If you were a frog*, where would you sit? (AE7,794); cf. Hajičová et al. (2001).

- (5) [However, while shoplifting occurred in the past, the extent of the crime has grown massively in recent years. From 1939 to 1964, offences quadrupled to over 60,000 known offences. By 1972, that figure had doubled to over 120,000 offences and since then there has been a steady increase.]

Although popularly thought of as a female offence, women do not outnumber men among those found guilty. (B17,1390)

If the adjunct clause is placed initially, it is presented as the setting, irrespective of its context-dependence or independence. However, it is often the most dynamic element (the diatheme) of the thematic section of the field. Here the extent of the adverbial element influences the distribution of the degrees of communicative dynamism. As shown by Uhlířová (1980), the increase in the extent of the element results from the growing semantic content of the given element, which may lead to the increase in its CD. Adverbial clauses, being more complex and more extensive than phrasal realizations of the adverbial, are more prominent than the non-clausal adverbials, even if they are a part of the theme. The extent of the clause element, i.e. its form and shape, can thus be considered a secondary factor influencing FSP. This may be illustrated by ex. (6).

- (6) [Peace camps were formed around some of the RAF air bases The most famous of these was the first, at Greenham Common.]

Organized exclusively by women, it quickly became a symbol not only of peace but also of the values of the women's movement.

[On 12 December 1982, 30,000 women linked hands to 'Embrace the Base'. They adorned the perimeter fence with pictures, flowers, and messages of peace.] (ASB,1485)

In the above example the thematic section of the communicative field of the superordinate clause comprises the context-bound subject *it* and the subordinate past-participial clause. The pronominal subject is the less dynamic element (theme proper), referring to the rhematic element of the preceding sentence, but also developing the hypertheme of the paragraph, i.e. the peace camps. The nonfinite clause carries a higher degree of CD. This is not only due to the 'weight' of the clause (i.e. its length and complexity) but also due to the distribution of CD within the subfield of the clause. The participial clause is homogeneous with regard to the distribution of CD since the elements carrying the lowest amount of CD (the contextually bound subject, the transition-oriented conjunction) are not expressed in it, and the temporal and modal exponents of the verb (transition proper) are restricted (in comparison with a finite verb predicate). "Through this extreme thematization [i.e. the omission of the thematic elements], the retained elements of an abbreviated clause are brought into relief, even though they do not constitute the rheme of the entire sentence." (Bäcklund 1984: 164) The importance of the information conveyed by the clause is further stressed by the fact that its rheme proper (*women*) becomes (a part of) the global paragraph theme (*30,000 women, they*) in the following sentences.

As shown in the above example, "abbreviation may also influence the FSP of a sentence through its compacting effect, which contributes to bringing about distinct

risers or falls in CD over the sentence elements" (Bäcklund 1984: 165). As explained by Firbas, "the phenomenon of compactness can be displayed by any elements that differ comparatively little from each other in CD, but form a section which in its entirety noticeably differs in CD from the elements which precede and follow it" (Firbas, 1961: 88). Compactness, i.e. homogeneity in terms of CD, influences the distribution of the degrees of CD in two ways: one concerns the 'compact' element itself (ex. 6), the other the neighbouring elements. The effect with respect to the superior field of the superordinate clause may be illustrated using ex. (7).

- (7) [Dr Mumby successfully defended himself against causing distress by performing allergy tests in front of others and of giving patients' names to the press.]
Dr Mumby, supported by his staff, said that he always asked patients' permission *before giving their names to journalists*.⁶ (EA0,1366)

In ex. (7) the temporal *before* clause performs the function of a setting within the communicative field of its superordinate clause. All its elements are contextually bound. It is therefore compact with respect to the distribution of CD. As such it may contribute to setting off the rheme of the superior field. The rhematic element *patients' permission* is brought into additional relief through the marked fall in CD following it.

The operation of the compacting effect is not to be regarded a rule: it is not always the case that a participial clause sets off an adjacent element. On the other hand, it seems that participial clauses in medial position,⁷ although thematic themselves, frequently assign a certain degree of prominence to the preceding thematic subject. In this way, a contextually bound thematic subject *human beings* (in ex. 8) is highlighted owing to the following participial clause. The subject would not be emphasised if the adverbial clause were placed in initial position. Bäcklund points out that participial clauses resemble parentheses in this respect. Both may be used to "throw emphasis on a word immediately preceding it" (Bäcklund 1984: 184), and in both "the emphasis is signalled by intonation in speech but is also in most cases signalled by commas in writing" (ibid.). As in Bäcklund's corpus, in our material there is no instance of an adverbial clause inserted in medial position following a personal pronoun subject. This supports her conclusion that "there is rarely any need to set off an item that contributes so little to the development of communication" (Bäcklund 1984: 185). Quite to the contrary, the subjects followed by an adverbial clause in medial position are often contextually non-bound (ex. 9).

- (8) [I am going to consider now a famous case in which the supposed regularities of human morality are attributed to the workings of adaptive rules, so providing an evolutionary explanation for part of human culture. ...]
Human beings, being observant and intelligent, spot the consequences of matings between close relatives and make safety laws about them. (CMA,983)

⁶ *Before, after, since, until, till* are here considered conjunctions introducing adverbial participial clauses.

⁷ Participial adjuncts (and augmented free adjuncts in particular) are more frequent in medial position than finite clauses. This is due to the fact that subject identification poses no problem in this position; at the same time, augmented participial clauses, where the conjunction clearly distinguishes the adverbial clause from a postmodifying one, seem to be less problematic with respect to processing than both finite and non-augmented clauses in this position.

- (9) For example, a barely detectable innate bias toward the use of body adornment, *if combined with a moderate sensitivity to peer usage*, would result in most or all members using such adornment in all societies. (CMA,1286)

It seems that a similar effect of setting off a preceding element may be achieved by an absolute clause whose subject is contextually bound and which functions as a setting (ex. 10). This may be linked to the fact that such constructions resemble postmodifying clauses. It was shown by Svoboda (1968) that in communicative fields constituted by a noun phrase the head noun functions as the theme, and the postmodifying clause as a specification. This may be the reason why the absolute clause in a similar construction may specify, and thus set off, the preceding noun. However, the number of such absolutes in our corpus is not sufficient to test the hypothesis.

- (10) A piece of ecological history that remains to be fully researched was the decision by a number of individuals, *many apparently working in isolation from each other*, to establish, like Darwin, permanent plots within which the fate of individual plants could be recorded over time. (CMA,274)

The position of the adverbial clause correlates also with its degree of integration in the sentence: non-integrated adverbial clauses display a marked preference for the initial position (cf. Figure 1). Participial clauses may function as disjuncts, representing the writer's comment on the style and form of the utterance (ex. 11), wide orientation viewpoint subjuncts (ex. 12), or (near-)conjuncts (ex. 13), which present the writer's "assessment of how he views the connection between two linguistic units" (CGEL: 632). As sentence modifiers, these clauses are considered transition-oriented irrespective of their position.

- (11) *Generally speaking*, organisms in warm, shallow seas that either build or are closely associated with reefs have been relatively vulnerable to extinction, ... (CMA,556)
(12) But *historically speaking*, this reverence for language is deeply ingrained and persistent. (CGF,1525)
(13) *Before examining the major sociological perspectives on crime*, it is useful to refer to theories from outside of sociology, from other academic disciplines. (B17,187)

End-placed adjunct clauses may either be thematic or rhematic. Their function is determined on the basis of contextual and semantic factors. Out of these, the role of context is generally reduced in adverbials as they are not typically contextually bound or non-bound in the same way as other (nominal) clause elements.⁸

⁸ Cf. SVOBODA (1987: 48): "... adverbiale běžně funguje jako prvek tematický i rematický. Oproti funkčnímu hodnocení jiných větných členů (např. subjektu nebo objektu) je zde situace složitější v tom, že adverbiale obvykle nevykazuje zřejmou kontextovou vázanost či nevázanost, která je jedním z důležitých kritérií funkčního hodnocení jevů. Proto se ve větší míře uplatňuje kritérium sémantické, ruku v ruce s kritériem slovosledným a prozodickým." [... generally, the adverbial functions as a thematic as well as a rhematic element. As compared with the functional evaluation of other clause elements (e.g. the subject or the object), the situation is more complicated here in that the adverbial does not usually display marked contextual boundness or non-boundness, which constitutes an important criterion of functional evaluation of phenomena. Consequently, the semantic criterion is employed to a larger extent, together with the criteria of word order and prosody.] (translation mine)

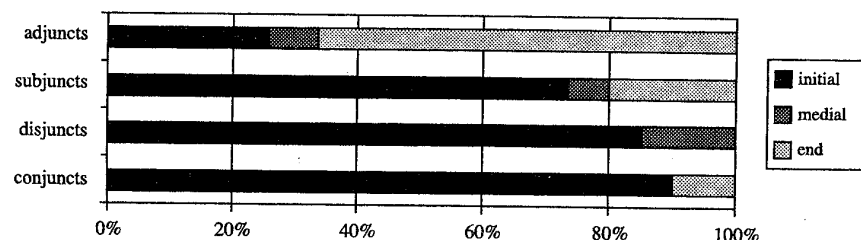


Figure 1. The correlation between the degree of integration of an adverbial clause into the sentence and its position with respect to the matrix clause.

Table 1. The position of participial adjunct clauses with respect to the superordinate clause

			position						total (100%)
			initial		medial		end		
				%		%		%	
adjuncts	subjectless	non-augmented	107	28.8	23	6.2	242	65.1	372
		augmented	79	29.6	34	12.7	154	57.7	267
	absolutes	non-augmented	4	6.2	2	3.1	59	90.8	65
		augmented	4	6.8	0	0.0	55	93.2	59
	total (adjuncts)			194	25.4	59	7.7	510	66.8

Table 2. The position of adverbial subjectless participial clauses not integrated in the superordinate clause (in our data, absolute participial constructions were always integrated in the superordinate clause)

		position						total (100%)
		initial		medial		end		
			%		%		%	
subjuncts	non-augmented	9	75.0	1	8.3	2	16.6	12
	augmented	2	66.6	0	0.0	1	33.3	3
	total	11	73.3	1	6.7	3	20.0	15
disjuncts	non-augmented	23	85.2	4	14.8	0	0.0	27
	augmented	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
	total	23	85.2	4	14.8	0	0.0	27
(near-)conjuncts	non-augmented	26	96.3	0	0.0	1	3.7	27
	augmented	10	76.9	0	0.0	3	23.1	13
	total	36	90.0	0	0.0	4	10.0	40
total (non-integrated clauses)		70	85.4	5	6.1	7	8.5	82

3. The contextual factor. The prevalence of contextually retrievable elements in the adverbial clause (which may nevertheless function as rhematic elements within the adverbial clause) may mark it as thematic (exx. 14, 15).

(14) [Any reasonably informed participant will know that B's utterance is blatantly false.] *That being so*, B cannot be trying to deceive A. (J2K,1023)

(15) [There she had a row with her mother ... and took an overdose of approximately 30 aspirin tablets and cut both her wrists superficially with a razor. ...]

When seen the next morning in hospital, Pamela said she had not cared whether she lived or died *when she took the overdose*, ... (B30,702)

The factor of contextual boundness is employed particularly if the other elements of the superordinate clause, apart from the adverbial, are context-dependent, thus marking the adverbial as a rhematic element. Here the adverbial participial clause was observed to function as the most dynamic element of the superior communicative field. An extreme case of this is an adverbial clause modifying a 'code clause' (Edgren, 1971: 180), whose elements are all proforms.

(16) Nevertheless, most natural populations, at most times, change much more slowly than *they would if subjected to strong directional selection*. (AE7,677)

(17) [Having asked that she should not be disturbed she had taken the overdose in her room. ...]

During the assessment interview Margaret claimed *she took the overdose intending to go to sleep and never wake up again*. (B30,890)

4. The semantic factor. End-placed context-independent adverbial clauses may be classed either as thematic or rhematic depending on the semantic structure of the sentence. In context-independent adverbials the semantic factor may manifest itself in that a "context-independent adverbial that conveys an obligatory amplification of the semantic content of the verb functions as a specification and does so irrespective of sentence position (ex. 18). The same behaviour is shown by a context-independent adverbial that does not convey an obligatory amplification of the verb, but an amplification essential enough to be regarded as specifying (ex. 19)" (Firbas 1992: 50). If, on the other hand, the relationship of a context-independent adverbial to the verb is so loose that it conveys mere background information, it serves as a setting irrespective of sentence position (ex. 20).

(18) Karl von Frisch spent his life *discovering unsuspected sensory and behavioural skills in animals*. (GU8,1427)

(19) He suggests that the 'unfamiliar' release sites of pigeons may in fact be familiar, and the pigeons home *using remembered landmarks and home cues (whether visual, auditory, olfactory, or magnetic)*. (GU8,776)

(20) However, he opened up and discussed his problems with the therapist, *at times bursting into tears*. (B30,799)

The function depends basically on how specific the meaning of the superordinate verb is, i.e. to what extent the adjunct is needed to specify the activity. In ex. (19) the sentence is perspectived to the more specific description of the method/instrument rather than to the predicate verb with a more general meaning. Although punctuation (unlike prosodic features) is not always a reliable means of signalling the FSP function, here its absence supports the specifying function of the adjunct. In ex. (20)

the adjunct clause functions as a setting, referring to circumstances concomitant with the event denoted by the matrix clause.

A context-independent adverbial becomes a setting or a specification on account of a suggestive semantic clue offered by the perspectives of the sentences occurring in the immediately relevant preceding or following context (cf. Firbas 1992: 50–51). The importance of the information conveyed by the adjunct clause may, for example, be reinforced by negation (ex. 35 below), contrast or focalizers (ex. 21).

- (21) In effect, they were all males, although there was probably a division into 'plus' and 'minus' strains, such that gametes could only fuse *if produced by strains of opposite type*. (AE7,442)

The clue may consist in the amount and specificity of information conveyed by the adjunct clause. The adverbial clause functions as a specification if it contains precise or specific information. This factor was proved valid for temporal clauses by Bäcklund (1984: 169): “‘the degree of exactness’ plays an important role in the distribution of CD: the more exact information contained in a temporal adverbial, the higher its degree of CD”, but it seems to apply to other semantic types of clauses as well (ex. 22).

- (22) The amendment failed, *being opposed not just by the Government but surprisingly also by the SDP spokesman, Mr Robert MacLennan, who said that “senior Ministers who have the duty to authorise interception of communications must have a very wide – in many cases, almost unlimited – discretion”*. (ASB,1050)

In the above example ‘the degree of exactness’ is enhanced by the fact that there are three dependent clauses embedded within a noun phrase in the adjunct clause.⁹ Finite or non-finite clauses may also constitute clause elements of participial adjuncts. The embedded clause then functions as a single unit in the distributional communicative field of the participial adverbial clause. In ex. (23) the participial clause functions as a specification within the communicative field of the *while* clause, and the *while* clause as a whole performs the function of a setting in the superior field of the superordinate clause.

- (23) *While the bee was back in its hive dancing about the source*, von Frisch put out other dishes containing the same scented sugary water nearer to and further from the hive, ... (GU8,1438)

Expressing the adverbial in a nonfinite adverbial clause by a finite clause gives the adverbial additional prominence (in comparison with an abbreviated clause) (ex. 24). However, the form of the embedded adverbial clause does not appear to influence the FSP function of the superordinate nonfinite adverbial clause in its superior field.

- (24) They continued to provide both practical help with job hunting and emotional support until people were placed, *staying with them for up to a year afterwards when this was necessary*. (EA0,1711)
cf. ... *staying with them for up to a year afterwards when necessary*.

⁹ Relative adnominal clauses are not integrated directly in the superordinate clause. In terms of FSP they function within the distributional field of their noun phrase which, in turn, constitutes a unit in the superior field of the adverbial clause.

Frequently, the complexity of a nonfinite adverbial clause consists in the fact that its object is expressed by a finite clause. The nonfinite matrix clause (underlined in the examples below) is usually reduced to the maximum extent of comprising only the predicate verb (ex. 25). The direct object clause is not only the most complex and prominent part of the adverbial clause but it also carries a high degree of CD. The finite object clause is further highlighted by being preceded by the compact matrix adverbial clause which carries a low degree of CD (containing transitional and dynamically weak elements, such as the indirect pronominal object *her* in ex. 26). As a whole the complex adverbial clause conveys a large amount of information, and as such is likely to be rhematic. In initial position in the sentence it is nevertheless presented as a setting (ex. 27).

- (25) Careful and accurate description of the problems is necessary *before deciding what help is appropriate and what the patient needs to do to overcome his difficulties*. (B30, 38)
(26) Holmes replies that such a tag functions not to undermine the speaker but to engage the hearer, *reassuring her that the speaker cares about her opinions too*. (CGF,649)
(27) *Having held that British practice was not in accordance with law*, the judges found it unnecessary to address the question what would be regarded as acceptable limits on the right to privacy. (ASB,936)

The semantic clues involve also the semantic role of the adjunct clause. There is a close relation between the semantic role of the adverbial (of whatever form) and its FSP function. As shown by Uhlířová (1974), who studied Czech adverbials realized by noun or prepositional phrases, and Švardalová (1998), who focused on English adverbial finite clauses, the semantic classes of adverbials functioning most frequently as a setting comprise condition, concession, point of view, and time, with condition being the most thematic type of adverbial, irrespective of its form. The adverbials of result proved to serve most frequently as a specification.¹⁰ Our data confirm the link between the semantic role of result and the function of specification. Participial adverbial clauses of result occur exclusively in end-position, which is related on the one hand to the word-order principle of iconicity, and on the other to the rhematic character of these clauses (ex. 28). Purpose clauses seem to display the same behaviour.¹¹

- (28) [Because schools rather than individual pupils were assigned to intervention groups responses of pupils within a school (cluster) tend to be correlated and hence the effective sample size is less than the number of students surveyed.]

¹⁰ There may be assumed to exist a scale of increasing communicative dynamism among the adverbials linked with their semantic roles. It was pointed out by SGALL ET AL. (1986: 194) that “the kinds of participants and free modifications in the valency frames are ordered, and this ordering, which is given by the structure of the language, is identical with the CD hierarchy of individual sentences in the primary case [when the elements are not contextually bound]”. This linear ordering is called systemic ordering. The following (partial) list of systemic ordering in English was suggested by SGALL ET AL. (1986: 201): Temporal – Actor – Addressee – Objective – Origin – Effect – Manner – Norm – from where – Accompaniment – which way – Benefit – Directional.

¹¹ However, the number of participial purpose clauses, six, in our corpus was too small for the results to be conclusive.

The statistical analyses take into account this correlation and the nesting of schools within intervention groups, *thus avoiding underestimation of the standard errors of estimates and spurious significant results.* (EA0,672)

Such straightforward correlation between the semantic role, position of the adverbial clause, and its FSP function is infrequent. Clauses of reason may serve as an example. Participial clauses of reason do not share subordinators (*as, since, because*) with finite reason adjuncts. Nevertheless, there exists an explicit means used to express the reason relationship in free adjuncts: the insertion of an *as*-clause into a present-participial adjunct (exx. 29, 30). The role of the *as*-clause is reduced to the extent of functioning as a subordinator.¹² As the examples below illustrate, from the point of view of FSP the participial adjunct with the inserted *as*-clause may either function as a part of the theme (ex. 29) or as a rhematic element (ex. 30). In the former, the finite *because*-clause is perspectived towards 'sharing a culture and a history', the participial clause is backgrounded, presenting a 'generally known' reason. In the latter, the superordinate finite clause represents a quality scale¹³ in which the initially placed nonfinite clause functions as a setting, and the end-placed participial clause (with the inserted *as*-clause) as a specification. It specifies the reasons for ascribing the particular quality, and its importance is enhanced by the fact that it is a complex clause itself, with the object realized by coordinated finite content clauses.

(29) Conversely we are not sensitised to the possibility of sociocultural differences between the sexes, because they seem to share a culture and a history in common, *living as they do in close proximity.* (CGF,391)

(30) [Classic ethnographic studies of all-male interaction have tended to focus on street gangs and ritual verbal performances, whereas studies of all-female interaction are more likely to focus on small, intimate groups.]
As well as producing data on the two sexes that is not directly comparable, this is surely simplistic, *suggesting as it does that men don't have intimate conversations (and women don't have large scale confrontations).* (CGF,305)

Example (30) is not exceptional: end-placed nonfinite clauses of reason often (7 out of 18 subjectless clauses) modify copular predications, specifying the reasons why the subject of the superordinate clause was assigned the particular quality (ex. 31).¹⁴ These clauses function as specifications.¹⁵

(31) 'Herstory' is an excellent word, *pointing out with wit and elegance that history has too often been the story of men's lives;* (CGF,1306)

¹² It is a 'code clause', its subject coreferential with the implied subject of the adjunct, its predicate a pro-form referring to the predicate of the adjunct.

¹³ Copular verbs "are interpreted as performing the dynamic semantic function of ascribing a quality (AofQ)" (FIRBAS 1992: 68). The position of the AofQ in the Quality Scale is the following: Setting – Bearer of Quality – AofQ – Quality – Specification – Further Specification (ibid.).

¹⁴ The adverbial clause in ex. (31) may alternatively be interpreted as a postmodifying participial construction. Although tests may be suggested to support the adverbial reading (substitution by a finite adverbial clause of reason, change of position), the two participial constructions are sometimes difficult to distinguish.

¹⁵ Among finite clauses, *as*-clauses display a similar pattern (out of the 12 *as*-clauses in end-position, 6 modify a copular predication, with 4 others being used in a passive superordinate clause with a similar distribution of CD), e.g. Again, the justification for this is interesting *as it draws on both structural and thematic evidence.* (J89,134); As this happens equity is sacrificed *as purchasing power rather than clinically diagnosed need determines which patients should be treated.* (EA0,35).

Initially and medially placed participial clauses of reason (56% of clauses) were again considered thematic. Nevertheless, they may contain a large amount of new information (initially placed reason clauses are typically the most dynamic element of the theme, cf. ex. 6 above), which, however, is presented as a reason 'known' to the reader, serving as a common background (ex. 32). It was noted by Bäcklund (1984: 180) that here "the purpose of abbreviation could be to create an impression of shared knowledge, which perhaps would be flattering to the reader" (ex. 33).

(32) *With hospitals all over Britain restricting admissions, the problems of London becoming more evident by the day, and general practice fundholders stealing a march on non-fundholders,* ministers are faced with a complex set of challenges. (EA0,5)

(33) [This tendency to look abroad for inspiration is not new, of course. It is no more a feature of postmodernism than of the modernism which preceded it, very often the work of exiles or displaced persons.]

Centred around the work of an Irishman living in Trieste, Zurich and Paris, modernist fiction – though strongly an anglophone phenomenon – had relatively few significant practitioners of British nationality and domicile, apart from Virginia Woolf. (APS,247)

The most 'thematic' semantic role, according to Uhlřřov (1974) and řřvardlov (1998), is conditional. Most participial conditional clauses are indeed to be considered thematic (61% clauses were in initial/medial position). In end-position, free adjuncts expressing hypothetical condition functioned as a setting,¹⁶ often containing contextually bound elements (ex. 34). On the contrary, most of the end-placed augmented participial adjuncts expressing open condition performed the FSP function of a specification. The function is particularly clear in negative conditional clauses introduced by *unless*, where the negation functions as a focalizer (ex. 35).

(34) Indeed, one might wonder how the same basic story line would look if *supplemented with those evaluative devices.* (J89,240)

(35) According to the decay theory, the memory of some event fades with time *unless continually upgraded.* (GU8,429)

Participial adjuncts frequently perform semantic roles which do not require much knowledge or (co-/contextually substantiated) evidence on the part of the reader to be identified – the temporal relations (simultaneity, in particular), manner, explanation, accompanying circumstance. Generally, these clauses prefer end-position. In determining their FSP function, the degree of their dependence on the notional component of the superordinate verb is to be considered. As shown above, obligatory manner clauses are rhematic. At the same time, the verb they complement is very general in meaning. It therefore requires the specification of manner both on syntactic (valency) and semantic grounds (ex. 36). Elsewhere, the more general the meaning of the superordinate verb is, the more likely the adverbial is to perform the function of

¹⁶ The only exception was a conditional clause dependent on a superordinate 'code clause' (ex. 16 above).

specification indispensable from the point of view of the information structure (albeit not from the syntactic point of view) (ex. 37).

(36) Others, such as noise, are treated *as being irrelevant*. (CMA,916)

(37) Finally the wavelengths of the lines in the spectrum of HDE 226868 change with time *following a regular cycle that repeats every 5.6 days*. (H8K,1701)

The degree of specificity of the adjunct is not always compared with that of the superordinate verb. Explanatory and exemplifying adjuncts are not dependent on the superordinate verb but on the clause element they specify. Therefore, they do not function directly as a communicative unit in the distributional field of the superordinate clause but rather form one field with the element they explain, representing (together) a unit in the superior communicative field. In this respect they resemble appositional (attributive) content clauses. In ex. (38) the participial explanatory clause is anticipated in the superordinate clause by a less explicit expression *retrograde*. Together they represent an inferior communicative field, where the adverbial clause is more dynamic than the adjective it specifies. This inferior field performs the function of a single (rhematic) communicative unit of the superior field. The situation is similar in explanatory clauses expressed by absolutes (ex. 39).

(38) Lymphangitis in filariasis is classically retrograde, *spreading down from the irritating worm*. (EA0,1943)

(39) The response to the problem has been variable, *with excellent services being established in some areas and woefully inadequate facilities continuing in others*. (B30,1658)

It is not only the degree of dependence of the participial adjunct on the notional component but also on the temporal exponent of the superordinate verb that needs to be considered. It was pointed out by Svoboda (1987: 53) that temporal adverbials specify or develop the temporal exponent, which is always already present in the sentence in the form of the superordinate verb. On the one hand, the temporal adverbials are bound to, and to a certain extent limited by, this exponent, on the other hand the very existence of the temporal exponent makes it possible to regard the temporal adverbials as additional extensions: more or less independent temporal settings (thematic) or independent specifications (rhematic). Their function in the particular sentence depends on whether they are presented as the former or the latter, whether the sentence is perspectived towards them. If the temporal clause refers to events preceding or following that of the matrix clause it is less dependent on the matrix clause than if it expresses simultaneity. Accordingly, a nonfinite clause expressing simultaneity more often functions as a setting dependent on its matrix clause. Participial clauses of temporal posteriority shift forward the reference time within the complex sentence (typically in narrative discourse) (ex. 24 above). Such clauses "qualify as foreground concerning all features but the syntactic one" (Kortmann 1991: 156). It is possible to treat these clauses as (mostly rhematic) units of the superior distributional field of the superordinate clause because they are presented (and syntactically marked) as subordinate. As a matter of fact, they are to a large extent independent of the superordinate clause (and could be paraphrased using a paratactic structure). Framing

the temporal clause as subordinate may serve as a means of indicating a close relationship between the events referred to by the super- and subordinate clauses.

5. Conclusions. As we have seen, participial adverbial clauses perform the same range of FSP functions within the communicative field of the superordinate clause as non-clausal and finite-clause adverbials. The FSP function of participial adjuncts is determined primarily by the FSP factors as given by Firbas (1992) for written texts:¹⁷ the context, semantics, and linear modification. Out of these, the employment of the factor of linear modification is constrained by processing pressure (due to the clausal form of the adverbial and the unexpressed subject in participial free adjuncts). The role of context is generally reduced in adverbials, as they are not typically context-dependent or independent in the same way as other (nominal) clause elements. The FSP factor prominent in adverbial clauses thus seems to be the semantic structure. Several secondary factors, or clues, can be traced here. The adverbial clause generally introduces more information into the superordinate clause than non-clausal adverbials, which marks it as more dynamic. Consequently, the thematic adverbial clause typically functions as the diatheme. If the information presented by the participial clause is quite specific or the adverbial clause is itself complex (this applies in particular to adverbial clauses with a finite-clause object), the end-placed adverbial clause functions as a rhematic element. The form of the adverbial (a nonfinite clause) may influence the distribution of CD in the superior communicative field in yet another way. Being itself homogeneous with regard to the distribution of CD, the participial clause may lead to the compacting effect, setting off the rheme of the superior field or assigning additional prominence to an adjacent thematic element, typically the subject of the superordinate clause.

Although it is generally possible to identify the factors influencing the communicative (dynamic) functions of adverbial clauses, some clauses remain potentially indeterminate between the setting and specification functions in written texts. Evidently, much remains to be discussed in the field of the FSP functions of adverbials realized by clauses.

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¹⁷ In spoken texts the prosodic factor co-determines the FSP function of the clause element. Punctuation in written texts (i.e. separating the adverbial clause from the superordinate clause by commas, hyphens or brackets) may be considered a secondary factor in that the presence of punctuation may support the setting function of the adverbial clause.

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The data cited herein have been extracted from the British National Corpus World Edition, December 2000 Release (CD), published by the Humanities Computing Unit of Oxford University on behalf of the BNC Consortium.

K participiálním příslovečným větám z hlediska aktuálního členění větného

Résumé

Příslovečné určení může z hlediska aktuálního členění větného fungovat jako prvek tematický (kulisa), orientovaný k přechodu, nebo rematický (specifikace). Ukazuje se, že participiální příslovečné věty mohou plnit všechny tyto funkce. Při stanovení jejich funkce v psaném textu je rozhodující sémantická struktura věty. Faktor slovosledný je ve svém působení omezen na jedné straně délkou a komplexností větného adverbialu a na druhé nutností identifikovat nevyjádřený podmět participiální konstrukce z předcházejícího kontextu. Pokud jde o kontextovou zapojenost příslovečné věty, lze tento faktor nejspíše aplikovat tam, kde je většina členů participiální konstrukce kontextově zapojená (pak je příslovečná věta tematická), nebo tam, kde představuje adverbialu jediný nezapojený člen věty řídící (příslovečná věta je rematická). Jako indikátor rematickosti participiální příslovečné věty se uplatňuje specifická a obsažnost informace, kterou přináší – zejména tam, kde předmět adverbialní věty má formu finitní vedlejší věty. Samotná forma participiální příslovečné věty se uplatňuje jako faktor aktuálního členění v zásadě dvěma způsoby: větné adverbialu je dynamičtější než nevětná forma (v tematické části nadřazeného sdělného pole obvykle představuje diatéma); na druhé straně díky své kompaktnosti může přispívat k zdůraznění jiných členů komunikativního pole (typicky podmětu).