

THE SYNTAX OF CLIMATE CHANGE: SYNTACTIC MEANS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GRETA THUNBERG'S COMMUNITY IDENTITY ON FACEBOOK

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ABSTRACT. *The Syntax of Climate Change: Syntactic Means in the Construction of Greta Thunberg's Community Identity on Facebook.* It is argued that the identity of an online community (e.g., a Facebook community) is manifested by linguistic devices, such as syntactic means (Androutsopoulos 2015; Blumenfeld-Jones 2022; Kapranov 2019). This contention is explored in the study that is further presented and discussed in the article. The study seeks to identify syntactic means, in particular dependent clauses, which are involved in the construction of Greta Thunberg's community identity on Facebook. Greta Thunberg, a famous climate change activist from Sweden, has a public account on Facebook that is followed by a substantial number of Facebook users, who, presumably, share her views on climate change, sustainability, and other environmental issues. It is assumed in the study that Greta Thunberg's status updates on her public Facebook account could be characterised by syntactic means that facilitate the construction of the climate activists' community identity. In order to verify the assumption, a corpus of Greta Thunberg's status updates on Facebook was collected and analysed by the software program L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (Lu 2010). The computer-assisted analysis was supplemented by a manual procedure of identifying the types of dependent clauses in the corpus. The results of the corpus analysis revealed that Greta Thunberg's community construction on Facebook was facilitated by such syntactic means as dependent clauses, in particular non-finite, adverbial, and relative clauses. The findings were further discussed in the article through the lens of the construction of community identity.

Keywords: *climate change, dependent clauses, Facebook, Greta Thunberg, identity, online community, syntactic means*

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REZUMAT. *Sintaxa schimbărilor climatice: mijloace sintactice în construirea identității comunitare a Gretei Thunberg pe Facebook.* Se susține că identitatea unei comunități online, de exemplu, o comunitate Facebook, se manifestă prin mecanisme lingvistice, cum ar fi unele mijloace sintactice (Androutsopoulos 2015; Blumenfeld-Jones 2022; Kapranov 2019). Această dezbatere este explorată în studiul care este prezentat și discutat în continuare în articol. Studiul urmărește să identifice mijloacele sintactice, în special propoziții subordonate, care contribuie la construcția identitară a comunității Gretei Thunberg pe Facebook. Greta Thunberg, o celebră activistă din Suedia în domeniul schimbărilor climatice, are o pagină web publică pe Facebook, care este urmărită de peste trei milioane de utilizatori Facebook, care au în comun cu aceasta activismul în domeniul schimbărilor climatice, respectiv schimbările climatice, durabilitate și alte probleme de mediu. În studiu se presupune că actualizările de pe pagina publică de Facebook a Gretei Thunberg, scrise de ea însăși, ar putea avea drept caracteristici unele mijloace sintactice care facilitează construirea identității comunității interesate de domeniul schimbărilor climatice. Pentru a verifica ipoteza, s-a realizat și analizat un corpus de actualizări de pe pagina de Facebook a Gretei Thunberg prin intermediul programului software L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (Lu 2010). Analiza asistată de computer a fost completată de o procedură manuală de identificare a tipurilor de subordonate din corpus. Rezultatele analizei de corpus au arătat că identitatea în cauză a fost construită prin mijloace sintactice precum subordonatele, în special nepredicativele, adverbialele, relativele, condiționalele și exclamativele. Constatările sunt discutate în articol prin prisma construcției identității acestei comunități online.

Cuvinte-cheie: schimbări climatice, propoziții subordonate, Facebook, Greta Thunberg, identitate, comunitate online, mijloace sintactice

1. Introduction and specific research questions

Greta Thunberg is a symbol of youth engagement in the issue of climate change (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020), who “catapulted to world fame after mobilizing young people to urge the Swedish parliament to take action on climate change” (Park, Liu, and Kaye 2021, 1). Owing to her climate change-related activism, Greta Thunberg is typically referred to in the current literature as “a highly influential activist” (Telford 2022), “a global icon”, “a hero” (Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021), “an eco-celebrity” (Murphy 2021), “a face of climate activism” (White 2021), and “one of the most prominent leaders of climate activism” (Martínez García 2020). It should be observed that whilst Greta Thunberg’s rise from a lonely school striker to the global icon of

climate change activism (Olesen 2022, 1325) is remarkable, her activities seem to be described as a broad palette consisting of controversy, fame, paradox, and popularity (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021; Park, Liu, and Kaye 2021; Telford 2022).

As a popular climate change activist, Greta Thunberg is eagerly involved in creating a strong presence on social networking sites (SNSs), in particular Facebook (Sabherwal et al. 2021), where she currently (in October 2022) has three and a half million followers. Greta Thunberg's Facebook account is public. In this regard, it should be noted that in case the Facebook account is "constructed for the general public to look at, then the account will be made visible to everyone" (Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin 2008, 1823). The public status of Greta Thunberg's Facebook account allows Facebook users to visit her Facebook page, familiarise themselves with its content, and, if desired, write their comments under her status updates. In this way, it could be argued that Greta Thunberg's public Facebook account is interactive, given that her Facebook followers are free to leave their written comments, as well as multimedia input, such as YouTube videos, hyperlinks, and emojis, i.e. pictograms embedded in the text message, or, alternatively, a stand-alone emoji.

In case we problematise Greta Thunberg's Facebook account as an open and interactive online forum that is focused on the issues of climate change and sustainability, it could be argued that it embodies not only her Facebook account per se, but epitomises an online community that, arguably, shares her climate change-related concerns. In particular, Greta Thunberg positions herself on Facebook as a climate and environmental activist (<https://www.facebook.com/gretathunbergsweden>). The aforementioned self-description emblematises the ethos of her Facebook account and, consequently, facilitates the construction of an online community of her followers, who are free to interact with her and with each other on her Facebook page. In other words, we may describe Thunberg's Facebook page as a digital community, or a digital culture (Androutsopoulous 2015) with the accompanying sense of identity, which "bespeaks a need of belonging that is readily afforded and met by the social platforms" (Cotrău, Cotoc, and Papuc 2021, 26). In unison with the literature (Cotrău, Cotoc, and Papuc 2021), it is argued in the present study that Greta Thunberg's Facebook page could be regarded as a "locus where identities are deliberately constructed and negotiated" (Garzone and Catenaccio 2009, 9).

Presumably, one of the aspects of Greta Thunberg's online community construction on Facebook could be manifested by syntactic means. Notably, syntactic patterns are thought to be associated with the construction of identity (Blommaert 2015; Kapranov 2014; Schiffrin 2009). For instance, Schiffrin (2009, 421) has established that such syntactic means as dependent clauses,

verb phrases, and existential *there* are employed in the construction of personal identity. In the wake of Schiffrin (2009), micro-syntactic means have been found to be involved in the construction of identity by early balanced bilinguals (Kapranov 2019). Additionally, prior research demonstrates that dependent clauses are reflective of the early balanced bilinguals' identity maintenance (Kapranov 2014). The nexus between syntactic means and identity construction is reported in the literature on second language (L2) acquisition, where syntax forms one of the facets of the learners' "sense of self and their ways of interacting with the world" (Belz 2002, 13). This observation is especially relevant in the context of the present study, given that Greta Thunberg's first language (L1) is Swedish, and English is her L2. It also should be noted that whilst Thunberg writes her Facebook status updates predominantly in English, she does so in order to reach a virtually unlimited audience (Garzone and Catenaccio 2009) of her global online community of followers, who, just like Thunberg, may communicate in English as an L2. It is quite possible that syntactic means that are used by Thunberg in her online communication with the Facebook followers would be reflective of her English competencies as an L2 speaker to address an online community of other English L2 speakers. It could be assumed that Greta Thunberg's use of English as an L2, taken in conjunction with the substantial part of her Facebook followers, who are English L2 speakers, is conducive to employing syntactic means in writing her Facebook status updates that are frequent and, perhaps, characterised by patterning. Presumably, the frequency of the occurrence of syntactic means found in Greta Thunberg's status updates on Facebook could be indicative of the construction of her Facebook community identity.

Currently, however, little is known about how syntactic means are employed in relation to the construction of an online community identity. Whilst there is a cornucopia of fairly recent studies that analyse Greta Thunberg's discourse (Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020; Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021; Keller 2021; Martínez García 2020; Nässén and Rambaree 2021; Nordensvard and Ketola 2021; Murphy 2021; Pałka-Lasek 2020; Sabherwal et al. 2021; Sjögren 2020; Stoecklin 2021; Vowles and Hultman 2021; White 2021), there seems to be no published research that specifically examines syntactic means in her Facebook status updates. Furthermore, there are insufficient studies that focus on the frequency and use of such syntactic means, as dependent clauses in the construction of an online community identity. Guided by the prior literature that emphasises the role of dependent clauses in textual identity construction (Belz 2002; Blommaert 2015; Kapranov 2014; Schiffrin 2009), the study further presented in the article seeks to discover novel insights into the interaction of online community

identity and syntactic means (specifically, dependent clauses), both of which are aligned with the issue of climate change as one of the principal starting points of community identity construction. The study aims to elucidate the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What are the most frequent types of clauses that are used in Greta Thunberg's Facebook status updates?

RQ2: How are dependent clauses used in Greta Thunberg's Facebook status updates in relation to the construction of the identity of her online community on Facebook?

In line with the RQs, the article proceeds as follows. First, the prior literature on Greta Thunberg's discourse is given in section 2. Then, theoretical considerations associated with the discourse of identity on Facebook are provided in section 3. Thereafter, in section 4, the present study is described in conjunction with the corpus, procedure, methods, and results that are discussed through the lens of community identity construction. Finally, in section 5, the major findings are summarised from the vantage point of their relevance to the field of discourse of identity studies.

2. The prior literature on Greta Thunberg's discourse

As mentioned in the introductory part of the article, there is a wealth of prior literature on Greta Thunberg's discourse. The literature appears to address the following research themes that are associated with Greta Thunberg's discourse: i) climate change activism (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Martínez García 2020; Nässén and Rambaree 2021; Pałka-Lasek 2020; Sabherwal et al. 2021; Sjögren 2020; Stoecklin 2021), ii) fame (Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021; Murphy 2021), iii) feminism and masculinity (Keller 2021; Vowles and Hultman 2021; White 2021), iv) populism (Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020; Nordensvard and Ketola 2021), and v) trolling and bullying (Park, Liu, and Kaye 2021; Telford 2022).

The research theme of climate change-related activism in Greta Thunberg's discourse is explored in the recent publications by Martínez García (2020), Nässén and Rambaree (2021), Pałka-Lasek (2020), Sabherwal et al. (2021), Sjögren (2020), and Stoecklin (2021). From the standpoint of climate change-related activism, Greta Thunberg's discourse is reflective of her individual "I" as her personal self, testimonial "I" that stands for multiple individuals, and testimonial "we" that demonstrates her collective identification (Martínez García 2020, 356).

Presumably, the multiple personas identified in Thunberg's discourse, especially the testimonial "we", have positive rapport with the public at large (Sabherwal et al. 2021; Sjögren 2020; Stoecklin 2021). In particular, Sjögren (2020, 615) posits that Greta Thunberg's message "resonates with a worldview related to the promises of modernity" due to its structure and simplicity, which involve such narrative foci, as "science as the truth", "for the human child's sake", and "the apocalyptic future" (ibid.). The simplicity and accessibility of Thunberg's narratives render her the characteristics of leadership and moral authority in the public eye (Nässén and Rambaree 2021). Greta is argued to be depicted positively by the mainstream media (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Pałka-Lasek 2020). In terms of the mass media, Sabherwal et al. (2021) indicate that those individuals, who are familiar with Greta Thunberg's speeches and activities via mass media as well as personal and virtual contacts, exhibit a strong association between collective efficacy beliefs and collective action intentions that are facilitative of the individuals' support for climate activism (Sabherwal et al. 2021, 321). As far as climate activism is concerned, Greta's capacity to make a difference is thought to be based upon several discursive strategies that sustain her speeches, namely objectification, personification, sanctification, unification, and diversification (Stoecklin 2021, 1). The strategies, in turn, are associated with such symbolic landscapes as activities, relations, values, images of self, and motivations that are argued to streamline her social interactions with the public in climate change-related activism (ibid.).

The research theme of fame in relation to Greta Thunberg's discourse is represented by the studies conducted by Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons (2021), and Murphy (2021). The studies demonstrate that Thunberg's key role as a famous climate change activist is "reinforced and legitimized with her own personal story told through the hero's journey" (Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021, 36). According to Murphy (2021), Thunberg's fame, referred to as "eco-celebrity", eventuates from her personal story, which is anchored in her role as a well-known and well-recognised leader of the global climate movement. Murphy (2021, 193) argues that "Thunberg's rise to global eco-celebrity has been media-centric", with the media's attention being focused on her confrontational style of climate change activism that is aimed at teenage and young adult audiences.

Thunberg's discourse is examined through the prism of feminism and masculinity by Keller (2021), Vowles and Hultman (2021), and White (2021). Keller (2021) suggests that Greta Thunberg could be seen as a figure of the so-called international girlhood whose climate change-related discourse provokes a range of sexist, racist, and ageist responses on the part of the masculine culture of the Canadian province of Alberta, which, coincidentally, is rich in oil.

In accordance with Keller (2021), Thunberg represents a symbol of international girlhood that is perceived as a challenge by the male representatives of the local patriarchal culture that is centred on resource extraction. In the same vein, Thunberg's climate change-related discourse is analysed by Vowles and Hultman (2021) via the lens of masculinity and the traditional male-dominated culture. Vowles and Hultman (2021) have found that Thunberg's speeches on environmental privileges, carbon emissions, and resource use have been met with hostility and mistrust on the part of the far-right Swedish media associated with the traditional "breadwinner" masculinity. Similarly, White (2021, 396) points out to the misrepresentations of Thunberg's climate and feminist discourse in online anti-feminist fora that express negativity towards "girls, women, feminism, the environment, and people with disabilities".

The research theme of populism in Greta Thunberg's discourse is discussed by Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall (2020), and Nordensvard and Ketola (2021). In particular, Nordensvard and Ketola (2021) argue that Greta Thunberg's approach to climate change narratives involves the 'truth-telling' hero character, who delivers the narrative by means of foregrounding the rhetorical strategies of emotions and conflicts as devices of populist discourse.

Interestingly, whereas Nordensvard and Ketola (2021) portray Thunberg as a populist narrator, Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall (2020) suggest that Thunberg is a victim of the populist far-right culture, which is characterised by the discourse of climate change denial.

Trolling and bullying in relation to Thunberg's discourse are scrutinised by Park, Liu, and Kaye (2021), and Telford (2022). Specifically, having analysed user comments from the most-viewed YouTube videos about Thunberg, Park, Liu, and Kaye (2021) demonstrate that approximately half of the comments are characterised by uncivil remarks that ignore her position on climate change, and focus on her age, gender, and Asperger's syndrome. In a similar fashion, Telford (2022) indicates that the discourse of bullying associated with Thunberg's climate change activism is conceptualised as the construals "bully", "the bullied", and "the anti-bully".

It is evident from the review of the recent literature that Thunberg's discourse on climate change has inspired a plethora of research publications that examine it from the vantage point of various foci. However, there seems to be no state-of-the-art research that focuses on syntactic means in her climate change-related discourse. The study that is further presented in the article aims to bridge the gap in the current knowledge. Prior to proceeding to the study, however, it appears relevant to provide a brief overview of the discourse of identity on Facebook, which is described in section 3 below.

3. Discourse of identity on Facebook: Theoretical considerations

Generally, identity “deals with the question “Who am I?”, which usually refers to further questions of belongings and locating oneself in social contexts” (Zhang, Jiang, and Carroll 2012, 102). The discourse of identity has attracted scholarly attention resulting in a wealth of research publications that analyse the construal of identity in its relation to the bilingual population, ethnic groups, the teaching and learning of foreign languages, professional identity, for instance, teacher identity, personal online identity, group identity, gender and sex, culture, to name just a few (Androutsopoulos 2015; Baym 2000; Bolander and Locher 2010; Cotoc 2017; Cotrău 2013; Drotner 2007; Georgalou 2018; Kapranov 2020; Mak and Chui 2013; Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin 2008).

Concurring with Garzone and Catenaccio (2009), it seems feasible to suggest that identity is quite often fluid, and subject to construction and, arguably, de-construction (Kapranov 2018). As far as the construction of identity on SNSs is concerned, it is posited in the literature that online identity involves one’s selective self-presentation and the interplay between the individual’s online and offline identities (Cotrău, Cotoc, and Papuc 2021, 26). With the advances in online technology afforded by the Web 2.0 websites, the issue of online identity (for instance, individual, group and social identity) has come to the fore in discourse studies (Cotoc 2017; Georgalou 2018). In terms of online identity, or cyber-identity, Cotoc (2017, 206-207) notes that in cyber-space

[...] the focus is more on how we wish others to perceive us and on the process of setting forth an image we want others to perceive (online self-presentation), but also on how we contribute to the perception of other users and how other users contribute to our perception. Hence, online identity is the social identity encountered in cyberspace, what users display on SNSs, Websites, Weblogs, public chats, emails, etc.: “digital forms of identity performance” (Drotner, 2007: 171). It is the content posted by digi-participants in different Internet environments and one cannot create a recognizable identity in any digital space or group without posting (Baym, 2000: 144). Additionally, cyber-identity is the social identity expressed as individual identity (what is unique to the user) and group identity (what he shares with other users).

It is inferred from Cotoc (2017, 207) that an online identity is concomitant with a form of discursive, or more generally, semiotic presence of an individual and/or a group on the SNS. As far as the person’s online identity on Facebook is concerned, Georgalou (2018, 12) argues that there is a mutual relationship between one’s discursive practices and Facebook identity, since the identities

Facebook users employ in interactions influence their online communication. It is suggested that the users' discursive practices on Facebook determine the way they perceive themselves and others (Georgalou, 2018).

Whilst it is beyond the scope of the article to provide a comprehensive outline of the multitude of studies on discourse of identity on Facebook, it seems feasible to summarise the major theoretical postulates that are applicable to the present investigation. In particular, it stands to reason to agree with the following considerations that have been adapted from Georgalou (2018, 4). They are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Theoretical Considerations of Discourse of Identity on Facebook (based upon Georgalou 2018)

N	Theoretical Considerations	Explanation
1	Facebook discourse is inherently constitutive of identity	Creating and updating a public profile on Facebook requires the users to reflect upon how they wish to represent themselves, enabling them to uniquely locate and combine their self-descriptions in the context of social connections.
2	Discourse of identity on Facebook is a product of social interaction	Identity on Facebook is intrinsically interactive, which is construed and maintained by means of exchanging comments between the user and the audience
3	Orchestrating meaning through multimodality is a critical element in Facebook identity construction	Communication in social media is integrated into visually anchored environments, with verbal/textual exchanges being fragmented and reliant on multimodal context.
4	Facebook users adopt certain textual practices to present their identities online	The users may adopt special textual practices for a variety of purposes (for instance, to secure their accounts) that affect the textually visible identity product.

Of particular relevance to the present study is the last consideration formulated in Table 1 under number 4. It refers to the adoption of certain textual practices by Facebook users. By means of expanding on this consideration, it appears possible to hypothesise that Greta Thunberg's Facebook discourse would be characterised by certain textual practices that involve, for instance, syntactic means. Further, the study is presented in section 4 of the article that addresses the issue of syntactic means in construing Greta Thunberg's community identity on Facebook.

4. The present study

It is not a novel idea that syntax, in particular syntactic patterns, the frequency of syntactic devices and their variation are associated with the speaker's/writer's style (Serrano and Oliva 2011) and identity (Grabovac and

Kapranov 2016; Kapranov 2019; Schiffrin 2009). However, as previously mentioned, few studies focus explicitly on the aforementioned contention, especially in the context of Greta Thunberg's online community identity. Given that there is no published research on how syntactic means are employed in Thunberg's Facebook discourse, the purpose of the present study is to identify and quantify the use of such syntactic means, as dependent clauses, in the construction of Thunberg's Facebook community identity. In conjunction with the purpose of the study, two specific RQs have been formulated (see Introduction).

The study is based upon the theoretical and methodological premises that have been expanded upon in the prior literature, which points to the crucial role of dependent clauses in identity construction (Belz 2002; Blommaert 2015; Kapranov 2014; Schiffrin 2009). Specifically, the study is informed by the findings (Kapranov 2014; Schiffrin 2009) indicating that a written narrative can evoke and shape nexuses of time, space, and identity by syntactic means, inclusive of dependent clauses (Schiffrin 2009, 421). Given that Facebook status updates could be regarded as written (mini)-narratives, it is assumed in the study that Facebook status updates written by Greta Thunberg on her public Facebook page would involve a number of dependent clauses that would be reflective of textual practices and/or preferences that are used in order to present her identity online (Georgalou 2018). Based upon the aforementioned assumption, the following specific aims of the study have been explicated:

- i) to collect a corpus of Greta Thunberg's status updates on Facebook;
- ii) to analyse the corpus by means of the software program L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (Lu 2010);
- iii) to analyse the corpus manually in order to establish the types of dependent clauses;
- iv) to analyse the role of the most frequent dependent clauses in the construction of Greta Thunberg's online community identity on Facebook.

4.1. Procedure, methods, and corpus

In terms of the procedure, the following should be explained. In order to ensure that ethical standards are observed, it was decided to collect the corpus that consisted exclusively of textual material found on Thunberg's public Facebook profile, thus factoring out such multimodal elements as pictures and videos. As far as the cut-off for the corpus was concerned, it was established in accordance with the previous literature (Kapranov 2019), which indicated that a period of time between six months and two years would be sufficient for the corpus collection of status updates on Facebook. Hence, the corpus was comprised of Greta Thunberg's status updates on Facebook from

1 July 2020 to 1 July 2022, i.e., two years. The corpus was collected in July 2022 by means of accessing and downloading Thunberg's status updates available at <https://www.facebook.com/gretathunbergsweden>.

Based upon the methodology described by Grabovac and Kapranov (2016), Thunberg's Facebook status updates were merged into one file and processed in the software program L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (Lu 2010) in order to calculate the descriptive statistics, such as the total number of words, sentences, and T-units. In concord with Hunt (1965), a T-unit, or a minimal terminable unit of language, was defined as the smallest word group that could be considered a grammatical sentence, regardless of punctuation. The descriptive statistics of the corpus were summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The Descriptive Statistics of the Corpus

N	Descriptive Statistics	Thunberg's FB Status Updates
1	Total number of FB status updates	191
2	Total number of words	11 718
3	Total number of sentences	1 013
4	Total number of T-Units	1 184

The computer-assisted analysis of the corpus was followed by a manual procedure of identifying the types of dependent clauses. The results of the analysis were given in subsection 4.2 below.

4.2. Results and discussion

As mentioned in the introductory part of the article, there are two specific RQs in the study. Let us discuss the results of the corpus analysis in conjunction with the RQs.

4.2.1. RQ 1: The frequency of clauses in Thunberg's Facebook status updates

The results of the quantitative investigation have revealed that there are 39 coordinate and 408 dependent clauses in the corpus. It follows from these findings that subordination is much more prominent in the corpus in contrast to coordination. Unfortunately, there is no possibility to compare the findings with the prior literature discussed in section 2 of the article, since the previous studies (Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020; Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021; Keller 2021; Martínez García 2020; Nässén and Rambaree 2021; Nordensvard and Ketola 2021; Murphy 2021; Pałka-Lasek 2020; Sabherwal et al. 2021; Sjögren 2020; Stoecklin 2021;

Vowles and Hultman 2021; White 2021) do not focus on the syntactic means in Thunberg’s discourse.

The coordinate clauses in the corpus can be exemplified by Excerpts (1) and (2), which demonstrate that coordination is associated with the coordinating conjunctions *and* and *but* that are used rather frequently in English (Kapranov 2019), e.g.

(1) Perhaps the most overlooked industry when it comes to the climate and ecological crisis is forestry. In the coming decades we will undoubtedly be needing every possible carbon sink to sequester and store CO₂, and yet a forest area the size of a football field is being cut down every second, according to Global Forest Watch. (Thunberg, 18 October 2020)

(2) Today on #YouthDay social media is filled with people praising youth for leading on climate action, along with countless of other issues. Youth commitment is truly great, but make no mistake we have no desire to “lead”. (Thunberg, 12 August 2020)

Given that coordinate clauses are indicative of syntactic complexity (Kapranov 2014), their less frequent occurrence in the corpus could be explained by Thunberg’s communicative style that aims to be accessible and easy to follow (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Pałka-Lasek 2020). Conversely, dependent clauses are used by Thunberg more frequently and consistently. The types of dependent clauses are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3. The Types of Dependent Clauses in the Corpus

N	Descriptive Statistics	Total N in Thunberg’s FB Status Updates
1	Adjective clauses	5
2	Adverbial clauses	56
3	Causative clauses	35
4	Comment clauses	18
5	Comparative clauses	5
6	Conditional clauses	37
7	Elliptical clauses	3
8	Exclamative clauses	30
9	Imperative clauses	16
10	Interrogative clauses	22
11	Nominal clauses	18
12	Non-finite “-ing” clauses	39
13	Non-finite “to” clauses	67
14	Non-finite past participle clauses	4
15	Relative clauses	49
16	Subjunctive clauses	4

It is evident from Table 3 that the most frequent type of dependent clauses in the corpus is represented by non-finite clauses, comprised of “-ing”, “to” and past participle clauses. This finding is further emblematised by Figure 1, where the frequency of non-finite clauses is given in the form of percentage to the total number (N) of dependent clauses (N = 408).

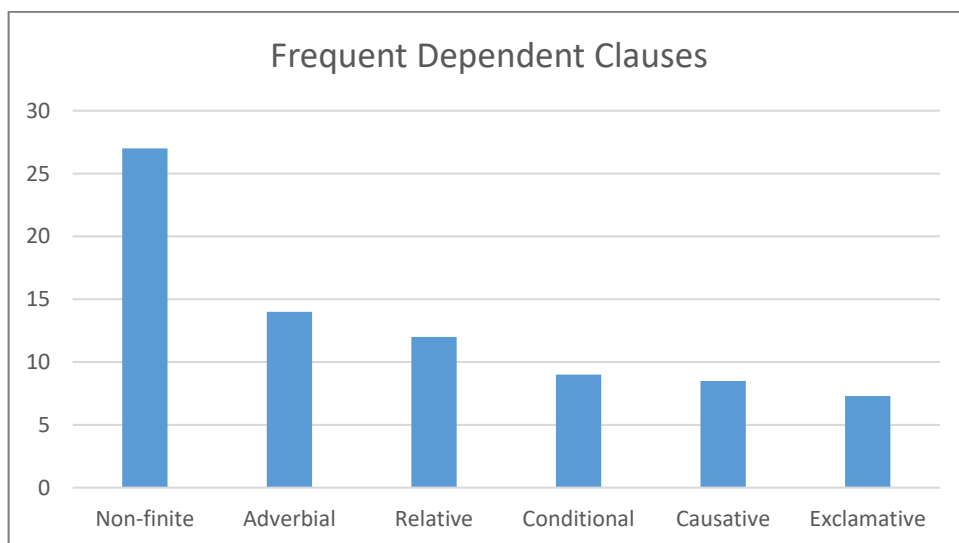


Figure 1. Percentage of the Most Frequently Used Dependent Clauses
Non-finite “-ing” clause

It is seen in Figure 1 that the non-finite clauses in the corpus are substantially more frequent compared to the rest of the clause types. This observation begs a logical question concerning the role of the frequent clauses in the construction of Thunberg’s community identity. In other words, to what objectives are non-finite clauses used more frequently than the other types, what is the pragma-communicative purpose of employing them in the status updates, do they serve a certain purpose in the construction of Thunberg’s community identity? We will address these questions in the following subsection of the article.

4.2.2. RQ 2: The use of the most frequent types of clauses in the construction of Greta Thunberg’s community identity on Facebook

We have previously established that non-finite clauses are the most frequent clause type in Thunberg’s status updates on Facebook. Could the frequency be explained from the vantage point of the construction of Thunberg’s

community identity on Facebook? Alternatively, could we assume that the frequency of these clauses is fortuitous and devoid of any rhetorical or pragma-communicative purpose? Let us try to examine the pragma-communicative role of the non-finite clauses in constructing Thunberg's community identity by analysing Excerpt (3) that exemplifies the non-finite "-ing" clause and Excerpt (4) which illustrates the use of the non-finite "to" clause:

(3) Interview in *Vogue Scandinavia*. The fashion industry is a huge contributor to the climate-and ecological emergency, not to mention its impact on the countless workers and communities who are being exploited around the world in order for some to enjoy fast fashion that many treat as disposables. Many are making it look as if the fashion industry are starting to take responsibility, by spending fantasy amounts on campaigns where they portray themselves as "sustainable", "ethical", "green", "climate neutral" and "fair". But let's be clear: This is almost never anything but pure green washing. You cannot mass produce fashion or consume "sustainably" as the world is shaped today. That is one of the many reasons why we will need a system change. Photo by Alexandrov Klum (Thunberg, 8 August 2021)

(4) We can't call for climate justice while advocating for policies and phase-out-dates based on targets that exclude aspect of equity and historic emissions. The first step towards climate justice must be to include ALL (especially) high income nations emissions in the targets (like consumption, burning of biomass and waste, land use, international aviation and shipping etc). To surrender the aspect of equity based on historic emissions and climate justice for low- and middle- income countries in order to create goals and targets that high income nations consider to be "politically possible" is not just immoral - it violates the heart of the Paris agreement. (Thunberg, 5 May 2021)

Let us assume that the use of non-finite clauses in (3) and (4) is a conscious strategy that is employed by Thunberg in order to a) deliver an important message to her online community and, possibly, b) mobilise her community for action. Arguably, the non-finite "-ing" clause in (3) could be consciously used to convey a continuous, recurrent situation, which is "timeless" in the sense that it happened before, is happening now and is likely to happen again in the future. Such an interpretation of timelessness in (3) is suggestive of the construal of "chronotope" developed by Bakhtin (1981), who argues that there can be a textual blending of space and time in any event in the real world (Blommaert 2015, 106). Presumably, Thunberg employs the non-finite clause in (3) in order to emphasise that the fashion industry has been causing harm to the environment irrespective of where and when its production capacities are

located in the coordinates of the Bakhtinian chronotope (1981). By means of the frequently used non-finite clauses, Thunberg, perhaps, seeks to foreground a perennial nature of the problem that, arguably, is boundless in time and space, and, as such, should be tackled by the climate change activists.

The non-finite “to” clauses in (4) seem to impart an idea that certain actions expressed by the to-infinitive verbs must be taken in order to ameliorate the deplorable situation associated with the issue of climate change. Whilst it might be an impressionistic reading of (4), such textual fragments as “the first step towards...”, “must be”, etc., facilitate an impression that (4) reads more like a manifesto and a call for action rather than a plain Facebook status update. Seemingly, the non-finite “to” clauses reinforce this impression. Furthermore, in (4) we observe several non-finite “to” clauses that form a chain, or, rather, a pattern that is suggestive of the step-by-step instruction of what needs to be done to tackle the long-standing issue of climate change. It could be the case that by using the concatenation of “to” clauses Thunberg seeks to mobilise her online community and provide the activists with a concrete and feasible plan of action.

5. Conclusions

The article has introduced and discussed the computer-assisted study on how syntactic means, to be more precise, dependent clauses are used in the construction of Greta Thunberg's community identity on Facebook. It has been established that non-finite clauses are the most frequent type of dependent clauses in the corpus of Thunberg's Facebook status updates in the period of time 1 July 2020 – 1 July 2022. The corpus analysis has revealed that non-finite clauses are frequent and recurrent, which might be suggestive of the conscious use of these syntactic means in order to create an effect of timelessness in case of the “-ing” clauses and a call for action, or, metaphorically speaking, a “laundry list” of actions to be taken in order to ameliorate the current situation associated with climate change in case of the non-finite “to” clauses. A possible interpretation of the frequent non-finite clauses has been provided in subsection 4.2.2 of the article. The interpretation is based upon Thunberg's conscious use of the non-finite clauses.

However, there seems to be more than one interpretation of the present findings. First of all, let us take into consideration that English is not Greta Thunberg's L1. Hence, we may argue that her preference for non-finite clauses stems from her English proficiency. This interpretation appears possible, especially in light of the prior research that indicates that syntax is a facet of an L2 speaker's way of interacting with the world (Belz 2002, 13). If this interpretation of the findings is correct, we may speak of the frequent non-finite clauses in the corpus as an indicator of Thunberg's mastery of the English language.

Another interpretation of the findings could involve a contention that, perhaps, there are neither conscious nor L2 proficiency-related reasons for Thunberg's frequent use of non-finite clauses. In other words, Thunberg is, supposedly, not aware of her frequent use of non-finite clauses and such use constitutes her personal style of writing, when she communicates with her community on Facebook.

Whilst there are multiple avenues for the interpretation of the findings, the study has revealed that there is a tendency on the part of Thunberg to prefer certain types of syntactic means, specifically non-finite clauses. It would be desirable for future studies to organise an interview with Thunberg to solicit answers to the questions why and how she writes her Facebook status updates, whether or not she considers the choice of syntactic means, for instance, dependent clauses.

Presumably, the relevance of the present findings to the research field of discourse studies, especially to the discourse of identity, may rest with the following considerations. First, it could be concluded that the findings provide indirect support to Kapranov (2014) and Schiffrin (2009), who suggest that dependent clauses are reflective of one's identity maintenance and construction. Second, the findings might be indicative of dependent clauses as a pragma-communicative means that facilitates the construction of a community identity. Third, it could be inferred from the findings that the research focus on syntactic devices, particularly, dependent clauses, might offer novel ways to approach the issue of community identity construction that is centred on discourse/discourses by the community's charismatic leader, such as Greta Thunberg.

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