

## A Linguistic Study of Transition Adverbials with Reference to Conrad's Heart of Darkness

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### Abstract

The most convincing ideas in the world, are expressed in the most beautiful sentences, will move no one unless these ideas are properly connected. Unless readers can move easily from one thought to another. Linking adverbials play a very important role in discourse cohesion. They are viewed as significant means of cohesion in English whether in spoken or written discourse. The focus of this study rests on the use of the semantic categories of linking adverbials which explicitly mark textual cohesion on a varying length (e.g. clause, sentence, and paragraph). The researcher will mainly focus on the transition category as one of the most important of the semantic categories of linking adverbials that may hold between parts of discourse.

### 1. Introduction

An adverb is a part of speech. It is any word that modifies any part of language other than a noun. Adverbs can modify verbs, adjectives, clauses, sentences and other adverbs. They typically answer questions such as How? In what way? When? Where? And To what extent? This function is called the adverbial function. Biber et al(1999:762) state that adverbials are elements of clauses that have three main functions: firstly to add circumstantial information about the proposition in the clause, secondly, to express the speaker/writer stance towards clauses, and thirdly to link the clauses (or some part of it) to some other unit of discourse. The aim of this paper is to express the use of linking adverbials as instrumental in providing cohesive means in both speaking and writing. It introduces different points concerning linking adverbials such as the terminology clarification their classification, semantic categories of linking adverbials, syntactic realization and their position in a sentence and within a text as a whole.

### 2. Terminology Clarification:

Linking adverbials seem to be one of the most widely researched categories in contemporary text linguistics and discourse analysis. They have been referred to by different names in different research for example conjunctions(Halliday and Hasan 1976), conjuncts (Quirk et al 1985), linking adverbs) (Biber et al 1999). According to Huddleston & Pullum (2002), these are connective adverbs, transitions (Hyland 2005), linking adjuncts (Carter & Mc Carthy 2005), discourse markers (Swan

2005, Cowan 2008) ... etc. In this research, the term linking adverbials is mainly used depending on Biber et al (1999). Biber et al (1999:879) state that linking adverbial is described as having a primary function of marking the relationship between two units of discourse. They also can have functions that overlap with those of circumstance and stance adverbials.

### 3. Classification of Linking Adverbials

Biber et al (1999:763) point out that there are three main classes of adverbials according to their functions: Circumstance, Stance and linking. These three classes differ in the extent to which they are integrated into the clause structure and the amount of variability in the precise functions of the class. Circumstance adverbials add information about the action. This class tries to answer questions such as "how, when, where, how much, to what extent, and why"? Circumstance adverbials introduce both obligatory and optional adverbials. Stance adverbials convey speakers' comments on what they are saying (i.e., the content of the message) or who they are saying it (i.e., the style). They fall into three categories: Epistemic, Attitude, and Style. In the present paper, our concern is that of the classification of linking adverbials. Liu (2008:495) states that classifying linking adverbials is a very difficult task because of the fact that the discourse semantic relationships they convey vary greatly. For instance, some of these adverbials express addition, some show sequencing, and some indicate contrast, etc. In addition to this, grammarians often differ in the way in which they classify the semantic types of the linking adverbials. For example, some of them put 'listing, numeration' (e.g. first and second) and addition (e.g., furthermore and in addition) together as one group (Biber et al 1999; Leech and Svartvik 1994), other for instance (Murica and Freeman 1999; Parrot 2000) consider these semantic categories as different categories.

Halliday and Hasan's (1976) classify linking adverbials into four main types with some subcategories, they are:

- 1- Additive: emphatic, appositional, and comparative.
- 2- Adversative: proper adversative contrastive, correction & dismissal.
- 3- Causal: general causal conditional.
- 4- Sequential.

In fact, some grammarians view many of the subcategories within a type as different types. For example the appositional, subcategory (e.g. in other words and for instance) under the additive type, on the other side, Biber et al (1999) and Huddleston and Pullum (2000) consider it as a type separate from additive. Another example,

Murcía and Freeman (1999 : 530) state that sequential category includes both listing and summative linking adverbials (e.g. first and to sum up) although they did not explicitly list them as two subcategories. Other grammarians for instance (Biber et al 1999 : 875-876; Leech and Svartvik 2002:188-189) , however , consider summative as an entirely , different categories from ' listing /sequential' .Liu (2008:496) lists the two subcategories (listing and summative plus the simultaneous subcategories (e.g. by the way , by the by, by and by and incidentally). The reason for including the simultaneous linking adverbials is temporal in nature like all the other sequential. Generally speaking, the classification system of linking adverbials is not meant as a clear-cut guide for determining the meaning of linking adverbials. What makes this problem of classification more complicated is that some of the linking adverbials have more than one meaning. For example **of course** can express both emphatic (congruent) and concession(in congruent) discourse meanings.

#### 4. Semantic Categories of Linking Adverbials

Grammarians differ in their classification of the semantic categories of linking adverbials. For instance Halliday and Hasan (1976) classify them as (additive, adversative, causal and temporal conjunctions; Quirk et al's (1991) classification is: listing , summative , resultive , inferential , appositional, contrastive and transitional adverbials connectors; Biber et al (1999) distinguish six general semantic categories : (enumeration , summative , apposition , result , contrast and transition; Swan (2005) mentions twenty one categories of discourse markers Carter and Mc Carthy's (2006) listing additive, resultative , contrastive , time , concessive, inference , summative , listing and meta-textual linking adjuncts and a few other . It is noticeable here that different scholars differ in their classification of the semantic categories of linking adverbials for example, the term , transition is used to refer to both a higher- level category of connectors and a lower- level category of a specific type of connectors which is our concern in this paper. In this paper, the researcher will follow the classification of Biber et al (1999) and his classification of the semantic categories of linking adverbials which is included six general semantic categories. They are expressed briefly in the next section according to Biber et al (1999:875-879). Transition category will be expressed in some details because it is the main subject of this paper

##### 4.1 Enumeration & Addition

These linking adverbials enumerate pieces of information in an order chosen by the speaker/writer. They include ordinal numbers for example, **first** and **second** and adverbs such as **finally** and **lastly**, as well as other structure such as prepositional phrases such as (**for one thing, for another** )....etc

## 4.2 Summation

These adverbials express that a unit of discourse is intended to conclude or sum up the information in the preceding discourse for instance **in sum/to conclude/ to sum up / in short / in brief / to put it briefly** ...etc.

## 4.3 Apposition

These adverbials are used to show that a particular unit is to be treated as restating/ reformulating information mentioned earlier , i.e. (elaboration) . For instance , (**which is to say , in other words , to put it another way** ....etc.). In other cases the second unit of discourse is an example i.e. , exemplification such as (**for example , for instance , namely , as an illustration** ...etc.

## 4.4 Result / Inference

Adverbials of this category attempt that the second unit of discourse draw our attention to results or consequence either logical or practical for example, (**as a result , thus , hence , therefore , consequently , it follows that ,** ...etc.).

## 4.5 Contrast / Concession

This category is wider than many other categories of linking adverbials. It includes items that either indicate contrast between information in different discourse units, or that mark concession relations for example ( **in contrast, though, nevertheless , however, ...etc.**)

## 4.6 Transitional Category

Biber et al (1999:879) state that items of this semantic category signal new information usually another topic , which may be connected only loosely or even un connected . This means that in this semantic category we have the insertion of an item that does not relate directly to the previous discourse. These linking adverbials refer to the transition to another/usually tangential, topic.Liu(2008:496) states that transitional category includes in the sequential type He mentions that the reason for such inclusion is , however , mentioned more by a need of simplicity than by semantics. Items of this category according to Liu (2008) are only three transitional adverbials (**by the by ,by the way , and incidentally**. In addition to these three

## **A Linguistic Study of Transitional Adverbials with Reference to**

items, Biber et al (1999:879) state that also certain occurrences of "now" and "meanwhile". Ernst (2002:75) also adds new item to the previous items i.e. , "by

and by". Actually, this semantic relation in spite of being that has only few items but it is considered as a major type that makes a good sense & give new information. Aronson (1950:141) regards transitional adverbials as a main type of the semantic category of linking adverbials.

### **5. Syntactic Realization of Linking Adverbials**

Biber et al (1999:884) state that the syntactic structures of linking adverbials can be realized by the following items:

- 1- Single adverbs \_\_\_\_\_ any way , however , so , through
- 2- Prepositional phrases \_\_\_\_\_ by the by , by the way , in addition , in conclusion .....
- 3- Finite clauses \_\_\_\_\_ that is , that is to say .
- 4- Nonfinite clauses \_\_\_\_\_ added to that , to conclude.....etc.

### **6. Positions of Linking Adverbials.**

In fact there are three main positions for linking adverbials: Initial, medial , and final . Actually, initial adverbials especially in academic prose and in conversation.

According to Biber et al(1999:891), initial position can be treated as the unmarked position for linking adverbials. In terms of a system of punctuation , Halliday and Hasan (1976:232) state that it is common to find these adverbials occurring in written English following a colon or semicolon

### **7. The Analysis of Transitional Category of Linking Adverbials.**

In this section, texts are taken from Joseph Conrad's novel "Heart of Darkness". Before its(1902) publication, it appeared as a three-part series (1899)in Blackwood's magazine .It is widely regarded as a significant work of English literature and part of the Western Canon. The story centers on Charles Marlow, who narrates most of the book. He is an English man who takes a foreign assignment from a Belgian trading company as a ferry-boat Captain in Africa . Heart of Darkness exposes the dark side of European colonization while exploring the three levels of darkness that the protagonist , Marlow, encounters: The darkness of Congo wilderness , the darkness of the Europeans' cruel treatment of the natives, and the unfathomable darkness within every human being for committing heinous acts of evil. The researcher will analyze the existence of transitional category as one of the semantic categories of linking adverbials with regard to the syntactic realization , semantic relation these adverbials convey in any text and also their position (i.e. as

initial, medial , or final ) in any text . The syntactic realization of this analysis will be limited only to the single adverb and the prepositional phrases.

### Text (1)

**"Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps , I would look for hours at south America , or Africa , or Australia , and lose myself in all the glories of exploration .At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth , and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say , When I grow up I will go there ."**  
(p.11)

In this text ,"now" is related to the transitional category .Here, Marlow recounts that he first to got the idea when ,after returning from a six – year voyage through Asia ,he came across a map of Africa in London shop window , which reinvigorated his childhood fantasies about the blank spaces on the map .Here , we have new information is conveyed by (now) but these information is related to the childhood . The syntactic realization of "now" is as a single adverb and has an initial position that it is the most common position for linking adverbials in literature. Actually, the use of this single adverb i.e., "now" contributes greatly to a better understanding of a text .Hence, it functions as an effective means of cohesion, in spite of its main function of transition from one idea to another .The reader feels that all the parts of a text are logically connected with each other .

### Text(2)

**'I let him run on ,this papier-mache Mephistopheles, and it seemed to me that if I tried I could poke my forefinger through him, and would find nothing inside but a little loose dirt, maybe. He , don't you see ,had been planning to be assistant - manager by –and –by under the present man , and I could see that the coming of that Kurtz had upset them both not a little' .** (P.37-38)

This text is much more coherent by the use of the preposition phrase (by –and –by) .Here ,the organization of the informational and the links between sentences help readers more easily from one sentence to the next In this text ,by –and –by conveys new

information that does not follow directly from the previous discourse. Here, Marlow has gotten new job, he travels a cross the English Channel to a city that reminds him of a whited sepulcher .This prepositional phrase has a medial position here .In this text, we have several concrete objectives .One of these is to locate Marlow more specifically within the wider history of colonialism .It is important that he goes to Africa in the service of a Belgian company rather than a British one .So, the prepositional phrase "by- and- by" gives new information about the narrator i.e., Marlow, the man who still followed the sea .He makes a comment about London having been "one of the dark places on earth" .Thus , by this prepositional phrase of transition we begin new story of Marlow and a job he took as Captain of a steamship in Africa .

## Text(3)

**To tell you the truth ,I was morbidly anxious to change my shoes and socks .  
"He is dead" , murmured the fellow , immensely impressed .  
"No doubt about it" , said I , tugging like mad at the shoe –laces ,  
"And by the way ,I suppose Mr. Kurtz is dead as well by this time" (p.67)**

In the above text the transitional adverbial (by the way) comes at the beginning of the last sentence of this text .It realizes as a prepositional phrase and it gives new information that has not related to the previous sentence .It can stand alone because it has its own meaning. Here, Marlow 's response to the helmsman's death reflects the general atmosphere of contradiction and absurdity: rather than immediate mourning his right – hand man, Marlow changes his socks and shoes . In the meantime , tension continues to build as Marlow draws nearer to Kurtz . Here, (by the way) continues in its telling of new information and that Marlow speculates that Kurtz may be dead but the strong message and the book full of notes left with the firewood suggest otherwise . We have no connection between (by the way's sentence and the previous sentence.)

## Text(4)

**"Now if he does not say the right thing to them we are all done for" , said the Russian at my elbow. The knot of men with the stretcher had stopped , too, half- way to the steamer , as if petrified. (p.85)**

Here , now, stands as a transitional category , it realizes as a single adverb . By its initial position it gives new ideas and new meanings . In this text "now" gives new ideas about Kurtz , he acts as a symbol for all of the other characters , not only the natives .Here , Marlow describes Kurtz as a remarkable man . The Russian asks Marlow to protect Kurtz's reputation. They have done everything possible for Kurtz , but that his unsound methods have closed the district off to the company for the time being . All these new information is reflected by the use of the single adverb "now".

## 8. Conclusions:

To conclude , linking adverbials in general can be realized as a significant means of cohesion in English no matter it is written or spoken , formal or informal. As for transitional types, they convey new information and present new ideas in any text . The researcher analyzes the use of transitional adverbials in Heart of Darkness novel and this analysis has shown the extensive use of transitional adverbials as prepositional phrases for example (by-and-by and by the way) more than those as single adverbs , for example incidentally , i.e. , the use of this single adverb is very rare in comparison to those of prepositional phrases adverbials of this category Also , the researcher looks into their frequency of occurrence , their positions in a sentence , i.e. (initial , medial , or final position ). To sum up , final position is very rare in comparison to those of initial and medial ones.

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**الخلاصة****دراسة لغوية لظروف الانتقال بالإشارة إلى رواية كونراد هارت اوف داركنس**

إن أكثر الأفكار المُقنعة في العالم تُوضَح من خلال جمل جميلة ولا يمكن لهذه الأفكار أن ترتبط بشكل صحيح إلا إذا تمكن القراء من الانتقال من فكرة إلى أخرى بسهولة. ظروف الربط تلعب دوراً مهماً جداً في تماسك الخطاب. تعد هذه الظروف معاني مهمة للربط في اللغة الانكليزية سواء أكان ذلك في الخطاب المقروء أم المكتوب. أن تركيز هذه الدراسة ينصب على استخدام التصنيفات المعنوية لظروف الربط والتي تشير بوضوح إلى التماسك النصي في مختلف الأنواع سواء أكان ذلك في (العبرة , الجملة أم المقطع). أن الباحث سوف يركز بشكل رئيسي على ( مجموعة الانتقال) كواحدة من أهم المجاميع المعنوية لظروف الربط والتي ربما تقع بين أجزاء الخطاب .

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