

Pragmatic Aspects of Temporal Adverbial Clauses in English Novels

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The objective of this study was to investigate pragmatic aspects of temporal adverbial clauses in novels as written in English. Whilst previous studies, which focused on adverbial clauses, selected the texts of EFL writing, English cookbooks and academic texts, the current study investigates the pragmatic aspects of adverbial clauses in English novels. They are reading materials that are suitable for everyone to read regardless different ages and genders.

In regard to methodology, the data collection of English novels in this study are derived from five novels with different authors: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 2007), *Robinson Crusoe* (Defoe, 2013), *the Midnight Plan of the Repo Man* (Cameron, 2014), *Naked Lunch* (Burroughs, 2016), *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Rhys, 2016) and *the War of the Worlds* (Well, 2018). From a total of approximately 300,000 words, there are 39 tokens of temporal adverbial clauses that were collected to be studied with their main clauses. The analysis of temporal adverbial clauses follows Swan (2016) who provided the temporal adverbial connector keywords, such as *after*, *when* and *whilst*. After going through the process of the data analysis, three linguists were instructed to check the accuracy of the data analysis for the sake of reliability.

The results show that the occurrences of temporal adverbial connectors in this study are *until*, *before*, *when* and *while* at different percentages. The use of these temporal adverbial clauses was explained by two reasons: *pragmatic aspects of iconicity of sequence* and *end-weight principle*. It is expected that the results of this study will be useful for learners of English as Foreign Language (EFL).

Keywords: Pragmatic aspects, temporal adverbial clauses, English novels

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Introduction

In the 21st century, English has become an international language where the numbers of speakers of the English language rank in the top five (Melchers & Shaw, 2013). To know a language is to know the grammar of a language. It is regarded as a necessary tool to build up one's *grammatical competence* (Radford, 2009). The grammar of the English language is made up of numerous features, such as adjective clauses, noun clauses, passive voice and adverbial clauses. However, Gries and Wulff (2021) highlighted that learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are now facing difficulty in ordering adverbial clauses. Since adverbial clauses are adjuncts, they can be used in different positions of the sentences where their meaning remains the same, as in (1).

(1)

(a) When I was young, I fed three cats.

(b) I fed three cats when I was young.

In (1), while English language learners can understand the form and meaning of temporal adverbial clauses as exemplified, they tend to be confused as to whether the temporal adverbial clauses should be placed in either the initial or the final position. With this curiosity, it is interesting to discover the pragmatic aspects of temporal adverbial clauses in English. This will help boost English language learners' confidence when using these clauses in English.

Pragmatically, adverbial clauses are special because they can be placed in different positions of the sentence, including the placement in the beginning position, and the placement in the final position Haegeman, (2010) as in (2).

(2)

(a) ***When Peter was young***, he fed three dogs.

(b) Peter fed three dogs ***when he was young***.

In (2a), *when Peter was young* is placed in the initial position of the sentence. On the other hand, the same statement was placed at the final position of the sentence in (2b). Why this phenomenon can occur this way can be explained by the principle of temporal simultaneity, referring to the

occurrence of the two events at the same time (Duffley & Arseneau, 2012). Because of this, swapping the position between the main clause and the adverbial clause does not affect their semantic denotations and grammaticality.

Despite having the concept of temporal simultaneity to apply with the use of the adverbial connector *when*, the concept of pragmatic order of sequential events can also be applied (Fisher & Duffley, (2019). This can be seen in example (3).

(3) ***When I listen to a sad song***, I always cry.

Unlike examples (2), it is possible to interpret that listening to a sad song can occur at a different time to the emotional action of crying. In example (3), it can be interpreted that the action of listening occurs first, while the action of crying is interpreted to occur subsequently.

This current study play attention to temporal adverbial clauses. *Temporal adverbial clauses* are a kind of adverbial clause to indicate time where the events occur before, after or simultaneously (Swan, 2016). There are various keyword connectors to indicate temporal adverbial clauses, such as *after*, *before*, *until*, *when* and *while*, as in (4).

(4)

(a) ***After*** I finish my dinner, I always have a cup of tea.

(b) I always apply sunscreen body lotion ***before*** I go swimming.

(c) ***When*** I was young, I fed three puddle dogs.

The adverbial connectors as in (4) such as *after*, *before*, and *when* allow us to know that they are classified as temporal adverbial clauses (Swan, 2016).

Several principles seem to relate to temporal adverbial clauses. One of them is *Iconicity of Sequence*, referring to the depiction of events based upon the occurrences of events in the real world (Diessel, 2008). This definition can be explained by examples, as in (5).

(5)

(a) ***After*** I finish my dinner, I always have a cup of tea.

(b) Jane always applies sunscreen body lotion ***before*** she goes swimming.

(c) ***When*** I was young, I fed three poodles.

In (5a), the event of having dinner occurs before the event of having tea. In (5b), the event of applying sunscreen occurs before the event of swimming. When an event happens first, it is written before the event that occurs subsequently. However, when the two events are interpreted to occur simultaneously, such as (5c), they can be written prior to or after each other in a sentence.

Regarding related previous studies of adverbial clauses, Wongkittiporn (2018) investigated the semantic denotations of adverbial clauses in a British cookbook. Various cognitive linguistic principles were applied to test the use of adverbial clauses in English cookbooks, such as the principle of markedness, the principle of iconicity, the end-weight principle and the principle of discourse pragmatic factor. The results show that the semantic denotations of temporal adverbial clauses occurred the most due to the principle of iconicity.

When it comes to this current study. The researcher fills the gap by using novels in English. According to Seo and Kim (2020), using English novels as materials could support learners to have stylistic skills and analytical thinking skills and creative skills. This is because English language learners can be encouraged to have discussions with their peers about what happens in the stories. It may be true that using English novels in classrooms may be time-consuming; however, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages in that English novel increase critical thinking, imagination and creativity (Lazar, 1990). This information leads to the following research objective.

Objectives of Research

To examine the pragmatic aspects of temporal adverbial clauses in English novels

Research Methodology

The source of the data in the current study is English novels where the advantages as mentioned above (Lazar, 1990). A total of six English novels were collected to examine the pragmatic aspects of temporal adverbial clauses in English. The criteria of data collection of English novels in this study were based upon their being best-sellers (Wongkittiporn, 2021). The English novels used in this study are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Data Collection

English Novels	Authors & Years
<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i>	Dahl (2007)
<i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	Defoe (2013)
<i>The Midnight Plan of the Repo Man</i>	Cameron (2014)
<i>Naked Lunch</i>	Burroughs (2016)
<i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>	Rhys (2016)
<i>The War of the Worlds</i>	Well (2018)

From approximately 300,000 words, 39 tokens were found, referring to a combination of the main clause and adverbial clause in this study. The data collection of adverbial clauses follows Radford (2009). The data collection is at sentence level which is made up of subordinate clauses or adverbial clauses and the main clause. The entire sentence was collected to study the pragmatic aspect as in (7).

(7)

(a) ‘Give it to a mark with K.Y. and he will come back for more.’ And *when the Kid spots a mark*, [TEMPORAL ADVERBIAL CLAUSE] he begins to breath heavy. (Burroughs, 2016)

(b) I read that long ago *when I was young*. [TEMPORAL ADVERBIAL CLAUSE] (Rhy, 2016)

Once the data was collected as illustrated in (7), their pragmatic aspects were analyzed as explained in the following section.

The data analysis in this study follows Swan (2016) with the keywords to analyze temporal adverbial clauses as in Table 2. Swan (2016) is an expert in the field of grammar for learners of English as a foreign language. Once the data was completely collected, the data analysis was given as follows:

Table 2 The Data Analysis

(8)

Adverbial Clauses	Examples
Temporal Adverbial Clauses	(a) ‘Give it to a mark with K.Y. and he will come back for more.’ And <i>when the Kid spots a mark</i> , he begins to breath heavy. (Burroughs, 2016, p. 5) (b) In fact, it seemed to have thickened enormously <i>since</i> he entered the room. (Burroughs, 2016, p. 164) (c) I can say definitely that I was never metabolically cured <i>until</i> I took the apomorphine cure. (Burroughs, 2016, p. 204)

Table 2 presents how the data collection in this study was interpreted semantically. In (8), the adverbial clauses are interpreted as temporal adverbial clauses as used with the keywords of adverbial connectors *when*, *since* and *until*. Other adverbial connectors under this category include *whenever*, *after* and *before* (Swan, 2016).

Once the data collection was analyzed semantically, three linguists were asked to validate the data analysis for the sake of accuracy and reliability based upon Item Objective Congruence (Ismail & Zubairi, 2022). The researcher asked three linguists to read the definition of temporal adverbial clauses in English as presented in literature review. Then, they were instructed to make a judgement whether they agree or disagree with the data analysis by putting the tick on the columns given. While placing a tick in column A means they agreed with the data analysis, placing a tick in column D represents disagreement with the data analysis. If 2 or 3 linguists placed a tick in column A, the data analysis was accepted as reliable. In contrast, if one or none placed a tick in column A, the data needed reanalyzing based upon the linguists’ suggestion. This methodology provided the basis for the results and discussion as follows:

Results of Research

With the above methodology, this section provides the results and discussion of the current study. As a total number of approximately 300,000 words, there are 39 tokens of adverbial clauses which are divided into 4 items of adverbial connectors, including *until*, *before*, *when* and *while* as presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Frequencies and Percentages of Temporal Adverbial Connectors in English Novels

Adverbial Connectors	Frequency Percentage (%)		Total
	Initial Position	Final Position	
<i>until</i>	0 (0)	3 (100)	3 (100)
<i>before</i>	1 (20)	4 (80)	5 (100)
<i>while</i>	4 (44.44)	5 (55.56)	9 (100)
<i>when</i>	12 (54.55)	10 (45.45)	22 (100)
Total	17	22	39

Table 3 reveals the frequencies and percentage of temporal adverbial connectors in English novels. The temporal adverbial connectors as found in this study are *until*, *before*, *while* and *when*. In regard to descriptive statistical analysis, the adverbial connector *until* was only found in the final position at 100 percent. The majority of adverbial connector *before* occur at the final position at 80 percent. The initial position and the final position of the adverbial clauses with the adverbial connector *while* are 44.44 percent and 55.56 percent, respectively. On the other hand, the temporal adverbial clause with the adverbial connector *when* frequently occur at the initial position at 54.55 percent.

Conclusion and Discussion

Theoretically, the results of temporal adverbial clauses in this study comply with the cognitive linguistic principles of pragmatic aspects of iconicity of sequence (Diessel, 2008) and *pragmatic aspects of end-weight principle* (Kim, 2015) as elaborated in the following session.

1. Pragmatic Aspects of Iconicity of Sequence

The results of this currents go along the same line with *iconicity of sequence* referring to the depiction of events based upon the occurrences of events in the real world (Diessel, 2008). In this study, the occurrences of the adverbial connector *before* in English novels apply effectively with the pragmatic principle of iconicity of sequence referring to the sequential occurrences of event in the real world (Diessel, 2008).

(10)

(a) He had to know a man and know him well *before he would pick up his money*. (Burroughs, 2016)

(b) I felt the concussion of Hauser's shot *before I heard it*.

(c) I never wished to live *before I knew you*. (Rhy, 2016)

(d) He can make chewing gum that never loses its taste, and candy balloons that you can blow up to enormous sizes *before you pop them with a pin and gobble them up*. (Dahl, 2007)

(e) That's what they call all of us who were here ***before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave trader.*** (Rhy, 2016)

(f) ***Before I could distinguish clearly how the man lay,*** the flicker of the light had passed. (Wells, 2018)

The adverbial connector *before* at the final position occurs at 80 percent. Depicting the event in this way helps support the reader's imagination to see events chronologically.

One of the obvious results of temporal adverbial clauses in English novels is that the use of adverbial connector *until* always occur at the final position as in (11).

(11)

(a) I just hated to see my little girl feeling unhappy like that, so I vowed I would keep up the search ***until I'd got her what she wanted.*** (Dahl, 2007)

(b) The church bells that have ceased a fortnight since suddenly caught the news ***until all England was bell-ringing.*** (Wells, 2018)

(c) I can say definitely that I was never metabolically cured ***until I took the apomorphine cure.*** (Burroughs, 2016)

The reason that the adverbial clauses that begin with the adverbial connector *until* are always used at the final position could be because it leads to the termination or the end point of the event.

The pragmatic aspect of iconicity of sequence is also applied with the use of the adverbial connector *when* as in (12).

(12)

(a) ***When the Kid spots a mark,*** he begins to breath heavily. (Burroughs, 2016)

(b) ***When I smiled at him,*** he began to cry. (Rhy, 2016)

(c) ***When our boat mounting the waves,*** we were able to see the shore. (Defoe, 2013)

(d) ***When he heard this,*** Mike Travee flew into a terrible tantrum. (Dahl, 2007)

In (12a), there are two actions that occur in sequence. Spotting a mask occurs first and breathing heavily occurs later. In (12b) smiling occurs before the event of crying. In (12c), the action of the boat mounting the wave occurs before seeing the shore.

2. Pragmatic Aspects of End-Weight Principle

The results of this current study also comply with *end-weight principle* which is defined as the placement of longer and heavier information at the final position of the sentence (Kim, 2015). Information that is long with a lot of detail or additional information related to numerical data, examples, subjectivity and supplementary information is usually placed at the final position. In this study, the use of the adverbial connector *when* is also found at the final position. This can be explained through the pragmatic aspect of end-weight principle referring to the placement of longer or heavier information at the final position as in (13).

(13)

(a) He was there once ***when they ate up twenty men, two women and one child.*** (Dahl, 2007)

(b) It always goes wrong ***when we come to the dessert,*** sighed Mr. Wonka. (Dahl, 2007)

(c) I was earnestly begging of God to give me repentance, ***when it happened providentially the very day that reading the scripture.*** (Defoe, 2013)

(d) I seldom gave anything over without accomplishing it, ***when I once had it in my head enough to begin with.*** (Defoe, 2013)

The temporal adverbial clause used with the adverbial connector *while* refers to the simultaneous coincidence of the two events at the same time as in (14).

(14)

(a) ***While I dressed,*** I thought that this would indeed make a fool of me. (Rhy, 2016)

(b) ***While they were talking,*** Mr. and Mrs. Bucket, Charlie's mother and father, had come quietly into the room, and now both were standing just inside the door, listening. (Dahl, 2007)

(c) *While I was cutting down some wood here*, I perceived that behind a very thick branch of brushwood. (Defoe, 2013)

(d) *While I was loading these pieces*, there happened a fierce engagement. (Defoe, 2013)

(e) It fell *while Miss Elphinstone was watching*. (Wells, 2018)

(f) They halted *while we hurried toward them*. (Wells, 2018)

(g) The horse had an hour's rest *while I took supper with my cousins and commented my wife to their care*. (Burroughs, 2016)

(h) He leaves the platform in a pile of old used condoms *while he adjusts the rope across the room and came back carrying the noose on a silver tray*. (Wells, 2018)

(i) He was standing very still, holding it tightly with both hands *while the crowd pushed and shouted all around him*. (Dahl, 2007)

Examples (14a)-(14i) show that the events in the main clause and the events in the adverbial clause co-occur at the same time. The difference of position between the initial position and final position could be interpreted by the pragmatic aspect of *the end-weigh principle*, referring to the post of longer or more information at the final position of the sentence (Kim, 2005). When the use of adverbial clauses with the adverbial connector *while* are used with compound structures with the coordinator *and*, they are placed at the final position such as (14g)-(14i). Another salient feature of using adverbial clauses with the adverbial connector *while* is that the progressive tense is often used in the adverbial clauses, such as (14b)-(14e).

In conclusion, this study examines pragmatic aspects of temporal adverbial clauses in English novels in order to answer the following question.

What are the pragmatic aspects of temporal adverbial clauses in English novels?

Using English novels to investigate the use of temporal adverbial clauses allows us to understand their system more clearly. The use of the

adverbial connectors *until*, *before*, *when* and *while* are systemic, referring to the systematic and consistent use (Radford, 2009). Adverbial clauses with the adverbial connector *until* always occur at the final position and adverbial clauses with the adverbial connector *before* most frequently appear at the final position, highlighting the pragmatic aspect of iconicity of sequence where the subsequent events are linguistically placed at the final position. The results of the current study complies with Wongkittiporn (2021).

Unlike *until*, it is possible for the placement of the adverbial connectors *when* and *while* to be in either the initial or the final position. When taking a closer look at the support of qualitative data, the use of the adverbial connectors *when* and *while* comply with both iconicity of sequence and end-weight principle. The adverbial connector *when* that occurs in the initial position refers to the event in the real world that occurs first (i.e., *when I smiled at him, he began to cry*). On the other hand, the occurrence of *when* and *while* in the final position is applied with the pragmatic aspect of end-weight principle (i.e., *the horse had an hour's rest while I took supper with my cousins and commented my wife to their care*).

New Body of Knowledge

1. Exact Sequence of Writing Novels in English

This present study demonstrated a new body of knowledge in that the linguistic expressions of temporality in adverbial clauses are written based upon the actual event that happens in the read word. What happened first is written first, but what happens later will be written in the following sentence. It can be seen that sequence of writing plays an important role of narrative writing or short stories. Otherwise, the readers may get confused while reading the texts and they could stop reading. When English language teachers ask their students to write short stories or narrative writing, it is important to let them know that sequence of writing is important, so making an outline or a story board would help them write story more effectively and more fluently.

2. Styles of Writing Narrative Writing and Shorts Stories

The pragmatic aspects of end-weight principle apply in writing novels. Although writing shorter sentences in English would reduce a mistake of crating ungrammaticality. However, it the writing need to write additional or supplementary information which is long and heavy, putting them at the final position of the sentence is strongly recommend.

Suggestions of Research

1. Suggestions for the results of the study

As seen in the above session, the results of the study shows that writing novels in English prefers its own style of writing. Having the notion of temporal adverbial clause allows us to be able to use this structure grammaticality. However, the use of temporal adverbial clauses seems to be applied differently and they have its own specific use in writing novels in English. It is important for the writer to apply the notion of adverbial clauses at the same time as pragmatic aspects of iconicity of sequence simultaneously.

2. Suggestion for applying the results of this study with EFL learners

This study will be useful for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Additionally, it introduces them to the concept of using English novels to learn grammar. Seo and Kim (2020) mentioned that not only do English novels improve the grammatical competence of English language learners, but it also supports English language learners' creativity, critical thinking and analytical thinking. Moreover, English novels can help English language learners to upgrade their linguistic and cognitive capabilities (Wong, Miao, Cheng & Yip, 2017).

To improve these skills, English language teachers could use English novels as outside reading materials. The advantages of English novels as outside reading materials are that English language learners can learn form, meaning and use at the same time (Lazar, 1990).

As novels are a kind of narrative writing that are usually set by time, using English novels to learn about temporal adverbial clauses is beneficial to English language learners. Learning this way could avoid boredom when compared to studying grammar from grammar texts or worksheets.

3. Suggestions for Future Research

The results of temporal adverbial clauses in this current study are only applicable with English novels. Applying the results of temporal adverbial clauses in this study to other types of text, such as English newspapers and academic prose, may not be applicable to the optimal level. For future research in the field, it is recommended that examining other types of adverbial clauses in-depth, such as concessive adverbial clauses and adverbial clauses of condition, may contribute something new to the field.

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