A STUDY OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN HABIB YAKOOB'S THE UGLY ONES REFUSE TO DIE

Peter Timothy Ayoola
Department of English and Literary Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.
Samuel Oyeyemi Agbeleoba Ph.D
Department of English and Literary Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.
Olumide Ogunrotimi Ph.D
Department of English and Literary Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

ABSTRACT

Discourse markers are words or phrase that plays the role of managing the flow and structure of discourse. Discourse markers are words and phrases such as "well", "because", "however", etc. The purpose of this study is to examine the use of discourse markers in Habib Yakoob's the ugly ones refuse to die, using the theoretical framework developed from Schiffrin (1987) categorization of discourse markers. Ten utterances were selected from the text to further the study, which we later find out that in an interpersonal conversation, the use of discourse markers helps to make conversation smooth and meaningful. This study adds to a more profound comprehension of Yakoob's story strategy and enhances the more extensive talk on postcolonial writing. It highlights the urgent job of discourse markers in molding the readers' insight and confirms their strength as a device for scholarly examination. At the end, this study gives a far reaching system to future investigations into the complexities of discourse markers observable in subsequent scholarly researches.

Keywords: Discourse Markers; Categorization; Habib Yakoob; Comprehension.

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse markers, also known as discourse particles or connectors, are linguistic elements that play a crucial role in guiding and structuring written and spoken communication. They serve as signposts, helping to signal relationships between different parts of a text, clarifying meaning, and facilitating smoother comprehension for the reader. One of the primary functions of discourse markers is to provide coherence and cohesion in a text. They achieve this by establishing logical connections between sentences, paragraphs, or even larger sections of a piece. For example, words like "however," "moreover," and "conversely" indicate contrasting or additive relationships, respectively. These markers help readers follow the flow of ideas and understand how different pieces of information relate to one another.

In one of the early studies on Discourse Markers (DMs), Schiffrin (1987) conducted a thorough examination of eleven markers (because, and, or, you know, okay, well, then, but now, I mean, and so) that she found in her sociolinguistic corpus, which she created by taping interviews with regular speakers. The placement of DMs in unstructured discussions, such as so, and, and, and because, which comprise conclusive information and final paraphrases, continuation of prior topics, and the presentation of proof, were examined to identify some potential roles. She discovered that DMs serve a crucial role in speech that contributes to discourse coherence by giving contextual coordinates for utterances. They also produce coherence by illuminating the

relationships between different discourse units. It was discovered that the DM and denoted logical progression. Rejections, denials, and an inability to respond to inquiries or fulfill requests were discovered to be introduced by the well. She divided her DMs into the following categories: DMs of connectives (or, but, and), DMs of cause and effect (because, so), DMs of temporal adverbs (now, then), DMs of response (well), and DMs of information involvement (e.g. I'm talking about DMs in information management, for instance. This study's second goal is to group DMs into groups based on the jobs they do.

The evolution of the DMs indeed, in fact, and besides, as well as their function in a theory of grammaticalization, are examined by Traugott (1995). This connection between syntax, pragmatics, and semantics is demonstrated by this development. The findings of the study demonstrated that the three DMs indeed, in fact, and besides were entire lexical nouns that evolved into adverbial phrases, sentence adverbials, and subsequently discourse markers. Frequent usage in constrained situations causes the transformation, which Brinton (1996) refers to as delexicalization (weakening the lexical item's semantic power and enhancing its pragmatic impact).

This examines the study of discourse markers in Habib Yahoob's, *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*. Yakoob, Habib is a public relations specialist with writing, speaking and listening skills. He has a special interest in research and writing. Yakoob also worked as a journalist before moving into public relations where he manages communications, designing and implementing strategic communications framework, social media strategy, and handles proof reading, academic and professional researches, media relations, creative writing, among others.

Discourse markers are helpful tools in making speech and writing both logically and coherent. The text, there are different mode of conversation. Conversation between Esther and her husband Jude. Also, conversations in a political meeting and also between friends, Mr. Joe and Pastor Ade. For example, in page (1) of the text in discourse, when Esther was having a conversation with Jude her husband, she was trying to remind him of the beauty of America. She said 'OH, what a saintly pleasure to the watching eyes. The word 'OH' in inter personal discourse marker enhances Esther's expression of amazement, on the beauty of America. Later in the study, we are going to examine the different categories of discourse markers and their relevance to the play text by Habib Yakoob, *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*.

The objectives of this study is to identify the discourse markers in the play by Habib Yakoob, *The Ugly Ones Refuses to Die;* examine different categories of discourse markers in Habib Yakoob's, *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*, and the importance of discourse markers in the text, and highlight some examples of discourse markers in the next, Habib Yakoob's, *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*.

2. FRAMEWORK

This study adopted the Schiffrin's (1987) model of English discourse markers. In this model, a sociological perspective is adopted. It looks at discourse as a means of social interaction and employs the term discourse markers (hereafter referred to as DMs) for English expressions like then, now, because, so, I mean, you know, or, and, but, well, oh, and analyzes them in conversations. A DM in this model is defined as "sequentially dependent element which bracket unit of talk" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31). For a form to be considered a DM in this model, it has to be commonly used in initial position of an utterance, be syntactically detachable from a sentence, be able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse, be able to operate on varied planes of discourse and have a range of prosodic contours, Schiffrin argues that DMs are used in discourse because they provide contextual coordinates for utterances.

That is, they are responsible for building the local coherence which is collectively built by speaker and hearer in their discourse structure, context, meaning and action during the communication. Her argument is that all DMs have indexical functions, that is, they place adjacent arguments to the speaker, the addressee or both and also to prior and/or subsequent exchange. The DMs locate arguments on one or more planes of her discourse model which include the following: The exchange structure which is made up of turns or adjacency pairs, the action structure which contains speech acts, the ideational structure which has semantic units like ideas or propositions, the participation framework which is responsible for displaying the social relations between speaker and hearer, and the information state which has to do with the mental capacities of speaker and addressee. She explains that in order for a word/expression to be considered a DM, it must be multifunctional. This means that a DM does not have a distinct meaning, but the ability of a DM to operate in different planes enables it to achieve the different functions as dictated by the context of occurrence. This model guided the study in analyzing the functions of different forms of DMs in different discourse slots. Which will be analyzed in the third chapter of the study.

Schiffrin's (1987) model has its own strengths. As for the strengths, the theory lays the foundation in the field of DMs research and firmly establishes the term DM in discourse studies. Moreover, her model of five planes of talk and her characterization of DMs provides researchers with the basic functions of DMs and a basis on how they can identify expressions as being DMs.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the discourse markers used in the drama text. A Nigerian drama text: *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*, has been purposively selected for study being a parallel literary work to Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, an African novel by a Ghanaian author. The play relates to the catalogue of how Nigerian politicians with characteristic greed, corruption and intolerance have turned into the best enemies of democratic growth. The play contains the intrigues that come into play before and during elections.

The play, which comprises III Act & II Scene (three acts and two scenes), in 75 pages, has been systematically selected for the course of study. We also find dialogues within the play text as well as among different characters. For example, Esther's confession to Jude shows a level of candidness and trust between the characters. It also suggests that Esther may not have always presented her original work, which could be a source of conflict or tension. This elicits Jude's response and his perspective on America. Such dialogue provides a snapshot of the characters' relationship, Esther's creative process, and Jude's perspective on their shared experience. It's a moment of honesty and connection between them

The character Jude (A fugitive-returnee) is the main character in the play text. Having spent six years in the United States as a fugitive, Mr. Jude Oscar returns to Nigeria to lead a quiet life. But he is soon lured into active politics by his friend and that marks his nemesis. Esam (A maverick politician) later incites the military against the politicians because of the conflict he has over money and Jude is arrested.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The first two chapters of this study focused on contextualizing the research report in a particular field, identifying the data and reviewing relevant words that are important to the study. However, this chapter focus on data analysis. Using the theoretical framework that was developed from the preceding chapter. This framework will be used to explore the inherent

meaning in the selected data. The data analyzed are only twenty randomly selected utterances drawn from the text: *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die* by Habib Yakoob.

Datum 1

> Esther: You remember, Jude when we used to take a leisure trip by a continental train from Ohio to Arkansas? *I mean*, enjoying the serenity of the American atmosphere with the cool morning breeze wafting the sweet warmth of princely vegetation? *And* the sun overhead bathing us gently in it glamour; there were the smooth, fine streets, too- over which spreads rays of light, in unique illumination. *Oh*, what a saintly pleasure to the watching eyes. Do you remember all these or not Jude?

From the conversation above, in page (1) of the text. The discourse markers; "I mean", "and" and "oh" are frequently used by Esther while having a conversation with Jude.
"I mean" is used to mark Esther's attention to rephrase what she is talking about. So here, we find "I mean" as a marker of information and participation.
"And" is used to coordinate ideas and continue what she is explaining as marker of connectives.
The discourse marker "oh" is also used in the example above. Esther uses "oh" to upon realization and also to change focus of attention back to Esther. "Oh" marker of information management.

Datum 2

> Esther: Y*ou know*, I've written a lot of lines. To be honest Jude, the previous readings were lifted from one of my unpublished works titled " going down Washington street". There's yet another with the title "American, this American ", *and* it goes like this! American, o American, which eyes have met thee and yet be at ease to bid bye to thy lovely   Built?"

"You know" is used here to gain Jude's attention and to open up another interactive focus. " You know" is identified as marker of information and participation. Also, "and" was used to coordinate ideas and to continue a speaker's action as used by Esther in the example above. "And" marker of connectives.

Datum 3

> Jude: *Well*, I must admit that I was rather rash in my decision *then,* we all have our little weaknesses, don't we? You must forgive me.

"Well", a response marker was used at the beginning of the utterance to show that Jude admits to his mistakes. "Well" is used as marker of response.
"Then", indicate temporal succession between prior and upcoming talk. "Then" points backward, to explain something that happened in the past as used in the example. "Then" is used as marker of temporal adverbs.

Datum 4

> Jude: Really wonderful to be back like being freed from bondage *and* to be away *then*, was like having escaped the sharp painful teeth of death! However, American is simply a nice place.

Jude use "and" to add to what he is saying, which the functions of "and" is that it is used to coordinate ideas. "And" has been identified as marker of connectives.
"Then" is also used to focus on how Jude was able to respond to Esther prior talk. "Then" marks out temporal adverbs in the discourse.

Datum 5

> Esther: Brother, if Nigerian political landscape would be so accommodating to the women…..Jude must join. That will be a great opportunity. *And* you know what! I am already beginning to see myself as Hillary *and* Clinton- the most remarkable couple in American politics.

The use of both "and", markers is indicative of the speaker's continuation. Esther uses both "and" to coordinate and connect her ideas.

Datum 6

> Ade: God, give them no peace of mind at all; expose *and* disgrace them whenever the plan their mischief or better still, shatter them with both thunder *and* lightning. All these I ask in the name of our…….

"And" is a structural coordinator of ideas which has pragmatic effect as a marker of speakers continuation as can be seen in the example above. as Ade uses "and" to coordinate his ideas as well to also mark continuation.
"And" marker of connectives.

Datum 7

> Ezekiel: Yes, I am a retired soldier, *but* with wealth of experiences. I have served this great people for many years, defended them in times of war. *Now* with this great opportunity afforded by the new democracy, I want to serve them again. This time not as a soldier, but as an elected leader. I shan't take much of your time, I hereby donate #90 million to the greatness of this party.

"But" as used in the example above can be interpreted as Ezekiel effort to return to prior concern of making a point. "But" is a marker of connectives. "Now" is a timing adverb because it talks about the present. It points to coming discourse as marker of temporal adverbs.

Datum 8

> Esam: You weren't thinking that you would have no opposition at all, were you?
> Jude: W*ell,* not really!

"Well", the response discourse marker is used by Jude to answer Esam's question. "Well" is used at the beginning of utterances to reject or disagree with a given content. It is, therefore, a "Well" marker of response.

Datum 9

> Esam: *I mean*, at least everyone knows you looted!

The discourse marker "I mean" is used by Esam to let Jude knows of his ideas and intention from what he has already said before. "I mean" is seen as marker of information participation.

Datum 10

> *Oh,* I see your bitterness *now. But* does that matter, when I actually did it? After all, you gave me your word that you would pass it to the party leadership! *Now* that history, let talk business. In plain language, how do we forge ahead in this political jam?

"Oh", in the example above is used to indicate a strong emotional states of realization. Jude uses 'oh!' to show that he now understand why Esam acted that way. "Oh", here, is used as marker of information management.

Also, the use of "but" can be used to mark an upcoming unit as contracting action. Jude uses "but" because what he was about to say contrast with what Esam has been saying all along. "But" marker of adversative discourse.

We have found out that discourse markers can signal the speaker's or writer's stance, attitude, or intention. Expressions like "in my opinion," "frankly," or "to be honest" reveal the speaker's perspective, emphasizing subjectivity and personal involvement in the discourse. These markers play a crucial role in shaping the tone and establishing rapport with the audience.

It is also evident in our study that discourse markers aid in managing turn-taking in conversations. Phrases like "well," "you see," and "by the way" can signal the speaker's intention to begin, continue, or conclude their turn in a conversation, helping to maintain a smooth and orderly exchange of ideas. Furthermore, they contribute to the rhetorical organization of a text, helping to structure arguments, presentations, and narratives effectively. For example, markers like "firstly," "in conclusion," and "finally" assist in organizing information in a clear and sequential manner.

Discourse markers are indispensable linguistic tools that enhance the coherence, clarity, and flow of communication. They serve various functions, from signaling logical relationships to expressing attitudes and structuring discourse. Effective use of these markers enables writers and speakers to convey their message more persuasively and facilitates better understanding for their audience.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of discourse markers in Habib Yakoob's "The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die" provides valuable insights into the author's notable use of language. Through the strategic deployment of these markers, Yakoob crafts a narrative that not only guides the reader through the text but also conveys deeper layers of meaning, highlighting themes of resilience, social injustice, and the human spirit's capacity to endure adversity. This study underscores the significance of discourse markers as essential tools in shaping the reader's interpretation and engagement with the text, ultimately enriching our appreciation for Yakoob's literary craftsmanship and the powerful messages embedded within his work.

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