

A Corpus-Based Study on Comparing Discourse Markers by Francis Younghusband and Nicholas Roerich to Tibet¹

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Abstract

A discourse marker is a word or a phrase that plays a role in managing the flow and structure of discourse. Since their main function is at the level of discourse (sequences of utterances) rather than at the level of utterances or sentences, discourse markers are relatively syntax-independent and usually do not change the truth conditional meaning of the sentence. Regarding this point, the current study aimed to do a corpus-based study to compare the discourse markers by Francis Younghusband and Nicholas Roerich to Tibet. A study of the British expedition to Tibet by the famous orientalist Colonel F. Younghusband allows us to better understand the place that Tibet occupied in the international politics of various states, in particular, Russia and Great Britain, and the role that the investigator played in this. F. Younghusband left a noticeable mark in the history of the so-called “Big Game”. In addition to the political result, it is difficult to underestimate the important travel notes of F. Younghusband, numerous monographs describing not only the political process of the task assigned to him but also the region of Asia as a whole, nature and people. N. Roerich with his sons, one of whom was an orientalist and another was an artist, implemented many cultural projects, however, in historiography, there are opinions about the political nature of his mission. A number of implications of the results are discussed and relevant recommendations are presented.

Keywords: Corpus, Discourse, Discourse Markers, History.

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1. Introduction

The term Discourse is widely used in a number of disciplines with different purposes and scholars and philosophers have expressed various views regarding it. The term is frequently used in linguistics where it generally refers to an utterance whose magnitude is bigger than the sentence. Discourse means coherent use of language; putting sentences in a random order does not give a complete sense, so it cannot be called discourse. Yet sometimes people communicate through ungrammatical sentences and succeed in communication. So, 'coherence' and 'complete' sense together combine a discourse structure. In other words, coherence is the basis of discourse. Different devices such as discourse markers are used to make discourse coherent. Schiffrin (1987) maintains that discourse markers contribute to the coherence of the text by establishing coherence relationship between units of talk. Discourse markers are an important feature of discourse. Discourse markers have been studied much in the last decades and during this time many approaches to this notion have been developed. Discourse markers are those lexical expressions which are studied under various tags such as discourse markers, discourse connectives, discourse operators and sentence connectors. Researchers agree that discourse markers do connect the segments in discourse, but there is no agreement on their functions in discourse. Each researcher has a different view on their functions and definitions. A more common concept about discourse marker is that it is a word used for showing a change in the way a conversation is developing or for showing the other speakers how one is reacting to what the others are saying.

Studying the events of the political, military and scientific history of Tibet, their causes and consequences are of great importance not only for a more detailed recovery of events that took place in the XX century in this region but also to understand a number of political, cultural and scientific events at present.

One basic feature of discourse as a specific linguistic structure is that it should be coherent and logically presented. Speakers tend to use different linguistic units or particles which are termed Discourse Markers (DMs) to maintain the coherence and logic flow of the discourse. Accordingly, it can be argued that efficient use of DMs can help in achieving the ultimate goal of any discourse i.e. mutual understanding and effective communication. Absence or shortage of using such linguistic units, on the other hand, may result in pragmatic failure.

These characteristics of DMs attracted the attention of researchers who investigated issues such as their functions in different genres, the volume of their use by specific speech communities, the best methods to help EFL learners master them, and the use of them across various languages. Therefore, DMs were the topic of a large body of research that addressed various inquiries. An interesting question attempted by some of these studies was whether DMs are culture or L1-specific. The argument dealt with regarding this question was supported by investigating situations such as the different techniques used by EFL writers of various L1 backgrounds. Such

variations were attributed to the cultural and metalinguistic features of different languages which provoke using writing techniques including DMs in diversified ways. The Contrastive Rhetoric Hypothesis by Kaplan (1966) suggested that “rhetorical patterns of language are unique to each language and culture” (Connor, Nagelhout, & Rozycki, 2008, p. 1) and thus implied that writers transfer their spoken language behaviour to writing since culture and social aspects of language are more likely to be connected to oral discourse. Using different numbers and types of DMs was perceived as one feature of this claimed variation.

A study of the British expedition to Tibet by the famous orientalist Colonel F. Younghusband allows us to better understand the place that Tibet occupied in the international politics of various states, in particular, Russia and Great Britain, and the role that the investigator played in this. F. Younghusband left a noticeable mark in the history of the so-called “Big Game”. In addition to the political result, it is difficult to underestimate the important travel notes of F. Younghusband, numerous monographs describing not only the political process of the task assigned to him but also the region of Asia as a whole, its nature and people.

If to study Tibet from the cultural and scientific side, the expedition of the Roerichs must not escape our attention. The routes of the expedition participants ran through the most inaccessible and unexplored areas of the Asian region. Having undertaken his Central Asian expedition, N.K. Roerich not only continued the scientific and expeditionary activity of his famous predecessor colleagues (Przhevalsky, Kozlov) but also enriched it by penetrating the Transhimalaya region.

Although DMs were abundantly studied in the recent decades, there is no consensus on their definition or functions. Even the term DMs is not agreed upon since the concept is also referred to by many other terms such as Sentence Connectives (Halliday & Hasan, 1985), Pragmatic Markers (Fraser, 1996), Discourse Particles (Aijmer, 2002), and Cohesion Markers (Gee, 2018) to name few. The term DMs, however, is the most preferred by researchers and scholars. Researchers also suggested different definitions of DMs most of which were from a functional perspective. They are considered as elements that facilitate the addressees’ interpretation of the discourse according to the surrounding context (Aijmer, 2002) and mark different aspects of participants’ intentions (Guo, 2015). Thus, it is noted that the occurrence of these “seemingly empty expressions found in oral discourse” (Brinton, 1996, p. 29) normally signals a change in the development of the discourse (Jabeen, Rai, & Arif, 2011; Namaziandost, Shatalebi, & Nasri, 2019) whether by the speaker or the addressee. Some other researchers e.g. (Fraser, 2006) discussed the wide range of the classes of DMs. In the English language, for instance, a DM can be an adverb of time (now), an adjective (okay), a conjunction (however), a prepositional phrase (by the way), a phrase (I mean), or an interjection (oh). The focus on the functional approach in defining DMs indicates that although they are important in facilitating interpretation of the discourse, DMs nevertheless have no semantic value

and may not denote their exact meaning when used as cohesion devices. Correspondingly, a specific DM can have different meaning according to the context or the speaker.

The main issue emerged as a consequence of the various classes and the different perceived functions of DMs is reflected in the typology of them. The dispute related to such an issue is whether to classify DMs according to their syntactic categories or to their role in the discourse (Asik & Cephe, 2013; Etemadfar, Namaziandost, & Banari, 2019). This is basically because it is difficult sometimes to decide if the word actually in a sentence such as “he is actually sick” is a discourse marker implies emphasis or an adverb qualifies the adjective sick. For other words such as the interjections ah, oh or the gap fillers hum, aha there is a more consensus to consider them as DMs because they have no literal connotation to be confused with their pragmatic function. In fact, the notion of pragmatic function was taken by many researchers to classify DMs accordingly. For Example, (Farser, 2006; Namaziandost, Neisi, Kheryadi, & Nasri, 2019) suggested four classes of what he termed Pragmatic Markers which were: Basic, Commentary, and Parallel Pragmatic Markers. He termed the fourth group Discourse Markers and defined them as those elements which connect adjacent discourse segments. It is noted that Fraser (2006) used the term DMs only to point to those elements that connect the upcoming unit of discourse to the previous one, a concept that was used earlier to define DMs by many scholars.

From 1923 to 1928, Nikolai Konstantinovich Roerich led the Central Asian expedition. Before Roerich's expedition, Russian travellers had been researching the central regions of Asia for two centuries. The expedition led by N.K. Roerich mainly summarized many works on the study of this region.

2. Methods

Our study is based on general scientific principles: historicism, which within the framework of a systematic approach allows the use of source study, chronological, ethnographic methods of research; systematicity allowing us to consider the political space as an element of a geopolitical system in the process of its reconstruction;

The following methods were used in the study: historical-genetic method which allows us to trace the event from beginning to end; a biographical method, which is a method of measuring and evaluating the history of life and evidence of life told or reported from the position of those who lived this life.

3. Results

Since its emergence in the 1960s, corpus studies have represented a significant methodological development in linguistics. It can be simply defined as “the study of language based on examples of real language use” (McEnery & Wilson, 1996, p. 1). It thus marks an outstanding shift from the previous approaches which

tended to describe the structure of language and generalize the findings to portray how language is used. The focus of corpus-based studies, on the contrary, is on the functional description of the language and therefore based on a real sample of used language. Moreover, it is crucial that this sample of a used language is not gathered in an observed or structured setting as this may violate its natural quality. It is rather concerned with the “language which has occurred under circumstances in which the speaker was known to be doing something more than demonstrate how the system works” (Timmis, 2015, p. 2)

The novelty feature is then the backbone of corpora with which it would be safer to generalize research findings and implications since these findings are based on frequent regularities. This highlights the common objective of most of the recent corpus studies which is to investigate a specific linguistic structure and to present the generated information about its frequency, its various forms and its communicative capabilities (Meyer, 2002). These features and potentials of corpus-based studies have recently turned the approach into one of the preferred methodologies of investigation in modern applied linguistics.

We considered the goals and objectives of the N.K. Roerich’s expedition. The main purpose of the expedition declared personally by N.K. Roerich was to paint landscapes of Central Asia. Since the family of N.K. Roerich, his wife and children, took part in the expedition, its goals also included the discovery of ancient monuments of the peoples of Asia, the collection of material in the field of ethnology, as well as the discovery of marks left from the great transmigration of peoples.

The diversity of interests of the Roerich family in relation to the Tibetan region led to doubts and heated discussions about the real purpose of his expedition. It is no coincidence that N.K. Roerich was accused of espionage.

The approach of using corpora to analyse language-in-use is termed Corpus Linguistics. The term, although widely used and accepted, raised some argument regarding the question of whether corpus linguistics is a branch of linguistics such as semantics and syntax. It is apparent that corpus linguistics is a methodology that is used by linguists to study other branches of linguistics. Being this tightly-related to other linguistic fields is a sufficient reason, some scholars believe, to consider it a branch of linguistics. According to (McEnery & Wilson, 1996) “while corpus linguistics is not an area of linguistic inquiry it does at least allow us to discriminate between methodological approaches taken to the same area of inquiry by different groups, individuals or studies” (p. 2). It can be convincing to consider corpus linguistics a branch of applied linguistics equal to psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics for instance (Aswini & Srinivasan, 2016) thus it can yield two instances of each linguistic approach i.e. corpus-based syntax versus theory-based syntax, corpus-based semantics and non-corpus-based semantics ...etc

We have studied the course and stages of the expedition by N.K. Roerich. We can conclude that the route was developed based on the objectives of the

expedition. The expedition took place in 2 stages. The first stage of the expedition began in 1923 and took place in India, primarily in Bombay, where the Roerichs studied the cultural monuments and the condition of the caves of Ajanta and Elora on the island of Elephanta. The second stage began in 1925. The Roerichs went from India to Altai, then again through Mongolia and China returned to India. After this, the Roerichs' family stopped over in Kashmir for the final preparations to complete the expedition, where they were overtaken by great difficulties. In October 1927, in the Shandi Valley, the Roerichs were detained by local authorities; the expedition was forced to winter there dwelling in summer tents for 9 months, 5 people and all animals died. The expedition ended in 1928 with a return to Moscow.

We have analysed the results of the expedition by N.K. Roerich. The expedition resulted in the creation of many scientific and artistic materials, an international project in force today, painting of more than 500 pictures with Asian landscapes, and the creation of a scientific centre the Institute of Himalayan research.

However, despite the success, the fate of the expedition's legacy was tragic. Urusvati Institute ceased operations due to lack of financial support in the context of the World Economic Crisis of the 30s. After the death of N.K. Roerich, his son, Yu.N. Roerich, lived the dream and considered it his duty to create a museum dedicated to his father. The refusals of the request and the indifference from the Ministry of Culture of the USSR led to strong feelings of Yu.N. Roerich and his imminent death. The dream by Yu.N. Roerich was continued to be embodied by his brother, S.N. Roerich, and also unsuccessfully. The legacy was faded away into nothing and retained illegally by various persons.

The pragmatic nature of the selected elements imposes that their uses as DMs are controlled by the context in which they occur. Accordingly, considerations were to be taken to analyse the cases where the studied elements were used as DMs or mere semantic units. In this regard, it was noted that you know was mostly used as a DM by both native and non-native speakers with a notable supremacy in favour of native speakers. In other words, Sudanese speakers used the term you know in its literal sense more than their British counterparts. It was used in this sense to ask audiences about their previous knowledge of a topic or to confirm such knowledge. Examples from STSE can include “I don't know what yet, if you know please contact me.” (Osman, 2011), “you know what a cart is, right?” (Mahjoub, 2013)). This implies less competence in using this specific DM as the native speakers used it mainly as a pause filler when they ran short of suitable words, for instance, “...he's like many teenagers in London spending lots of time hanging around, you know, and I wanted him to really understand ...” (Gratton, 2012).

Today, the question of the Roerichs heritage remains open. The State Museum of the East and authorities for culture are still accused of illegally retaining the Roerichs heritage.

We have given a description of the “Big Game” and the goals of the expedition by F. Younghusband. We understand that Tibet is located in Central Asia; therefore, this region occupied an important place in the strategy of the British Empire because it allowed for easy penetration into China and India.

It is worth noting that until the end of the XIX century the Big Game did not affect the Tibetan region. But by the end of the XIX century, the Russian Empire began to establish close ties with Tibet. That greatly excited the head of the Indian administration, D. Curzon, and it was decided to send a diplomatic mission to disrupt Russian plans.

We have studied the course and stages of the expedition by F. Younghusband. Initially, the mission was conceived as diplomatic, but due to the refusal of the Tibetans to negotiate, the expedition acquired a different character. The expedition took place in 4 stages. On December 1, 1903, the detachment entered Tibet. Stage 2 began on January 1904, with moving from Pagri to Gyandze. On March 30, near Tuna the first military clash was experienced. Stage 3 was characterized by a siege of the English detachment lasting two months; since that moment, the Tibetans perceived the situation as a war. At stage 4, a serious battle took place at the Karo-la Pass. Then, within a month, England prepares for negotiations. On September 7, 1904, a peace treaty was signed.

The case was different for the DM well. Speakers of both groups used it as a non-DM at around 40% of the situations. Bearing in mind the wide range of using the word well in spoken English, this finding seems sensible. The use of well by the non-native group was proven to be the closest to the native among the three regarding the distinction between DM and non-DM usage. The majority of the cases of non-DMs usage of well were as an adjective (well + past participle) e.g. "It's a novel story, well written and well presented." (Dafaa-Alla, 2014), " Who am I as a dropout to judge someone on how well-qualified they are. " (Barlett, 2016); or as an adverb, for example, " we have to choose a set of customers that this product works well for them." (Yousif, 2015), " a very curious thing that very often doesn't match up well with reality." (Shrimban, 2017); and as a conjunction e.g. 'it is some sort of judgment as well as an attitude that we have towards ourselves self-esteem" (Hussein, 2013).

We came to the conclusion that this agreement was unequal and was signed by force. The agreement provided for the establishment of borders with Sikkim unfavourable for Lhasa; the British control over a part of the Tibet territory, and a ban on its visiting by representatives of third countries without the permission of England.

However, in the future, due to the protests of Russia and China, Britain was forced to withdraw troops from the territory of Tibet and refuse from all the achievements of the expedition of F. Younghusband.

4. Discussion

One language in which discourse markers have been intensively researched is English. English has become a lingua franca (Crystal, 2003) and the sole medium of communication in many parts of the world. Researchers are taking interest in the analysis of English spoken by non-native speakers. It is a multi-dimensional area with a lot of scope for future research. The Major bulk of this research is devoted to the function and role of discourse markers in coherence and utterance interpretation. In the context of present research, it is necessary to mention the following studies on discourse markers. Two approaches have been developed so far to study discourse markers; one is concerned with coherence and the other with relevance. Hussein (2007) has worked with these two views and discussed the semantic and pragmatic status of discourse markers and their functions. Proponents of coherence suggest that discourse markers are cohesive devices and they contribute to the coherence of well-formed discourse by encoding “cohesive relationships between discourse units” (Hussein, 2007, p. 19). The other approach of relevance treats discourse markers as “pragmatic devices” (Ibid, p. 24) that interpret an utterance by encoding procedural information. Hussein finally moves to the relevance theory which is concerned with the relationship between “thoughts and propositions” rather than the “articulated linguistic units”.

The history of Tibet during the reign of the Dalai Lama XIII has repeatedly attracted orientalist (Marshall, 2004). However, it is worth noting that in domestic historiography, attention was mainly paid to only one aspect of Tibetan history - Russian-Tibetan interaction, mainly from 1898 through 1914. An array of studies devoted to this region in a given period can be classified into several positions.

From a chronological point of view, the first of the few works in the pre-revolutionary period, *The English Expedition to Tibet*, was issued in 1904 and belongs to the historian and publicist V.A. Teplov. The work narrated about the beginning of the interaction between Russia and Tibet. Its appearance was related with the British expedition of Colonel F. Younghusband to Tibet. In his work, the historian analysed the circumstances that led to the formation of the British expedition, and also cited several diplomatic documents from the Blue Book collection published by the British government.

In Soviet times, the events of the first Central Asian expedition were described in notes of a journey by N.K. Roerich "Altai-Himalayas" (Roerich, 1990) and Yu.N. Roerich "On the paths of Central Asia" (Tuttle & Schaeffer, 2013). It is worth noting that the Roerichs' works in English were published in the 1930s, during the lifetime of their authors. In the same period, notes of other participants in the Tibetan travel were published, in which attention was paid to the diplomatic "Buddhist mission" in Lhasa (B. S. Ryabinin; N. D. Kardashevsky). Thanks to these publications, we can expand our understanding of the tasks of the “scientific and artistic” expedition by N.K. Roerich. During this period, the paper by V. A.

Bogoslovsky and A. A. Moskalev, “The National Question in China in 1911-1949,” was published; it was dedicated to the expedition by F. Younghusband. Then the monograph by T. L. Shaumyan “Tibet in international relations at the beginning of the XX century” appeared.

Aijmer (2002) has argued in “English discourse particles: evidence from a corpus” that discourse markers perform many pragmatic functions in discourse. This study is an attempt to investigate the core meanings that these discourse markers denote. Aijmer has chosen five discourse markers for analysis from the London-Lund Corpus. The criterion of selection is the frequency of occurrence in the corpus. Besides functions of discourse markers, she has dealt with the placement issue i.e. discourse markers at initial, medial or at the final position. She summarises her findings thus: Discourse particles are different from ordinary words in the language because of the large number of pragmatic values that they can be associated with. Nevertheless, speakers are not troubled by this multifunctionality but they seem to know what a particle means and be able to use it appropriately in different contexts. (p. 3)

Lenk (1998) has also discussed the functions of discourse markers. She has selected six lexical items “anyway, however, incidentally, actually, still, and what else” for her analysis. This choice has been made on the basis of frequency and the functions that these markers perform in discourse. It is a comparative study between two corpora, London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English and Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English to describe the function of these “lexical items”. With the help of Oxford Concordance Program, she has investigated the function of discourse markers. The focus of her research is to find out how speakers use these markers to develop coherence in discourse or how they make a conversation coherent by using these items.

Among the works of Western literature, it is necessary to mention the monograph by F. Younghusband “India and Tibet” published in 1910. This monograph first covered the issue of Anglo-Tibetan negotiations at the beginning of the twentieth century and the circumstances of sending the British Expeditionary Force to Tibet. The work is of particular interest, as it was written by a direct participant in those events. Also worthy of attention is the monograph by W. Smith “The Tibetan People” of 1996, where the author outlined the history of Tibet, giving a review of historical events during the reign of the Dalai Lama XIII. The personality and legacy of Younghusband himself is most widely reflected in (French, 2016; Hackett, 2012; Neuhaus, 2012). The literature on his expeditions to Central Asia is also very extensive (Martynova et al., 2017; Martynov & Martynova, 2015).

Table 1. *Comparison of the Expeditions by Younghusband and the Roerichs*

| N.K. Roerich | F. Younghusband |
|--------------|-----------------|
|--------------|-----------------|

| <i>Chronological framework</i> | 1923-1928 | 1903-1904 |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Background</i> | Awareness of the role of Siberia as a region where a synthesis of eastern and western cultures takes place | The Trans-Caspian Railway changed the strategic balance not in favour of Britain; Tibetan raids on British territory in India; revitalization of Russian scientists in Tibet |
| <i>Expedition purpose</i> | Collection of art, ethnographic materials | Settlement of trade and border issues |
| <i>Expedition Composition</i> | The Roerich family, Lichtman spouses, and Konstantin Ryabinin | 4,600 soldiers; 7,000 supporting functions |
| <i>Difficulties during the expedition</i> | Chinese authorities confiscated weapons and delayed the expedition for 3 months; | Stopping the supply of food by residents and authorities |
| <i>Expedition Results</i> | Roerich Pact for the Protection of Cultural Monuments; the establishment of the Urusvati Institute; about 500 paintings; scientific ethnographic and language materials | Lhasa Treaty of 1904, intensification of Qing policy in the region |

5. Conclusions

The obtained results can be used to provide insights regarding DM instruction. Focusing on the diversity of DMs and their functions and distribution is a recommendation to consider. For further research, investigating the use of more DMs and their functions can provide more beneficial indications. As a considerable part of this research was conducted manually, a pertinent suggestion is that future research should also consider adopting more developed software that can handle automatic recognition of sentence boundaries to facilitate the process of detecting DMs positions and functions. The STSE corpus also should be developed to include more samples of Sudanese spoken English extracted from different genres. The aim of these suggestions is to validate the findings of this study and hence to present more insightful implication for DM instruction.

The tasks that were assigned to Younghusband were fully achieved. In addition, the Tibetan authorities had to recognize the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and Sikkim Trade Agreement of 1893. In fact, Tibet has become an English protectorate. It is worth mentioning that the global politics of Great Britain also needed to maintain the presence of China in Tibet, at least formal. This allowed the British to prevent the independence of Tibet and the influence of foreign powers in the region, primarily Russia.

Thus, Britain secured its dominance in the region, the non-interference of other powers in the Tibetan lands, and settled all exciting issues.

The Roerichs' family was not the first to set off to study the Tibet region, but they were the first to enter the Trans-Himalayan region. The Roerichs united extensive knowledge and material of a five - year expedition, creating the Urusvati Institute. In addition to domestic science, the Roerichs made a contribution at the international level, proposing the idea of a “Pact on the Protection of Cultural Monuments”. Of course, globalization leads to structural changes in the modern world (Glushkova et al., 2019), but the Tibetan region is still the least studied.

No research is final and more investigation and work can be done on the topic at hand. But what is certain is that many benefits may be drawn from this study for teaching and learning English as a second language. This will show a direction arrow to different users for developing fluency and clearer expressions of ideas. Placement issue may help the learners develop a native like fluency as each marker has been mentioned in relation to its position. This study has been conducted on a small scale. The result of this research may not be an end in itself because of limited range of the study; further investigation can be made on the same topic at a broader level.

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