

**CIRCUMSTANTIAL MEANINGS IN
TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE :
A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

TONG SU HSIEN @ ALICE TONG

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2012

**CIRCUMSTANTIAL MEANINGS IN
TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE :
A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

TONG SU HSIEN @ ALICE TONG

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ENGLISH
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2012

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

Name of Candidate: TONG SU HSIEN @ ALICE TONG
(I.C/Passport No: 800521-10-5592)

Registration/Matric No: TGB070015

Name of Degree: MASTER OF ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE

Title of Project Paper/Research/Dissertation/Thesis ("this Work"): CIRCUMSTANTIAL MEANINGS IN 'TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE: AN OLD MAN, A YOUNG MAN, AND LIFE'S GREATEST LESSON,' A MEMOIR: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Field of Study: SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

I do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

- (1) I am the sole author/writer of this Work;
- (2) This Work is original;
- (3) Any use of any work in which copyright exists was done by way of fair dealing and for permitted purposes and any excerpt or extract from, or reference to or reproduction of any copyright work has been disclosed expressly and sufficiently and the title of the work and its authorship have been acknowledged in this Work;
- (4) I do not have any actual knowledge nor do I ought reasonably to know that the making of this Work constitutes an infringement of any copyright work;
- (5) I hereby assign all and every rights in the copyright to this Work and that any reproduction or use in any form or by any means whatsoever is prohibited without the written consent of UM having been first had and obtained.
- (6) I am fully aware that if in the course of making this Work I have infringed any copyright whether intentionally or otherwise, I may be subject to legal action or any other action as may be determined by UM.

Candidate's Signature

Date: 27 August 2012

Subscribed and solemnly declared before,

Witness' Signature

Date: 27 August 2012

Name: DR. SRIDEVI SRINIWASS
Designation: SENIOR LECTURER

ABSTRACT

The current study attempts to examine the use of Circumstantial elements in the memoir *Tuesdays with Morrie: An old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson* by Mitch Albom. Drawing from Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) System of Circumstantiation, this study aims to reveal the choices of Circumstantial elements in the data and relate how the choices are used to fulfill the text's social purpose of recounting. The selected data is transcribed, coded, analysed and provided in distribution tables. The distribution of Circumstantial elements shows that Circumstance of Location (Place and Time) predominates the chosen texts with 50.34% confirming the common use of Place and Time to express a recount. Circumstance of Manner with 25.17% also holds an importance in recounting due to its nature in explaining *how* something took place. The work most relevant to the study of Circumstantiation is by Dreyfus and Jones (2011). Although there are a number of work on Transitivity namely by Manan (2001), Teo (2002), Srinivass (2003), Chen (2005), Gallardo (2006), Tan (2007) and Siow (2008), less attention has been given solely on the analysis of Circumstantial elements. Hence, this study attempts to give importance to the System of Circumstantiation. Among the four types of Circumstances of Expansion, Enhancing plays a significant role in expanding a text as it predominates at 87.76%. This suggests that enhancing expressions of Extent, Location, Manner, Cause and Contingency play a significant role in recounting thus enriching the text. The other three types of Expansions are Extending, Elaborating and Projection which are not significant at only 2.72%, 1.36% and 8.16% respectively. This study proves to be invaluable to many who wish to explore deeper into Systemic Functional Linguistics and its application in narratives and memoirs. Besides, the current study may also help teachers and writers to better appreciate the importance of using Circumstantial elements to provide details concerning Place and Time.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki penggunaan ‘Circumstantial Elements’ yang terdapat dalam memoir, *Tuesdays with Morrie: an old man, a young man and life’s greatest lesson*, yang ditulis oleh Mitch Albom. Dengan menggunakan kerangka ‘Systemic Functional Linguistics’, khususnya sistem ‘Circumstantiation’ oleh Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat realisasi ‘Circumstantial Elements’ dalam tiga bab pertama memoir tersebut. Kajian ini akan menghubungkan realisasi ‘Circumstantial Elements’ dengan cara penulis merekod kejadian masa silam. Data yang terpilih ditaip dalam format jadual, diberi kod dan kemudiannya dianalisa. Hasil kajian menunjukkan ‘Circumstance of Location’ yang merangkumi Tempat dan Masa paling kerap digunakan dalam memoir kerana kewujudannya mencapai 50.34%. Ini mengesahkan bahawa Tempat dan Masa merupakan maklumat penting dalam pengimbasan kejadian lepas. ‘Circumstance of Manner’ dengan frekuensi 25.17% juga kerap digunakan dalam catitan sesuatu kejadian kerana ia menjawab persoalan ‘bagaimana’ sesuatu kejadian berlaku. Walaupun sistem ‘Circumstantiation’ merupakan salah satu daripada komponen sistem ‘Transitivity’, ia jarang menjadi fokus kajian dan sering diabaikan. Kajian yang berkaitan dengan sistem ‘Circumstantiation’ hanya terdapat dalam Dreyfus and Jones (2011). Oleh itu, kajian ini bermatlamat untuk menyerlahkan kepentingan sistem ‘Circumstantiation’. Sistem ‘Circumstantiation’ yang merangkumi sembilan ‘Circumstantial Elements’ yang utama boleh dirumuskan dalam empat kategori iaitu ‘Enhancing’, ‘Extending’, ‘Elaborating’ dan ‘Projection’. Keempat-empat kategori tersebut merupakan cara untuk mengembangkan sesuatu teks. Antara empat cara tersebut, ‘Enhancing’ memainkan peranan yang paling penting dengan peratusan yang mencapai 87.76%. Ini menunjukkan ‘Circumstantial Elements’ yang terdapat dalam kategori ‘Enhancing’ iaitu termasuk ‘Circumstance of Extent’, ‘Location’, ‘Manner’, ‘Cause’ dan ‘Contingency’ diberi keutamaan dalam catitan sesuatu kejadian. Ketiga-tiga cara yang lain jarang digunakan untuk pengimbasan kejadian lepas. Kajian ini adalah bermakna untuk penyelidik yang ingin menerokai genre naratif dan memoir dengan menggunakan ‘Systemic Functional Linguistics’. Selain daripada itu, kajian ini juga boleh membantu guru bahasa dan penulis memahami kepentingan penggunaan ‘Circumstantial Elements’.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to praise the Lord, Jesus Christ, for being gracious to me throughout the years of pursuing my Master in English as Second Language. He has blessed me with an understanding husband, a superb supervisor, friendly coursemates and church members to guide and encourage me.

Secondly, I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Sridevi Srinivass for her guidance and patience in supervising my work. Her meticulousness and diligence in the supervision of my work inspired me to be a good teacher in the future when I rejoin the workforce. Her sharing of her experiences has inspired me to read and write more.

Thanks also to be extended to my husband, Kuan Chuin Seong, who has been a great help in taking care of our toddler son while I was busy with my writing. Thanks to my adorable son, Isaac Kuan Chuen Xin, who was willing to play by himself when nobody had the time to play with him while I had to rush through my work. Thanks to my late father, Tong Eng Khong, who inspired me to take up the challenge of the current course. Thanks to my mom, Tho Saw Chan, who has been supportive through the years. Thanks to my brother, David Tong, who has always been concerned about me.

I would also like to thank my coursemates: Manvir, Siew Gaik, Joyce and Punitha, for encouraging me and giving me helpful advice in my writing. Thanks to my church members for their encouragement and prayers throughout the writing of this thesis. Thanks to the members of Sysfling who has given fruitful advice and information for the writing of my thesis.

Without those mentioned above, I would fall short of finishing this thesis. My gratitude and thanks are beyond words and may God bless them with peace and joy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
PREFACE	
Declaration of work	ii
Abstract	iii
Abstrak	iv
Acknowledgement	v
Table of Contents	vi

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Statement of the Research Area	1
1.2	Aims of the Study	2
1.3	Research Questions	3
1.4	Rationale of the Study	3
1.5	Significance of the Study	4
1.6	Delimitations of the Study	4
1.7	Organisation of the Study	5
1.8	Conclusion	6

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction	7
2.1	Memoir and its nature	7
2.2	A Brief Account on the Development of Systemic Functional Linguistics	10
2.2.1	Historical Background of the Theory	11
2.2.2	The Three Metafunctions	11
2.2.3	The Experiential Meanings	13
2.3	Review of Research on Experiential Meanings	16
2.4	Review of Relevant Research on Circumstantial Meanings	20
2.4.1	Review of Research on Adverbials	20
2.4.2	Review of Research on Circumstantial Meanings	21
2.5	Conclusion	25

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction	26
3.1	Theoretical Framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics	26
3.2	The System of Circumstantiation	28
3.2.1	General Description of Circumstantial Elements	28
3.2.2	Types of Circumstantial Elements	30
3.2.2.1	Enhancing	30
	(a) Circumstance of Extent	
	(b) Circumstance of Location	
	(c) Circumstance of Manner	
	(d) Circumstance of Cause	

	(e) Circumstance of Contingency	
3.2.2.2	Extending (a) Circumstance of Accompaniment	35
3.2.2.3	Elaborating (a) Circumstance of Role	36
3.2.2.4	Projection (a) Circumstance of Matter (b) Circumstance of Angle	37
3.3	Research Methodology	39
3.3.1	Research Design	39
3.3.1.1	Data Selection	
3.3.1.2	Data Description	
3.3.1.3	Research Stages	
3.4	Conclusion	52

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0	Introduction	53
4.1	Circumstances used in the text	53
4.1.1	Enhancing	54
4.1.1.1	Circumstance of Extent (a) Circumstance of Distance (b) Circumstance of Duration (c) Circumstance of Frequency	54
4.1.1.2	Circumstance of Location (a) Circumstance of Place (b) Circumstance of Time	57
4.1.1.3	Circumstance of Manner (a) Circumstance of Means (b) Circumstance of Quality (c) Circumstance of Comparison (d) Circumstance of Degree	59
4.1.1.4	Circumstance of Cause (a) Circumstance of Reason (b) Circumstance of Purpose (c) Circumstance of Behalf	62

4.1.1.5	Circumstance of Contingency (a) Circumstance of Condition (b) Circumstance of Default (c) Circumstance of Concession	64
4.1.2	Extending	65
4.1.2.1	Circumstance of Accompaniment (a) Circumstance of Comitative (b) Circumstance of Additive	
4.1.3	Elaborating	66
4.1.3.1	Circumstance of Role (a) Circumstance of Guise (b) Circumstance of Product	
4.1.4	Projection	68
4.1.4.1	Circumstance of Matter	
4.1.4.2	Circumstance of Angle (a) Circumstance of Source (b) Circumstance of Viewpoint	
4.2	Quantitative Distribution of the Circumstantial Elements	70
4.2.1	Materialisation of the Circumstantial Elements and how they fulfill the field of recounting	75
4.3	Conclusion	82

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

5.0	Introduction	84
5.1	Summary of findings pertaining to the Research Questions	84
5.1.1	Summary of findings pertaining to Research Question Number 1	85
5.1.2	Summary of findings pertaining to Research Question Number 2	86
5.2	Implication of the study	91
5.3	Suggestions for future research	93
5.4	Conclusion	93

APPENDICES

Appendix A1: Analysis on First Tuesday

Text 1a: Enhancement analysis

Text 1b: Extension, Elaboration and Projection

Appendix A2: Analysis on Second Tuesday

Text 2a: Enhancement analysis

Text 2b: Extension, Elaboration and Projection

Appendix A3: Analysis on Third Tuesday

Text 3a: Enhancement analysis

Text 3b: Extension, Elaboration and Projection

Appendix A4: Analysis on Reflection of past after First Tuesday

Text 4a: Enhancement analysis

Text 4b: Extension, Elaboration and Projection

Appendix A5: Analysis of Reflection of past after Second Tuesday

Text 5a: Enhancement analysis

Text 5b: Extension, Elaboration and Projection

Appendix A6: Analysis of Reflection of past after Third Tuesday

Text 6a: Enhancement analysis

Text 6b: Extension, Elaboration and Projection

Appendix B: Raw Data

First Tuesday

Reflection of past after First Tuesday

Second Tuesday

Reflection of past after Second Tuesday

Third Tuesday

Reflection of past after Third Tuesday