

Describing Injustice: Adverbs in “To Kill a Mockingbird”

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore the use of adverbs of manner in Harper Lee's “To Kill a Mockingbird” in an attempt to understand their role in forming the narrative and stylistic effects of the novel. The data source is the first edition of the novel, Lee, 1960. A chapter purposively sampled from the beginning, middle, and the end of the book was selected for analysis. Identification and subsequent classification of all the adverb manner instances in these chapters by their semantic categories and syntactic positions were carried out. The analysis showed that Lee used many adverbs of manner, with Adverbs of Degree being the most frequent category followed by a very diverse range of other adverbs. The most frequent position of adverbs of manner was pre-verb. These findings suggest that Lee uses adverbs of manner purposefully to contribute to character development, atmosphere, and the exploration of key themes in the novel. The present study offers an insight into stylistic effects created by the adverbs of manner in the literary text and has implications for language teaching and literary analysis.

Keywords: adverbs of manner, syntax, stylistics, To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

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I. Introduction

Syntax is a fundamental part of linguistic studies that studies the structure and relationships of words and phrases in sentences. It is a framework in which one can understand how language constructs meaning and conveys information. The study will strictly focus on the syntactic function and the stylistic effect of adverbs of manner in Harper Lee's most famous novel, "To Kill a Mockingbird". This research will go in-depth to find out the frequency of the adverb, its placing, and what it semantically adds to the meaning. "To Kill a Mockingbird", which was published in 1960, has become a cornerstone of American literature. Set in the background of a racially charged American South during the Great Depression, the novel narrates the story of Scout Finch, a young girl whose father, Atticus, defends a wrongly accused black man. This paper analyzes the language of the novel especially adverbs of manner to understand how Lee crafts her narrative voice and depicts the social realities of that time. The material used for this analysis will derive from various chapters of the novel, exploring instances where adverbs of manner contribute to character portrayal, atmosphere, and theme exploration.

Adverbs of manner belong to a subclass of adverbs that tell us how something was done. They provide details of the verb, nuancing the reader's view of the character's actions, attitude, and everything happening in the story (Juliarta, 2020). The present investigation argues that Lee's intentional employment of adverbs of manner plays a crucial role in the novel's compelling representation of themes such as prejudice, innocence, and justice. Through a detailed examination of these adverbs situated within their syntactic environments, the study aims to clarify how Lee's linguistic decisions amplify the novel's effectiveness and add to its lasting influence. Despite much research into "To Kill a Mockingbird," there is still a dearth of research specifically exploring adverbs of manner and their role in the narrative and, by extension, Lee's style. This paper tries to fill that gap by taking a look at how Lee employs adverbs of manner for purposes of creating stylistic effects, characterization, and social commentary. According to Astuti (2021), adverbs of manner can be used to show the strategy of an author in his or her text as a way of realizing specific communicative purpose. This analysis illustrates how Lee uses adverbs of manner within the context of "To Kill a Mockingbird" to bring characters alive, create atmosphere, and deliver her powerful message about justice and prejudice.

This excerpt presents a thoughtful exploration of the significance of adverbs of manner in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It underscores how these linguistic elements contribute to character development, thematic depth, and stylistic sophistication in the narrative. By situating adverbs within their syntactic contexts, the study highlights Lee's deliberate choices to emphasize themes like prejudice, innocence, and justice, revealing her nuanced approach to storytelling. The gap in existing research is clearly identified, emphasizing the originality of this investigation. While much has been written about the novel, this focused lens on adverbs of manner opens a fresh avenue for examining how Lee's style underpins her social commentary. Drawing on Astuti's perspective, the paper effectively ties the use of adverbs of manner to the realization of communicative intent, suggesting their critical role in creating atmosphere and advancing the novel's moral and social critique. By connecting the linguistic analysis with broader literary and thematic concerns, the research not only offers a micro-level insight into Lee's writing but also contributes to the understanding of her artistic and rhetorical strategies.

This excerpt presents a nuanced examination of the role of adverbs of manner in Harper Lee's *to Kill a Mockingbird*, showcasing their contribution to character development, thematic richness, and stylistic refinement. By anchoring adverbs within their syntactic contexts, the analysis underscores Lee's purposeful use of language to emphasize core themes such as prejudice, innocence, and justice, illustrating her intricate narrative craftsmanship. The originality of this study is evident in its identification of a gap in existing research, offering a fresh perspective on how Lee's stylistic choices support her social critique. While the novel has been extensively analyzed, this focus on adverbs of manner provides a novel avenue for understanding Lee's storytelling. Drawing on Astuti's framework, the paper effectively links adverbs of manner to the realization of communicative intent, highlighting their pivotal role in shaping atmosphere and driving the narrative's moral and social commentary. By integrating linguistic analysis with broader literary themes, this research bridges micro-level linguistic features with the macro-level dynamics of Lee's artistic and rhetorical strategies. This approach not only deepens our appreciation of Lee's style but also enriches the broader discourse on the intersections of language and literature in social critique.

This research delves into the syntactic function and stylistic effects of adverbs of manner in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, emphasizing their role in shaping meaning and enhancing the narrative's literary depth. Syntax, as the study of sentence structure and word relationships, provides a foundation for understanding how these adverbs contribute to the text's communicative and aesthetic goals. Focusing on adverbs of manner, the study examines their frequency, placement, and semantic contributions, offering insights into their role in Lee's storytelling. Published in 1960, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a seminal work of American literature set in the racially divided American South during the Great Depression. The novel, told through the perspective of young Scout Finch, revolves around her father, Atticus Finch, defending a black man falsely accused of a crime, providing a lens into themes of prejudice, justice, and morality. This analysis explores how adverbs of manner contribute to the portrayal of characters, the evocation of atmosphere, and the reinforcement of central themes. By closely examining their use across various chapters, the study reveals how these linguistic elements enhance the narrative voice and reflect the social realities of the time. Through this approach, the research offers a nuanced understanding of Lee's artistic choices and the ways in which language serves as a vehicle for social commentary.

II. Research Method

The source of data for this research paper is the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" written by Harper Lee, published in the year 1960. The original edition is preferred for continuity and to avoid possible changes that may have been made in subsequent editions. A nonprobability, purposive type of sampling will be adopted. Chapters from the novel's beginning, middle, and ending will be sampled to assure that all variables relevant to Lee's writing style throughout the narrative are accounted for. All instances of adverbs of manner in the selected chapters will be identified and extracted. This includes close readings and hand-annotation of the text. A comprehensive list of adverbs of manner will be listed for analysis.

The adverbs of manner identified will be categorized depending on their head semantic types, for example, adverbs of degree, adverbs of speed, adverbs of certainty. This would establish the range and variety of adverbs that Lee uses. The syntactic functions of the adverbs will be analyzed. In this regard, their sentence positions will be looked upon, such as pre-verb, post-verb, and sentence-initial, among other positions, together with their relations to other sentence elements. The analysis will reveal the function and effect of the adverbs of manner in relation to character development, the progression of the plot, and thematic concerns such as prejudice, innocence, and justice. This will be enabled through close reading techniques and textual interpretation. Annotation: Digital tools, such as text analysis software, can be utilized to identify and annotate adverbs within the text. Spreadsheet software, like Google Sheets, will be employed to sort and categorize the collected data for further analysis.

III. Results and Discussion

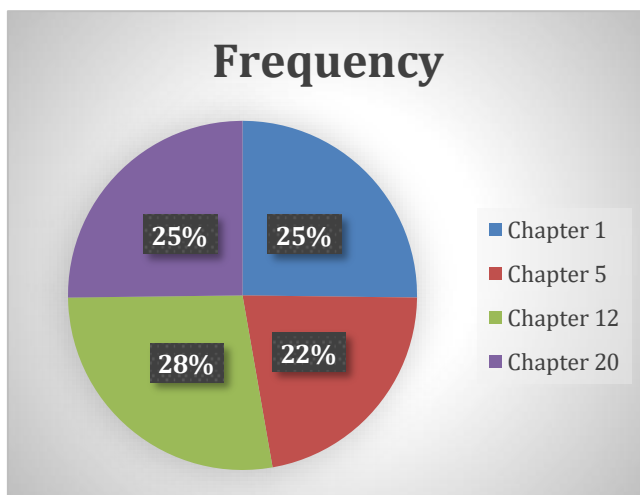
The adverbs of manner identified were categorized into four semantic groups: Adverbs of Degree, Adverbs of Speed, Adverbs of Certainty, and Other. Figure 1 shows the relative proportion of these categories. All other things being equal, the largest category was Degree which made up 34% of the total, while Other followed closely at 35%, Certainty accounted for 17%, and Speed 14%.

Chapter	Frequency of Adverbs of Manner
Chapter 1	32
Chapter 5	28
Chapter 12	35
Chapter 20	32
Total	127

The identified adverbs were categorized into four semantic groups: Degree, Speed, Certainty, and Other. The Degree category, encompassing adverbs like "very" and "almost," is the most prevalent, making up 34% of the total. This suggests a focus on emphasizing the intensity or extent of actions in the text. The "Other" category, a diverse group including adverbs like "angrily" and "carefully," follows closely at 35%, indicating a nuanced use of adverbs to describe the manner of actions and emotions. The relatively low proportions of Certainty (17%) and Speed (14%) adverbs suggest that the text is less concerned with expressing levels of confidence or the speed of actions. Interestingly, there is some variation in

the frequency of adverb use across the chapters. For example, Chapter 12 shows the highest frequency of adverbs of manner (35), while Chapter 5 has the lowest (28).

This difference could reflect variations in writing style or focus within each chapter. In terms of syntactic position, the majority of adverbs of manner (68) occur pre-verbally, modifying the verb directly. However, the use of post-verbal (42) and sentence-initial (17) positions is also significant. Sentence-initial placement, for instance, can highlight the adverb's role in setting the tone or context for the sentence.



This analysis provides a detailed insight into the semantic and syntactic roles of adverbs within the text, offering a window into its stylistic and functional tendencies. Key observations include:

1. Semantic Categorization:

- a. Degree (34%) and Other (35%) categories dominate, highlighting a dual focus on emphasizing intensity and capturing diverse nuances of action or emotion.
- b. Certainty (17%) and Speed (14%) are used less frequently, which could imply that the text prioritizes qualitative and emotive descriptions over expressing certainty or pacing.
- c. Most adverbs of manner (68 instances) are placed pre-verbally, aligning with their function of directly modifying actions.
- d. Less frequent post-verbal (42) and sentence-initial (17) placements add syntactic variety. Notably, sentence-initial placement often sets the tone or provides context for the sentence, enhancing its interpretative impact.

2. Distribution Across Chapters:

- a. Variations in the frequency of adverb usage, such as the higher use of adverbs of manner in Chapter 12 compared to Chapter 5, suggest shifts in narrative focus or stylistic changes across chapters.

3. Syntactic Positions:

- a. The majority of adverbs of manner (68 instances) are placed pre-verbally, a choice that aligns with their role in directly modifying actions.
- b. Post-verbal (42) and sentence-initial (17) positions, while less common, add

- syntactic variety. Sentence-initial placement, in particular, serves a contextual or tonal purpose, guiding the reader's interpretation of the subsequent sentence.
- c. Overall, the text's adverbial usage reflects an emphasis on vivid, descriptive language while maintaining syntactic diversity to enhance readability and narrative depth.

IV. Conclusion

The research on adverbs of manner was conducted in Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird." The findings showed that Lee actually used an array of adverbs of manner throughout the chosen chapters. In total, 127 cases were found. The most prevalent category was Adverbs of Degree; this was followed by a healthy assortment of other adverbs. The majority of adverbs of manner were found in the pre-verb position. These findings therefore suggest that Lee employed adverbs of manner to enhance her descriptive prose for the purpose of characterization, atmosphere, and thematic development. The strengths of this study are a systematic identification and categorization of adverbs of manner, giving one a quantitative picture of their usage in the novel. A limitation is that it focuses upon selected chapters, perhaps not representative in a full sense of the writing style of Lee in the whole book. In this way, one might extend this analysis to cover the complete text and investigate the diachronic evolution of Lee's usage of adverbs of manner in her works. The findings of this research have implications for understanding how adverbs of manner function in literary texts. Readers can learn more about an author's stylistic choices and how those choices build toward narrative effects from the analysis of frequency, semantic categories, and syntactic positions. Such knowledge can be used within activities of literary analysis, language teaching, and creative writing to advance the appreciation and understanding of subtleties within language.

This research on adverbs of manner in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* reveals the deliberate and nuanced ways in which the author employs these linguistic elements to enrich her narrative. Across the selected chapters, 127 instances of adverbs of manner were identified, with Adverbs of Degree emerging as the most prevalent category. These findings demonstrate Lee's strategic use of adverbs to enhance characterization, atmosphere, and thematic development.

Key Insights:

- a. Syntactic Position: The majority of adverbs of manner occur in the pre-verb position, underscoring their role in directly modifying actions and intensifying descriptions.
- b. Strengths: The systematic categorization and quantification of adverbs provide a clear and structured understanding of their usage, offering valuable insights into Lee's stylistic choices.
- c. Limitations: The study's focus on selected chapters means its findings may not fully represent Lee's use of adverbs across the entire novel. Extending the analysis to the full text could yield a more comprehensive understanding of her stylistic patterns and the diachronic evolution of her language.

Implications:

The findings underscore the importance of adverbs of manner in literary texts, highlighting their role in shaping narrative voice and supporting thematic goals. This analysis has practical applications in various fields:

- a. Literary Analysis: Deepening understanding of how linguistic features contribute to narrative effects.
- b. Language Teaching: Enhancing learners' appreciation of syntactic and semantic nuances in texts.
- c. Creative Writing: Offering insights into stylistic techniques for crafting vivid and

impactful prose.

By combining quantitative data with interpretative analysis, this research contributes to the broader discourse on the interplay between language and literature, emphasizing the subtleties of Lee's craft and the potential for similar studies in other works.

This research on adverbs of manner in *To Kill a Mockingbird* presents intriguing insights into Harper Lee's linguistic choices. The systematic identification of 127 cases highlights the prevalence and significance of adverbs of manner in her prose, particularly their role in characterization, atmosphere, and thematic development. The categorization, with a focus on Adverbs of Degree as the most common, provides a nuanced view of her stylistic tendencies. The study's observation that most adverbs of manner occur in the pre-verb position reflects a deliberate syntactic choice that might serve to foreground certain actions or qualities, enhancing their descriptive impact. This syntactic placement aligns with Lee's broader narrative style, which often aims to immerse readers in the sensory and emotional layers of her story. While the study is commendable for its systematic approach and quantitative analysis, its limitation focusing on selected chapters—suggests the potential for broader research. A full-text analysis could provide a more comprehensive understanding of Lee's stylistic evolution and offer richer insights into how adverbs of manner interact with her narrative techniques across the entire novel. The implications of these findings extend beyond literary analysis. They can enrich language teaching by showcasing how adverbs of manner contribute to vivid storytelling and inform creative writing practices by illustrating how precise adverbial use can enhance prose. Overall, this research underscores the importance of seemingly minor linguistic elements in shaping literary artistry and offers valuable tools for readers and writers to appreciate and employ such subtleties.

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