



## THE CONTRASTIVE AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSES OF THE ADVERB *WELL*

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### Abstract

*This study aims to provide a clear picture of adverbs **well** through contrastive and contextual analyses in an effort to overcome translation problems. This study employs a semantic approach and is qualitative in nature. The data were collected in a purposive manner from The Little Oxford Thesaurus and the analysis was made into two phases, contrastive and contextual ones. There is a close relationship among the meanings of **well** in contrastive analysis, i.e. when it is contrasted with words (fast, thoroughly, carelessly, harshly, and nearly) of the same semantic domain and of the same level and in contextual analysis, i.e. when it is used in different contexts. The results of the analyses show that there are four semantic domains namely **progress, manner, degree, and distance** shared by both analyses. In other words, the meaning of **well** in the contrastive analysis is related to its meaning in the contextual analysis by means of four features, i.e. **manner, distance, degree, and progress** where **manner** occupies the highest percentage of the occurrence.*

### Subject Area Semantics

**Keywords:** Contrastive Analysis, Contextual Analysis, Adverb, Semantic Domain

### 1 Introduction

In the world of translation, translators have to be able to overcome problems in translating texts. One potential problem in translation is context. This has intrigued scholars to eventually come up with theories on how to deal with it (Bassnett, 2002; Newmark, 1988). Bassnett asserts that every translated work is culture-bound and it is non-separable from the context (2002: 9-20). Moreover, Newmark (1988: 45-47) offers eight Translation Strategies in order to provide ways or solutions to solve translation problems in relation to context.

The same thing is also true for the translation of Indonesian texts into English. The translators have to understand the context of both Indonesian (Source Text) and English (Target Text). In order to help the translators understand the context of English, Semantics, as a branch of linguistics that is concerned with meaning, offers a scientific way.

A question may be posted: why Semantics? One of the concerns of Semantics is, according to Goddard, to provide a clear understanding of the relationship between languages and cultures (2011: 1). He elaborates more by saying that parts of the grammar in a certain language reflect the culture of the speakers (2011: 1). Consequently, this becomes an important issue for translators in translating Indonesian texts into English since parts of the grammar in English are the core of the language that could even be a problem in the translation process.

One of the parts of grammar is an adverb. In this study, the adverb *well* was chosen as an object of study. It is classified as an adverb of manner. The reason for choosing *well* is that it is considered to be a “pure” adverb. Adverbs of manner say how something happens or is done (Swan, 1995: 15). Adverbs are used to modify verbs, e.g. *I don't remember them very well*. Adverbs are also used to modify adjectives, past participles, other adverbs, and adverbial phrase. *well* is an

adverb corresponding to the adjective good e.g. *A good singer sings well.* *well* belongs to irregular adverb of manner.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Review of Related Studies

Past studies suggested that semantically, words were analyzed in order to find out their meaning components, lexical meanings, and semantic features. Cahyani (2019) found fifteen lexemes meaning “look” in English. The fifteen lexemes were “see, look, watch, stare, gaze, glance, glare, glimpse, gape, behold, peer, peep, peek, blink and wink.” Those were taken from four different dictionaries. This study was qualitative in nature. This researcher conducted the steps of data collection by finding the lexemes which had the meaning “look”. The components of meaning were determined by several semantic features such as the device of seeing (direct eyes or not), the way of seeing, the object, and the involved feeling through the process of seeing. Her study provided insight to this study in terms of semantic features that finally led to the meaning components of the fifteen lexemes.

The lexical meaning of a complex verb *Gbá* in Igbo provided more insight to this study. Nwachi, Babarinde, Nwachi, Babarinde, & Ahamefula (2020) concluded that *Gbá* was a verb of movement or motion resulting in the change of position. The data were elicited through interviews. Understanding the lexical meaning of *Gbá* was beneficial to this study in the way that both studies were conducted in order to give a clear picture among the meanings of lexemes in the same semantic domain. Nwachi’s, Babarinde’s, and Ahamefula’s research dedicated to curriculum designers by giving them insight on areas. While this study is intended to be beneficial in the translation field.

Finding out semantic features is keys to the development of translation. Arnita, Puspani, & Malini (2016) contributed their research to the field of translation. They believed that “in translating the text, the translator does not simply translate a word from a source language into a target language but also the cultural context” (2016: 15). They then analyzed cultural terms in the bilingual short story entitled Mati “Salah Pati” and its translation “The Wrong Kind of Death”. They concluded that there were two types of semantic features namely object element and event element. No cultural words had the same feature and meaning. It all depended on the culture of the community in Bali. The similarity between the previous research and this research lies in the contribution of the research to the translation world and the belief that semantic analysis gives a clearer picture of a certain word in order to overcome translation problems.

### 2.2 Theory of Meaning and Componential Analysis

Semanticists have started to make some scientific investigation with observational aspects, such as words. This is an attempt to base meaning on context as something that translators require. Then, what is the meaning of *meaning*? According to Hartmann and Stork, meaning is the sense that a word or group of words conveys (1972: 138). In exploring the connection between meaning and context in English, there is a clear method of stating and denoting meaning. In Goddard’s terms, it is called a system of semantic representation (2011: 4).

The discussion of *meaning* does not stop here. In Structural Linguistics, there is a belief that word-meanings do not exist in themselves, or being separated from other words. They only exist in relation to one another or as parts of a big linguistic system (Goddard, 2011: 51). Further, Nida elaborates “words have meaning only in terms of systematic contrasts with other words which share certain features with them but the contrast with them in respect to other features” (1975: 32).

Accordingly, a semantic analysis of a word can be conducted in order to understand its meaning. Goddard mentions that semantic analysis is conducted by comparing and contrasting related words called semantic field or semantic domain and the procedure is called Componential Analysis (2011: 51). In conducting Componential Analysis, there are two procedures to employ namely contrastive analysis and contextual analysis.

In conducting contrastive analysis, Johnson provides a clear picture of it (1999). He elaborates that contrastive analysis aims to describe the similarities and differences of two or more items of the same level in order to find principles that can be applied to practical problems in contextual analysis (1999: 85). Further, he describes that this approach is said to be synchronic in that it pays attention only to contemporary forms of the language in question. From this approach, there gained semantic features or semantic properties of the linguistic items being contrasted (1999: 85).

In doing the contrastive analysis, Nida gives us an illustration by providing an example (1975). He explains about word *father* (1975: 33). If we attempt to determine the componential features of the central meaning of *father* (the name of one's biological progenitor), then it can be done by contrasting this central meaning of *father* with related meanings of other forms which occur in the same semantic domain where they share certain aspects of meaning as kinship terms. This meaning of *father* contrasts with that of *mother*. *Father* is male while *mother* is female. Besides, we also can contrast *father* with *son* and *grandfather* which refer to different generations although it shares with *son* and *grandfather* the component of the male sex.

Another procedure is contextual analysis. The Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terms (2003) defines contextual analysis as a phase of natural language processing following semantic analysis whose purpose is to elaborate the semantic representation of what has been made explicit with what is implicit from the context. Meanwhile, Hartmann and Stork provide another definition namely as a type of linguistic analysis that recognizes that the meanings of linguistic units are determined by the context in which they occur (1972: 52).

With regard to contrastive and contextual analysis, there are some features involved. The objective of having contrastive and contextual analysis is to find out whether the contrastive meaning is related to contextual meaning. In other words, the objective of the analysis is to build a bridge to connect the two meanings on a contrastive and contextual level. The features shared by both meanings will act as a bridge.

By contrasting the adverb *well*, we will come up with meanings manifested by certain features. After that, *well* will be put in different contexts to find out whether its meanings are related to the meaning (s) in contrastive analysis. Again, the meaning (s) in the contextual analysis are manifested by certain features. When the features or some in contrastive level occur again in the contextual level, then it is considered that the meaning of that word is related. In other words, any features shared by both analyses are there to bridge the meaning of the word which exists in two different analyses. Therefore, the meaning (s) of a word in the contrastive or contextual analysis is not a sole meaning. They are connected with one another. They are interrelated by means of the same features they both share.

### 3 Methodology/Materials

This study employed a semantic approach and was qualitative in nature. George mentions that qualitative research is any research whose results are captured in words, images, or non-numeric symbols (2008: 7). The qualitative procedures were conducted in accordance with Creswell's procedures: collecting the data, analyzing and interpreting them (2009: xxiv). Therefore, the researcher collected the data by conducting observation in *The Little Oxford Thesaurus* (2006). The selection of the data was done in a purposive manner. After collecting the data, the contrastive analysis was conducted by contrasting the data with other adverbs of manner. Then, the contextual analysis was done by looking up word meanings in *The New Oxford American Dictionary* (2005), *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (1996), and *The Little Oxford Thesaurus* (2006). The results of this research will be in words in the light of explanation in the Results and Findings section. A detailed explanation of each step in the study is presented in the next paragraphs.

The object of the study is the adverb *well*. *well* will be contrasted with other adverbs of manner namely *fast*, *thoroughly*, *carelessly*, *harshly*, and *nearly*. The definition of each datum is taken from *The Little Oxford Thesaurus* as follows:

- a. well: in a good or proper or satisfactory manner or to a high standard
- b. fast: quickly or rapidly
- c. carelessly: without care or concern
- d. thoroughly: in an exhaustive manner
- e. harshly: in an unpleasant manner
- f. nearly: slightly short of or not quite accomplished

After that, those words are contrasted using some contrastive features. There are eighteen features used to contrast those words namely *regular*, *irregular*, *slow*, *rapid*, *completed*, *uncompleted*, *proper*, *improper*, *calm*, *blustorous*, *high consideration*, *low consideration*, *high quality*, *low quality*, *high attentiveness*, *low attentiveness*, *long*, and *short*. Those features are chosen because they belong to certain semantic domains. These semantic domains, later on, will go further to the level of contextual analysis. The analysis will be presented in tables where each table consists of contrastive features belonging to a semantic domain.

## 4 Results and Findings

### 4.1 The Contrastive Analysis

The results and findings of the contrastive analysis are all presented in five tables where each table consists of contrastive features belonging to a semantic domain. After each table, a discussion is conducted.

Table 1. Type of Adverb

Features Adverbs	Type of Adverb	
	Regular	Irregular
Well		√
Fast		√
Thoroughly	√	
Carelessly	√	
Harshly	√	
Nearly	√	

Table 1 presents the type of adverb, i.e. regular and irregular. *well* and *fast* both belong to irregular adverbs while *thoroughly*, *carelessly*, *harshly*, and *nearly* belong to the regular ones.

Table 2. Progress

Features Adverbs	Progress			
	slow	rapid	completed	uncompleted
Well			√	
Fast		√		
Thoroughly	√			
Carelessly				
Harshly		√		
Nearly				√

Table 2 consists of four contrastive features, i.e. *slow*, *rapid*, *completed*, and *uncompleted* which all belong to *progress*. In this case, there is an adverb, *carelessly*, whose boxes are empty. This adverb does not suggest any feature the contrastive feature of *progress* has. It is hard to determine whether something which is done carelessly must be slow, rapid, completed, or uncompleted. Therefore, the box was left unchecked.

Table 3. Manner

Features	Manner			
	Proper	Improper	Calm	Blusterous
Adverbs				
Well	√			
Fast				√
Thoroughly	√		√	
Carelessly		√		√
Harshly		√		
Nearly				

Table 3 presents four features, i.e. *proper*, *improper*, *calm*, and *blusterous*. They belong to the semantic domain of *manner*. Again, there is an adverb whose boxes are empty. Based on the definition of the word, *nearly* means slightly short of or not quite accomplished. Therefore, when something is nearly done, it has four possibilities namely to be proper, improper, calm, and blusterous. It is impossible to check all boxes. Thus, all are left blank.

Table 4. Degree

Features	Degree					
	High consideration	Low consideration	High quality	Low quality	High attentiveness	Low attentiveness
Adverbs						
Well	√		√		√	
Fast		√				
Thoroughly	√		√		√	
Carelessly		√		√		√
Harshly		√		√		√
Nearly						

Table 4 presents an interesting fact about the six adverbs. For example, *well* and *thoroughly* both share common features namely high consideration, high quality, and high attentiveness. It happens *carelessly* and *harshly* as well. *well* and *thoroughly* become the counterpart of *carelessly* and *harshly*. Any features *well* and *thoroughly* do not have must be the features of *carelessly* and *harshly* and vice versa.

Table 5. Distance

Features	Distance	
	long	short
Adverbs		
Well	√	
Fast		√
Thoroughly	√	
Carelessly	+/-	+/-
Harshly		√
Nearly		√

Table 5 presents the fifth semantic domain namely *distance*. *Distance* consists of *long* and *short*. For something which is done *carelessly*, it might be done either in short or long duration. Therefore, *carelessly* is assigned plus or minus features in its boxes.

## 4.2 The Contextual Analysis

After the contrastive analysis is done, now the discussion is directed to the contextual analysis of the adverb *well*. As mentioned earlier, this analysis is required to find out the meaning (s) of *well* when it occurs in context. All contextual meanings of *well* are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Contextual Meanings

No	Context	Meaning	Example	Feature
1.	One's condition (mentally or physically)	Satisfactorily in regard to health or physical condition	The patient is doing well these days.	progress
2.	One's performance in a test	Satisfactorily with respect to conduct or action, in a good or satisfactory manner	He did the exam well.	manner
3.	One needs an umbrella/prevention	In all likelihood	You may well need your umbrella.	degree
4.	One's condition of living	In a prosperous, comfortable or affluent manner	He lives in Canada well.	manner
5.	Knowing somebody	In a close or familiar manner	Do you know Matt well?	manner
6.	One's expressing ideas	In a kindly or friendly manner	Please speak well of your idea.	manner
7.	Watching what someone is doing	With careful, care or close attention	Watch well what I do.	manner
8.	One's painting something	With skill or aptitude	Michelangelo paints well.	manner
9.	One's being paid for his job	In a way appropriate to the facts or circumstances	James is well paid for his work.	manner
10.	People's behavior	In a moral or proper manner	They behave very well in class.	manner
11.	One's way of taking a joke	Without unusual distress or rancor or resentment, with good nature	She took the joke well.	manner
12.	One's approval	In a favorable or approving manner	Ralph has always spoken well of Tina.	manner
13.	One's favor	To an extent approaching completeness	He likes his roast beef well done.	degree
14.	One's way of talking to elderly	In an appropriate or polite manner	In Javanese tradition, we must speak well with our parents.	manner
15.	One's attitude towards the news	In good spirit	With good grace, he took the news well.	manner
16.	The condition of a project	To a suitable or appropriate extent or degree	The project was well underway.	degree
17.	One's probability of doing something	Indicating high probability, very likely	I might well do it.	degree
18.	Fuel tank and cigarette	Far and away	Keep well away from the fuel tank before lighting your cigarette.	distance



19.	One's certainty about needing no help	Without doubt or question	He well says he needs no help	degree
20.	The reason why one will be a good announcer	In an accurate and grammatical manner	He will be a good announcer because he speaks well	manner
21.	One's marriage	In a manner affording benefit or advantage	She married well	manner
22.	A film's budget	To a great extent	I am afraid the film was well over budget.	degree
23.	One's appearance	With good appearance or effect	She dressed well in a party.	manner
24.	An idea and somebody	As one could wish	The idea did not sit well with her	degree
25.	What someone does before doing something else	With adequate consideration	She thinks well before she acts.	degree
26.	One's leaving a meeting with a great extent of permission	With a considerable margin/tolerance	She left well before the coffee break.	degree

In total, there are 26 contextual meanings found in *well*. These meanings are gained from The New Oxford American Dictionary (2005), The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1996), and The Little Oxford Thesaurus (2006).

From Table 6 above it can be revealed that there are four semantic features/properties/domains gained from the previous contrastive analysis, i.e. *progress*, *manner*, *degree*, and *distance*. There is only one semantic feature/property/domain in the contrastive analysis that does not occur here namely *type of adverb*. Just like its category as an adverb of manner, the meaning of *well* is dominated by *manner* as well. It occupies the first place compared to others. *Progress* and *distance* occur once each. *Degree* occurs nine times and the rest is occupied by *manner*.

In accordance with the previous objective of doing contextual analysis, i.e. to find out features or properties or domains which are previously found in the contrastive analysis, here we have found out that there are four features (*manner*, *distance*, *degree*, and *progress*) shared by both analyses. The meaning of *well* in the contrastive analysis is related to its meaning in the contextual analysis by means of four features, i.e. *manner*, *distance*, *degree*, and *progress*. Based on the results of the table above, here we could calculate the results as follows.

- a. Manner: 15
- b. Degree: 9
- c. Progress: 1
- d. Distance: 1

The results are also stated in the percentage of occurrence of each feature in contextual analysis. The results are *manner* is 58%, the *degree* is 34, *progress* 4%, and *distance* is 4%. As mentioned earlier, *manner* occupies the highest rank in terms of occurrence. The percentage of the occurrence of each feature is represented in Figure 1 below.

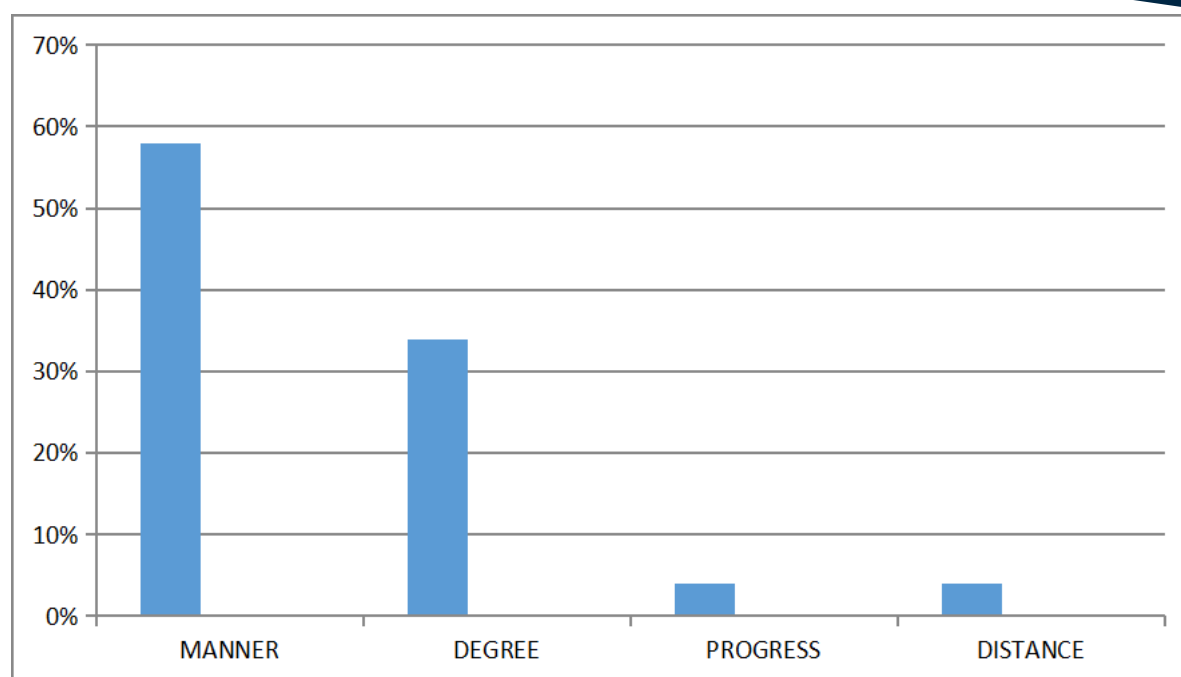


Figure 1. The Occurrence of Four Features

## 5 Conclusion

Contrastive and contextual analyses as tools of scientific investigation involving observational aspects do reveal facts that in search for the meaning of the adverb *well*, we can go beyond what lexicographers have done so far in order to provide a clearer picture of the word *well* when it goes to translation. There is a close relationship among the meanings of *well* in contrastive analysis, i.e. when it is contrasted with words (*fast*, *thoroughly*, *carelessly*, *harshly*, and *nearly*) of the same semantic domain and of the same level; and in contextual analysis, i.e. when it is used in different contexts.

Based on the two analyses, there are four semantic domains namely *progress*, *manner*, *degree*, and *distance* shared by both analyses. In other words, the meaning of *well* in the contrastive analysis is related to its meaning in the contextual analysis by means of four features, i.e. *manner*, *distance*, *degree*, and *progress* where *manner* occupies the highest percentage of the occurrence.

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