

# Syntactic Interpretations of Reduced Adverbial Clauses in Applied Linguistics Research Articles and Novels

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## Abstract

This study examines the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in applied linguistics research articles and novels. While previous research studies focusing on reduced adverbial clauses selected the materials of cookbooks and newspapers, this current study contributes to the field by using applied linguistics research articles and novels. The sources of data in this study are applied linguistics research articles, including the Journal of English for Academic Purposes, the Journal of English for Specific Purposes, the LEARN Journal, and the PASSA Journal, due to their indexation in the SCOPUS Q1 and the Scopus Q2. 20 applied linguistics research articles, divided into 5 articles each, were collected to be studied. The dataset of novels was gathered from Peter Pan (Barrie, 2022), The Secret Garden (Burnett, 2021), and The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle (Doyle, 2022) due to their best sellers (www.amazon.com). A total of approximately 400,000 words was divided into approximately 200,000 words for each dataset. Both datasets contain 50 tokens, referring to sentences. 37 tokens were founded in applied linguistics research articles, whereas 13 tokens were discovered in novels. The data analysis in this study follows Swan (2016). The data analysis was ensured reliability and validity via checking by three experts whose English is their mother tongue. The results of this study show that the syntactic interpretations of verbless adverbial phrases in applied linguistics research articles occur the most at 67.57 percent. On the other hand, the absolute adverbial phrases in novels occur the most at 53.84 percent. This could be explained by the principles of formality and the least effort requirement. It is expected that this present research

paper will be beneficial for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in order to apply the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in applied linguistics research articles and novels accurately and appropriately.

**Keywords:** Syntactic interpretations; Reduced adverbial clauses; Applied linguistics research articles; Novels

## Introduction

What we know when we know a language is a frequently asked question in Linguistics classrooms. Even though this question might be difficult to answer due to various aspects of the language, there are at least two perspectives to answer this question. First of all, when we know a language, we know grammar of the language (Radford, 2009). So, an acquisition of *grammatical competence* leads one to have the capability of accurate and fluent skills of communication. Nevertheless, O’neill (2005) added that having *pragmatic competence* leads one to have successful communication. Accordingly, having both grammatical competence and pragmatic competence allows language learners to be able to use form, meaning and use simultaneously.

Since grammar is viewed as a significant part for English language learners to study, this current study focuses on the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in English as there are several forms, such as related adverbial phrases, verbless adverbial phrases and absolute adverbial phrases (Swan, 2016). Nevertheless, previous studied did not provide adequate information for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) which variants should be used over the other, as illustrated in (1).

(1)

- (a) *Running in the garden*, she felt down accidentally.
- (b) *When running in the garden*, she felt down accidentally.
- (c) *When in Rome*, we enjoyed travelling so much.

Example (1a) is known as *related adverbial phrase* (Swan, 2016). The syntactic interpretations of related adverbial clauses do not require to have adverbial connectors, the subject of the sentence and auxiliary *be* as in *is*, *am*, *are*, *was* and *were*. Example (1b) is called *verbless adverbial phrase* (Swan, 2016). Both subject and the auxiliary *be* of the syntactic interpretations of this verbless adverbial phrase are omitted. Example (1c) is known as *absolute adverbial phrase*

(Swan, 2016). The subject and the auxiliary *be* of the dependent clause in absolute adverbial phrases are omitted. With the availability of three variants in English, it is interesting to know when one variant is used over the other. This leads one to this current study. Whilst previous studies selected the materials of cookbooks and newspapers as written in English to examine *reduced adverbial clauses* (Wongkittiporn, 2022), this present study focuses on the materials of applied linguistics research articles and novels written in English

Via the perspectives of semantic denotations, the use of reduced adverbial clauses and adverbial clauses are regarded as the same. However, it is useful to investigate them in other perspective such as syntactic interpretations so as to examine their differences. While related previous study (Wongkittiporn, 2021) examined reduced adverbial clauses and adverbial clauses in cookbooks and the results in his study shows that verbless adverbial phrases occur the most. This study field the gap by examining the syntactic of reduced adverbial clauses in applied linguistic research articles and novels as written in English. This leads to research questions of the study.

## Research Questions

1. What are the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in applied linguistics research articles?
2. What are the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in novels?

## Literature Review

### Related Adverbial Phrase

*Related adverbial phrase* refers to a kind of adverbial phrases that are used without having adverbial connectors, the subject and auxiliary *be* (Swan, 2016). Exemplifications of related adverbial phrases are given in (2).

(2) (a) *Visiting her mum yesterday*, Elizabeth and her mum had Spanish food in downtown.

(b) *Written in the garden*, a letter was blown away.

Both exemplifications in (2) are related adverbial phrases. Example (2a) represents related adverbial phrases with the present participle, where the verb *visit* is inflected with the present participial *-ing*, as in *visiting* (Radford, 2009). On the other hand, example (2b) is related adverbial clauses with the past participle as in the irregular verb *written*. The adverbial connectors, such as *when*, *while* or *whilst*, in both italic phrases are omitted as well as their

auxiliary *be*, such as *is*, *am* *are*, *was* and *were* (Swan, 2016). The derivation of related adverbial phrases is reformulated into adverbial clauses, such as (3).

(3) (a) *When Elizabeth visited her mum yesterday*, they had Spanish food in downtown.

(b) *When a letter was being written in the garden*, it was blown away.

In (3a), the adverbial connector is *when* and the subject of a dependent clause is *Elizabeth*. The present participial *visiting* in (2a) was transformed from *visited* as shown in (3a) via inflectional derivation process. Similarly, the adverbial connector in (2b) is *when* and the omitted subject is the determiner phrase or the DP *a letter*.

### Verbless Adverbial Phrases

Apart from related adverbial phrases, another syntactic interpretation of reduced adverbial clauses is *verbless adverbial phrase* (Swan, 2016). It is common for related adverbial phrases to be used with adverbial connectors, which are considered as their salient linguistic features (Swan, 2016), such as (4).

(4) *Whilst waiting for a call*, Mary practiced speaking English for her interview.

To gain better understanding about the derivation of related adverbial phrases, examples of verbless adverbial phrases as in (4) is transformed into adverbial clause of temporality as in (5).

(5) *Whilst Mary was waiting for a call*, she practiced speaking English for her interview.

The agent of the dependent clause in (4) is *Mary* and the auxiliary *be* were omitted as reproduced to be seen in (5). In other words, this construction is called *control constructions* in generative grammar (Radford, 2009). The subject *Mary* is analyzed to have the coreferential subject via the mechanic called *PRO* as in *whilst PRO waiting for a call*, *Mary practiced speaking English for her interview*. So, the coreferential subject *PRO* in the dependent clause has the coindexation with the subject *Mary* in the independent clause, as in (4).

### Absolute Adverbial Phrases

Aside from verbless adverbial phrases (Swan, 2016), interchangeably known as *control constructions* (Radford, 2009), another syntactic interpretation of reduced adverbial clauses is called *absolute adverbial phrases* (Swan, 2016). The prominent linguistic feature of absolute adverbial phrases is the formulaic colligation between the adverbial connectors and adjective phrases, noun phrases, prepositional phrases or adverbial phrases (Swan, 2016), as in (6).

(6)

(a) We would like to pay by a credit card *if possible*.

(b) *When in Austria*, we travelled around the city.

(c) *As the oldest son of the family*, he needs to take care of everyone.

In (6a)–(6c), *if possible*, *when in Austria* and *as the oldest son of the family* are absolute adverbial phrases with an adjective phrase, absolute adverbial phrases with a prepositional phrase and absolute adverbial phrases with a noun phrase, respectively.

### Previous Studies of Reduced Adverbial Clauses

While syntactic interpretations and semantic denotations of reduced adverbial clauses relevant to this study were addressed in the above sections, this section reviewed the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in different text varieties or genres. This study uses different text varieties to examine reduced adverbial clause because it is believed that different text varieties is likely to have its own preferences of grammatical use. In other words, one variant is likely to be preferred over the other. One of the most distinctive studies of reduced adverbial clauses was conducted in cookbooks by Wongkittiporn (2021). The category of reduced adverbial clauses that frequently occur in cookbooks as written in English is verbless adverbial clauses.

(7) Place the skins in the pan to crisp up on both sites, removing it ***when golden***.

(Wongkittiporn, 2021)

In (7), *when golden* is a reduced adverbial clause under the syntactic interpretations of verbless adverbial phrases where the adverbial connector is colligated with the past participial. The semantic denotation of verbless adverbial phrase as in (7) is temporality since the adverbial connector in (7) is exemplified into *when*. The subject *they* and auxiliary *are* in dependent clause are omitted. Aside from the material of cookbooks, Wongkittiporn (2022) also studied the use of adverbial clauses in news as written in English which were collected from the sports section of BCC news. This results in his study shows that the syntactic interpretation of verbless adverbial phrases occurs frequently in the sports section of BBC news, as illustrated in (8).

(8) The season-opening triumph was Kang's first LPGA title ***since winning the Marathon***.

(Wongkittiporn, 2022)

With the results above, Wongkittiporn (2022) explained that the reason as to why verbless adverbial phrases occur frequently in news due to *Economy Principle* or *Principle of Least Effort Requirement*, as the subject and the auxiliary *be* in reduced adverbial clause is not required to be spelt out or the omitted subject in a dependent clause can be shared with the available subject in an independent clause.

### Applied Linguistics Research Articles

Whilst previous studies focused on the study of reduced adverbial clauses in sports news articles and cookbooks as written in English (Wongkittiporn, 2022), this present study contributes to the field by selecting the different materials of applied linguistics research articles. There are several reasons to explain the advantages of applied linguistics research articles why they are used in this study. First of all, applied linguistics research articles are viewed as reliable empirical evidence as written by academic researchers, master students, doctoral students, and well-known scholars in the field. The reliability in this case refers the availability of an editor-in-chef and an editorial team to help maintain the standard and quality of their journal before each research paper gets published. Each submitted paper must go through several process before getting published. One of the earlier steps is called *pre-screen*. Each research article firstly goes through the process of prescreen to make sure that it is written professionally inside the scope of the journal. If yes, the paper will be then sent to be reviewed by several knowledgeable reviewers or experts in the field to ensure content validity, format consistency and language accuracy. After that, the research article with reviewers' comments is then send back to the authors in order to be edited and adjusted according to provided commented. After that, the research article subsequently sends back to the publication and it was checked by the editorial team whether it has been revised as recommended or not. The next step is proofreading. The research article is then sent to the proofreader so as to check the quality and accuracy of language use in case of being written by non-native English speaker. Once these processes are completely done, it is finally sent to be published called *production process*. Before a research paper is published, it must be considered, selected, revised, accepted and proofread. Accordingly, not only could we gain knowledge in the field of applied linguistic research articles, but we could learn the acceptability of the language as used in this genre.

### English Novels

As mentioned above, different text varieties tend to have their own preferences of grammar. Novels written in English is another material to be used to investigate different syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in this study. There are several advantages of English novels. First of all, it is a kind of reading material that can be read by everyone regardless gender and age. Each person can select a novel that has their own suitable levels English proficiency. In addition, many famous English novels were written in international versions for the sake of non-native English speakers. There are various genres of English novels, such as romantic comedy,

horror and adventure where the reader can select based upon their own favorite. They can carry a novel with them to practice reading anywhere when they have free time. While previous studies examined the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in cookbooks and sports news articles, this study fills the gap by using the materials of applied linguistic research articles and English novels. This information leads to the methodology in the following section.

## Methodology

### Applied Linguistics Research Article

The data to analyze reduced adverbial clauses in this study is four journals of English applied linguistics as indexed in the SCOPUS Q1 and SCOPUS Q2 databases (scopus.com). The first one is called *Journal of English for Specific Purposes*. The second one is called *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. The third one is called *LEARN Journal*. The fourth one is *PASSA Journal*. In recent years, these journals gained high scores of citations. The citation score of *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* is 4.9, whereas the citation score of *Journal of English for Specific Purposes* is 5.4.

### Novels

Apart from applied linguistics research articles, there are three novels as written in English in this study. The first one is *Peter Pan* (Barrie, 2022), *the Secret Garden* (Burnett, (2021) and *the Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle* (Doyle, 2022). They are the best seller novels (www.amazon.com).

### Data Collection

In terms of novels, the whole books are examined in order to seek different syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in English. As a total of approximately 200,000 words contain 13 tokens referring to sentences. With regard to the four journals of applied linguistics research articles as indicated above, a total of 20 articles with five articles for each journal. In order to avoid the subjectivity or bias of the data collection, the topic of applied linguistics research articles as selected in this study must be various, such as instructions, language use and evaluation. The ideas of being up-to-date is also concerned by this present study. The applied linguistics research articles gathered in this study is between the year of 2022 and 2023, which are regarded as the most up-to-date at the time of this present study. The data collection between *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *Journal of English for Specific Purposes* and *LEARN Journal* and *PASSA Journal* are given in Table 1, Table 2 Table 3 and Table 4, respectively.

As a total of approximately 200,000 words in applied linguistics research articles, there are 37 tokens, referring to sentences. The applied linguistics research articles in *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* covers Yang and Zhang (2023), Zhang and Cheung (2023), Liu, Tang and Lim (2023) Zhang (2023) and Palmour (2023). The applied linguistics research articles in *Journal of English for Specific Purposes* covers Tardy (2023), Luzon (2023), Zuaro (2023), Sawaki (2023), Lindenburg (2023). The applied linguistics research articles in *LEARNS Journal* covers Kimura (2023), Nam (2023), Zuaro (2023), Sabiq (2023), Widiati, Sharif, Karmina and Zubaidi (2023) and Zubaidi (2023). The applied linguistics research articles in *PASSA Journal* include Nipaspong (2022), Kulprasit (2022), Charoenchaikorn (2022), Phoocharoensil (2022), and Sakulprasertsri (2022).

### Data Analysis

The data analysis of the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in this current study follows Swan (2016), graduating from University of Oxford, England. He classified reduce adverbial clause into three categories. The way how data in this study is analyzed is given in Table 1.

**Table 1** Data Analysis of the Syntactic Interpretations of Reduced Adverbial Clauses

| Syntactic Interpretations  | Examples                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Related Adverbial Phrases  | (9a) <b>Based on the students' scores and teachers' evaluation</b> , six candidates, three of whom were female high self-regulated writers and the other three female low self-regulated writers, were invited to participate in the study with their consent. (Yang & Zhang, 2023, p. 3) |
| Verbless Adverbial Phrases | (9b) <b>When asked</b> whether she understood the corrections initiated by the teacher, Sha answered no and explained. (Yang & Zhang, 2023, p. 7)                                                                                                                                         |
| Absolute Adverbial Phrases | (9c) <b>Until very recently</b> , Italy has been characterized by a dearth of EMI research, nonetheless some complex discussions around the phenomenon have been taking place in this context. (Zuaro, 2023, p. 268)                                                                      |

Table 1 represents the syntactic interpretations or reduced adverbial clauses in this study. (9a) are related adverbial phrases where the adverbial connector, the subject and auxiliary in this category are omitted (Swan, 2016). In case of related adverbial clauses with present participial,

the main verb has got to be transformed into present participial such as *using* as in (9b). On the other hand, related adverbial phrases are different from verbless adverbial clause in that verbless adverbial clauses requires to have adverbial connectors. As exemplified in (9c), absolute adverbial phrases refer to the colligation between adverb with adjective phrase, prepositional phrase, noun phrase or adverbial phrases (Swan, 2016).

## The Results

Approximately 400,000 words contains 50 tokens of different types of reduced adverbial clauses in applied linguistic research articles and novels in English as in Figure 1.

**Figure 1** Percentages of Syntactic Interpretations of Reduced Adverbial Clauses in Applied Linguistics Research Articles and Novels

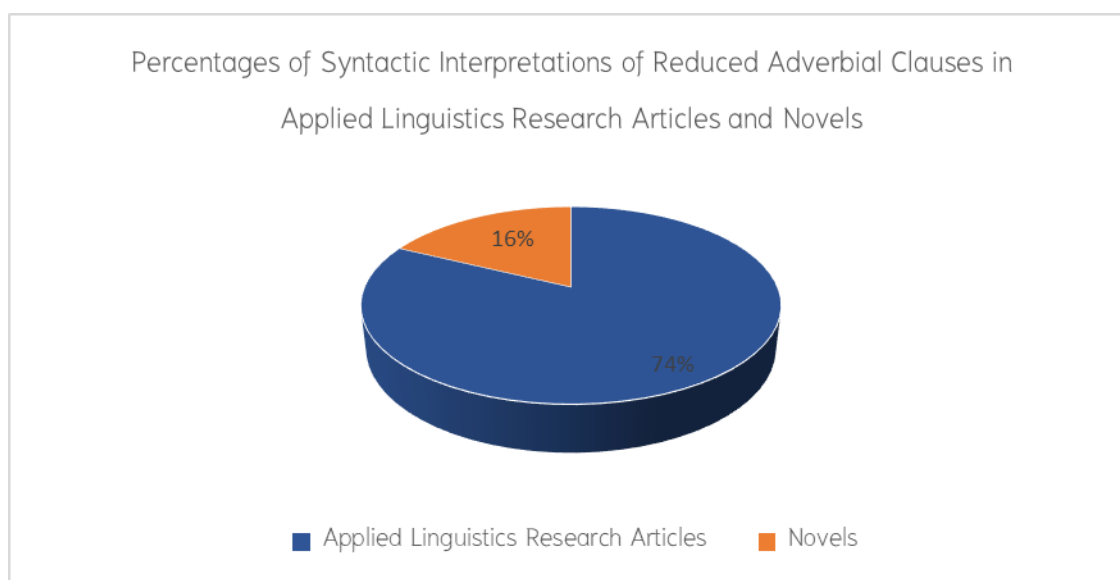


Figure 1 represents percentages of syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in applied linguistics research articles and novels. The percentage of reduced adverbial clauses in applied linguistics research articles occurs the highest at 74 percent, whilst the percentage of reduced adverbial clauses in novels as written in English occurs only 16 percent.

### Applied Linguistic Research Articles

#### Quantitative Result of Reduced Adverbial Clauses

This section provides the frequencies and percentages of reduced adverbial clauses in English applied linguistics articles as in Table 2.

**Table 2** Frequencies of Reduced Adverbial Clauses in Applied Linguistics Research Articles

| Syntactic Interpretations  | Frequencies | Percentages (%) |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Verbless Adverbial Phrases | 25          | 65.67           |
| Related Adverbial Phrases  | 10          | 27.03           |
| Absolute Adverbial Phrases | 2           | 5.40            |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>37</b>   | <b>100</b>      |

This frequency of syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in applied linguistics research articles is converted into percentage

Verbless adverbial phrases occur the most at 67.57 percent. The second place is related adverbial phrases at 27.03 percent. Finally, the third place is absolute adverbial phrases at 5.40 percent. The qualitative result of reduced adverbial clauses in this study is present in the following section.

### Quantitative Results of Reduced Adverbial Clauses

#### Verbless Adverbial Phrases

As indicated by Swan (2016), verbless adverbial phrase is a type of reduced adverbial clauses that are used with adverbial connectors. However, the subject in reduced adverbial clauses is omitted and the main verb in verbless adverbial phrases is changed into *-ing* form such as (10).

(10)

- (a) *After conducting the move analysis*, we coded and analyzed the instances of code glosses in the presentations

(Liu, Tang & Lim, 2023)

- (b) *After we conducted the move analysis*, we coded and analyzed the instances of code glosses in the presentations

While (10a) is the original version of verbless adverbial clauses as found in applied linguistic research articles, (10b) is a modified version into an adverbial clause. The subject *we* is omitted and the past tense of the verb *conducted* was changed into *conducting*.

#### Related Adverbial Phrases

Another type of reduced adverbial clauses is related adverbial phrases. The adverbial connectors and the subject in this adverbial phrase are omitted. In addition, the finite verb in

adverbial clauses is transformed into present participle in related adverbial phrases (Swan, 2016), as in (11).

(11)

(a) Other revising strategies described by both groups, but not employed in the same way, included rereading writing prompts, ***using dictionaries to source language, and rewriting.***

(Yang & Zhang, 2023)

(b) Other revising strategies described by both groups, but not employed in the same way, included rereading writing prompts, ***when they used dictionaries to source language, and rewriting.***

Example (11a) comes from applied linguistics research articles. On the other hand, (11b) is a modified version. Once modified, the adverbial connector *when* and *the subject* they were omitted. The finite verb *used* was transformed into the present participle as in *using*.

### Absolute Adverbial Phrases

According to Swan (2016), absolute adverbial phrases is a kind of reduced adverbial phrase where adverbial connectors are colligated with noun phrase, prepositional phrase, and adverbial phrases itself such as (12).

(12)

(a) ***Until very recently,*** Italy has been characterized by a dearth of EMI research, nonetheless some complex discussions around the phenomenon have been taking place in this context.

(Zuaro, 2023)

(b) ***Until it is very recently,*** Italy has been characterized by a dearth of EMI research, nonetheless some complex discussions around the phenomenon have been taking place in this context.

While the exemplification of (12a) is derived from authentic texts of applied linguistics research articles, example (12b) is a modified version. The expletive subject *it* and the auxiliary *be* in absolute adverbial phrases was omitted. Based upon the quantitative and qualitative results of this present study, the discussion is given in the following section.

## Novels

### Quantitative Results

This section presents quantitative results of the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in novels where their frequencies and percentages are given in Table 3.

**Table 3** Frequencies of Syntactic Interpretations of Reduced Adverbial Clauses in Novels

| Syntactic Interpretations  | Frequencies | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Absolute Adverbial Phrases | 7           | 53.84          |
| Verbless Adverbial Phrases | 4           | 30.77          |
| Related Adverbial Phrases  | 2           | 15.38          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>13</b>   | <b>100</b>     |

The highest percentage of reduced adverbial clauses is absolute adverbial clauses at 53.84 percent. The second place is verbless adverbial phrases at 30.77 percent. The third place is related adverbial place at 15.38 percent. The qualitative results of syntactic interpretation of reduced adverbial clauses in novels are given in the following section.

### Qualitative Results of Syntactic Interpretations of Reduced Adverbial Clauses

#### Verbless Adverbial Phrase in Novels

According to Swan (2016), the prominent linguistic features of verbless adverbial phrases is the appearance of adverbial connectors, such as *if* and *as if*. However, the subjects of the dependent clause are omitted as in (13).

(13)

(a) Take care lest an adventure is now offered you, which, ***if accepted***, will plunge you in deepest woe.

(Burrie, 2022)

(b) Even the iron claw hung in active; ***as if knowing that it was no intrinsic part of what the attacking force wanted***.

(Burrie, 2022)

While the adverbial connectors of verbless adverbial clauses on (13a)–(13b) are *if*, *if* and *as if*. The subject of these reduced adverbial clauses is omitted.

### Absolute Adverbial Phrases

Like verbless adverbial phrases, the prominent part of absolute adverbial phrases is that the subject and auxiliary be of reduces adverbial clauses are omitted. The adverbial connector is colligated with prepositional phrase and noun phrases, as in (14).

(14)

(a) *As if in answer to his request*, the air was rent by the most tremendous crash he had ever heard

(Burrie, 2022)

(b) What the boys were wondering was, would any one answer the knock? *If a lady*, what would she be like.

(Burrie, 2022)

The adverbial connector *as if* in (14a) is colligated with prepositional phrases. On the other hand, the adverbial connector *if* in (14b) is colligated with the determiner phrase *a lady*.

### Related Adverbial Phrases

Unlike the verbless adverbial phrases and absolute adverbial phrase, related adverbial phrases are not used with adverbial connectors in their dependent clauses.

(15)

(a) “The captain!” said the pirates, *staring at each other in surprise*.

(Burrie, 2022)

(b) He returned in a moment, *wearing John’s hat and looking solemn*.

(Burrie, 2022)

The adverbial connectors in (15a) and (15a) were omitted. The possible adverbial connectors in (15a) and (15b) are *when* and *while*.

### Discussion

The frequency shows that 37 tokens of reduces adverbial clauses appear in applied linguistic research articles, whereas only 13 tokens appear in novels. When calculating these frequencies into percentage, the percentage of reduce adverbial clauses in applied linguistics research article and novels are 74 percent and 26 percent, respectively. The huge different percents of the syntactic interpretations between the two datasets could be explained by the reason of space limitation. The length of applied academic research articles selected in this study

is between 15–25 pages. The space of writing is rather limited once compared to novels that the author could write up to 300 pages. Choosing grammatical structures that could be reduced, but maintain the same meaning, would be the best choice for research writing. Accordingly, adverbial clauses would prefer to be used in novels, whilst reduced adverbial clauses are preferred in applied linguistic research article. Although this point has not yet concludable, it leaves some rooms for future research study.

### Principles of Formality and Informality

Whilst the highest percentage of reduce adverbial clauses in English novels is absolute adverbial clauses, the highest percent of reduce adverbial clauses in applied linguistic research articles is verbless adverbial clause. This could be explained by principles of formality and informality. It seems to be less formal for the absolute adverbial clauses in English as the subject, and the auxiliary be are not required to be spelt out. Moreover, the adverbial connector can be immediately merged with adjective phrases, and noun phrase as in *what the boys were wondering was, would any one answer the knock? If a lady, what would she be like*. This interpretation of informality goes along the same lime with the genre of novels as they are less formal then applied linguistic research articles.

Applied linguistics research articles are the genre in English that required a high level of formality in writing both in lexical items and grammatical aspects (Hyland & Jiang, 2017). The lowest frequency of absolute adverbial phrases in this study could be explained by the principle of informality leading to the lower use of absolute adverbial phrases in applied linguistics research writing.

(16) ***While in the Italian lecture***, this leads to listing mostly Italian artists.

(Zuaro, 2023)

Example (16) represents the use of absolute adverbial phrases in this study. Only 8 percent of absolute adverbial phrases occur in this study. To confirm the informality of absolute adverbial clauses in this study, Wongkittiporn found that approximately 25 percent of absolute adverbial phrases of condition are used in cookbooks as written in English as in (17).

(17) Season to taste with salt, pepper, and a pinch of sugar ***if necessary***.

(Wongkittiporn, 2021)

When making a comparison between the genres of cookbook and applied linguistics research articles, the level of formality in cookbooks is likely to be lower. However, the percentage of absolute adverbial phrases in cookbook is obviously higher (Wongkittiporn, 2021). Due to this

empirical evidence, it seems fair to mention that absolute adverbial clauses are preferred in the genres having lower formality

So as to triangulate the result of formality of verbless adverbial phrases in applied linguistics research articles, this result is used to compare with verbless adverbial phrases in sports news articles as studied by Wongkittiporn and Chitrakara (2018). The results in their study show that only 24.59 percent of verbless adverbial phrases are used in sports news articles, whereas 66.67 percent is used in this study. Therefore, the levels of formality of reduced adverbial clauses can be ordered into verbless adverbial phrases, related adverbial phrases and absolute adverbial phrases.

To contribute this study to the field of Thai EFL writer, five Thai authors working as lecturers in Thai University are used their research papers in the field of applied linguistics to compare their use of related adverbial clauses with foreigner academic authors in this study as in Table 4.

**Table 4** Comparison of Frequencies and Percentage of Reduced Adverbial Clauses in Applied Linguistics Research Articles between Foreigner Academic Authors and Thai Academic Author

| Syntactic Interpretations  | Foreigner Academic Authors | Thai Academic Authors |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
|                            | Frequencies                | Frequencies           |
|                            | Percentages (%)            | Percentages (%)       |
| Verbless Adverbial Phrases | 20<br>(66.67)              | 5<br>(71.42)          |
| Related Adverbial Phrases  | 8<br>(26.67)               | 2<br>(28.57)          |
| Absolute Adverbial Phrases | 2<br>(6.66)                | 0<br>(0.00)           |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>30</b>                  | <b>7</b>              |

Table 4 represents percentage of reduced adverbial causes in applied linguistics research articles between foreign academic authors and Thai academic author. The results appears closely where the percentage of verbless adverbial clauses appear highest in both datasets. It seems that this syntactic interpretation of reduced adverbial clauses is particularly suitable to be use in applied linguistic research articles. With the similarities of percentages in both datasets, it could show the linguistic reliability or language use in writing in *PASSA Journal*.

### Principle of Least effort Requirement

The highest frequency of verbless adverbial clauses is explained by *economy principle* or *principle of least effort requirement* (Bybee & Hopper, 2001) where the use of verbless adverbial clauses can be explained via the following principle.

(18)

(a) For example, **when PRO<sub>i</sub> responding** to the teacher's feedback on developing ideas in the second writing task, Jiao<sub>i</sub> analyzed the issue critically from the perspective of a reader.

(Yang & Zhang, 2023)

(b) **While PRO<sub>i</sub> realizing the importance of building a shared theoretical basis,**

Tom<sub>i</sub> found it difficult to understand the taste and preferences of his target readers.

(Liu, Tang & Lim, 2023)

Examples (18a) and (18b) represents verbless adverbial clauses. PRO is an abstract subject which has its coindexation with the subject in the main clauses (Radford, 2009). This mean that producing language in this way does not require the author to repeat the subject again in dependent clauses. For example, PRO in (13a) refers to *Jiao*, whereas *PRO* in (18b) refers to Tom.

Although the use of related adverbial clauses is partially explained in the aforementioned principle. Ironically, it seems that more effort of interpretation is required. Example (19a) is the original version from the applied linguistic research articles. However, example (19b) is a modified version.

(19)

(a) Other revising strategies described by both groups, but not employed in the same way, included rereading writing prompts, **using dictionaries to source language, and rewriting.**

(Yang & Zhang, 2023)

(b) Other revising strategies described by both groups, but not employed in the same way, included rereading writing prompts, **when they used dictionaries to source language, and rewriting.**

(Yang & Zhang, 2023)

Although the subject in relate adverbial phrases is coindexed with *both groups* in a higher clause, the author suddenly increases the higher effort for the readers to interpret themselves what is the adverbial connector. Once the reader needs to interpret the information themselves, it

does not go along the same line with academic research writing stating that academic writing should be clear and concise. This could be the answer as to why related adverbial phrases are not popular in academic research writing (Murray, Thow, Moore & Murphy, 2008).

### Comparisons with Previous Studies of Reduced Adverbial Clauses

This section provides the comparison of the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in different text varieties or genres. The use of reduced adverbial clauses in novels as written in English in this study goes along the same line with Wongkittiporn's (2021) study of reduced adverbial clauses in cookbooks as written in English. The category of reduced adverbial clauses that frequently occur in cookbooks as written in English is verbless adverbial phrases as reproduced in (20).

(20) Place the skins in the pan to crisp up on both sites, removing it *when golden*.

(Wongkittiporn, 2021)

In (20), *when golden* is a reduced adverbial clause under the syntactic interpretations of verbless adverbial phrases. The productivity of verbless adverbial phrases between cookbooks and novels as written in English could be supported by the principle of informality as the two genres are able to be classified under this register.

### Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

This present study investigates the syntactic principles of reduced adverbial clauses in applied linguistics research articles and novels. Although there are three types of reduced adverbial clauses in this study, the highest frequency of reduced adverbial clauses is verbless adverbial clauses at 66.67 percent. The reason of this frequency is because of the clarity of having adverbial clauses connector and the coindexed reading of the subject between matrix clauses and the lower clauses. Once comparing with use of verbless adverbial verbless with other genre, such as sports news articles, the use of verbless adverbial phrases in sports news articles showed three-time lower. This could indicate verbless adverbial phrases is common with those formal text varieties. On the other hand, the lowest frequency of the absolute adverbial phrases in this study is explained by the principle of informality once comparing with Wongkittiporn (2022) study in cookbooks. This study helps indicate the different formality of different types of reduced adverbial clauses. So, this can be applied in the pedagogy among EFL learners. For example, English teachers could relate the use of verbless adverbial phrases with academic writing in writing subjects, while absolute adverbial phrases could be taught with spoken register in speaking

subjects. Generalizing the results of this study with other genre, such as magazines, may not applicable to an optimal level. With future research studies, it is recommended that study the syntactic interpretations of reduced adverbial clauses in magazines could contribute something new to the field.

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