

## A corpus-based discourse analysis of the linking adverbial *besides*

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This study examines the phraseology of the linking adverbial *besides* to unravel why, unlike similar-meaning transitions such as *in addition*, it sounds unnatural in some contexts, as in "*She likes football. Besides, she likes tennis and basketball*" (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*). A total of 205 instances from (1) two written English corpora of academic English (the Michigan Corpus of Upper-level Student Papers and the British Academic Written English corpus), (2) academic sections of the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, and (3) examples from 35 English teaching coursebooks or others materials were analyzed. Each instance was examined to identify the discourse environment in which *besides* is used to bind the sentences together, which might explain the pragmalinguistic features of the sequences of sentences joined by *besides*. In line with Yeung (2009) and Hannay, Caro, and Mackenzie (2014), the findings suggested that *besides* co-occurs frequently with pragmalinguistic features typical of argumentations. While most reference materials define the usage of *besides* as a linking adverbial in relation to the nature of the element that follows it, no consistent pattern was discerned across those elements. On the contrary, the use of *besides* was found to be regulated by the nature of what precedes it. In 93.6% of the data, *besides* was shown to be used to make an addition to the preceding clause—either the proposition to be supported or the immediately preceding statement to which the *besides*-clause lends support—that expresses "negativity." In most cases, negation was acquired by means of an explicit negative word (e.g., "not," "no," or "never"), a negative affix (e.g., "in-," "un-," or "dis-"), words with negative implication such as semi-negatives and the focus particle "only," or the degree adverbial "too" with a negative signification in the context. Negative assertions were also made in the form of a rhetorical question, the subjunctive mood, or the comparative construction. When negativity in the preceding clause is not expressed overtly, the *besides*-clause was shown to act as a rhetorical cue for treating previously stated arguments as premises for an inference of a *de facto* proposition, which takes a negative form without fail. Pedagogical implications are discussed in the light of the findings.

### References

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