

# Semantics and grammar of adverbials

(adjuncts, subjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts)

# Adverbials

- have a wider range of roles than the other four sentence elements, subject (S), verb (V), object (O), and complement (C);
- have a wider range of meanings, forms, positions, and grammatical functions;
- several A-elements may be included within a single sentence.

# **Four criteria for classification of adverbials**

- **Semantic role**
- **Formal realization**
- **Position**
- **Grammatical function**

# Semantic roles of adverbials

- According to their **semantic roles**, it is possible to distinguish the following classes of adverbials:
- **space** (position, direction, goal, source, and distance);
- **time** (position, duration, frequency, relationship);
- **process** (manner, means, instrument, agency);
- **respect**;
- **contingency** (cause, reason, purpose, result, condition, concession);
- **modality** (emphasis, approximation, restriction);
- **degree** (amplification, diminution).

# Formal realization of adverbials

- **an adverb phrase with a closed-class adverb** as head (*never, ever, then*);
- **an adverb phrase with an open-class adverb** as head (*carefully, quickly*);
- **a noun phrase** (*a very long way, this morning*);
- **a prepositional phrase** (*in the afternoon, in the house*), the most common form;
- **a verbless clause** (*as soon as possible, when in doubt*);
- **a non-finite clause** (*coming home, having done all the homework*);
- **a finite clause** (*because he was happy*).

# Clause position of adverbials

- I *By then the book should have been returned to the library.*
- iM *The book by then should have been returned to the library.*
- M *The book should by then have been returned to the library.*
- mM *The book should have by then been returned to the library.*
- eM *The book should have been by then returned to the library.*
- iE *The book should have been returned by then to the library.*
- E *The book should have been returned to the library by then.*

# Grammatical function of adverbials

- **adjuncts**
- **subjuncts**
- **disjuncts**
- **conjuncts**

# Adjuncts

- have grammatical properties resembling S, C, and O;
- can be the focus of a cleft sentence: *It is to the library that the book should have been returned.*
- can be **predication** and **sentence adjuncts**:
- **Predication adjunct** is frequently placed at E position. Its relation is not so much with a whole sentence as with its predication, e.g.  
*She put the letter on the table (obligatory sentence element);*  
*She found the letter on the table (optional sentence element).*
- **Sentence adjunct** can be placed at I as well as E position within a sentence thanks to its relatively ‘peripheral‘ relationship to the rest of the sentence.
- **Compare:**  
*John kissed his girlfriend on the cheek. (predication adjunct)*  
*John kissed his girlfriend on the platform. (sentence adjunct)*  
*On the platform, John kissed his girlfriend. (sentence adjunct)*



# Adjuncts of space

- **Adjuncts of space** (where? from where? how far?)
  - position:** *She still lives where she was born.*
  - direction:** *The boy kicked the ball through the open window.*
  - source and goal:** *We flew from Prague to Paris.*
  - distance:** *She walked four miles.*
- Note: If two or more adjuncts of space are clustered at E position, they are ordered as follows:

*She walked a few steps (**distance**) towards him (**goal**) in her room (**position**).*

# Adjuncts of time

- **Adjuncts of time** (when? how often? how many times? how long? till/since when?)

- **position:** *I'll see you at nine on Monday.*

Note: Like spatial adjuncts of position, time-position adjuncts can be in a hierarchical relation, usually the one denoting the longer or superordinate period coming second.

- **duration:** *He waited until she returned.*

- **frequency:** *Jane came to see me twice daily.*

Note: It is necessary to distinguish **frequency of occasion** (how many times? - *twice*) from **frequency of period** within which occasions take place (how often - *daily*).

- **relationship:** *You should complain about it again.*

Note: If two or more adjuncts of time co-occur at E position, they are ordered as follows: *I was there for a short while (**duration**) every day (**frequency**) last year (**position**).*

# Adjuncts of process, respect, contingency

- **Adjuncts of process** (how? with what? by whom?)
- **manner:** *He walks like his father. I wish I could swim as you do.  
Speak in a nice way.*
- **means, instrument, and agency:** *She influenced me by her example. (means) He was killed with a hunting knife (instrument) by a terrorist (agency).*
- **Adjuncts of respect** express the respect in which the truth value of a sentence is being claimed, e.g. *My friend is advising me legally/on legal issues/in respect to law/from a legal standpoint/so far as legal matters are concerned.*
- **Adjuncts of contingency**
- **reason:** *He did it because he was angry.*
- **purpose:** *He did it to relieve his anger.*
- **concession:** *She gave up her job despite her high salary.*

# Subjuncts - wide orientation

- Subjuncts have a subordinate and parenthetical role in comparison with adjuncts.
- There are two main types: wide and narrow orientation subjuncts
- **Wide orientation subjuncts** relate more to the **sentence as a whole**, but show their subjunct character in tending to achieve this through a particular relationship with one of the clause elements, especially the subject;
- **1. viewpoint subjuncts** are largely connected with the semantic concept of respect, e.g. *From a personal viewpoint, he is likely to take this job.*
- **2. courtesy subjuncts** (including *please*) convey a formulaic tone of politeness, e.g. *She kindly offered me a seat.*

# Subjuncts - narrow orientation

- **Narrow orientation subjuncts** are chiefly **related** to the **predication** or to a **particular part of predication**;
- **1. item subjuncts** are most frequently connected with the subject of the sentence,  
e.g. *She has consistently opposed her father.*
- **2. emphaziers** express the semantic role of modality with a reinforcing effect on the meaning of a sentence,  
e.g. *I really can't believe it. Yes indeed. Certainly not.*
- **3. intensifiers** are broadly concerned with the semantic category of degree, indicating an increase (**amplifiers**) or decrease (**downtoners**) of the intensity with which a predication is expressed,  
e.g. *She is fully satisfied. I was only joking.*
- **4. focusing subjuncts** call special attention to a part of a sentence. There are two types: **restrictive**: *I merely wanted to know her opinion*;  
**additive**: *I also invited my brother's family.*

# Disjuncts

- While subjuncts have a lesser role, disjuncts have by contrast a **superior role to sentence elements**, being somewhat detached from and superordinate to the rest of the sentence.
- There are two broad types:
  - style disjuncts**
  - content disjuncts**

# Style disjuncts

- convey the speaker's comment on the style and form of what is being said and define in some way the conditions under which 'authority' something is being uttered;
- **manner and modality disjuncts** involve items, such as *frankly, honestly, truthfully*:  
e.g. *Frankly, I'm tired. (To put it) briefly, there is nothing we can do about it.*
- **respect disjuncts** involve items, such as *generally, literally, strictly, personally*:  
e.g. *I would not, (speaking) personally, have followed his advice. Privately, was Henry ever in prison?*

# Content disjuncts

- comment on the content of an utterance and can relate to:
  - **certainty**, commenting on the truth value of what is said, such as *undoubtedly, perhaps, apparently*  
e.g. *The novel was apparently written by Walter Scott.*
  - **evaluation**, expressing an attitude to an utterance by way of evaluation, such as *strangely, unexpectedly, predictably, fortunately, happily, sadly, luckily, amusingly, pleasingly, understandably*,  
e.g. *Naturally, my husband expected me home by then.*



# Conjuncts

- serve to conjoin two utterances or parts of an utterance, and they do so by expressing at the same time the semantic relationship (e.g. time, contingency) obtaining between them;
- are usually placed at I position, but can appear also at M and E positions (e.g. *however, though*);
- according to their semantic roles it is possible to distinguish several groups:

# Conjuncts

- **listing** (**enumerative**: *in the first place, secondly*; **additive**: *moreover, in addition*);
- **summative** (*all in all, altogether, in sum, to sum up*);
- **appositive** (*i.e., for example, namely, in other words*);
- **resultative** (*so, therefore, accordingly, of course*);
- **inferential** (*in other words, in that case, then, else*);
- **contrastive** (**reformulatory and replacive**: *(or) better, more accurately, worse, alias*; **antithetic**: *on the contrary, by contrast, instead, on the other hand*; **concessive**: *still, yet, nevertheless, however, all the same, anyhow, though*);
- **transitional** (**discoursal**: *by the way, incidently, now*; **temporal**: *meanwhile, originally, subsequently, eventually*).

# Final remark

- Notice how position influences the grammatical function of the same form:
- *He can dance **amazingly** with his metal leg.* (adjunct)
- *He can dance **amazingly** well with his metal leg.* (subjunct)
- ***Amazingly**, he can dance well with his metal leg.* (disjunct)