

Adverbials – grammatical functions

In terms of their grammatical functions, adverbials fall into 4 main categories:

adjuncts subjuncts disjuncts conjuncts

Please remember:

POSITION influences FUNCTION!!! POSITION is important to indicate MEANING!!!

Compare:

She dances amazingly. = adjunct (adverbial as a clause element A; adverbial of manner)

She dances amazingly well. = subjunct

Amazingly, she dances well. = disjunct (content disjunct)

I didn't know her personally. = adjunct (adverbial of manner)

He personally wants to see you. = subjunct

Personally, I think it's nonsense. = disjunct (style disjunct)

Please, explain this problem simply. = adjunct (adverbial of manner)

You're simply the best. / Please, simply explain this problem. = subjunct

Simply, I can't stand him. = disjunct (style disjunct)

ADJUNCTS

- clause element = adverbial (A), mostly of space, time, manner (e.g. *I put it carelessly / on the bed / yesterday.* – *carelessly* = adverbial of manner; *on the bed* = adverbial of space; *yesterday* = adverbial of time)

- more than other adverbials, adjuncts have grammatical properties resembling the sentence elements S, C, and O, i.e., only adverbials functioning as an element of clause structure (represented as A) are adjuncts => *clearly* is an adjunct in the first sentence below, but not in the second:

*He spoke **clearly** and to the point.*

***Clearly**, I could be wrong.*

- generally come in E position; typically occur in SVA and SVOA clause types (thus, they usually refer to space, time, or manner – see above); however, other positions are also possible, e.g. frequency adjuncts usually come in M position – *They **usually** come on time.*

SUBJUNCTS

- have a subordinate and parenthetical role in comparison with adjuncts, cannot be compared to other clause elements
- usually related to the predication or to its part only (not to the whole sentence)
- largely appear at iM and M position
- emphaziers: *just, really, simply, certainly, indeed, sure(ly), certainly not*
- intensifiers: *fully, completely, badly, rather, sort of, only, in the least*
- focusing: *merely, only, also, even, too, as well*

E.g. *I **just** / **simply** / **really** can't believe a word he says!*

*She was **badly** in need of help.*

*He has **completely** ignored my question.*

*In spite of his manners, I **rather** like him.*

*I was **only** joking.*

- they can frequently occur as responses, e.g. *(Yes) **certainly**. **Sure(ly)**. (Yes) **indeed**.*

DISJUNCTS

- have a superior role to sentence elements, being somewhat detached from and superordinate to the rest of the sentence.
- most disjuncts appear at I position (some of them also often at M position)
- two broad types:

a) style disjuncts (relatively small class) – how the speaker is speaking; they claim that the statement is being made in a particular way, e.g.: *honestly, frankly, to be frank, crudely, truthfully, (to put it) briefly, generally, literally, (speaking) personally, strictly, privately, ...*

- !!! many style disjuncts can be seen as abbreviated clauses in which the adverbial would have the role of manner adjunct: e.g. *frankly = I tell you frankly*

b) content disjuncts – comment on the content of an utterance; express the speaker's or writer's attitude to the content of an utterance: *undoubtedly, apparently, perhaps, in essence, certainly, foolishly, quite rightly, justly, stupidly, cunningly, correctly, naturally, curiously, funnily (enough), strangely, unexpectedly, predictably, understandably, disturbingly, pleasingly, regrettably, fortunately, happily, luckily, sadly, amusingly, hopefully, significantly, to my regret, to my surprise, what is especially fortunate, ...*

CONJUNCTS

- they connect two parts of a sentence, or even two sentences, by expressing a meaning (semantic) relationship between them; sometimes also called **connectors**

- appear usually at I position, but their connective role is often achieved more smoothly when they are placed at M position

- they have a variety of meanings, e.g.:

listing: *in the first place, secondly, thirdly, next, then, finally, ...*

summative: *to sum up, in sum, altogether, overall, ...*

resultive: *as a result, therefore, accordingly, in consequence, of course, ...*

concessive: *however, nevertheless, yet, all the same, though (used at E), ...*

contrastive: *on the contrary, by contrast, on the other hand, ...*

Compare:

*We were at school together. I haven't seen him for ages **though**.* = conjunct

X

*He hasn't phoned, **though** he said he would.* = conjunction