

# 14

## WORD ORDER

1

- a. Chocolate did she really love. → *Chocolate she really loved* (*She really loved chocolate.*)  
There is no inversion after a fronted direct object in English.
- b. They went never further north than the Scottish border. → *They never went further north than the Scottish border*. The verb comes after the adverb *never*.
- c. Never once did they consider giving up. → Correct (inversion after negative sentence opener).
- d. Why on earth you have bought that very expensive outfit? → *Why on earth have you bought that very expensive outfit?* An interrogative sentence has the finite auxiliary before the subject.
- e. After several hours of walking came they to a pub in a small village. → *After several hours of walking they came to a pub in a small village*. No inversion after an optional adverbial in initial position.
- f. The authorities have because of a shortage of nurses been unable to implement the health reform. → *Because of a shortage of nurses the authorities have been unable to implement the health reform*. The adverbial is too long and heavy to be placed in medial position and must be moved either to the beginning or to the end of the sentence.
- g. “Keep calm and carry on,” said the policeman. → Correct (inversion is normal in reporting clauses with a simple verb phrase and a full noun phrase as subject).
- h. “So you’re back again,” said she. → *“So you’re back again,” she said*. No inversion in reporting clauses where the subject is realized by a pronoun.

- 2 The following sentences should agree better with the principle of end weight.
- A 30-year-old man from Lanarkshire who had participated in the race three years in a row was the winner. → *The winner was a 30-year-old man from Lanarkshire who had participated in the race three years in a row.*
  - Why they could not solve the riddle even after hours of trying was difficult to understand. → *It was difficult to understand why they could not solve the riddle even after hours of trying.*
  - To be out on one's own during dark and stormy nights can be scary. → *It can be scary to be out on one's own during dark and stormy nights.*
  - The leading contemporary philosopher, Professor Jerry Fodor, wrote the article. → *The article was written by the leading contemporary philosopher, Professor Jerry Fodor.*
  - The question of what cause there is for celebration was asked. → *The question was asked of what cause there is for celebration. (Somebody asked the question of what cause there is for celebration.)*
  - We sent a letter explaining the details of the investigation to him. → *We sent him a letter explaining the details of the investigation.*

3 Explain the difference in form and meaning between the members of each pair.

- Peter couldn't see Paul.
  - Paul couldn't see Peter.

*The sentences differ as to which name is mentioned first and last. The placement of a noun phrase usually signals syntactic function in English, so in (a1) *Peter* is the subject (= the person who could not see) and in (a2) *Paul* is the subject.*

- You don't mess with me.
  - Don't you mess with me.

*Sentence (b1) has declarative form, with a subject before the verb phrase, while (b2) has imperative form, with an implied subject after the auxiliary (but before the main verb). Sentence (b1) is a statement or a warning; i.e. information of the fact that people in general don't, or shouldn't, mess with the speaker. Sentence (b2) is a command for the hearer not to mess with the speaker.*

- There is a difference in cost.
  - Is there a difference in cost?

Sentence (c1) is a declarative and (c2) is a *yes/no*-interrogative. This is shown by the placement of the finite verb, which is after the subject in (c1) and before it in (c2). Sentence (c1) means that a difference in cost exists, while (c2) asks whether the assessments of cost are similar or different.

- d. 1 Naturally, you must behave.  
2 You must behave naturally.

The difference is the placement of *naturally*. The placement carries with it a difference in meaning: In (d1) the adverb is placed clause-initially and is followed by a comma. It modifies the whole sentence and is a stance adverbial expressing the speaker's view ("of course you must behave"). In (d2) the final placement of the adverb suggests that it modifies *behave*. Thus it is a circumstantial adverbial of manner: The speaker urges "you" to behave in a natural manner.

- e. 1 On no account must you speak to him.  
2 You must not speak to him on any account.

Sentence (e1) has a negative adverbial in initial position and therefore also inversion of auxiliary and subject. Sentence (e2) has the corresponding adverbial in initial position, so no inversion is required. In (e1) the negation is provided by the determiner *no* in the adverbial phrase. In (e2) the negation is provided by the negator *not*, which triggers the use of the determiner *any* in the adverbial. The meaning of the two sentences is much the same, but there is more emphasis on the adverbial in (e1) because it represents an unusual (marked) word order.

4 Read the following text and answer the questions below:

*The current issue of the magazine Psychologies has attracted a lot of attention from tweeters, readers and, funnily enough, newsagents.* The reason? It features an Indian cover star, British-born actress Archie Panjabi.

*It seems odd that such a cover choice should elicit much attention.* Magazines, not just in the UK but globally, tend to be incredibly conservative (i.e. white) about their choice of covers, yet recently there have been signs of change. In the past few months, Kelly Rowland, Rihanna and Thandie Newton have appeared on the covers of Marie Claire, Cosmo and InStyle respectively, while Red magazine's January cover featured chef Lorraine Pascale.

*Despite the current vogue for magazines using more racially diverse stars, Asian faces on the newsstand are still a rarity.* "We've seen in the past how publishers were reluctant

to feature ethnic faces on their magazine covers because they felt it might affect sales,” says Anjana Gosai, an expert on Asian beauty. “It’s encouraging to see more black and Asian women on mainstream magazines. However, we have a long way to go before this becomes the norm.”

*But why does the ethnicity of the faces that greet us on the newsstand matter anyway?* Because if, like me and like countless others, you grew up avidly consuming magazines but rarely seeing anyone of the same race or colour, it has a corrosive effect. The pleasure of magazines has always been about a certain deluded aspiration – the “you, but better” philosophy. If we are finally moving away from “you, but white...”, that really will give women cause for celebration. (From *The Guardian*, abridged)

- The first sentence of the text is declarative; it starts with the subject, which is followed by the verbal (*has attracted*).
- That such a cover choice should elicit much attention seems odd.* The original sentence agrees better with the principle of end weight, since the notional subject is so much longer than the verbal. The other sentence with the anticipatory *it* is *It’s encouraging to see more black and Asian women on mainstream magazines.*
- The current trend for “racially diverse stars” to feature on the cover of magazines has already been described, so it is given information. The fact that Asian faces are still a rarity on the newsstand seems to contradict what has just been said, so it is new information (which is also elaborated on in the next sentences).
- Initial position: ... **yet recently** *there have been signs of change.*  
Medial position: *The pleasure of magazines has **always** been about a certain deluded aspiration...*  
End position: *However, we have a long way to go **before this becomes the norm.***
- The adverbial *in the past* occurs in medial position (between the main verb and the direct object). If it had been moved to end position, it would lose contact with the main verb *seen* and instead seem to modify *affect sales*. It could have been placed in initial position; however, the speaker probably wanted to start the sentence with the subject rather than focusing on the past from the outset.
- The sentence is a *wh*-interrogative. Its subject contains a relative clause.

c    A    v   |-----S-----|    V    A  
*But why does the ethnicity of the faces that greet us on the newsstand matter anyway?*

S    V   dO |-----A-----|  
*that greet us on the newsstand*

5 Findings from the British National Corpus at <http://corpus.byu.edu/>:

- a. The sentences starting with *not until* have subject-auxiliary inversion, as in *Not until 1918 was universal manhood suffrage introduced*.
- b. Most examples of *then came* represent subject-verbal inversion. We give two examples of *then came* which do not represent inversion; there are more examples of both types in the corpus: (i) *The young chap then came down stairs*; here *then* is in medial position after the subject. (ii) *we went to see my cousins at West Suffolk and and, and then came home again*; the subject has been omitted in a coordinated clause.
- c. *Of course* occurs in all three adverbial positions, but seems most common in initial position.
- d. Three among the first 20 occurrences of *maybe* in our sample are misspellings of *may be*. Some of the positions are difficult to classify, particularly when *maybe* does not occur in a complete clause structure. Of those that can safely be classified, we found 7 in initial position and 5 in medial position. *Perhaps* occurs initially in 11 cases, 3 times in medial position and twice in end position, in addition to a few that are hard to classify as clause elements.

In our sample, it was more difficult to classify *maybe* because almost half of them occurred in unplanned speech with a less clear sentence structure than we usually find in writing. The first 20 examples of *perhaps*, on the other hand, all occurred in writing. Note, however, that if the search is restricted to the written genres of newspapers and magazines, initial position is clearly preferred for both adverbs, but *perhaps* is medial more often than *maybe* is.