

# 7

## Adjectives, Adverbs and Adverbials

- 1 Choose the correct alternative in the sentences below. If you find both alternatives acceptable, explain any difference in meaning.
  - a. All the venues are ~~easy~~/easily accessible.
  - b. There's a possible/~~possibly~~ financial problem.
  - c. We admired the wonderful/~~wonderfully~~ panorama.
  - d. Our neighbours are (simple)/simply people who live near us.

Although less likely in this case, the adjective “simple” could be used as a premodifier to describe the noun (that is, the neighbours are not sophisticated people). Since the sentence seems to be a more general description of neighbours, however, the adverb “simply” is the more likely choice. The adverb serves as a comment on the part of the speaker (disjunct Adverbial).

- e. They seemed happy/~~happily~~ about George's victory.
- f. Similar/~~similarly~~ teams of medical advisers were called upon.
- g. Something in here smells horrible/~~horribly~~.

Note that the adverb “horribly” can be used in cases like this in informal English. It then refers to the intensity of the smell. Normally an adjective will follow a linking verb to describe a quality of the subject referent.

- h. This cream will give you a beautiful/beautifully smooth complexion.

The adjective *beautiful* describes *complexion* (‘your complexion will be smooth and beautiful’). The adverb *beautifully* describes *smooth* (‘your complexion will be smooth in a beautiful way’)

- i. Particular/Particularly groups such as recent immigrants felt their needs were being overlooked.

The adjective “particular” premodifies or describes the noun “groups”, whereas the adverb functions as a disjunct Adverbial (speaker's comment).

- 2 Determine whether the underlined adverbial in each sentence is an adjunct, a disjunct or a conjunct.
  - a. You know how to behave nicely.  
Adjunct
  - b. Anyway, I enjoyed these relaxed performances.  
Disjunct
  - c. I'm better off most weeks.  
Adjunct

- d. If the plant is still green, then it is probably alive.

Disjunct

- e. If the plant is still green, then it is probably alive.

Adjunct

- f. Comsat also sold meteorological information.

Conjunct

- g. We took him to the Castle Inn.

Adjunct

- h. They sold information to a competing firm.

Adjunct

- i. I'm not really worried about it to be honest.

Disjunct

- j. For that reason he volunteered to look after Ray Marsh.

Adjunct

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

- a. 1 She is a natural blonde.

- 2 She is naturally a blonde.

The difference between these sentences is that the adjective “natural” is used in sentence (1) and the adverb “naturally” in sentence (2). The adjective in sentence (1) functions as premodifier in the noun phrase that functions as subject predicative. The adjective classifies or describes what kind of blonde she is, namely one who does not need to dye her hair to be blonde. In sentence (2) the adverb “naturally” functions as a disjunct adverbial, which means that the speaker comments that it is obvious to him or her that she is a blonde.

- b. 1 This project was completed by Christopher.

- 2 This project was completed by Christmas.

The difference between these sentences lies in the prepositional phrases at the end of each clause. In sentence (1) the noun “Christopher” functions as complement of the preposition, whereas in sentence (2) the noun “Christmas” functions as complement. Both prepositional phrases function as adverbials, but the adverbial in sentence (1) is a participant adjunct (agent) and the adverbial in sentence (2) a time adjunct. Sentence (1) means that Christopher was the person (or agent) that did the work. In sentence (2) the agent of the action is not known, but instead the focus is on the time aspect: by Christmas.

- c. 1 The English can be fairly strange and peculiar.

- 2 The Englishman can be fairly strange and peculiar.

The difference lies in the noun phrases that function as subjects. In sentence (1) the nominalized adjective “English” functions as head. In sentence (2) the countable noun “Englishman” functions as head. The difference in meaning is that the nominalized adjective refers to a group of people (English people in general), whereas the countable noun “Englishman” in the singular refers to one person.

- d. 1 They all work hard at it.
- 2 They hardly work at all.

In this sentence pair there is a difference in word order in addition to lexical differences. In sentence (1) the pronoun “all” functions as part of the subject. The prepositional phrase “at it” functions as an adverbial (adjunct: respect) in the clause. In sentence (2) the adverb “hardly” functions as adverbial (adjunct: degree). The prepositional phrase “at all” functions as adverbial (adjunct: focus). Sentence (1) means that everybody works intensively with the project. The pronoun “all” is used to emphasize that everybody is involved. Sentence (2) means that they do very little work. The prepositional phrase “at all” emphasizes that the fact that almost nothing is done.

- e. 1 The Americans will see this as a hopeful and optimistic sign.
- 2 The Americans will hopefully see this as an optimistic sign.

In sentence (1) we find the adjective “hopeful”, whereas in sentence (2) we find the adverb “hopefully”. Sentence (1) also includes the coordinating conjunction “and”. In sentence (2) the indefinite article is written with an “n” because the following word begins with a vowel sound. In sentence (1) the adjective “hopeful” (along with “optimistic”) premodifies the noun “sign”. In sentence (2) the adverb “hopefully” functions as adverbial (disjunct). Sentence (1) states that the Americans will see this as a positive sign. In sentence (2) we get the speaker’s comment (“hopefully”) on his or her wish that the Americans will see this as a positive sign.

4 Read the following text and answer the questions below:

For Christmas shoppers watching their pennies closely, the offer of a half-price frozen turkey sounds too good to miss. Unfortunately, Tesco’s heavily promoted deal is not all that it seems. Rival supermarkets are selling their own frozen turkeys for around the same price – without the supposed 50 per cent discount. A Tesco half-price, extra-large frozen turkey is reduced to £25 from £50, while the equivalent bird sold by Asda is available at the full price of £24.

In theory, stores are supposed to advertise a product at the higher price for at least 28 days before using it as a benchmark for any price cut promotions. Tesco insists that it complied with this rule because they sold the turkeys at their full original price during the summer months of August and September – when very few shoppers would want a frozen turkey. The Tesco offer reinforces the view that supermarkets try to pull the wool over customers’ eyes with bogus deals. Some 42 per cent of shoppers do not believe that all offers are genuine, according to an Ipsos MORI survey.

(From the Daily Mail, slightly adapted)

- a. The adjectives in the text that function as premodifiers of nouns have been marked in **blue**.

For Christmas shoppers watching their pennies closely, the offer of a **half-price frozen** turkey sounds too good to miss. Unfortunately, Tesco’s heavily **promoted** deal is not all that it seems. **Rival** supermarkets are selling their own **frozen** turkeys for around the **same** price – without the **supposed** 50 per cent discount. A Tesco **half-price, extra-large frozen** turkey is reduced to £25 from £50, while the **equivalent** bird sold by Asda is available at the **full** price of £24.

In theory, stores are supposed to advertise a product at the **higher** price for at least 28 days before using it as a benchmark for any price cut promotions. Tesco insists that it complied with this rule because they sold the turkeys at their **full original** price during the summer months of August and September – when very few shoppers would want a **frozen** turkey. The Tesco offer reinforces the view that supermarkets try to pull the wool over customers’ eyes with **bogus** deals. Some 42 per cent of shoppers do not believe that all offers are genuine, according to an Ipsos MORI survey.

- b. Find an adjective in the text that functions as subject predicative.

In the last line of the text (in the book) the adjective “genuine” functions as subject predicative. In line 8 “available” functions as head of the adjective phrase that functions as subject predicative.

- c. Analyse the structure of the adjective phrase *too good to miss* (line 1-2).

It is a split modifier with “good” as head, “too” as first part and “to miss” as second part.

- d. Why is the form *heavily* preferable to *heavy* in line 2?

The adjective “heavy” would describe or premodify “deal”. In this case the purpose is to modify the adjective “promoted”. The adverb “heavily” says something about how the deal is promoted.

- e. What kinds of adverbials have been underlined throughout the text (table 7.8)?

For Christmas shoppers watching their pennies closely (adjunct: manner), the offer of a half-price frozen turkey sounds too good to miss. Unfortunately (disjunct: comment), Tesco’s heavily promoted deal is not all that it seems. Rival supermarkets are selling their own frozen turkeys for around the same price (adjunct: manner) – without the supposed 50 per cent discount. A Tesco half-price, extra-large frozen turkey is reduced to £25 from £50, while the equivalent bird sold by Asda (adjunct: participant) is available at the full price of £24.

In theory (adjunct: viewpoint), stores are supposed to advertise a product at the higher price for at least 28 days (adjunct: time) before using it as a benchmark for any price cut promotions. Tesco insists that it complied with this rule because they sold the turkeys at their full original price during the summer months of August and September (adjunct: reason) – when very few shoppers would want a frozen turkey. The Tesco offer reinforces the view that supermarkets try to pull the wool over customers’ eyes (adjunct: place/manner) with bogus deals. Some 42 per cent of shoppers do not believe that all offers are genuine, according to an Ipsos MORI survey.

- 5 Findings from the Corpus of Contemporary American English at <http://corpus.byu.edu/>:

- a. Search for the word *likely* and study the first fifteen occurrences of it. Does it function as an adjective or an adverb? How can you tell in each case?

“Likely” functions as an adjective in cases where it describes or premodifies the noun, such as “likely targets”. When “likely” modifies the verb phrase, it functions as an adverb, for example “has likely been tuned” and “likely to stop”.

- b. Search for *in a negative manner* and study the list of hits. Could the adverb *negatively* have been used instead in all cases? If you think *negatively* could have been used, would there have been any difference in meaning or style? How about *in a certain manner* compared to *certainly*?

*Negatively* could have been used in many of the sentences with the same meaning, for instance *speak negatively about somebody* = *speak about somebody in a negative manner*. In a few cases, *negatively* would be unidiomatic, as in *\*shake one’s head negatively*. On the other hand *in a certain manner* means “in a particular way”, which is not a likely interpretation of *certainly*. So in the sentences with *in a certain manner*, the use of *certainly* would either change the meaning (from a manner adjunct to a disjunct) or be wrong. (An example: *I have to conduct myself in a certain manner* means that a particular behaviour is called for. *I have to conduct myself certainly* is slightly strange, but the most likely interpretation is “I am pretty sure I have to behave”.)

- c. Search for *of course*. What seems to be its most common position, judging from the first 15-20 hits (initial, medial or end)?

Initial position is its most common position.

- d. Search for *during the \**. Before hitting the search button, write down the first three expressions with *during the* that enter your mind. Were these expressions in the list of hits?

The ten most frequent words following *during the \** in the corpus are: *first, day, past, last, war, summer, early, course, next, 1980s*.

- e. *Furthermore* is a fairly formal word. How many hits are there in the corpus? What genre(s) does it occur in most often? (Search hint: tick the radio button for “chart” above the search box, and you will see the genre distribution of hits as a diagram.) What kind of adverbial does *furthermore* function as?

11 601 hits. It occurs most often in academic texts. *Furthermore* functions as a conjunct.