

# 5

## ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

- 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.*
  - 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.  
*Normally an adjective will follow a linking verb to describe a quality of the subject referent. However, the adverb “horribly” can be used to refer to the intensity of the smell.*
  - h. This cream will give you a beautiful/beautifully smooth complexion.
  - 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 use of the adverb “particularly” functions as a comment on the part of the speaker.

2 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 (a1) and the adverb “naturally” in sentence (a2). The adjective in sentence (a1) functions as premodifier in the noun phrase. 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 (a2) the adverb “naturally” means that it is obvious to the speaker that she is a blonde.

- b. 1 I prefer blue.  
2 I prefer the blue one.

In sentence (b1), “blue” is used as a nominalized adjective and refers to the colour in general, and it behaves as an uncountable noun. In sentence (b2) the adjective “blue” is used to identify a concrete object and functions as a premodifier in the noun phrase “the blue one”, premodifying the pronoun “one”. The meaning of (b1) is roughly “My favourite colour is blue”, while (b2) means “I choose the blue thing over those that have other colours”.

- 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 (c1) the nominalized adjective “English” functions as head. In sentence (c2) 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 specific 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 (d1) the pronoun “all” functions as part of the subject. The prepositional phrase “at it” describes what they work with. In sentence (d2) the adverb “hardly” denotes how much (or how little) they work. The prepositional phrase “at all” is

used to draw attention to another element in the clause, namely “hardly”. Sentence (d1) means that everybody works intensively with some project. The pronoun “all” is used to emphasize that everybody is involved. Sentence (d2) means that they do very little work indeed.

- 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 (e1) we find the adjective “hopeful”, whereas in sentence (e2) we find the adverb “hopefully”. Sentence (e1) also includes the coordinating conjunction “and”. In (e2) the indefinite article is “an” rather than “a” because the following word begins with a vowel sound. In (e1) the adjective “hopeful” (along with “optimistic”) premodifies the noun “sign”. In (e2) the adverb “hopefully” is used as an evaluation of the situation on the part of the speaker. Sentence (e1) states that the Americans will see this as a positive sign. In sentence (e2) we get the speaker’s comment (“hopefully”) on his or her wish that the Americans will see this as a positive sign.

3 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.

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- b. Find an adjective in the text that is not followed by a noun, but describes the subject. In the last line of the text the adjective “genuine” describes the subject “offers”. In line 6 “available” functions as head of the adjective phrase (“available at the full price of £24”) that describes the subject (“the equivalent bird sold by Asda”).
  - c. Analyse the structure of the adjective phrase *too good to miss* (line 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 the second sentence? 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.
- 4 Use the Corpus of Contemporary American English at <http://corpus.byu.edu/> to find answers to the following questions. (See instructions for how to use the corpus at the end of Chapter 1.)
- a. Search for *the rich* and go through the first 20 hits on the list. Decide in each case whether *rich* is a nominalized adjective or a premodifier. In a search (June 2018), *the rich* occurred as a nominalized adjective (functioning as head of a noun phrase) in 17 of the first 20 cases, but this may vary. An example is ... *while cutting taxes for the rich*. The adjective is a premodifier of another noun in the remaining 3 cases, e.g. *The rich wood frame was scarred...*

- b. The more common comparative form in each of the following pairs has been set in **blue and bold**: **Crazier** – more crazy; **cleverer** – more clever; **slower** – more slow; **slowlier** – more slowly; **earlier** – more early.

- c. 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?

In the sample studied here, seven cases were adjectives in the constructions “be likely to do something” or “it is likely that”, e.g. *agencies are most likely to modify rules; it is far more likely culpable behavior will be uncovered*. Thus, as an adjective, *likely* functions as a subject predicative in these sentences; it gives a description of the subject. (In addition it can be a premodifier as a noun, but this function was not found in our sample.) *Likely* is an adverb (and an adverbial) in the remaining nine cases, where it is placed between an auxiliary and a main verb, as in *it would likely be unacceptable*, between the main verb and a following obligatory clause element, as in *there are likely far stronger proxies*, or before an adjective that it modifies, as in *Posner’s theory would only apply to the, likely rare, individual*. As an adverb, *likely* either modifies an adjective (or another adverb) or gives the speaker’s evaluation of the content of a sentence, in which case it can often be paraphrased as “I think”.

- d. Here are the three most frequent adverbs modifying the adjectives *nice*, *smart*, *beautiful*, *unkind*, *stupid* and *ugly* in the COCA corpus (as of June 2018).

very/really/so nice  
very/so/too smart  
most/so/very beautiful  
so/very/too unkind  
so/how/too stupid  
very/so/as ugly

- e. Here are the three most frequent adjectives premodifying the nouns *man*, *woman*, *boy*, *girl*, *child* in the COCA corpus.

young/old/unidentified man  
unidentified/young/old woman  
little/young/good boy  
little/young/good girl  
only/young/small child