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English Morphosyntax. On Adjectives, Adverbs and Prepositions

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English Morphosyntax

On Adjectives, Adverbs and Prepositions

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A Word of Introduction*

English Morphosyntax. *On adjectives*, *adverbs and prepositions* is a companion volume to two earlier volumes on English morphosyntax published by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek.[1]

Grammatical functions and categories. *Part I. The English verb* (2001), *English morphosyntax*. *On nouns*, *determiners and pronouns* (2013), and the current volume together cover the morphosyntax of all the major English word classes. Excluded from their joint scope are minor word classes like numerals, conjunctions, and interjections, and special forms like the infinitive marker *to*, the negator *not*, etc. For future reference, the three volumes will be referred to as:

- MSPS I: *Grammatical functions and categories*. *Part I. The English verb* (2001)
- MSPS II: *English morphosyntax*. *On nouns*, *determiners and pronouns* (2013)
- MSPS III: this volume (2019)

The target audience of all three volumes is (undergraduate) students of English language and linguistics, especially those whose mother tongue is Croatian. MSPS II and MSPS III in particular make occasional references to some contrasts between English morphosyntactic structures and their Croatian counterparts. This may help students get a handle on those aspects of conventional English usage that lead to interference errors. Generally, by discussing linguistic categories closest to the concrete utterances that a student hears or produces (form and function of *words*), all three volumes foster the development of cross-linguistic competence in Croatian students of English.

Of course, we aim for more than just a simple presentation of basic language facts. The goal, as with the earlier volumes, is to systematize these facts and place them into a broader perspective. There are several good reasons for this.

In addition to the capacity to use grammatical structures properly, students need to develop the ability to think and talk about those structures – and language in general – using linguistic metalanguage. For many future teachers of English as a foreign language, which many of our students become, this ability will be an important part of their basic teaching skill-set.

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* We are grateful to our reviewers for their helpful comments and constructive criticism. Needless to say, we remain responsible for any remaining errors.

[1] At the time of publication of the 2001 volume, the official name of the Faculty was the Faculty of Pedagogy.

Beyond those pragmatic goals, a good command of the linguistic metalanguage also means having the tools to handle the complexity of observable data. Put differently, if the task of any science is to reveal and explain the structured system behind the manifest complexity, students of linguistics cannot afford to not know the categories, and their relationships, that help rein in the endless intricacies and beauty of natural language. This may remain a utopian goal, but it does not mean we should stop trying. "Were a language ever completely "grammatical," it would be a perfect engine of conceptual expression. Unfortunately, or luckily, no language is tyrannically consistent. All grammars leak" (Sapir 1921: 39).

Organization of the book

The volume is organized into four main parts. The first part sets the stage by providing a quick summary of the three word classes included in MSPS III. It also briefly revisits the problem of unclear word class boundaries (see also MSPS II, Part I). The remaining chapters are dedicated to the three word classes each: Part II is on adjectives, Part III on adverbs, and Part IV on prepositions. Each chapter ends with exercises, and some include topics for further study. We make occasional references to frequency data, which should help students tell conventional patterns apart from the atypical. The main source of all frequency information and examples is the largest electronic corpus of Contemporary American English, viz. *the Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA, currently at 560 million words spanning 1990-2017). Occasional contrasts between American and British English structures stipulated in Quirk et al. (1985) were verified by comparing normalized frequencies of occurrence of those structures in COCA and *The British National Corpus* (BNC, currently at 100 million words of British English from the latter part of the 20th century).

List of symbols and typographic conventions

* ungrammatical words or sequences
? words or sequences of questionable acceptability
x ≈ y 'x is similar in meaning to y'
SMALL CAPS in bold: technical terms when defined in the running text
SMALL CAPS: conceptual metaphors, heads of phrases and other modified items, where necessary for contrast or emphasis
Meta-references to technical terms: *italics*, otherwise technical terms appear in regular font style.
Examples in running text: *italics*.
Examples in exercises: regular font style.
Emphasis: bold or underlined (+ italics in italicized examples)
Meanings of linguistic units: regular font style flanked by single quotes '…'
" …": short quotes and distancing from terminology or content
Adj(P): adjective (phrase)
Adv(P): adverb (phrase)
NP: noun phrase
PP: prepositional phrase
Cs: subject complement
Co: object complement
S: subject
Od: direct object
Oi: indirect object
Op: prepositional object
A: adverbial
AmE: American English
BrE: British English
BNC: British National Corpus
COCA: Corpus of Contemporary American English
LSWE: The Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus
OED: Oxford English Dictionary
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
LGSWE: Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber et al. 1999 [6th impression 2007])
🕮 followed by section, chapter, table, or figure number: 'see'
T: Topic for further discussion
TB: Text Box

PART I. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1. Fact sheet: adjectives, adverbs, prepositions

Chapter 2. Non-discreteness of word classes

Part I of this volume is a bit Janus-faced. It aims to simplify for expository encouragement. At the same time, it delivers a hint of complication to discourage complacency with simplistic explanation of language facts.

Chapter 1 presents a quick and dirty summary of the basic properties of adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. Though idealized, this summary will provide the reader with the foothold he will need once this neat picture begins to wrinkle.

Chapter 2 is a brief overview of some of these wrinkles. We show examples of words with multiple word class categorization; i.e. words that appear as different word classes in different contexts and those that show properties of more than one word class simultaneously. This summary is not meant to be exhaustive. These, and other problems, will be addressed more fully in Parts II to IV of this volume.

Chapter 1: Fact sheet: adjectives, adverbs, prepositions

1.1 Adjectives

Morphological characteristics

Form

Complex derived adjectives. Many adjectives are simple and have no characteristic morphological form, but some adjectives derive from other word classes by means of adjective-specific derivational suffixes (📖 MSPS II, Section 1.3 on derivational morphology).

boast$_{v}$ vs. *boast-ful*$_{adj}$, *child*$_{n}$ vs. *child-ish*$_{adj}$, *do*$_{v}$ vs. *do-able*$_{adj}$, *president*$_{n}$ vs. *president-ial*$_{adj}$, etc.

Comparison

Many adjectives compare by inflection (📖 MSPS II, Section 1.3 on inflectional morphology), although some compare syntactically with *more* and *most*, or special constructions like e.g. *twice as* Adj *as NP*.

rich, *rich-er*, *rich-est*

Syntactic characteristics

Attributive position

Adjectives, or rather adjective phrases (📖 Section 5.1) function attributively, i.e. they premodify the HEAD NOUNS of noun phrases (NPs).

(1) *They never came any more, like [**forgetful** GRANDCHILDREN]*$_{NP}$

Predicative position

Many adjective phrases can also be used predicatively, usually as subject complements (Cs) after copula verbs.

(2) *She seemed [**quite forgetful**]*$_{AdjP\ as\ Cs}$

Premodifier very

Many adjectives can be premodified by intensifying adverbs like *very*.

(3) *The story is [**very interesting**]*$_{AdjP}$

Head of noun phrase

Occasionally, adjectives figure as heads of nouns phrases, normally they head adjective phrases (📖 MSPS II, Section 3.1.1 and 3.1.2).

(4) *She served a useful purpose in the same way that the myth of summer reading does: reminding [the* ***FORGETFUL****]$_{NP}$ that reading exists*.

Semantic characteristics

Gradable vs. nongradable. Gradable adjectives denote properties which entities may have in different degrees. The grammatical consequence is the ability of these adjectives to be compared or modified for degree by adverbs like *very*, *sufficiently*, *completely*, *extremely*, etc. The opposite is the case with nongradable adjectives. Gradability is also a feature of adverbs, which means it alone is not enough as a diagnostic for adjectives.

Inherent vs. non-inherent. Inherent adjectives characterize the referent of the noun directly, non-inherent adjectives do not. For instance, *old* in *an old man* means a man who is advanced in age; *old* in *an old friend* could also mean that the friend is old, but not necessarily. What the speaker assesses as old is the friendship – the friend may well be only 25. Non-inherent adjectives, therefore, characterize a relationship or other aspects of the situation associated with the noun's referent, but not this referent itself. Such adjectives usually act as intensifiers, limiters, or classifiers, e.g. *utter stupidity*, *main reason*, *medical school*, respectively, or are related to adverbials, e.g. when *a beautiful dancer* means 'a person who dances beautifully' and not a good-looking dancer. Non-inherent adjectives are syntactically restricted to the attributive position.

Restrictive vs. non-restrictive. (Non-)restrictiveness is a property adjectives share with other kinds of modifiers in noun phrases (prepositional phrases, relative clauses, genitive phrases). When used restrictively, adjectives establish a subtype of a class of entities denoted by the noun, i.e. a medical school is a type of school different from other types by being specialized for the study of medicine. Alternatively, restrictively used adjectives establish the exact identity of the noun's referent where multiple potential referents exist in context, e.g. *I want the black dress* (*not the blue one*). When used non-restrictively, adjectives do not have the categorizing or referential function, only an optionally descriptive one. They add parenthetical information about the referent, e.g. *my dear loyal wife*.

1.2 Adverbs

The adverb is the most elusive of all traditional word classes. Simplifying considerably for purposes of this introduction (🕮 Part III), the adverb may be characterized as described below.

Morphological characteristics

Form

There are three types of adverbs (Quirk et al. 1985: 438):

Simple adverbs like *just*, *only*, *well*, *too*, *soon*, *tomorrow*, *already*, or many adverbs indicating position or direction like *under*, *out*, *near*, *back*, *down*, etc.

Compound adverbs like *somehow*, *someplace*, *therefore*, *anyway*, *nowhere*, and the highly formal *whereupon*, *hereby*, *herewith*, *whereto*, etc.

Derivational adverbs, the majority of which are formed from adjectives with the suffix *-ly*: e.g. *clear* > *clearly*, *Trump* > *trumpingly*, etc. Less common are denominal adverbs in *-wise*: *healthwise*, *girlfriend-wise*, *job-wise*; and adverbs in *-wards* formed from nouns or prepositions: *heavenwards*, *northwards*, *afterwards*, *onwards*; *-fashion*: *schoolboy-fashion*; *-ways*: *sideways*; *-style*: *cowboy-style*.

LGSWE (p. 540) adds to the three groups phrases like *of course*, *kind of*, *at last*.

Comparison

Comparison is used much more freely with adjectives, but some adverbs may also inflect for comparison. Even then, the superlative forms seem rare. Inflected forms cannot be added to derived adverbs: *clearly*, **clearlier*, **clearliest*. If they compare, they do so periphrastically with *more* and *most*.

Table 1. Comparison of adverbs

Absolute	Comparative	Superlative
well	*better*	*best*
badly	*worse or more badly*	*worst*
far	*farther*	*farthest*
	further	*furthest*
hard	*harder*	*hardest*
fast	*faster*	*fastest*
long	*longer*	*longest*
often	*oftener (rare)*	*oftenest (rare)*
	more often	*most often*

Syntactic characteristics

Adverbs, or rather adverb phrases, can be syntactically dependent or syntactically independent.

Adverb as modifier

Syntactically dependent adverb phrases modify other words or phrases. Modifying adverbs (bolded below) premodify adjectives, nouns, other adverbs as heads of their respective phrases, occasionally noun phrases and prepositional phrases (underlined). Sometimes they postmodify head nouns or head adjectives.

(1) *She's pregnant. She is [**beautifully** PREGNANT]$_{AdjP}$*
(2) *[The **outside** WALLS]$_{NP}$ were constructed with concrete.*
(3) *The bacon is sizzling [**so** BEAUTIFULLY]$_{AdvP}$*
(4) *It was, frankly, [**quite** a success]$_{NP}$*
(5) *I talked, on and on, [**well** into the night]$_{PP}$, about my father.*
(6) *Soon, a dozen or more birds cut [the SKY **above**]$_{NP}$*
(7) *The Nigerians have always felt themselves [BIG **enough**]$_{AdjP}$ and [STRONG **enough**]$_{AdjP}$ to take care of their own crises.*

Adverb as adverbial

Adverbs also function as adverbials, i.e. independent clause elements comparable to subjects, objects, predicators, and subject and object complements. Various subtypes of adverbials differ in the degree to which they are integrated into clause structure and in their semantic import. Below we only illustrate some of this variety, postponing a detailed discussion until Part III.

(8) *The girl went [**outside**]$_{A}$ too.*
(9) *The sun's still gonna shine [**tomorrow**]$_{A}$*
(10) *And, Gracie, we saw you last night. You skated [**beautifully**]$_{A}$*
(11) *The greatest ideas are [**often**]$_{A}$ the oldest ideas.*
(12) *[**Frankly**]$_{A}$, I'd like to stay in bed all day with the covers over my head.*
(13) *[**Quite wisely**]$_{A}$, the founders of our country made it very difficult to get anything done in a short period of time.*
(14) *His motive is not to politically undermine the president. [**Nevertheless**]$_{A}$, he may do just that.*

Semantic characteristics

Adverbs are a most heterogeneous word class. Members of this category differ vastly from each other on a number of formal and behavioral features, but also semantically. When they modify adjectives or other adverbs, they mainly signal degree, e.g. *rather clear* or *extremely clearly*. They may also convey the

speaker's subjective attitude, usually a high degree of the speaker's positive or negative evaluation of a property or emotion, e.g. *beautifully pregnant* or *unbelievably clearly*. When they function as adverbials, they specify various circumstances of the action, process, or state described in the clause, like its place, time, manner, frequency, etc. (examples 8–11). They may also convey speakers' comments on the style or content of what they are about to say (examples 12 and 13), or forge connections between different information units in discourse (example 14).

1.3 Prepositions

Prepositions establish a relation between two syntactic entities. One syntactic entity is the complement of the preposition, the other is located in the wider syntactic environment (Quirk et al. 1985: 657).

Morphological characteristics

English prepositions have no characteristic form. Most are simple, one-word items like *at*, *in*, *about*, *from*, *on*, *during*, etc. Complex prepositions consist of two words, e.g. *except for*, *instead of*, *because of*, *regardless of*, *according to*, *contrary to*, etc. Three-word prepositions include *in front of*, *in comparison with*, *by means of*, *on top of*, *as far as*, *in relation* to, etc. Boundaries to other word classes, especially adverbs, are uncertain (🕮 Section 12.4).

(1) *She looked **up** the steps to her left and saw no activity*. (*up* as a preposition)
(2) *She looked **up***. (*up* as a prepositional adverb, Quirk et al. 1985: 662)
(3) *Her brother had looked **up** the vehicle on the Internet*. (*up* as an adverb particle, ibid.)

Some words with prepositional functions have a distinctly verbal or adjectival overtone, cf. their matching verbal and adjectival uses:

(4) *I was astonished by this man's long life **considering** his extremely humble origins*. (preposition)
(5) *He's **considering** his options*. (verb)
(6) ***Given** my particular nature, the responsibility and distraction of child-rearing most likely would have prevented me from pursuing my work as a writer*. (preposition 'considering')
(7) *I've already **given** my opinion*. (verb)
(8) *Pinheiro has been suspended **pending** a police investigation*. (preposition 'until X happens')
(9) *Beyond that, we do not intend to comment on **pending** litigation*. (adjective 'ongoing')

Boundaries are weak between multi-word prepositions and free phrases. The former are indivisible and immutable (10), the latter (11) can be freely formed and modified (🕮 Section 12.3).

(10) *Two inches of powder had accumulated **on top of** the vehicle*.
(11) *The last place you want to be in a thunderstorm is **on the exposed top/peak of** a mountain*.

Syntactic characteristics

Syntactic structure

All prepositions are followed by a complement, mostly a noun phrase, but also a nominal *wh*-clause, or a nominal *-ing* clause. The two form a syntactic unit called the prepositional phrase.

Table 1. Structure of prepositional phrases

	preposition	**complement**
I returned	*at*	*midnight.*
She called you	*by*	*mistake.*
Fetch wine		*the cellar.*
I learned everything	*from*	*watching movies.*
You can learn much		*what people ask.*

Syntactic functions of prepositional phrases

1. Modifiers or complements

1.1. Postmodifiers (12), rarely premodifiers (13) of HEADS of noun phrases:

(12) *She had just reached [the BOTTOM **of the slope**]$_{NP}$*

(13) *Patients need [**round-the-clock** CARE]$_{NP}$*

1.2. Complements of HEAD ADJECTIVES in adjective phrases:

(14) *Before the economy went bust, she had been [SUCCESSFUL **at her job**]$_{AdjP}$*

1.3. Complements of other PREPOSITIONS

(15) *She wipes the bit of blood [FROM **under her nose**]$_{PP}$*

2. Syntactically independent units

2.1. Adverbials

(16) *We started out **[before daybreak]**$_{PP\ as\ A}$, two men on horseback.*

(17) ***[In all honesty]**$_{PP\ as\ A}$, I prefer long-form television to the movies.*

2.2. Complements of PREPOSITIONAL VERBS, i.e. prepositional objects

(18) *She LAUGHED **[at her own words]**$_{PP\ as\ Op}$*

2.3. Subject complements

(19) *He seems **[out of his depth]**$_{PP\ as\ Cs}$*

Semantic characteristics

The precise nature of the relationship between the two syntactic units linked by prepositions varies considerably. It may be some kind of relationship in space (static location, relative position, direction of movement, etc.); time (position or duration in time, frequency, etc.); other metaphorical interpretations of space (activity, state, etc.); relations like causes, purposes, manners, instruments, etc. Examples (20–27) illustrate only a fraction of this diversity.

(20) *He threw ran blindly **toward the stable***. (space: goal of movement)
(21) ***For years***, *astronomers have struggled to get quality 3-D data of galaxies*. (time: duration)
(22) *Her husband had gotten **into yoga***. (metaphor: STARTING AN ACTIVITY IS ENTERING INTO SPACE)
(23) *I just didn't want to live **in fear** the rest of my life*. (metaphor: STATE IS LOCATION IN SPACE)
(24) *I have a unique view of the world **because of my job***. (cause)
(25) *He's playing **with a lot of confidence** right now*. (manner)
(26) *I stood in back and touched the mare lightly **with a whip***. (instrument)
(27) *Trump was already dreaming **about his next conquest***. (subject matter)

Chapter 2: Non-discreteness of word classes

Categories of language are no less clear than any categories we have of the world around us (🕮 MSPS II 2.T). Just like a tomato is a less obvious member of the category FRUIT than a strawberry (for one, it is not sweet), so are *utter* and *astronomical* less well-behaved members of the word class adjective than e.g. *clean* and *bright* – considering their respective morphological, behavioral, and semantic properties.

Another issue with word classes is that the same form may assume functions of different word classes. In fact, few forms can be unambiguously assigned to a word class in isolation. For instance, the confidence with which we allocate *Trump* to the word class noun (on account of it being the name of a famous politician) is challenged by contexts like (1):

(1) *Donald trumps all those who tried to trump him*.[1]

In example (1) *Trump* has been "verbed" – turned into a verb. There is no explicit derivational morpheme that usually builds verbs from nouns, such as *-ize* (*womanize*), or *-ify* (*liquidify*). *Trumps* is one in a long list of English verbs created from nouns by the process of conversion, or zero-affixation, cf. *to shoulder the responsibility*, *to doctor the accounts*, *to plaster the wall*.[2] The 3rd person inflectional ending *-s* on *trumps* is a symptom, not the cause of the word's change into a verb, as is the decapitalization of noun initial 'T' (🕮 MSPS II, Section 1.3 on inflectional and derivational morphology).

English words are particularly prone to easy word class change or opportunistic but temporary shifts in syntactic function. With not a lot of morphology to anchor words into particular word class paradigms, many words are free to slip in and out of word classes with few to no morphological consequences. The task of differentiating word classes falls almost entirely to syntax. Some examples were discussed in MSPS II (pp. 20–27). Here we illustrate similar problems focusing more on adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions, postponing the explanations until Parts II, III, and IV of this volume. Examples in Table 2.1. highlight two aspects of the problem: (a) most forms function as different word classes in different environments, and (b) some forms, like *by* and *after*, show features of multiple word classes simultaneously. When they introduce noun phrases, *by* and *after* function as prepositions. *After*

---

[1] http://www.giantsinternational.org/miraculous-donald-trumps-all-those-who-tried-to-trump-him/Accessed 30 January 2017.

[2] Some linguists advance the theory that no word is a verb, noun, or adjective in and of itself; i.e. word class category is not an intrinsic property of any word but is assigned by syntax.

can also be used as a conjunction. As a conjunction, *after* introduces a time clause, which has the subject-predicate structure typical of clauses. However, *by* and *after* are indeterminate between prepositions and conjunctions when they introduce non-finite clauses. Non-finite clauses are different from noun phrases in that they do not refer to an entity but to an event. They are not fully clausal either, since, unlike finite clauses, they lack explicit subjects and thus fail to demonstrate the typically clausal subject-predicate structure. This indeterminate status of non-finite clauses following items like *by* or *after* prevents the straightforward classification of the two forms as prepositions or conjunctions.

Table 2.1. Multifunctionality of English words

Form	N	V	Adj	Adv	Prep	Conj.	Det.	Pron	Examples
little			•						*a sweet little child*
				•					*an ancient and little respected tactic*
							•		*to have little respect for others*
								•	*He has much patience. I have little.*
before				•					*I've never seen that before.*
					•				*Every person is equal before the law.*
						•			*He'd already opened the car door before she came to a full stop.*
that				•					*He punished him that severely.*
						•			*I knew that she'd come late.*
							•		*I want that shirt.*
								•	*I need that. (demonstrative)*
								•	*the cat that's afraid of mice (relative)*
right	•								*Protect their rights.*
		•							*We must right the injustice.*
			•						*the right hemisphere of the brain*
				•					*Turn right.*
green	•								*I love green.*
		•							*Lawns are greening up.*
			•						*green eyes*

Table 2.1. Multifunctionality of English words (continued)

Form	N	V	Adj	Adv	Prep	Conj.	Det.	Pron	Examples
considering		•							*I'm considering your proposal.*
					•				*Considering my age, I should be fit for this.*
when						•			*When I speak, I want everybody quiet.*
					•	•			*When speaking publicly, he always walks nervously around.*
after					•				*After her success, she was even more motivated.*
						•			*She loved him even more after he came to her help.*
					•	•			*She left him after realizing what a loser he was.*
by					•				*They were moved by her story.*
					•	•			*You help yourself by telling the truth.*
up	•								*He had many ups in his career.*
		•							*He upped and left.*
				•					*It moved up. (prepositional adverb)*
				•					*I looked up your address. (adverb particle)*
					•				*We went up the hill.*

PART II: ADJECTIVES

Chapter 3. Adjectives: setting the scene
Chapter 4. Comparison of adjectives
Chapter 5. Syntax of adjective phrases
Chapter 6. Semantics of adjectives
Chapter 7. Formation of new adjectives

The second part of the book is dedicated to adjectives. We first examine the defining features of prototypical adjectives in Chapter 3. Against this background we will explore the internal heterogeneity of the word class and address unstable boundaries between adjectives and some other word classes.

Chapter 4 deals with comparison, a feature prominently, but not exclusively, associated with adjectives. We present various comparative constructions expressing degree, focusing especially on the distribution of the two main constructions, viz. inflected comparison of adjectives by *-er* and *-est* and their periphrastic comparison by the adverbs *more* and *most*.

Chapter 5 presents the anatomy of adjective phrases. We then explore the functions of adjective phrases as syntactically dependent modifiers and as syntactically independent clause constituents.[3] Last, we discuss syntactically anomalous adjectives, which show distinct preferences for particular syntactic positions to the exclusion of others.

In Chapter 6 we turn to the semantics of adjectives, focusing especially on the syntactic correlates of various semantic classifications.

Part II ends with Chapter 7, where we briefly address the formation of new adjectives by various word formation and syntactic means.

Although each of the chapters is meant to focus on a seemingly different aspect of adjectives, this division only reflects a difference in focus, not an

[3] The terms *clause* and *sentence* are often used indiscriminately. In truth, they refer to syntactic units of different rank in the grammatical organization of language. A clause ranks lower than a sentence. It denotes only **simple sentences**. *Sentence* ranks higher as a term for **complex sentences** (those with a main clause and at least one dependent clause) or **compound sentences** (those built from two or more clauses of equal rank). In this book, the terms *clause* and *sentence* will be used interchangeably, following established usage patterns. For instance, it is more common to use the term *sentence* in reference to illustrative examples of clausal/ sentential scope.

exclusive orientation to one aspect of adjectives to the exclusion of others. For instance, adjective comparison is commonly achieved by morphological means – the morphemes *-er*, *-est*, but it is also abundantly served by syntax; cf. the periphrastic forms of comparison *more*, *most* + Adj, comparative constructions like *as* Adj *as* NP, *five times as* Adj *as* NP, etc. Even more importantly, in no chapter can we afford to disregard how the semantics of adjectives plays into their morphosyntactic behavior.

Chapter 3: Adjectives: setting the scene

Chapter 3 is a preliminary exploration of the word class adjective. We first examine the properties of typical English adjectives. Then we focus on boundary phenomena by zooming in on places where adjectives cross paths with members of other word classes, viz. adverbs, nouns, and participles.

3.1 Defining properties of adjectives

Forms like *little*, *right*, and *green* (📖 Table 2.1.) remind us that, like any other word class, adjectives are a challenge to define. A single form may fit multiple word classes, e.g. *right* can occur as a noun (1), a verb (2), an adjective (3), or an adverb (4):

(1) *When religion and the **rights** of others clash, it's religion that trumps.*
(2) *What mattered most was that a wrong could be **righted**.*
(3) *In short, both the left and the **right** brain must be activated.*
(4) *Turn **right** to the roundabout.*

There are, to be sure, adjectives with characteristically adjectival morphology, like the derivational suffixes listed in Table 3.1.[4] Unfortunately, many of the most frequent adjectives have no characteristic form, which makes it difficult to identify them in isolation: e.g. *big*, *small*, *cold*, *hot*, *old*, *young*, *calm*, *good*, *evil*, *dark*, etc.

Three baskets of criteria are usually used to identify adjectives (Givón 2001: 49), including various morphological, syntactic, and semantic features. Quirk et al. (1985: 402–403) propose the following four:

1. occurrence in attributive position in a noun phrase
2. occurrence in predicative position in a clause
3. premodification by the intensifying adverb *very*
4. comparison

They are all displayed in the set of artificial examples in (5).

(5) a. *a cold drink* (feature 1)
b. *The drink is cold.* (feature 2)
c. *a very cold drink* (feature 3)
d. *a colder drink*, *the coldest drink* (feature 4)

[4] The *-ing* and most of the *-ed* suffixes are not derivational, but are actually inflectional markers of the participles that have developed adjectival uses over time (📖 Section 3.2.3).

Table 3.1. Adjectival suffixes

Suffix	Adjective derived by suffixation
-able	*doable*, *knowledgeable*, *presentable*, *transferable*
-(i)al/(u)al	*accidental*, *segmental*, *parental*, *sentimental*; *presidential*, *facial*, *financial*, *beneficial*; *factual*, *textual*, *contextual*
-(i)an	*Shakespearean*, *Italian*, *Jordanian*, *agrarian*
-ary	*dietary*, *planetary*, *disciplinary*, *complementary*
-ed	*striped*, *red-bearded*, *long-nosed*; *advanced*, *mixed*, *sophisticated*
-esque	*Reaganesque*, *Clintonesque*, *statuesque*, *picturesque*
-ic	*nomadic*, *barbaric*, *heroic*, *parasitic*
-ing	*amazing*, *blazing*, *boring*, *surprising*
-free	*carefree*, *gluten-free*, *error-free*, *disease-free*
-ful	*careful*, *hopeful*, *boastful*, *wonderful*
-ish	*childish*, *greenish*, *sheepish*, *freakish*
-less	*careless*, *hopeless*, *harmless*, *fruitless*
-like	*humanlike*, *earthlike*, *birdlike*, *jewel-like*
-ly	*womanly*, *beastly*, *princely*, *motherly*, *lawyerly*
-ous	*ambitious*, *generous*, *outrageous*, *rigorous*, *murderous*
-y	*wiry*, *healthy*, *smudgy*, *freaky*; *spidery*, *chocolaty*; *creaky*, *clingy*

1. Attributive use

Adjectives occur attributively, viz. between the determiner (MSPS II, Part III) and the head noun in a noun phrase (NP). From this slot, adjectives, or more accurately, adjective phrases (📖 Section 5.1) premodify the HEAD NOUNS.

(6) a. *[a$_{Det}$ **[placid]**$_{AdjP}$ HORSE]$_{NP}$*
b. *[a$_{Det}$ **[completely placid]**$_{AdjP}$ HORSE]$_{NP}$*

(7) a. *[[**endless**]$_{AdjP}$ WINTER]$_{NP}$*
b. *[[**nearly endless**]$_{AdjP}$ WINTER]$_{NP}$*

2. Predicative use

Adjective phrases also occur predicatively. Predicative adjective phrases function as subject complements (8), or as object complements[5] (9) (📖 Section 5.2).

[5] In linguistics, the term *complement* is used for various syntactic functions and relationships. It denotes: (a) *subject complements*, i.e. syntactically obligatory noun phrases, adjective phrases, more rarely other types of structures, which follow copula verbs and characterize the subject (*He is **angry/chieftain***); (b) *object complements*, syntactically obligatory noun- and adjective phrases which follow complex transitive verbs and characterize objects (e.g. *make someone **angry/chieftain***); (c) *prepositional complements*, i.e usually noun phrases, and some types of

(8) *This horse is [**remarkably placid**]* *AdjP as Cs*
(9) *With training you can make any horse [**remarkably placid**]* *AdjP as Co*

3. Modification by *very*

Adjectives lend themselves to premodification by *very*.

(10) a ***very placid*** horse

4. Comparison

Adjectives compare by inflection *-er*, *-est* (11a–b) or periphrastic forms *more* and *most* (12a–b):

(11) a. a ***faster*** horse
b. *the **fastest*** horse
(12) a. a ***more placid*** horse
b. ***the most placid*** horse

Let us run a selection of presumable adjectives against these criteria and see how they fare.

(13) *A sudden expression of disappointment crosses the priest's face but is immediately replaced by a **placid** smile*.
(14) *Finally*, *there is the **sheer** pleasure of helping others*.
(15) *In the seventh year*, *the king became very **ill** and decided to have a great contest to choose their next king*.
(16) *She would come back tonight*, *when everyone else was **asleep***.
(17) *The endless pursuit of pleasure*, *luxury*, *and self-indulgence*, *chums the wheels of the **capitalist** economy*.
(18) *I guess they want a **fast** horse instead of a car*.

None of the adjectives in (13–18) raise an eyebrow at first. Some of them are compared, some are modified by *very*, some are used attributively, others predicatively. But if we tried to manipulate each to see how it matches the other criteria, the picture would change. *Sheer* cannot be predicative, *ill* cannot be attributive, neither *sheer* nor *asleep* compare. The only two adjectives that match all four criteria are *placid* and *fast*.

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non-finite clauses, governed by prepositions (e.g. *to **eternity***); (d) any dependent structure more obligatory than a modifier, which completes the meaning potential of its governing item, for instance prepositional phrases as complements of adjectives (*mindful **of one's words***) or degree phrases/clauses that complement the first element (underlined) of comparative constructions like *as Adj **as a lord***).

Table 3.2. Defining criteria of adjectives

	attributive	predicative	modification by *very*	Comparison
placid	+	+	+	+
sheer	+	-	-	-
ill	-	+	+	+
asleep	-	+	-	-
endless	+	+	-	-
fast	+	+	+	+

Still, *fast* can also function as an adverb (📖 Section 3.2.1.2) – and as an adverb, it meets two of the four criteria for adjectives, viz. modification and comparison (example 19).

(19) *They used their front paws*, *then*, *and ran very* ***fast***, *like regular rabbits*.

The lesson is simple: there can be no rigid definition of the adjective since (a) not every adjective is an equally good adjective, i.e. there is an appreciable degree of heterogeneity within the class, and (b) the boundary to other word classes, especially adverbs, is not firm. The first issue will keep recurring in our discussion of syntactic, morphological, and semantic features of adjectives in the coming sections. In Section 3.2 we address the problem of unstable boundaries to other word classes.

TB 3.1. Distribution of adjectives across varieties of English

Adjectives and adverbs are very common in various registers of English like academic prose, face-to-face conversations, prepared speeches, fiction, official documents, and other situationally defined varieties known as **REGISTERS** (registers are varieties of a language defined by purpose, topic, setting, etc., and as such are different from dialects as varieties defined by the social group of speakers, cf. Biber, Conrad & Reppen 1998: Chapter 6). However, neither word class is nearly as frequent as nouns or verbs, and the two are not equally distributed across the various registers. Adjectives are especially common in written registers, above all in academic prose, adverbs are more frequent in conversation and fiction (LGSWE, p. 504). While at first this may seem haphazard, there is a good functional explanation behind this distribution. Different registers serve different purposes. Some aim to inform, others to amuse, still others to prescribe, maintain social relationships, etc., and there is usually a set of linguistic features that more or less distinctly cluster around each of these functional goals. Academic prose is designed to inform (present facts), conversation is less informational, but is more interactional and affective. A frequent use of nouns, especially nominalizations, long words, attributive adjectives, or postmodifying prepositional phrases, of the passive

construction and extraposed constructions (*It is notable that* ...) is a feature of informational texts, where we want dense, carefully integrated information (text excerpts in 1). A significantly more frequent use of pronouns (references to *me* and *you* – the conversational partners, or *him*, *her*, or *them* as absent but mutually known others), of private verbs (*know*, *think*, *feel*, *want*, *remember*, etc.) and verbs in the present tense (in narrating events), and of adverbs (describing circumstances of such events) is characteristic of involved interpersonal interaction. These forms are good for sharing feelings and concerns, or knowledge of events that concern conversational partners themselves (text excerpts in set 2).

Set 1: Academic prose (from Breban 2010: 4–5)

(1) *Part III of this study comprises two additional case studies which adduce diachronic evidence for both the general grammaticalization-cum-subjectification claim proposed in Part I and the more specific claims regarding paths and models put forward in Part II.*

(2) *A second theoretical gap which characterizes most of the existing approaches to the NP is their deficient treatment of the combinatory relations between the different (functional) elements in the NP.*

Set 2: Conversation (excerpt from the Jerry Seinfeld TV series, Season 4, Episode 22)

George: Hey, is it my imagination, or do really good looking women walk a lot faster than everybody else?
Elaine: We don't walk that fast...
George: No seriously...
Elaine: Seriously, we don't.
George: The better looking they are, the faster they go! I mean, I see they out there on the street, they're zooming around, like a blur. Like they have a motor on their ass.
Elaine: (Yelling to Jerry) Hey Jerry, come on, let's go. We're gonna miss the previews!
Jerry (coming out of the bathroom): What's the big hurry?
Elaine: Hey, how are we getting' to Scott Drake's party on Saturday night?
Jerry: Oh, Drake's party, I forgot to buy a present.

3.2 Adjectives and other word classes

Since multiple properties go into the definition of any word class, it is only natural that a property we associate with one word class may be shared by others. This makes the boundaries between word classes unstable and word class identification a matter of weighing the evidence for or against a particular classification.

In this section we illustrate some boundary issues involving adjectives. Consider, by way of introduction, the special construction featuring non-adjectives in the typically adjectival slot: the [(*that's so*) X (*of* NP)] construction. Example (20) speaks for itself.

(20) *You know, it's funny - I happen to love the taste of vanilla. But people are always comparing it negatively to chocolate. And the word vanilla has become a pejorative - like, oh,* ***you're so vanilla*** *or* ***that's so vanilla*** *- meaning bland and unadventurous.*

Here are some more instances:

(21) *Luckily, we have a little-known strategy that helps you find an alluring fragrance* ***that's so you****.*

(22) *The holiday season has always been important to the movie business, and now measured by dollars per day, it is the most important time of the year … And if the season seems longer to you, you're right. It used to start on Thanksgiving, but* ***that's so yesterday -- and maybe today****. Anyway, a lot of department stores get their Christmas decorations up before Halloween, so why not Hollywood?*

(23) *And they took their message to YouTube.* ***That's so 2008 of them****.*

(24) *Stop Writing Checks Still writing checks?* ***That's so 1995****!*

Whatever sits in the construction's X slot does not have its primary meaning or reference – a particular person (example 21, featuring a pronoun) or a slice of time in the past (examples 22–24 featuring numerals). Rather, it is interpreted as a quality, viz. 'typical of person X' or 'typical of time X'. The latter carries implications of something being outdated, old-fashioned, the former has to be filled in from one's knowledge about the (stereo)typical qualities of the referenced individual.

In Section 3.2.1 we discuss the boundaries between adjectives and adverbs, Section 3.2.2 is on adjectives and nouns, Section 3.2.3 zooms in on adjectives and participles.

3.2.1 Adjective versus adverb

There are 3 areas of overlap between adjectives and adverbs:

1. Adjectives and adverbs ending in *-ly*
2. One form: two functions
3. Adjectives and adverbs beginning with *a-*

3.2.1.1 Adjectives and adverbs ending in *-ly*

Many adverbs are formed from adjectives with the suffix *-ly*. For instance:

clear > *clearly*; *frank* > *frankly*; *blissful* > *blissfully*; *ready* > *readily*

This adverb-forming *-ly* has a "close relative" (Adams 2001: 38) in the adjectival suffix *-ly*, which builds adjectives mostly from nouns, e.g. *friendly*, *kingly*, *manly*, *womanly*, *fatherly*, *brotherly*, *masterly*, *princely*, *scholarly*, *cowardly*, *beastly*, *actorly*, *leaderly*, etc.

The adjective-forming *-ly* (and the suffix *-like* as in *dream-like*) is related to the Old English noun *lic* 'body' and the Old English adjective *(ge)lic* 'similar to' (Adams 2001: 36). It attaches to nouns denoting persons, e.g. *friend*, *king*, *man*, etc. and means 'having the qualities appropriate to N', 'characteristic of N' (OED), i.e. 'like a N', or alternatively, 'in the manner of N' (Plag 2003: 97). The status of these forms as adjectives can be gleaned from their adjectival syntax:

(25) *I just want to hear [a* ***friendly*** *VOICE]*$_{NP}$
(26) *Delpha had [a* ***manly*** *FACE]*$_{NP}$ *and wore wire-rimmed bifocals*.
(27) *It was [a mass*, ***beastly*** *MURDER of people]*$_{NP}$

Forming corresponding adverbs with the suffix *-ly* is unacceptable, as it would result in unwieldy duplicate forms in *-lily* (📖 TB 3.2.). Simply using the *-ly* adjective as an adverb may be considered inappropriate. Therefore, if there is a need for an adverb corresponding to these adjectives, a roundabout construction with the adjective is a safe bet; e.g. instead of **manlily* we use a prepositional phrase construction *in a manly way* (Quirk et al. 1985: 407), instead of *lovelily*, *in a lovely manner*, instead of *kindlily*, *in a kind manner*, instead of *godlily*, *in a god-like way*, etc.

(28) a. *I have one shortcoming*, *he confessed* ***in a manly way***.
b. *… *he confessed* ***manlily***.

Words in *-ly* denoting periodic recurrence, such as *daily*, *monthly*, *weekly*, *hourly*, are also denominal adjectives (29). However, unlike the forms above, they may be used as adverbs (30):

(29) *Prisoners are allowed one **monthly** meeting with family*.
(30) *New images are posted **monthly**. (not *monthlily)*

Lively is another form alternating between adjective (31) and adverb (32) uses:

(31) *They are famous for their hospitality*, ***lively** music*, *and colorful art*.
(32) *So really there is a sort of officially sanctioned prostitution here*, *and other stuff bullfights and river rafting to get the heart pumping **lively***. (not **livelily*)

Let us briefly comment on two more special forms: *lovely* and *early*.

According to OED, *lovely* is an adjective that developed from another adjective during the Old English period. In Old English, there was the adjective *léof* 'dear', which developed a new adjectival form, viz. *léoflic* 'lovely', or 'such as becomes dear'. The meaning of the derived adjective implied a quality related to the quality expressed by the original adjective. According to OED, forming adjectives from other adjectives in this way ceased as far back as in the Old English period. Old English had a corresponding adverb form, *luflíce* meaning 'lovingly, affectionately', 'willingly, with joy', 'lovably, beautifully'. In contemporary English, if the context calls for an adverb form corresponding to the adjective *lovely*, a periphrastic construction containing the adjective is used (34). Unlike *lively*, *lovely* does not seem acceptable as an adverb. Among the first 100 hits in COCA, there was not a single instance of *lovely* as an adverb.

(33) *All the good things they do*, *all the **lovely** things they promise*.
(34) *The tree embodies Johnny's reality **in a (subtle and) lovely way***.

Early is now used as an adjective (35) or an adverb (36) with no change in form.

(35) *He always wanted to talk in this quiet of **early** morning*.
(36) *He left **early** to avoid the departure ceremony*. *(not *earlily)*

According to OED, the original Old English form was an adverb and the adjective most likely developed from the adverb later (it was not used as an adjective in Old English and was only occasionally found in Middle English). Although the frequency count below is informal, the fact that there were between 9 and 38 adverb uses of *early* among the first 100 hits in COCA's registers might be due to the lingering association of the form with its adverb roots.

Table 3.3. Occurrences of *early* as an adverb in 100-concordance samples of various registers in COCA

Academic texts	Spoken texts	Fiction	Magazines	Newspapers
9	29	38	27	20

TB 3.2. The history of the adverb-forming suffix *-ly* and how it relates to *-ly* adjectives is complex. Let us only briefly note that, according to OED, the attachment of adverb-forming *-ly* to adjectives ending in *-ly* was fairly common until the 17th century, resulting in forms like *earlily*, *godlily*, *kindlily*, *livelily*, *lovelily*, *statelily*. Such forms are now considered awkward and are avoided. Bauer (2004b: 6) observes that there are no instances of such words in the eighteen-million-word COBUILD corpus (🕮 http://www.cobuild.collins.co.uk, cf. also Bauer 1991). COCA features none either. BNC, however, currently has 3 hits for *jollily* and *sillily* each, 2 hits for *surelily*, 1 for *uglily*, *seemlily*, *oilily*, *ghostlily*, and *beastlily* each.

3.2.1.2 One form: two functions

fast, *long*

Some forms without *-ly* function as both adjectives and adverbs. In some cases this is so because there is no *-ly* form, in which case alternate uses are acceptable even in standard English. This is so with *fast* – used as an adjective in (37–38) and adverb (39); and with *long* – used as an adjective in (40–42) and as an adverb in (43) (**longly*).[6]

(37) *Gleaming with fresh paint*, *she was* ***fast***, *clean*, *modern*, *beautiful*.
(38) *I was no longer content with the fancy apartments*, ***fast*** *cars*, *and jet-setting around the world*.
(39) *It's late-afternoon going into evening*. *The sun is sinking* ***fast***.
(40) *What do people who sail alone over* ***long*** *distances think about*?
(41) *He had affairs*. *Some of them were* ***long*** *as well as secret*.
(42) *I haven't seen some of these people in a* ***long*** *time*.
(43) *They didn't have to wait* ***long*** *to find out*.

short

With *short*, things are different. Even though the corresponding adverb form – *shortly* – exists, *short* tends to be used in both functions, cf. *short* as an adjective in (44) and as an adverb in (45):

(44) *A* ***short*** *laugh popped from Daphne's lips*.
(45) *Don't you ever get jealous about her*? *He laughed* ***short*** *and fast when I shook my head*.

[6] In fact, according to OED, *fast* in the sense of 'rapid' was originally an adverb and only later came to be used as an adjective.

This is because the adverb *shortly* rarely matches the adjective semantically. The most frequent meaning of *shortly* is 'soon' (46), which is removed from (even if related to) the adjective's meaning 'not extended in space or time'. Sometimes *shortly* matches the adjective in its meaning 'not extended in time' (47–48).

(46) *Into this dead and bleeding silence came a knock on the door, followed* ***shortly*** *by the butler.*
(47) *I am quite well, she answered* ***shortly****, and walked away down the street.*
(48) *She laughed* ***shortly****.*

late

Another special case is *late*, a form which, like *short*, is found in both adjective (49) and adverb functions (50). The *-ly* adverb form *lately* (51) has a different meaning, viz. 'recently':

(49) *Poe and his wife invited me to a* ***late*** *dinner.*
(50) *Monday I worked* ***late*** *and fell into bed minutes after I got home.*
(51) *The economy hasn't really been improving* ***lately****.*

Other cases

So far we have observed that the same forms may be used in the two functions because the *-ly* adverb form does not exist or (usually) has a different meaning. But in non-standard English, a non-*ly*, adjectival form, will be used even if the corresponding and semantically matching *-ly* adverb exists. Compare *slow* and *slowly* used as adverbs in (52) and (53); and *strange* and *strangely* as adverbs in (54) and (55):

(52) *Professional golfers influence players. If we play* ***slow****, they'll play* ***slow****.*
(53) *There is enough pressure without someone counting the seconds ticking by. Jack played* ***slowly****, but he never tried to disrupt your rhythm.*
(54) *Steven acted very* ***strange*** *during the meeting.*
(55) *So, this administration has acted very* ***strangely*** *about this, Bob.*

While the choice of one form over the other in the case of *slow* vs. *slowly* or *strange* vs. *strangely* may be a matter of personal preference (the *-ly* form being preferred in formal style), there are positional restrictions on the non-*ly* (adjectival) form. The adjectival form can only take over as adverb when it follows the verb and its object – if present (Quirk et al. 1985: 405):

(56) a. *The man in the front* ***slowly*** *walked forward.*
b. **The man in the front* ***slow*** *walked forward.*
c. *The man in the front walked forward* ***slow****.*

Other colloquial forms include:

(57) *And then I would probably just turn up and act **stupid**.*
(58) *I'm sure Miss Marcy fixed him up **real** good.*
(59) *She wanted him to speak **proper** like her cousin the duke.*
(60) *If I talked **tough**, inside I was mush. I acted **confident**, but was petrified.*

Interestingly, while the positive form of the adjective is often found unacceptable in adverb roles in standard English, comparatives and superlatives are less objectionable (Quirk et al. 1985: 406):

(61) ?*Speak **clear**.*
(62) *Speak **clearer**.*
(63) *This newsreader speaks **clearest** of all.*
(64) *It's **easier** said than done.*
(65) *Ami ran (the) **slowest**.*
(66) *The car went **slower** and **slower**.*

Other acceptable uses of adjectives as adverbs include:

(67) *Danger, go **slow**.* (acceptable on a traffic control sign)
(68) *Speak **loud** and **clear**.* (acceptable if coordinated)
(69) *Lose **fair** and **square**.*

Finally, there is miscellany of other matching forms with adjective and adverb uses. Those that also share the meaning include items like e.g. *freelance* or *worldwide*. Cf. examples below, where the adjective uses (70a, 71a) and adverb uses (70b, 71b) only differ in distribution. Admittedly, since *-wise* is an adverb-forming suffix, we would not be amiss if we claimed that the adverb in (71b) is more basic:

(70) a. *A day in the life of a **freelance** translator is not just about translating.*
b. *A translator is considered a housewife if she works **freelance**.*
(71) a. *The Zika virus is grabbing **worldwide** attention.*
b. *This type of fungus is found **worldwide**.*

In some cases, there is a difference in meaning, like with *dead*, *ill*, *pretty*, *only*. Disregarding the fine syntactic detail, note that in (72a) the adjectively used *ill* 'sick' modifies *woman*; when used as an adverb *ill* (72b) means 'negatively' and modifies the verb. In (73a) the adjective *pretty* 'beautiful' modifies the noun *house*; when used as an adverb in (73b), *pretty* is an intensifying modifier of the adjective *easy*. In (74a) the adjectively used *only* 'sole' modifies *brother*; when

used as an adverb in (74b), *only* indicates the focus of the proposition[7] in the clause:

(72) a. *A very **ill** woman pushing an IV pole walks by*.
b. *I don't speak **ill** of the dead*.

(73) a. *This is a very **pretty** house in a fine neighborhood*.
b. *So Donald Trump has a **pretty** easy argument here.*

(74) a. *His **only** brother is three years younger than he*.
b. *I **only** asked. I **only** asked for a glass of water*.

TB 3.3. *good* vs. *well*

According to LGSWE (pp. 542–543), *good* is commonly used as an alternative to the adverb *well* in spoken AmE, but is rare in any register of BrE.

(1) *Ian and the beer did not go **good** together, but it inspired him*.
(2) *It'll go **good** with the congo drums you got me last time*.

3.2.1.3 Adjectives and adverbs beginning with *a-*

Some words begin in *a-*, a form historically related to the OE preposition *on*, *an* (OED). According to OED, the OE preposition featured meanings like 'on', 'in', 'unto', 'into', 'to', 'engaged in', 'at' etc., still discernible to an extent in words like *asleep*, *awake*, *afraid*, *alert*, *abroad*, *aboard*, *around*, *away*, *ablaze*, *alive*, *afloat*, *alike*, *afire*, *aloof*, *ashamed*, etc. These words are of special interest here since they are difficult to categorize as adverbs or adjectives.

As far as their syntax goes, all these words function predicatively, some also in postposition, which should speak to their status as adjectives. Yet, very few readily occur attributively, which makes them poor adjectives, if adjectives at all. We checked the total frequency and the frequency of attributively used *aloof*,

[7] Like virtually any other linguistic term, the term *proposition* can be defined in various ways. For our purposes, we will define **PROPOSITION** as the semantic core of the sentence, containing information about states or events in which entities participate (Givón 2001: 8).

afire, and *abroad* in COCA,[8] and established their general dispreference for attribution.[9] Still, there were differences among individual words.

Aloof: total 1006; attributive: 124

(75) *He was **aloof** and could be dismissive.*
(76) *She didn't have a sultry look or an **aloof** demeanor.*

Afire: total: 443; attributive: 0

(77) *Flames licked out from under the wheel wells, the tires were **afire**.*

Abroad: total: 12146; attributive: 0

(78) *He's much more effective when he is **abroad** rather than at home.*

Even when they occur predicatively, *a-* words are not necessarily adjectives. Examples (80a) and (81a) are instances of a small set of predicatively used adverbs denoting place and time (📖 Section 8.1). Compare them to *bona fide* predicative adjectives in (79a):

(79) a. *She was **angry**/**calm**.*
(80) a. *She was **upstairs**/**abroad**.*
(81) a. *The game is **tomorrow**/**today**.*

Unlike predicative adjectives, which allow a variety of copular verbs (79b) predicative adverbs are restricted to copular *be* (cf. 80b, 81b):

(79) b. *She seemed/appeared/looked/became **angry**/**calm**.*
(80) b. **She seemed **upstairs**/**abroad**.*
(81) b. **The game seemed/appeared/looked/became **tomorrow**/**today**.*

Predicative *a-* adverbs also differ from predicative adjectives semantically; like many other undisputable adverbs (*here*, *there*, *now*, *recently*, etc.), these forms denote space and time. This is why predicative adverbs can take a verb of motion instead of *to be* (80c) and why they can act as responses to the interrogative

[8] We looked for attributive uses of words like *aloof* using the following search syntax: aloof [nn*]. [nn*] was a cue for any noun following the attributive form (*aloof*). It should be noted, though, that such general formulae may fail to recognize errors and non-target forms and require manual cleaning. We did a bit of that to eliminate errors. For example, COCA's 12 hits for attributive *afire* [nn*] were all scrapped. Some involved misspelling, e.g. *afire alarm* was the misspelling of *a fire alarm*; the rest were predicative uses. With *abroad* none of the 191 hits were our target strings. Although we did not systematically eliminate all misclassifications, the numerical discrepancy is robust enough to support claims about the attributive vs. predicative asymmetry.

[9] *A*-adjectives may be readier to occur attributively if premodified, cf. *He'd never been the type to awaken easily, always struggling to cross that daily border between slumber and the responsibilities of the **wide awake** world.*

adverb *where*, as in *Where is she*? – *(He's) abroad/around/away*. *A-* adjectives denote temporary states and are incompatible with verbs of motion (79c) or interrogative adverbs:

(80) c. *She ran* ***upstairs****./She moved* ***abroad****.*
(79) c. **She ran/moved* ***angry/calm****.*

To conclude, the forms *abroad*, *aboard*, *around*, *away* are adverbs. Common *a-* adjectives include: *ablaze*, *alive*, *afloat*, *alike*, *afire*, *alert*, *ashamed*, *ajar*, *aloof*, *adrift*, *alone*, *awake*, *aghast*, *averse*, *aware* (Quirk et al. 1985: 408).

3.2.2 Adjective versus noun

The boundary between adjectives and nouns may also be uncertain as both can be used attributively.

(82) *a busy friend*
(83) *a business friend*

Attributive use is usually considered a defining criterion for adjectives but unless an attributively used item displays other adjectival properties, we have little reason to class it as an adjective.

Table 3.4. Differences between attributive adjectives and attributive nouns

	adjective	**noun**
Attributive use	*a busy friend*	*a business friend*
Predicative use	*The friend is busy.*	**The friend is business.*
Modification by *very*	*a very busy friend*	**a very business friend*
Comparison	*a busier friend*	**a businesser/more business friend*

Unlike most adjectives, nouns that occur attributively cannot function predicatively after a copula verb. Instead, they correspond to a postmodifying prepositional phrase or relative clause (Quirk et al. 1985: 411).

(84) *a* ***business*** *friend ≈ a friend with whom I do business*
(85) ***garden*** *tools ≈ tools for the garden*
(86) ***morning*** *train ≈ a train that departs/arrives in the morning*

Of course, prepositional phrases and relative clauses may paraphrase attributive adjectives too, e.g. *beautiful landscape ≈ a landscape of great beauty*. But whereas for the attributive adjective this is optional (the predicative is still available: *the landscape is beautiful*), with attributive nouns, postmodifying paraphrases are obligatory.

Some nouns can function both attributively and predicatively and so appear to lie closer to adjectives than (84–86). These nouns denote the material from which or the style in which something was made (Quirk et al. 1985: 412):

(87) a. *that **concrete** floor* ≈ *That floor is **concrete***.
(88) a. ***Worcester** porcelain* ≈ *The porcelain is **Worcester***.
(89) a. *Those **apple** pies* ≈ *Those pies are **apple***.

However, even these do not fit adjectives perfectly. When predicative, they only seem to be compatible with the copular verb *to be*. Typical adjectives allow a wider range of copulas, e.g. *seem*. According to Quirk et al. (1985: 411), the following predicatively used nouns are unacceptable:

(87) b. ?*That floor seems **concrete***.
(89) c. ?*Those pies seem **apple***.

In contrast to the examples above, there are formally matching nouns and adjectives that co-exist as separate, well-established lexical items. The adjective and the noun are independent words and each sits comfortably in its own word class. Their relationship can be described in terms of the word formation process called conversion (📖 MSPS II, p. 12), which creates novel lexemes from existing ones, usually of a different word class, with no overt means. Each noun in the pairs below seems like the product of adjective-to-noun conversion. But once converted, the form has received the usual trappings of nouns, e.g. plural markers, articles, or other determiners (Quirk et al. 1985: 411) and is no longer morphosyntactically associated with its adjectival roots:

(90) *a **classic** book* ≈ *You won't find that many **classics** in our library*.
(91) ***intellectual** interests* ≈ *She considers herself an **intellectual***.
(92) *a **noble** family* ≈ *The king greeted the **nobles***.
(93) *a **natural** skier* ≈ *He's a **natural** for the job*.

To these we may add the adjective and the noun *perennial*; the adjective and the noun *familiar*, the adjective and the noun *sectional* in examples (94–99).

(94) *We need to understand the history, contribution, and special problems of particular and often exemplary minority groups in American society. In short, we need to understand the how and the why of their **perennial** struggle*.
(95) *Get your garden off to a good start by planting your **perennials** at the right time*.
(96) *That way she has her **familiar** things with her and you know she's comfortable*.
(97) *The saying "every witch has her **familiar**", has a lot of truth in it*.

(98) ***Sectional*** *doors occupy exactly the same amount of internal* garage *space as a monolithic* door.
(99) *My husband and I* bought *this* ***sectional*** *for our downstairs theater*, *and with all the cup holders and consoles it's great for drinks and snacks*.

Nouns and adjectives linked through conversion should be distinguished from examples like (100). In (100) the adjective looks like a conversion from noun, but the keen sense of absence of the head noun *examination* makes it look more like a case of ellipsis.

(100) *Have you had your* ***physical*** *yet*?

3.2.3 Adjective versus participle

The main role of *-ing* and *-ed* participles is to build complex verb phrases as in (101a) and (102a):

(101) a. *We started chatting and soon he* ***was promising*** *me the world*.
b. *We started chatting and soon he started* ***to promise*** *me the world*.

(102) a. *He* ***has surprised*** *me by how far he has gone*.
b. *He* ***surprises*** *me by how far he will go*.

Promising and *surprised* build the past progressive and the present perfect verb phrase, respectively. Their "verbness" in (101a) and (102a) is reflected in the presence of the auxiliaries *was* and *has*, respectively, and object phrases (*me*). Also, as parts of these complex verb phrases they have a functional match in the corresponding simple verb phrases (101b and 102b).

But participles are well-known for their categorical inconstancy. In MSPS II (p. 21–22) we borrowed Quirk et al.'s (1972: 133) examples with *painting* to illustrate the cline between the most verbal and the most nominal uses of *-ing* forms. Here, we are taking participles up again to see how they straddle the verb – adjective divide. Not all participles are equally adjective-like. Forms like *interesting* appear like full-blown adjectives; forms like *barking* in *a barking dog* less so. The more adjectival properties a participle shows (in a given context), the more fitting the hybrid term *participial adjective* (LGSWE, p. 530). Let us illustrate some participles with adjectival properties.

Attributive use

(103) *He gave me [a* ***surprised*** *look]*$_{NP}$
(104) *A new laser treatment is proving [a* ***promising*** *alternative to more invasive surgery]*$_{NP}$

(105) *We had [an **interesting** conversation]$_{NP}$ this morning*.

Predicative use and modification by *very*[10]

(106) *She was/seemed very **surprised** that he would talk about it so openly*.
(107) *She was/seemed a very **promising** scientist*.
(108) *I thought that was/seemed very **interesting***.[11]

Comparison

(109) *No one was less **surprised** than Costner when the film was savaged by press and public*.
(110) *Mimicking what nature has created seems more **promising** than trying to devise novel DNA*.
(111) *I'm not as **interesting** as her standard seduction targets*.

With some *-ing* and *-ed* forms, adjectival and verbal properties may mix in the same sentence. Example (112) combines adjectival *very* with the *by* agent phrase associated with passive verb morphology, i.e. the *-en* participle. Although some speakers may question their acceptability, such uses are not rare (Quirk et al. 1985: 415):

(112) *And a lot of people were very **offended** by Hillary Clinton in those days*.

However, similar sentences featuring non-personal *by* phrases are usually found less acceptable:

(113) ?*We are very **encouraged** by these preliminary results*.

Without explicit indicators like *very* or the *by* phrase in (114), the status of *-ed* forms remains unclear (Quirk et al. 1985: 415).

(114) *A lot of people were **offended***.

As a participle, *offended* would be interpreted dynamically as denoting the act of offending. The adjective would be more static, focusing on the emotional state resulting from that act. Similarly with *-ing* forms. When interpreted as adjectives, they denote an attribute of an entity (115). As participles, they mean the act of

[10] NOTE: Adjectives (and adverbs) modify by *very*; verbs are modified by *much* (often, *much* is itself modified by *very – very much*). *I loved her very much*. *She was much loved*. **She was very loved*.

[11] When the *-ing* form occurs as a participle in a progressive verb phrase and the *-ed* form is part of the passive verb phrase, their auxiliary verb can only be a tensed form of *to be*. This is why by replacing *to be* with another copula verb we can test whether a clause features a participial adjective or a participle as part of a complex verb phrase. *She was/seemed a very promising scientist*. vs. **She seemed promising me the world*.

insulting (116). Note that if we interpret *insulting* as a participle, the sentence in (116) is not quite acceptable since the verb is transitive and should take an object.

(115) *John is **insulting***. ('a rude, abusive person')
(116) ?*John is **insulting***. ('in the process of throwing insults at someone')

Participles and participial adjectives must be distinguished from forms in *-ed* that do not feature a verb in their base. The latter are adjectives derived from nouns by *-ed* suffixation and mean 'having N':

(117) *gift > gifted*: *He was **gifted**, he was smart*.
(118) *skill > skilled*: *He was a **skilled**, habitual liar*.

It may be hard to tell whether an *-ed* adjective is denominal or participial because many nouns become verbs by conversion. What looks like a base noun in an *-ed* adjective may actually be a base verb. For example, *canned* in *canned fish* may have been derived from *a can* or *to can (fish)*; *sliced* in *sliced bread* may have been based on *a slice* or *to slice*. Still, it is relatively easy to distinguish participial *-ed* adjectives from denominal *-ed* adjectives. First, by checking if there even is a verb corresponding to the base of the *-ed* form. Second, by paraphrasing. Only denominal *-ed* adjectives mean 'has (a) N'. Participial adjectives usually paraphrase as 'has been vb-ed'. Therefore, *canned* in (119) is a participial adjective meaning 'tomatoes and oysters that have been canned'; but *bearded* in (120) is denominal, since it translates into 'have a beard':

(119) *You did get the **canned** tomatoes and **canned** oysters, didn't you*?
(120) *It's still me whether I'm **bearded** or not*.

Prefixed *-ed* adjectives appear to lack a (correspondingly prefixed) verbal base (121a–122a), but these adjectives actually emerge by the prefixation of already established participial adjectives (121b–122b):

(121) a. *unexpected* < **to unexpect*
(122) a. *unwanted* < **to unwant*

(121) b. *unexpected* < *expected*
(122) b. *unwanted* < *wanted*

When *-ed* and *-ing* items form compounds with other elements (123), they are full adjectives. For some participles, compounding with another element is the only way they can ever be used in adjectival functions, cf. (124–126):

(123) *heart-breaking*, *awe-inspiring*, *soft-spoken*, *ill-treated*, etc.
(124) a. *Lowell was a **soft-spoken** man, kind to people*.
b. **Lowell was a **spoken** man, kind to people*.

(125) a. *We parked his Chevy in a **well-travelled** spot*.
b. **We parked his Chevy in a **travelled** spot*.

(126) a. *He seemed surprised by how **well-read** I was*.
b. **He seemed surprised by how **read** I was*.

A final note on meaning. When the *-ed* participle is used attributively, the interpretation is usually passive (127), but the passive interpretation is excluded if the underlying verb is intransitive. Such participles are interpreted actively (128–130):

(127) *It was a string of **unbroken** promises - **broken** promises*. ('promises that have (not) been broken')
(128) *Who makes up lies about being an **escaped** convict*? ('a convict who has escaped')
(129) *Several **departed** souls had recently been cremated here*. ('souls that have departed')
(130) *Rogers and his wife*, *Dana*, *have two **grown** sons*, *one of whom is a Navy lieutenant*. ('sons that have grown up')

As argued by Quirk et al. (1985: 413), not all participles are equally acceptable as attributives. While the archaic *departed guests* ('guests who have departed') is acceptable, **gone guests* is ruled out ('guests who have gone'). Also, the participial adjective and the corresponding verb may mean different things:

(131) *Shevardnadze is a very clever politician*, *very **calculating***. *He never bets on just one person*, *always two or three*. ('scheming')
(132) *That way*, *traffic congestion can be factored in when the device is **calculating** routes*. ('determining using mathematical calculations')

T3. Word classes (adjectives) in a cross-linguistic perspective

The assumption that word classes are homogeneous and discrete from one another is an idealization that cannot stand the test of single language data, let alone data from a range of languages. In this section, we draw attention to some consequences of word class indeterminacy for language-internal and cross-linguistic word classification, drawing on Haspelmath (2012).[12]

We turn to the latter problem first. If we set out to compare word classes in different languages, we would have to assume that all languages have the same categories (a universalist position). For instance, to claim that Ancient Greek, English, and Mandarin Chinese all have nouns means that we assume that the nature of the category adjective is somehow intuitively obvious and needs no definition. This fairy-tale idea is challenged by the definitions of nouns found in the grammars of the three languages.

Greek Noun (Dionysius Thrax, Ars minor, 2nd c. BCE)
ὄνομά ἐστι μέρος λόγου πτωτικόν, σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα σημαῖνον
'a Noun is a case-inflected part of speech that denotes a thing or an action'

English Noun (LGSWE, pp. 62–63)
a Noun is a word class characterized by a combination of morphological (number and case inflection), syntactic (Nouns head noun phrases and function as subject, direct object, indirect object, etc.), and semantic features (Nouns refer to concrete entities, but may also denote qualities and states; they are associated with semantic roles such as agent, affected, and recipient).[13]

Mandarin Chinese Noun
a Noun is a word that can follow a classifier

As the above definitions show, grammars of different languages use different, language-specific criteria to define what we assume to be the "same" word class. Any comparison between such widely different words would have to be based on an assumption of similarity that has nothing to do with language particular categories like classifier, case, determiner, or even word order. The similarity is of a functional-semantic nature, since it is reasonable to expect that all languages have words for referring to extralinguistic entities (prototypically objects); words

[12] This is a significantly shortened and simplified overview. Anyone interested in details should consult Haspelmath (2012).

[13] The definition of English nouns given in Haspelmath (2012: 111) was either incomplete or included an inaccurate reference. Therefore, it has been replaced with a more suitable description of the word class from a different source. It should be noted, though, that this oversight does not invalidate the general argument made in Haspelmath (2012).

for property assignment (prototypically qualities like age, size etc.); words for predicating actions (prototypically dynamic volitional actions), regardless of how they formally manifest in the language-particular grammars.

The second problem of word class indeterminacy is deciding when a difference between sets of words is large enough for the two sets to be treated as separate word classes, rather than one being a subclass of the other. "If one starts out by asking whether a language has a distinction between nouns and verbs, or between verbs and adjectives, one presupposes that nouns, verbs, and adjectives can only be major classes. But what if their relationship can equally be described as a subclass relationship?" (Haspelmath 2012: 111–112). We could claim that, if two sets share a property which a third set lacks, they form a single macro-class. For instance, because they share some properties (🕮 Table T1), adjectives and nouns may form a single macro-class different from the verb as another macro-class.

While the proposal may sound outlandish at first, this view has had a long tradition in Western linguistic thought, going as far back as the earliest grammatical descriptions of Greek and Latin. In Latin, *homo* 'man' and *novus* 'new' were regarded as members of the same category, viz. *nomen*, for a long time. After all, Latin adjectives and nouns shared quite a few properties that distinguished them from verbs. Later this category was subdivided into *nomen substantivum* and *nomen adjectivum* and the two ultimately came to be regarded as separate word classes in 19th century linguistics.

Table T1. Latin *Nomina* and *Verba* (from Haspelmath 2012: 112)

	Nomen		**Verbum**
	Substantivum	**Adjectivum**	
Inflection	+	+	+
Case	+	+	-
Intrinsic number	+	+	-
Person	-	-	+
Tense	-	-	+
Copula in predicative use	+	+	-
Referential use	+	+	-
Attributive use	-	+	-
Comparative construction	-	+	-

The overlap between nouns and adjectives is impressive. Interestingly, similar overlaps have led some linguists to claim that a language like Huallaga Quechua, has no adjectives (Weber 1989). The fact that in Huallaga Quechua words denoting 'things' and words denoting 'properties' can both be used for reference,

both require the copula *ka-* to be used predicatively, and can both be used attributively was sufficient to collapse the two kinds of word into the same class.

Reference	*rumi-ta rikaa*	*hatun-ta rikaa*
	stone-ACC see.1SG	big-ACC see.1SG
	‘I see the stone.’	‘I see the big one.’
Predication	*taqay rumi ka-yka-n*	*taqay hatun ka-yka-n*
	that stone be-IMPFV-3	that big be- IMPFV-3
	‘That is a stone.’	‘That is big/a big one.’
Attribution	*rumi wasi*	*hatun wasi*
	stone house	big house
	‘stone house’	‘big house’

A mere shift of focus to a different set of properties easily may lead to the opposite conclusion, viz. that Huallaga Quechua has adjectives. According to Floyd (2011: 53), Quechua has both adjectives and nouns because adjectives can precede nouns, but not vice versa:

Chaypi	*shuk*	*yurak*	*wasi-ta*	*riku-ku-ni*.
there	one	white	house-ACC	see-PROG-1SG
**Chaypi*	*shuk*	*wasi*	*yurak-ta*	*riku-ku-ni*.
there	one	house	white-ACC	see-PROG-1SG

Of course, the interpretation in terms of a class-subclass relationship (along the lines of Latin nouns and adjectives) might be equally plausible.

Exercises

1. Use a good reference corpus (preferably COCA or BNC) to check the items below for the four criteria of adjectivehood: 1. Attributive use; 2. Predicative use; 3. Modification by *very*; 4. Comparison by *-er* or *-est* or *more* and *most*. Note that ambiguous adjectives may behave differently under different interpretations.

	attributive	predicative	*very*	comparison
1	*married*			
2	*fantastic*			
3	*rancid*			
4	*non-existent*			
5	*Australian*			
6	*lazy*			
7	*elect*			
8	*known*			
9	*defined*			
10	*interesting*			
11	*criminal*			

2. In each group of word forms below identify those that are forms of the same lexeme:

1. woman, woman's, women, womanly, girl
2. greenish, greener, green, greens, greenery
3. empty, emptier, empties, emptiness
4. quiet, quieter, quietly
5. dead, deader, deadly, deaden, death, deaths

3. Adjectives or adverbs? Manipulate the context to identify the word class of the underlined forms. Then, if possible, provide a sentence where the same form would be used as the other word class.

1. The off-white stone walls contrasted **nicely** with the shingled roof.
2. This board put their hearts and souls into keeping this event **alive**.
3. He's **street-wise**, **prison**- and **jail-wise**, and **law enforcement-wise**.
4. I've always been a little dyslexic, **relationship-wise**.
5. How to change... when change is **hard**?
6. She had been looking forward to studying **abroad** since she was a teen.

7. He mowed fairways, hopping on the tractor **early** and almost never getting off until **late**.
8. The garden's main bloom show begins in **late** winter and peaks in spring.
9. The new type was **fast** becoming a cliché.
10. This was a chess match, and Reagan was **masterly** at setting the tempo.
11. They allow other players to take their turn and are **friendly** with their competitors.
12. She had **lately** been telling herself that she had to stop taking these risks.

4. Use a corpus (COCA or BNC) to check whether the a-adjectives also occur attributively. Supply an example for each adjective, if available.

	***a*- adjective**	**attributive**
1	*ablaze*	
2	*alive*	
3	*ajar*	
4	*aware*	
5	*aghast*	
6	*adrift*	
7	*ashamed*	

5. Adjectives and nouns that denote nationalities may have the same form. Complete the following table giving the adjective for the corresponding country or continent name, and the corresponding nouns for an individual inhabitant or the whole nation.

	Country or continent	**adjective**	**Noun for individual**	**Noun for nation**
1	*China*			
2	*England*			
3	*Holland*			
4	*Croatia*			
5	*New Zealand*			
6	*Poland*			
7	*Germany*			
8	*Hungary*			
9	*Ireland*			
10	*Wales*			
11	*Scotland*			
12	*Mexico*			
13	*Peru*			
14	*Brazil*			
15	*Iran*			

16	*Australia*			
17	*Russia*			
18	*The Sudan*			
19	*Iraq*			
20	*Britain*			
21	*Asia*			
22	*Spain*			
23	*Greece*			

6. Read the following sentences and decide whether the bolded forms are (more like) adjectives or participles. Explain.

1. This was written from an optimism that seems **amazing** to us now.
2. The windows were **broken**, either by snow or by the men in a desperate attempt to escape.
3. Young initially sounded more **confused** than flattered.
4. Pakistani women are killed each year by family members who believe their honor has been **damaged** if a female relative refuses an arranged marriage.
5. She was **damaging** apartment property, threatening neighbors and acting erratically.
6. Teams also received feedback and evaluative comments from the judges during the competition, within **defined** limits.
7. Those of us in the middle of this country will not be **forgotten**.
8. My school is racially **mixed**.
9. Now, in these pictures, the house is still **furnished**.
10. To really make it a business, you'd have to be bonded and **insured**.
11. Well, it's always **interesting** to me.
12. Such fully **known** worlds are not devoid of uncertainty.
13. His description of imminent calamity is at odds with dozens of other descriptions with which I've been relentlessly **furnished**.
14. A child's attention span is **limited**, even when the weather is ideal and fish are biting.
15. Menón feels compassion and respect for a military leader with whom he identifies, and he is so **moved** by his tragic end that he takes the offending noose with him.
16. It rests on an unhealthy dualism that conceives nature and humankind as radically distinct and **opposed** to each other.
17. Our polling shows about two-thirds of residents of Colorado Springs are very **pleased** with the direction of the city.

18. He was the one who'd surprised her, who kept **surprising** her year after year.
19. It just gets so **tiring**.
20. One of the most important needs of a ship's power plant is a **well-trained** and competent crew.
21. The political environment is so **unsettled** right now.
22. At the end of the course, students turned in a final **written** business plan.
23. This encouraged them to develop a more **sophisticated** understanding of the problem.
24. The importance of such multidisciplinary programs has previously been **advanced**.
25. Next, they go through a heavy-duty grinder and are **mixed** with fruit and vegetables.
26. The illness didn't feel deadly, only like a nuisance, **tiring** us so we couldn't work.

Summary of Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 we examined the defining features of adjectives, i.e. their morphological, syntactic, and semantic characteristics. By observing how various features (fail to) materialize with particular adjectives, we were able to reveal the internal heterogeneity of the word class and appreciate the permeable nature of its boundaries to other word classes like adverbs, nouns, and participles.

Chapter 4: Comparison of adjectives

"Why do we even have the term *horsepower*? Is it to further humiliate the horses? The space shuttle rockets have 20 million horsepower! Is there any point in still comparing it to the horses? Any chance of going back to using rockets with horses trying to keep track of how many we're gonna need?"

(Jerry Seinfeld)

With adjectives that express gradable qualities (📖 Chapter 6) we can specify the degree to which the quality is present in an entity. One way to do this is to use degree adverbs with an intensifying or downtoning effect, as in *fabulously expensive* or *quite expensive*. In this chapter, we introduce and elaborate on Quirk et al.'s (1985) and the LGSWE taxonomy of comparative constructions.

The chapter is divided in two sections addressing:

4.1. the inflected forms *-er* and *-est* and the periphrastic forms *more* and *most*, both used for comparisons to a higher degree;

4.2. constructions for higher-, same, and lower-degree comparisons featuring various degree complements: e.g. *too* adj *to*-clause, *as* adj *as* phrase or clause; *less* adj *than* + phrase or clause.

We discuss comparison by *-er* and *-est* and the periphrastic forms *more* and *most* separately because these types of comparison have enjoyed primacy in descriptive accounts of English adjectives, in EFL textbooks etc. They may be regarded as the prototypical constructions for adjective (and adverb) comparison and as such deserve special attention. As we proceed, we will survey a number of special cases and provide informal corpus data, where relevant, to support claims about preferences for either form of comparison (by inflection vs. by periphrasis). Section 4.2 will then illustrate a variety of other constructions allowing comparison to the same, higher, and lower degree.

4.1 Inflected and periphrastic comparison: comparison to a higher degree

4.1.1 Regular comparison

The following constructions express the idea that an entity has a property to a degree higher than that found in an implied or stated standard of comparison:

1. the inflected forms *-er*, and *-est*;
2. the periphrastic forms *more* and *most*.

Higher-degree comparison involves a three-degree system, viz. the absolute or positive degree, the comparative degree, and the superlative degree. The English inflectional and periphrastic forms express the comparative and the superlative, whereas the uninflected base form or the unmodified form of the adjective expresses the absolute degree, as shown in the Table 4.1.:

Table 4.1. Degrees of comparison in English adjectives

	ABSOLUTE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
INFLECTION	*clear*	*clearer*	*clearest*
PERIPHRASIS	*abundant*	*more abundant*	*most abundant*

TB 4.1. The many faces of *most*

As Bauer duly warns (1994: 52), it is important to distinguish between the superlative use of *most*, as in *the most beautiful horse in the world*, and *most* which is not a genuine superlative, but an intensifier equivalent to *very*: *That is a most fascinating story*.

On top of that, there are constructions with *more* and *most* where no comparison of the adjective is made at all. In examples like *students with most correct answers* we are not expressing the extreme degree of correctness where some answers would be judged as more, or less correct, and some as the most correct of all. We are talking about students who have the most – the largest number of – correct answers. The quality of answers is not up for comparison, the number of correct answers, however, is subject to comparative quantification. In this example, *many* and its superlative *most* function as postdeterminers (🕮 MSPS II, pp. 159–164). The fact that even quantifying determiners like *many* and *much* (also *little* and *few*) compare for degree leads us to conclude, with some resignation, that comparison is rather unreliable as a diagnostic for adjectives.

4.1.2 Irregular comparison and other special forms

Good*, *bad*, *far

In a small set of highly frequent adjectives, the bases of comparative and superlative forms differ from the absolute form of the adjective. This relationship between forms in a paradigm of a single lexeme where one of the inflected forms bears no morphological resemblance to the other inflected form is called **SUPPLETION** (📖 MSPS I, p. 16; MSPS II, p. 18; Lieber 2009: 105). *Good* and *bad* have suppletive comparatives and superlatives. With *far* there is some resemblance between the three forms (📖 Table 4.2.):

Table 4.2. Comparison of *good*, *bad*, and *far*

ABSOLUTE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
good	*better*	*best*
bad	*worse*	*worst*
far	*further*	*furthest*
	farther	*farthest*

The forms *father* and *further*, and *farthest* and *furthest*, are two comparative and superlative variants of the absolute form *far*. Both sets of variants occur as adjectives or adverbs. While *farther* and *farthest* seem to be restricted to expressions of physical distance, *further* and *furthest* are not restricted in this way. Still, the comparative form *further* typically occurs in more abstract senses,[14] taking on meanings seemingly quite distant from *far*, viz. 'more', 'additional', 'later', while *furthest* seems to occur predominantly in the sense of spatial distance, with nouns like *edge*, *reach*, *depth*, *person*, *leap*, *extremity*, etc.

(1) *We're going to have to take **further** steps to deal with climate change.*
(2) *In the **furthest** depths of space... we will find the secrets to inner space.*
(3) *Swimming with it, we got to a rubble bank on the **farther** shore.*
(4) *Even the faintest sounds reached the **farthest** corner of the square.*

Old

Old compares in two ways: *older*/*oldest* and *elder*/*eldest*. The former are the usual forms. *Elder* and *eldest* may occur attributively in references to the relative seniority of members of a family, especially in BrE:

(5) *My **elder** brother was like the leader in the family.*
(6) *Her mother and her **eldest** sister pushed her to get an education.*

[14] Actually, it is hard to come by an example of *further* in the sense of physical distance.

Elder cannot be followed by a standard of comparison (*than* NP).

Well* and *ill

Well 'healthy' and *ill* 'in bad health' compare like *good* and *bad*, respectively.

(7) *He feels* ***better***/***worse***.

Better can be interpreted in two ways in (8):

(8) *He is* ***better***.
a. 'He is well again'
b. 'He is less ill, he's a little bit better'

There is no superlative *best* for the health sense of *well*. *Worse* is the opposite of *better* in (8b).

(9) *He is* ***worse***. 'He is less well'

When the forms *well*, *ill*, or *good* are first elements of compound adjectives like *good-looking*; *well-meaning*, *well-known*, *well-established*, *well-documented*, *well-suited*, *well-behaved*, *well-educated*, *well-balanced*; *ill-equipped*, *ill-suited*, *ill-looking*, they compare inflectionally or periphrastically. According to Quirk et al. (1985: 464), the inflected forms are more formal than the periphrastic forms, but may be more frequent, as in *well-known*. Since each adjective may show its own preferences, each needs to be studied separately.

In Table 4.3. we present the raw and normalized frequencies of the two types of comparison in a selection of *well-* compounds from among 20 most frequent *well*-compounds in COCA and BNC.[15] These qualitative results should be complemented by a closer inspection of contextualized examples, since some adjectives cannot have both types of comparison for semantic reasons. For instance, *well-worn* 'clichéd, repeated too often' can only take periphrastic comparison. Given the inherently positive meaning of *better* and *best*, if they were to replace *well* as the first elements of *well-worn* in the comparative and superlative, they would clash with the inherently negative meaning of the compound. Therefore, the figures below serve only for initial orientation.

[15] Because COCA is over 5 times bigger than BNC (560 million words vs. 100 million words), we cannot compare absolute (raw) frequencies. They are only given as a reference. Comparison is only possible when absolute frequencies are normalized to a common basis; in our case, we compare how often an item like e.g. *better-know* occurs per 1 million words in each of the two corpora.

Table 4.3. Raw and normalized (per mil.) frequencies of alternative comparisons in selected *well*-adjective compounds in COCA and BNC

	COCA		BNC	
	Raw freq.	**Norm. freq.**	**Raw freq.**	**Norm. freq.**
better-known	398	0.70	53	0.53
more well-known	68	0.12	10	0.10
best-known	2083	3.69	315	3.15
most well-known	271	0.48	30	0.30
better-defined	6	0.01	-	-
more well-defined	6	0.01	-	-
best-defined	-	-	-	-
most well-defined	-	-	2	0.02
better-educated	122	0.22	12	0.12
more well-educated	4	0.01	-	-
best-educated	46	0.08	1	0.01
most well-educated	3	0.01	-	-
better-to-do	1	0.00	1	0.01
more well-to-do	10	0.02	7	0.07
best-to-do	-	-	-	-
most well-to-do	8	0.01	-	-

Little and *small*

When the adjective *little* combines with count nouns, it compares like its near-synonym *small*, i.e. *smaller* and *smallest*. The two adjectives overlap in some of their meanings, viz. 'young' as in examples (10–12), or 'small in size' (13–15).

(10) *He seemed like a **little** kid that was about to get on a roller coaster.*
(11) *Ever since he was a **small** kid, he had dreams of being an animator.*
(12) *Santa is used to **smaller** kids crying and freaking out.*
(13) *He has **small** eyes and a small, pinched mouth.*
(14) *Oh, how weird. He has **little** fingers.*
(15) *… though tempted, he never abused his size to bully **smaller** kids.*

Littler and *littlest* occur only exceptionally:

(16) *Even the **littler** kids weren't dumb enough to swallow that;*
(17) *What attracts you to a woman? It's the **littlest** things.*

Littlest also occurs in a famous Christmas story by Charles Tazewell (1946) *The Littlest Angel*.

The comparative form *lesser* is mostly used attributively to express that something is of less importance or is less serious or severe. The most frequent

nouns collocating with *lesser* in COCA are *extent* and *degree* in *to a lesser extent*/*degree*. But there are other frequent noun collocates, e.g.

(18) *He pleaded guilty to a **lesser** crime and received probation*.
(19) *They could also choose to convict Jane of a **lesser** charge of manslaughter*.
(20) *Animal domestication played a **lesser** role than did plant domestication in the origins of agriculture*.
(21) *A **lesser** man might have panicked. Alexander*, *however*, *supremely confident in his own destiny*, *moved quickly to regain the initiative*.
(22) *Is not indiscriminate jailing a **lesser** evil than indiscriminate killing*?

Lesser also means 'smaller size' in the proper name *the Lesser Antilles*. *Least* occurs in non-assertive contexts, with abstract nouns, in the sense of 'slightest'.

(23) *The loudest skeptics are those with the **least** amount of knowledge*.
(24) *The catlike creature didn't look the **least** bit bothered by the drizzle*.
(25) *The human impulse is to take the path of **least** resistance*.

Least also occurs in a conventional phrase as the head of a noun phrase in (26).

(26) *The **least** I can do is buy you lunch*.

4.1.3 Changes in spelling

Adding inflectional morphemes may cause changes in the spelling of adjectives.

1. Omission of silent *-e*:
   large > *larg-* + *-er*/*-est*; *strange* > *strang-* + *-er*/*-est*;
2. Doubling of the single final consonant if preceded by one vowel letter:
   big > *bigg-* + *-er*/*-est*; *slim* > *bigg-* + *-er*/*-est*;
3. Final *-y*, if preceded by a consonant letter, changes to *-i-*:
   funny > *funni-* + *-er*/*-est*; *easy* > *easi-* + *-er*/*-est*

The final consonant is not doubled if it is preceded by more than one vowel: *clear* > *clearer*, *clearest*. With *cruel*, there are alternative spellings. Doubling is preferred in BrE, as evidenced by both raw and normalized frequency data from both national corpora (📖 Table 4.4.).

Table 4.4. Absolute (raw) and normalized (per mil) frequencies of two spelling variants of *cruel* in COCA and BNC

	COCA		BNC	
	Raw freq.	**Norm. freq.**	**Raw freq.**	**Norm. freq.**
crueller	7	0.00125	12	0.12
crueler	76	0.0135	-	-
cruellest	11	0.0019	41	0.41
cruelest	264	0.0471	2	0.02

TB 4.2. English comparison has a three-degree system: positive, comparative, superlative. Some languages, like Finnish, have a special, equative, form (Sulkala & Karjalainen 1992: 172, In Booij 2007: 101):

Jukka on Peka-n pit-uinen
Jukka be.3sg Pekka-gen long-equative
''Jukka is of the same length as Pekka''

The equative meaning can only be expressed periphrastically in English, with constructions like *as* adj *as* NP (*as long as* NP).

4.1.4 Inflectional versus periphrastic comparison

The choice of inflected vs. periphrastic forms has much to do with the adjective's syllable size. As a rule, adjectives of one syllable inflect for comparison (27), while longer adjectives normally require periphrastic comparison (28):

(27) *strong*, *stronger*, *strongest*; *hot*, *hotter*, *hottest*.
(28) *considerate*, *more considerate*, *most considerate*; *playful*, *more playful*, *most playful*.

But there are exceptions in both camps. Adjectives with two syllables vary considerably in their preference for one or the other type of comparison. We return to these exceptions further below.

Monosyllabic adjectives

Monosyllabic gradable adjectives compare by *-er*, and *-est*. Among the 60 most frequent *-er* comparative adjectives in COCA (ordered by frequency), only seven were not monosyllabic (marked +):

(29) *better*, *higher*, *older*, *lower*, *greater*, *larger*, *worse*, *younger*, *smaller*, *bigger*, *+easier*, *stronger*, *longer*, *closer*, *broader*, *harder*, *wider*, *deeper*, *shorter*, *faster*, *cheaper*, *tougher*, *lighter*, *darker*, *louder*, *taller*,

safer, *newer*, *+heavier*, *+happier*, *+healthier*, *warmer*, *smarter*, *+simpler*, *weaker*, *brighter*, *richer*, *clearer*, *slower*, *poorer*, *tighter*, *softer*, *thinner*, *wilder*, *elder*, *cooler*, *thicker*, *colder*, *hotter*, *cleaner*, *stranger*, *+quieter*, *finer*, *sharper*, *nicer*, *quicker*, *fuller*, *+narrower*, *wiser*, *stricter*[16]

The 60 most-frequent *-est* superlatives are shown in (30). Eight (marked +) have more than one syllable:

(30) *best*, *biggest*, *largest*, *latest*, *worst*, *greatest*, *highest*, *oldest*, *lowest*, *youngest*, *closest*, *strongest*, *finest*, *newest*, *longest*, *smallest*, *hardest*, *fastest*, *hottest*, *toughest*, *easiest*, *deepest*, *slightest*, *poorest*, *richest*, *brightest*, *+simplest*, *eldest*, *darkest*, *+happiest*, *safest*, *+wealthiest*, *tallest*, *cheapest*, *smartest*, *+busiest*, *+second-largest*, *shortest*, *heaviest*, *weakest*, *wildest*, *+funniest*, *dearest*, *coolest*, *strangest*, *nicest*, *fullest*, *sweetest*, *+deadliest*, *clearest*, *+prettiest*, *quickest*, *lightest*, *tiniest*, *broadest*, *widest*, *purest*, *coldest*, *loudest*, *faintest*

Right, *wrong*, *real*

The adjectives *right*, *wrong*, and *real*, though monosyllabic, do not compare inflectionally. If at all, they compare periphrastically. Their gradability is questionable, usually one is or is not right or wrong, something either is real or is not. But on the rare occasions that they do compare, they do so periphrastically.

(31) *In this*, *he turned out to be* ***more right*** *than he knew*.[17]
(32) *She admitted she could not have been* ***more wrong***.[18]

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[16] Some forms, like *farther*/*farthest* and *later*/*latest*, were omitted from both lists because they may be used as adjectives and adverbs. It is very likely that they were occasionally mistagged in the corpus and thus counted among the adjective forms even when they were used as adverbs.

[17] There are 12 occurrences of comparative *righter* in COCA, but they may be considered exceptions, e.g. *And Gloria was right*. ***Righter*** *than even she knew*. In a sample of 100 instances of *more right*, 41 were comparatives, others were nouns mistagged as adjectives, e.g. *to have more* ***right to do something***. More interestingly, both superlative forms seem equally unpopular. There were only two instances of *rightest*, and one of *the most right*: *… but I also know that staying with my friend in Carmel was right*. *The* ***rightest*** *thing I've ever done*; *All right*, *this looks like the Price is Right – we're going to tell you how to get the* ***most right*** *price at the supermarket*.

[18] COCA has only four instances of *wronger*: *I was wrong*. *I couldn't have been* ***wronger***. As with *wrong*, inflected and periphrastic superlatives are virtually nonexistent, only two occurrences of *wrongest* were found: *And I'm ready … to invest also in that type of contact*, *because the* ***wrongest*** *solution for problems is showing your back to each other* and only eight of *most wrong*: *This is completely wrong*. *It's one of the* ***most wrong*** *things you can do*.

(33) … *applied knowledge is* ***more real*** *than pure knowledge*.[19]

Other monosyllabic adjectives in periphrastic comparison

Some other monosyllabic adjectives may also compare periphrastically. Although LGSWE (p. 522), explains this by the need to make the comparison more prominent or emphatic, we argue there may be other, context- and meaning-related reasons. Consider examples (34–37):

(34) *This is going to be the most* ***open***, *honest and ethical Congress in history*.
(35) *The most* ***clean***, ***clear*** *and pleasant part of this war is over*.
(36) *Gawfler realized that they employed the most* ***lazy***, *incompetent*, *and insolent help in the world*.
(37) *The Franco and Salazar/Caetano regimes were far more* ***open***, *pragmatic*, *and changing than the static model we apply to them*.

Examples (34–37) each involve three consecutive adjectives. The first adjective is monosyllabic, and is followed by at least one, but mostly two polysyllabic adjectives. We speculate that in an attempt to avoid switching between the two types of comparison in such a short stretch of text, the authors have opted for the one type of comparison, viz. periphrastic, which works for all adjectives in the set. We may or may not like seeing *clean* or *open* or *lazy* compared by *more* and *most*, but homogenizing the sets to inflected comparison would be out of the question, since *changing*, *ethical*, etc. cannot compare by *-er* and *-est* at all.

The adjective *proud* is often found with periphrastic comparison.[20] *More proud* in example (38) is arguably purely intensifying, and no implicit or explicit comparison is being made. The speaker is saying that they were *extremely* proud of their father, not prouder than someone else, or prouder of him than of someone else. The other examples seem to confirm the tendency, observed in Quirk et al. (1985: 462), that adjectives readily compare with *more* when they are predicative and followed by an explicit standard of comparison (39–40). Nevertheless, many monosyllabic adjectives will still refuse to compare periphrastically even if both conditions are met, cf. (41–42):

(38) *Well*, *we couldn't be* ***more proud*** *of our father*.

[19] *Real* has the largest number of inflected forms of the three adjectives (N=29), cf. … *they are magical inventions*, *ultimately* ***realer*** *than real*. Again, periphrastic superlatives (N=24), like inflected superlatives (N=27) are few and far between: *He's one of the* ***most real*** *actors I've ever worked with and he wasn't a schooled* actor; *He's* ***the realest*** *thing in the world to me now*.

[20] In COCA there are 213 instances of inflectional *prouder* and as many as 170 of *more proud*. The superlative *proudest* (N=511) is matched by 271 instances of *(the) most proud*.

(39) *It was **more fun** than you thought it might be*.
(40) *It was **more real** than real life*.
(41) **She is **more good** than her sister*.
(42) **I am **more old** than most of the other riders in the group*.

In the final set of examples, *more* does not grade the quality expressed by the adjacent adjectives, but is quantificational in a different sense. Take example (44). *More* in *more tough* does not select a higher value on the scale of toughness than some implicit norm. The intensity of toughness is not even at stake. Rather, the author quantifies the relative proportion of tough times and exciting times during a year. In example (43), there is not even an adjective to compare; *more* is a postdeterminer (📖 TB 4.1.):

(43) *In this dish*, *there is **more meat** than vegetables*.
(44) *The last year was **more tough** than exciting for the Nets*.
(45) *After her death*, *I was probably **more dead** than alive*, *you know*.
(46) *This dilemma is **more apparent** than real*.
(47) *I've felt that Macs and PCs are **more similar** than different*.

Disyllabic adjectives

Disyllabic adjectives usually compare by *more* and most. However, under certain phonological and morphological conditions, disyllabic adjectives may compare inflectionally. Disyllabic adjectives ending in the following unstressed vowels (ordered by the frequency-rank of the comparative forms in COCA) allow inflectional comparison too:

-y: *easy*, *heavy*, *happy*, *healthy*, *wealthy*, *messy*, *pretty*, *risky*, *funny*, *angry*, *busy*, *sexy*, *tricky*, *scary*, *pricey*, *crazy*, *lucky*, *nasty*, *steady*, *dirty*, *rainy*, *roomy*, *skinny*, *hungry*, *speedy*, *bulky*, *noisy*, *edgy*, *tasty*, *busty*, *hardy*, *murky*, *sunny*, *tiny*, *lofty*, *rosy*, *holy*, *weighty*, *lengthy*, *shiny*, *flashy*, *merry*, *spicy*, etc.

When these disyllabic adjectives are prefixed with the negative prefix *un-*, they may still compare inflectionally. Forms like *unhappier*, *unhappiest*, or *unfriendlier* and *unfriendliest* do occur alongside phrasal comparatives and superlatives.

-ow: *slow*, *narrow*, *shallow*, *mellow*, *yellow*
-le: *simple*, *gentle*, *subtle*, *noble*, *nimble*, *idle*, *able*
-er, *-ure*: *clever*, *queer*, *sheer*, *sober*, *tender*; *pure*, *sure*, *sour*, *mature*
-ly: *early*, *friendly*

Disyllabic adjectives in *-ly* usually compare both ways, but with varying preferences for one or the other form (🕮 Table 4.5.). *Early* tops the list, since it has the highest relative preference for inflected comparison compared to periphrastic comparison of all the adjectives in the list. At the bottom of the list, we find *likely*, which shows the opposite tendency, a distinct preference for periphrastic constructions. Mid-section, the differences are not that dramatic. Interestingly, with *deadly* and *costly* the comparatives are preferably expressed with *more*, whereas superlatives are more frequently inflectional.

Table 4.6. shows the relative preferences of other disyllabic adjectives for the two types of comparison.

Table 4.5. Comparison of adjectives in *-ly* (COCA)

		Comparative		**Superlative**	
		-er	***more***	***-est***	***most***
1	***early***	79 416	50	7 025	68
3	***ugly***	356	31	576	11
2	***friendly***	538	229	191	47
4	***lively***	261	122	129	22
8	***lonely***	134	45	173	9
9	***lovely***	126	54	292	30
7	***deadly***	161	228	1 034	201
5	***costly***	218	634	244	187
6	***likely***	190	24 481	178	10 422

Table 4.6. Comparison of other disyllabic adjectives (COCA)

		Comparative		**Superlative**	
		-er	***more***	***-est***	***most***
1	***common***	67	3 291	170	7 067
2	***pleasant***	-	459	15	158
3	***polite***	17	126	13	50
4	***wicked***	-	20	20	27
5	***cruel***	83	66	-	48
6	***handsome***	51	124	126	111
7	***quiet***	1 897	134	275	20
8	***stupid***	94	72	238	47

Finally, two compound adjectives with *good* and *ill* as the first element compare inflectionally. Periphrastic forms either have not been attested in COCA or are

negligible in number. Other compound adjectives, if that they compare at all, are generally reluctant to inflect.[21]

Table 4.7. Comparison of compound adjectives with *good* and *ill* as their first element (COCA)

		Comparative		Superlative	
		-er	***more***	***-est***	***most***
1	***good-looking***	154	7	235	2
2	***ill-looking***	2	-	7	-

Polysyllabic adjectives

If gradable adjectives have two or more syllables but do not belong into any of the groups examined above, they compare periphrastically. This includes adjectives in *-ful* (*midful*), *-less* (*mindless*), *-al* (*instrumental*), *-ive* (*productive*), *-ous* (*pompous*), and especially participial adjectives like e.g. *bored* and *boring*.

[21] Many compound adjectives have an intesifying adverb as their first element, making comparison redundant: e.g. *blisteringly fast*, *grimly familiar*, *highly respectable*, etc.

4.2 Types of comparative constructions according to degree complements

Any comparison assumes that there is a reference value that acts as a standard for assessing the degree of a quality in an entity. This standard, called the *basis of comparison*, is expressed in the degree complement (LGSWE, p. 527). Usually it is a *that* phrase (48) or a *that* clause (49), which complements not so much the adjective, but its comparative and superlative inflections. In other construction types, degree complements such as *as* phrase/clause or *to* infinitive clause are complements of the construction-initial elements *as* and *too*, respectively (📖 Section 10.1.2):

(48) *Lois found it even **quieter** than the downstairs lobby*.
(49) *It was **quieter** than she would've expected for a machine of that size*.

The basis of comparison may remain unexpressed, cf. (50):

(50) *She drove into the **quieter** areas of the park*.

LGSWE (p. 527) lists six types of comparative constructions according to the type of degree complement. The first two types take either phrases or clauses as complements. The complements of other types are only clausal.

Type 1 **a. ADJECTIVE$_{\text{comparative-er}}$ + *than* + phrase/clause**
b. *more* + ADJECTIVE + *than* + phrase/clause
c. *less* + ADJECTIVE + *than* + phrase/clause

Type 1 includes prototypical comparison by inflection and by periphrasis. Adding to the higher-degree comparative constructions from Section 4.1, exemplified below in (51–54), there is also periphrastic comparison to a lower degree (55–56). In this type of comparison, the adjective is flanked on the left by the adverb *less* and on the right, by the degree complement:

(51) *A new sun will come up **brighter** than the old one*. (Phrase)
(52) *The lights burn **brighter** than any layperson can imagine*. (Clause)
(53) *Nothing is **more valuable** than your life*. (Phrase)
(54) *The zoo thinks a tiger is **more valuable** than I am*! (Clause)
(55) *That pastime seems **less dangerous** than his other hobbies*. (Phrase)
(56) *Being divorced and a non-smoker is **less dangerous** than smoking a pack or more of cigarettes and staying married*. (Clause)

Type 2 ***as* + ADJECTIVE + *as* + phrase/clause**

Type 2 construction allows same-degree comparison. An entity is said to have the quality in the same degree as the standard in the complement.

(57) *He worried about working in a world as* ***crazy*** *as Hollywood*. (Phrase)
(58) *Denying this is almost as* ***crazy*** *as denying climate change*. (Clause)

Type 3 *so* + ADJECTIVE + *that*-clause

Type 3 constructions suggest that an entity has a quality to the degree necessary to produce an effect. The effect is expressed in the *that* clause complement.

(59) *This barrier island is so* ***narrow*** *that visitors can watch the sun both rise and set over the ocean*.
(60) *My blood pressure was so* ***high*** *that I needed to get to a doctor*.

Type 4 *so* + ADJECTIVE + *as to*-clause

Type 4 construction also allows same-degree comparison. It differs from Type 3 in taking a *to* infinitive clause as the degree complement.

(61) *Make sure the pan never gets so* ***hot*** *as to cause the fat to smoke*.
(62) *I am not so* ***stupid*** *as to believe I could defend myself with a fake gun*.

Type 5 *too* + ADJECTIVE + *to*-clause

Type 5 allows higher-degree comparison, stating that the quality exists to such a high degree that it prevents the situation in the complement from happening.

(63) *Marlene and her husband found themselves too* ***anxious*** *to sleep*.
(64) *I was too* ***angry*** *to lie down without a fight*.

Type 6 ADJECTIVE + *enough* + *to*-clause

Type 6 allows same-degree comparison, where the quality is just about sufficient for the situation in the complement to be possible.

(65) *James wasn't* ***stable*** *enough to run the bistro*.
(66) *Most students are* ***curious*** *enough to give the CD a listen*.

To these six construction we add two more, both for higher-degree comparisons:

Type 7 *the* + ADJECTIVE$_{\text{comparative-er}}$ + of + NP

(67) *Ebony had seemed the* ***stronger*** *of the two*.

Type 8 *the* ADJECTIVE$_{\text{superlative-est}}$ + *of/among/in* + NP

(68) *We both agreed that architecture is the* ***noblest*** *of all the professions*.
(69) *Austin's cost of living was the* ***highest*** *among major Texas cities*.
(70) *This camp is the* ***biggest*** *in the world*.

T4. As … as similes
A look from the corpus

Do you know the story about the witness in court who said:
"The man was as drunk as a judge"
The judge interrupts him;
"I think you mean as drunk as a lord?"
"Yes," the witness replies, "I'm sorry my lord."

Comparisons that belong to conventional English phraseology (so-called *similes* and/or *comparisons*) [22] are among the top-ranking [as Adj as NP] expressions in COCA, frequency-wise. For instance, *as dead as*, when its NP element is *the dodo*/*a doornail*. However, each variant of the [as Adj as NP] construction deserves being studied separately, because the conventional expressions are only the tip of a huge iceberg, and probably not even the most exciting or the most frequently used variants of these expressions (cf. Omazić 2015). To use an instructive quote from Veale (2012: 329):

> There is something appealingly democratic and unpretentious about similes. Not only are they pervasive in language, they are at home in any register of speech and any genre of text, from tabloid newspapers to romantic poetry (Fishlov, 1992). Conveniently, most languages provide a wealth of pre-fabricated similes that are as well-known to native speakers as the adjectival features they serve to exemplify (e.g., "as strong as an ox", "as sober as a judge", etc.; see Taylor, 1954; Norrick, 1986; Moon, 2008). Such formulaic similes allow us to quickly identify the key stereotypes of a language and culture, and to recognize those which are shared by different language cultures, such as English and Chinese (Veale et. al, 2008). But just as importantly, languages like English make it easy for speakers to mint their own similes on the fly, by imposing low barriers to creation.

To probe into this creative genius, we entered into COCA the search string *as dead as*, and of the total of 140 hits, there were only two (2) examples of *as dead as the dodo*, and only eight (8) occurrences of *as dead as a doornail*. All other examples were more or less creative, one-off modifications of the original simile. Clearly, speakers have tired of the hackneyed old similes and are in constant

[22] We do not distinguish here between similes and comparison, although this distinction is sometimes drawn (Ortony 1979).

search for more riveting turns of phrase. Compare the following variants of *as dead as* from COCA:

(1) *He was as **dead** as the language of Latin.*
(2) *On either side of the road, the grassy landscape stretched as **dead** as broom straw.*
(3) *The position seemed as **dead** as the moon's landscape.*
(4) *The days of some prospector striking it rich were as **dead** as Wild Bill Hickok, shot in the head from behind in the Number 10 Saloon about four years earlier.*
(5) *Hiking taxes to pay for big government programs is as **dead** as disco.*
(6) *Having decided that listeners were less likely to turn off what was familiar to them, the stations, which big corporations had bought up and homogenized, played a small number of already overplayed songs until they were as **dead** as June bugs in winter.*
(7) *To find out if the tool business is as **dead** as a doornail in the dead of the night, The Denver Post recently filled some thermoses with coffee and spent the wee hours at the Home Depot in Arvada.*

Although these are only results of a limited corpus search for variants of a single simile, they might serve as an incentive for a careful reassessment of the kinds of phraseological expressions taught to English learners at more advanced levels, and the kinds of explanations often given to more advanced students of language about the nature of phraseology. Phraseological units are usually described as being 'frozen', 'fixed' and 'immutable', but we have seen that they are anything but.

This does not mean that we should throw the baby out with the bathwater. Exercise 3 below taps into this common stock of similes, testing the reader's familiarity with stock similes. However, here we are interested in something different.

First, note that the batch of examples in (8) includes the 50 most frequent adjectives in this kind of construction ordered by frequency. You can study each one individually, especially to establish the variety of nouns that can complete the constructions. In addition, you could study each of these expressions to weigh the proportion of conventional forms of the construction (if any) and unconventional ones, as we did for *as dead as* earlier.

(8) *as good as, as high as, as big as, as bad as, as important as, as simple as, as important as, as simple as, as close as, as low as, as large as, as old as, as strong as, as young as, as easy as, as small as, as tall as, as diverse as, as effective as, as great as, as wide as, as likely as, as thick as, as clear*

as, *as difficult as*, *as beautiful as*, *as bright as*, *as powerful as*, *as tough as*, *as varied as*, *as real as*, *as happy as*, *as common as*, *as smart as*, *as different as*, *as hot as*, *as safe as*, *as dangerous as*, *as sharp as*, *as quick as*, *as smooth as*, *as cold as*, *as dark as*, *as white as*, *as comfortable as*, *as popular as*, *as thin as*, *as serious as*, *as successful as*, *as short as*, *as pretty as*, *as sweet as*.

It is far more interesting to study examples in (9) and in the problems sets laid out further below. Both include a selection of similes from the very bottom of COCA's frequency range, with no variant of the simile occurring more than once in the 560-million-word corpus. Although we usually find all kinds of uninteresting anomalies at the bottom of the corpus-barrel (misspellings and suchlike), very often it is the place where one can find the most spectacular examples of (convention-breaking) creativity.

The set in (9) includes one-off expressions that do not depart from the formal or semantic features of the usual similes:

(9) *as derogatory as*, *as deranged as*, *as depthless as*, *as deprived as*, *as dented as*, *as depleted as*, *as demented as*, *as demoralized as*, *as demon-ridden as*, *as dewy as*, *as devilish as*, *as despotic as*, *as detestable as*, *as curable as*, *as cyber-savvy as*, *as citified as*, *as chummy as*, *as dead-ended as*, *as cold-hearted as*, *as college-ready as*, *as anti-establishment as*, *as envious as*, *as barbarous as*, *as catty as*, *as cellulite-ridden as*, *as butch as*, *as capricious as*, *as bottomless as*, *as boyish as*, *as boxy as*, *as bourgeois as*, *as brainy as*, *as forward-thinking as*, *as fratricidal as*, *as flammable as*, *as flippant as*, *as exhilarated as*, *as faithless as*, *as zesty*, *as zingy*, *as yeasty*, *as woodworky as*, *as worrying as*, *as wordy as*, *as willowy as*, *as two-faced as*, *as un-macho as*, *as unbendable as*, *as indoorsy as*, *as frankenstein-ish as*

However, examples in the problem sets below are different as they challenge to a greater or lesser extent our usual expectations of what the *as... as* construction should look like. Study the sets one by one and try to figure out what makes them special (each example features a reference to the register from which it has been retrieved):

Problem set 1

(10) MAG. *On a map showing levels of solar radiation*, *with the sunniest are as colored deep red*, *the kingdom is* *as* ***blood-red*** *as a raw steak*.

(11) FIC. *Your voice, like a ringing in my ears, makes me realize that it's me - as* ***bone-dry*** *as a bale of wastepaper compacted by feelings of helplessness*

(12) NEWS. *The scene is set to the cadence of an Ozarks twang - and it's not only as* ***lily-white*** *as Wonder Bread but also as avowedly wholesome as a church social.*

(13) MAG. *For most Abdeen residents, however, the promises of the good life are as* ***paper-thin*** *as movie posters.*

(14) MAG. *DVDs are virtually indestructible, and the 20th watching of a film is as* ***crystal-clear*** *as the first, unlike VHS, which can deteriorate with successive playing.*

(15) *Kevin Sanders looked as* ***foxlike*** *as always, with his reddish sandy hair and sharp features.*

(16) FIC. *And what about Marissa? Has she expressed doubts? Surely you can trust her to tell you the truth! From all that Teddy had told me about his wife, and from the few occasions I'd spoken with her myself, I knew she was as* ***arrow-straight*** *as they came. Even if she discovered Teddy was screwing around (which he claimed she'd never notice because she was too wrapped up in her work), Marissa wouldn't exact vengeance by using the PSD to perpetrate a hoax that would humiliate him.*

(17) FIC. *His eyes sometimes went as* ***stone-dead*** *as Barad's, vacant, sightless, and yet staring.*

(18) ACAD. *Appointment in Samarra (1934), his first and comparatively short novel, had earlier struck me as not being as* ***diamond-like*** *as the best stories or as energetic as the large novels.*

(19) MAG. *While the fabric is not as* ***silky-smooth*** *as the Pearl Izumi Voltana, it seems to wick away moisture slightly better.*

(20) NEWS. *Stereotypes tend to fix themselves in the public perception: the ever-affable Papa Haydn, the child-man Mozart of "Amadeus" caricature; not least, the stoically austere Sibelius, as* ***granite-willed*** *as his forehead was monumental.*

(21) NEWS. *If the system of near-total Kremlin supremacy built by former president and current Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is as* ***rock-solid*** *as its supporters say, then the mayor's sacking may be viewed as just a passing chapter in the long consolidation of power by the mighty political faction that includes both Mr. Putin and Medvedev working in friendly tandem.*

Problem set 2

(22) FIC. *Cole is a grounded fighter jock, as **wingless** as a plucked housefly.*
(23) FIC*: The magic of a Shadowen is as **two-edged** as any sword.*
(24) FIC. *We went to my office, which was as **unlocked** as I had left it.*
(25) FIC. *At the moment that she fixes her limbs to you, her commitment is unthinking: as **utter** as that between any two speechless animals.*

Problem set 3

(26) NEWS: *Turned out we were on the right side of history after all. Hanoi will be as **capitalist** as Hong Kong one day, and I suppose we'll be good buddies.*
(27) MAG. *In matching these shelter animals with "forever homes" across the country, Petfinder is doing work that's as **environmental** as it is humane.*
(28) MAG. *Youth voters - coast to coast, border to border -turned to Obama in numbers that are just hard to fathom. They were drawn to him from day one, and it was a connection that was as **psychological** as it was issue-driven.*
(29) MAG. *Combining the best of Cambridge seriousness with the best of London's elegant brio, James tosses in for good measure a virile democratic heartiness that could be mistaken for American but is in fact as **Australian** as grilled shark steaks at a rugby tailgate party.*
(30) NEWS. *And it is those relatives - people who now enjoy Israeli social benefits, vote in Israeli elections, and even consider their identities to be as **Israeli** as they are Palestinian - whose lives have grown in such a different direction from their kin in refugee camps in neighboring countries.*
(31) NEWS. *As fashion moments go, this is as all-American as it gets, right? # Actually, no. What makes today's prepidemic so fascinating is how it is, surprisingly enough, so Japanese. The look has its roots in the United States, to be sure. But the spirit, rigor and execution of today's prep moment is as **Japanese** as Sony. One need only flip through the intriguing Japanese book "Take Ivy", a collection of photographs taken in 1965 by Teruyoshi Hayashida on Eastern college campuses, to get the drift.*
(32) FIC. *I hardly think Wolftown qualifies as a city, and those boys are as **Cherokee** as you or I.*
(33) FIC: *Such weather was gone with the Change. Savannah was as **tropical** as Salvador.*

Exercises

1. Complete the sentences with suitable forms of comparison:

1. I said to myself that welfare reform will not be _____ difficult _____ many people think it will be.
2. Technically, it's still spring and this afternoon it was hot _____ to fry an egg outside.
3. Who would have been _____ bold _____ charge her with murder?
4. One text says he grew __ thin _____ his stomach touched his spine.
5. The man stood -- Aaron could see he was _____ larger _____ the two -- and moved towards him, waving the knife in front of his face.
6. There is a saying, you're never _____young _____ accomplish anything.
7. Martin Luther King Boulevard is going to be __ best _____ the world.
8. Poverty has steadily declined but remains high and _____ pervasive _____in _____ developed countries.
9. The uppers of his shoes were _____ weak _____ carry the re-soling.
10. The nature of the win is _____ important _____ the fact of the win.

2. Supply comparative or superlative forms of the adjectives in brackets, using inflected comparison whenever possible.

1. When motivated by hunger, they'll move up into _____ water to feed for brief periods, then they will drop back down into the depths. (shallow)
2. But I'm talking love, baby, I mean the _____ of all real things. (real)
3. We would have the finest coaches and the _____ horses. (handsome)
4. He complained that only stupid people attended the concert and that even _____ persons applauded them. (stupid)
5. Our garden centers sell the _____ forms of chrysanthemum. (common)
6. Women like that always ended up being the _____, the __ ____, though they'd deny it to their dying breath. (clingy, needy)
7. The virus mutated into a _____ form during the last outbreak (deadly)
8. "And I bet he was _____ than a skunk, " Larry said. (drunk)
9. She was _____ than I had ever seen her, flush with the ecstasy of taking on a new challenge. (alive)
10. "Christina in her terrible jealousy," said Mrs. Shevvington in the _____ ____ voice in the world, "was forced to extremes to get attention. (gentle)

3. Use COCA to complete these conventional similes with (an) appropriate adjective(s). The figure in brackets gives the frequency of the target adjective in the total number of occurrences of the particular *as … as* construction in COCA.

For example: as _____ as honey (19 hits)
Answer: sweet (7 of 19 hits).

as	as nails	(116/131)	as	as punch	(24/30)
as	as nails	(9/131)	as	as night and day	(22/28)
as	as snow	(68/101)	as	as sugar	(21/33)
as	as day	(65/174)	as	as crystal	(19/30)
as	as day	(52/174)	as	as clockwork	(18/26)
as	as day	(36/174)	as	as paper	(18/54)
as	as ice	(62/127)	as	as lead	(19/26)
as	as gold	(62/93)	as	as pitch	(16/31)
as	as silk	(54/94)	as	as lightning	(16/38)
as	as silk	(14/94)	as	as chalk	(15/32)
as	as hell	(52/1444)	as	as pitch	(15/31)
as	as time	(43/243)	as	as steel	(14/14)
as	as night	(41/115)	as	as dirt	(13/59)
as	as night	(29/115)	as	as death	(11/115)
as	as air	(33/80)	as	as death	(8/115)
as	as thieves	(33/35)	as	as civilization	(11/13)
as	as sin	(31/98)	as	as stone	(11/83)
as	as sin	(28/98)	as	as stone	(8/83)
as	as pie	(29/74)	as	as ink	(11/21)
as	as pie	(17/74)	as	as birds	(9/32)
as	as blood	(29/54)	as	as mud	(8/28)
as	as coal	(28/46)	as	as history	(7/26)
as	as glass	(24/98)	as	as death and taxes	(6/10)

Summary of Chapter 4

In Chapter 4 we explored various constructions for same-, higher-, or lower-degree comparison. We focused especially on the distribution of inflectional vs. periphrastic comparison, supplying fresh corpus data in support of some long-standing claims about the (dis)preference of adjectives of particular syllabic sizes for comparison by inflection. A special chapter was devoted to creative variations of some of the common stock similes of the *as … as* type.

Chapter 5: Syntax of adjective phrases

Most properties of the adjective spill over into its adjacent syntax. Take comparison for instance. Whether inflectional or periphrastic, comparison involves explicit or implicit reference to a basis of comparison. The basis of comparison is expressed by the complement phrase or clause within the adjective phrase. Similarly, the expression of degree usually involves attaching an intensifying adverb to the adjective, which increases the complexity of the adjective phrase. Also, "attributive" and "predicative" are functions of the adjective phrase, not the adjective alone. Therefore, to fully understand the nature of the adjective as a word class, we need access to the piece of syntax built around the adjective, viz. the adjective phrase. In the following sections we first describe the anatomy of adjective phrases (🕮 Section 5.1) and then discuss their functions (🕮 Section 5.2). We close the chapter with the syntactic subclassification of adjectives based on (lack of) restrictions on the placement of the adjective phrase into various syntactic slots (🕮 Section 5.3).

5.1 Structure of adjective phrases

Like nouns (MSPS II, p. 30), adjectives like company and build units called adjective phrases. An **ADJECTIVE PHRASE** (AdjP) is a syntactic unit whose syntactically and semantically most important element, i.e. head, is an adjective. The head adjective is featured in any AdjP regardless of whether, or how many, other elements are co-present. Compare the use of the adjective *fast* as the head of progressively larger AdjPs in (1a–c):[23]

(1) a. *That horse is [**FAST**]$_{AdjP}$*
b. *That horse is [extremely **FAST**]$_{AdjP}$*
c. *That horse is [as **FAST** as the wind that blows from the high moors]$_{AdjP}$*

Example (1a) features the simplest possible AdjP, consisting only of its head adjective. In (1b) and (1c) the AdjP becomes progressively larger. Besides their head adjective *fast*, the latter two AdjPs include optional modifiers and complements. Example (1b) features the premodifying adverb *extremely*. In (1c) the adjective is flanked by two parts of the complex comparative construction *as … as* NP. The first part of the construction is the premodifying adverb *as*, the second part, viz. *as the wind that blows from the high moors* is the degree

[23] For simplicity, we examine the structure of the AdjP with examples where the AdjP functions as a syntactically independent subject complement. Of course, AdjPs may also be parts of larger syntactic assemblies, e.g. premodifiers in an NP like [a [very fast]$_{AdjP}$ horse]$_{NP}$

complement (📖 Section 4.2). Regardless of this complexity, the brackets surrounding the AdjPs indicate that the adjective and its premodifiers and complements are syntactically "one". Whatever "non-head" material is within the brackets is only in the service of the head adjective.

Semantically, all these AdjPs are about the quality of being fast; this is the semantic core of the whole phrase. What changes from (1a) through (1c) is the amount of information (modification or complementation) added to the head adjective to make the quality, in this case its degree, more specific.

The head adjective is not only semantically central. It is also the syntactically most important since it is the only obligatory part of the AdjP.

(1) a'. **That horse is*.
b'. **That horse is extremely*.
c'. **That horse is as as the wind that blows from the high moors*.

Complements are prepositional phrases, as in (1c) *as the wind … moors*, but may appear as clauses (📖 Section 4.2), as in *less exciting than I had imagined*.

Adjectives may take complements even when they are not compared. In fact, many adjectives do:

(2) *She was [**FOND** of mirrors]$_{AdjP}$*
(3) *This made him [**RELUCTANT** to address controversial issues]$_{AdjP}$*

Such complements are also of various shapes. For instance, the adjective *fond* in (2) is complemented by a prepositional phrase; example (3) has a complement in a *to*-infinitive clause. Table 5.1. gives a fuller list of various complement types. Examples (4–10) showcase some of this variety.

(4) *I've been [**AFRAID** of snow ball fights]$_{AdjP}$*
(5) *I'm not [**KEEN** on the idea of having my fat sucked out of me with a vacuum cleaner]$_{AdjP}$*
(6) *The disease was [**SIMILAR** to paranoia]$_{AdjP}$*
(7) *I was [**THANKFUL** that my cardiologist was up to date on things]$_{AdjP}$*
(8) *Fans were [**UNSURE** what to expect from the second match]$_{AdjP}$*
(9) *The international community was [**SLOW** to respond to swelling protests in Tunisia]$_{AdjP}$*
(10) *I was [**BUSY** playing Frisbee with some pizza dough]$_{AdjP}$*[24]

[24] Although seemingly identical with sentences containing adjectives complemented by *-ing* clauses, a sentence like *It was fun being on her show* is structurally different. The *-ing* participial clause *being on her show* is an extraposed subject, i.e. the clausal subject which got postponed

Table 5.1. Overview of AdjP complements

Adj + Complement	Adjective	Complement
Adj + prepositional Phrase	*remote*	*from my reach*
	afraid	*of monsters* *of being lonely*
	keen	*on animals* *on improving her riding skills*
	similar	*to her mom*
Adj + *that*-clause	*sorry*	*that she said this*
	thankful	*that I was still there*
	proud	*that I stuck up for myself*
	upset	*that the toaster wasn't working*
Adj + *wh*-clause	*unsure*	*where to go next*
	undecided	*what to do about her misfortune*
	puzzled	*why she lived that long with cyanide in her blood*
	careful	*what she said about him*
Adj + *to*-infinitive clause	*able*	*to see the future*
	sorry	*to wake you so early*
	slow	*to respond to social change*
	ready	*to fight them to the bitter end*
Adj + *-ing* participle clause	*busy*	*trying to run a household full of boys*

due to its length. The opening pronoun *it* is nothing but an empty slot-filler, tagging the original slot of the displaced subject. Compare: *Being on the show was fun*, where extraposition has been reversed – the pronoun has been eliminated and the original subject recovered to the head of its clause. There is **no** extraposition where *-ing* is only a complement of the adjective phrase: cf. example (10) above and **Busy playing Frisbee with some pizza dough was*. The same applies to *that* clauses, which may be adjective complements, as in (7) above, or extraposed subjects as in *It clear that you were wrong → That you were wrong is clear*.

5.2 Functions of adjective phrases

Adjective phrases have various syntactic functions, which fall into two large sets. The first set includes functions where the AdjP is not a self-standing clause constituent, but an element within a larger syntactic constituent. The second set includes AdjPs as self-standing clause constituents (🕮 Table 5.2.).

Table 5.2. Functions of AdjPs

	AdjP as element of a larger syntactic unit		**AdjP as independent clause constituent**
5.2.1.1	Premodifier in NP	5.2.2.1	Subject complement
5.2.1.2	Postmodifier in NP	5.2.2.2	Object complement
5.2.1.3	Adjective as NP head	5.2.2.3	Detached modifier
		5.2.2.4	Exclamation

5.2.1 Adjective phrases as elements of larger syntactic units

5.2.1.1 Adjective phrases as premodifiers in NPs

In Part II attributive use was mentioned as one of the defining properties of adjectives. In this section we rephrase this property to make it more consistent with structural facts. Rather than speaking of "attributive adjectives" or "adjectives used attributively", we will talk about AdjPs functioning as premodifiers. Why so? First, nouns are not premodified by adjectives alone, but by AdjPs, even if the AdjPs is simple and consists only of the head adjective. The premodifier in (11) is a simple AdjP expandable to more complex AdjPs like those in (12) and (13):

(11) *[a [**cute**]$_{AdjP\ CAT}$]$_{NP}$*
(12) *[a [**very cute**]$_{AdjP\ CAT}$]$_{NP}$*
(13) *[a [**once unbelievably cute**]$_{AdjP\ CAT}$]$_{NP}$*

The second adjustment is switching from the term *attributive position/function* to the term *premodification*. Although the two may be used interchangeably, we feel that the term *attributive* is a bit too strongly associated with adjectives. The term *premodification* is more likely to be perceived as a general cover term for the full variety of premodifying structures, including adjective phrases, but also nouns or noun phrases: *concrete floor*, *student mobility statistics*; prepositional phrases: *round-the-clock service*, adverb phrases: *an away game*, *the upstairs room*, etc.

5.2.1.2 Adjective phrases as postmodifiers in NPs

As integral parts of noun phrases, AdjPs may also occur after the head noun or pronoun. This is usually referred to as "adjectives in postposition". We will refer to this configuration as AdjPs in postmodification. The AdjP is still only a dependent modifier, only this time it follows the NP head. Note that in (14) the NP head is a pronoun.

(14) *When the light or angle changes*, *[SOMETHING* ***new****]NP is revealed*.

Adjective phrases occur in postmodification only exceptionally, when/in:

1. indefinite pronouns function as NP heads

Adjective phrases occur in postmodification when the head of the NP is an indefinite pronoun like *anyone*, *someone*, *no one*, *anything*, *something*, *nothing*.[25]

(15) *So*, *I knew there was [SOMETHING* ***wrong****]NP*
(16) *Even if it is [NOTHING* ***serious****]NP*, *he will be unlikely to use his hand*.
(17) *Can you think of [ANYTHING* ***better****]NP*
(18) *You really found [SOMEONE* ***special****]NP*

2. AdjPs have complementation

Adjective phrases also occur as NP postmodifiers if the adjective takes a complement (underlined):

(19) a. *They all run like [PEOPLE* ***afraid <u>of being caught from behind</u>****]NP*
b. **They all run like [****afraid <u>of being caught from behind</u>** *PEOPLE]NP*

(20) a. *He was holding [a BAG* ***full <u>of something</u>****]NP*
b. **He was holding [a* ***full <u>of something</u>*** *BAG]NP*

(21) a. *[LAND* ***suitable <u>for grain production</u>****]NP sold for 500 dollars an acre*.
b. **[****suitable <u>for grain production</u>** *LAND]NP sold for 500 dollars an acre*.

A more elegant alternative would be to split the complex AdjPs in two so that the head adjective and its complement are separated from each other by the head noun. In (22), for instance, the two parts of the modifying AdjP *easiest to get along with*, viz. (a) the head adjective *easiest* and (b) the complement *to get along with* flank the head noun *person* in the complex NP *the easiest person to get along with*. Compare also example (23).

[25] Adjective phrases also follow indefinite adverbs like *anywhere*, *somewhere*, *nowhere* in adverb phrases, e.g. *We need to get [SOMEWHERE* ***safe****]AdvP*.

(22) a. *I'm not [the **easiest** PERSON **to get along with**]NP*
b. *I'm not [the PERSON **easiest to get along with**]NP*

(23) a. *I want her to have [a **better** LIFE **than what I have right now**]NP*
b. *I want her to have [a LIFE **better than what I have right now**]NP*

When an adjective is premodified by an intensifier, the AdjP is usually not used in postmodification:

(24) a. *They have [an **insanely beautiful** CAT]NP*
b. ?**They have [a CAT **insanely beautiful**]NP*

3. Fixed expressions

A number of fixed expressions contain postposed adjectives:

(25) *attorney general*, *court martial*, *time immemorial*, *knight errant*, *Asia Minor*, *president elect*, *notary public*, *devil incarnate*, *all things English*, etc.

4. Specific adjectives

Certain adjectives, like *concerned*, *involved*, *available*, *absent*, *present*, tend to be used in postmodification. Also some *a*-adjectives, although these adjectives are more commonly predicative (📖 Sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.5).

(26) *I know that [all PARTIES **concerned**]NP are seeking a solution.*
(27) *The officials said [the COUNTRIES **involved**]NP intend to get a "nod" of approval from the US.*
(28) *It's not clear that [the MONEY **available**]NP is enough to get that done.*
(29) *The classroom typically had [other STUDENTS **present**]NP during observation sessions.*
(30) *Trump was like [a HOUSE **afire**]NP, moving fast pace through his campaign promises.*

5.2.1.3 Adjective phrases as heads of NPs

In some cases adjectives take over as heads of NPs. This happens in NPs whose head nouns are generic enough to be dispensable. Omitting the generic head leaves the originally modifying AdjP and the determiner as the only overt elements in the NP and the adjective has the appearance of the NP head. Still, the absence of the head noun continues to be felt. The adjective cannot take nominal morphology, but it can be compared and modified for degree. For his reason, it would be inaccurate to claim that the adjective has become a full-blown noun.

Instead we could say that, while still only an adjective, it functions as a 'stand-in' for the unexpressed head noun. Adjectives as NP heads come in three types:

1. Personal adjectival heads (🕮 MSPS II, Section 3.1.2)

This type denotes classes of people defined by the quality expressed in the head adjective. The unexpressed generic head is *people* and the whole phrase is plural. The adjective itself may be modified by an adverb and may be compared. The determiner is usually the definite article, but possessive and demonstrative determiners occur as well:

(31) *[**The brave**]$_{NP}$ may not live forever - but [**the cautious**]$_{NP}$ do not live at all.*

(32) *'[**The rich**]$_{NP}$ are all alike', to revise Tolstoy's famous words, 'but [**the poor**]$_{NP}$ are poor in their own particular ways'.*

(33) *[**The newly rich**]$_{NP}$ are working to create a legacy of social welfare.*

(34) *[**Those interested**]$_{NP}$ should submit an application by email.*

(35) *"Give me your tired, your poor,*
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
*Send these, [**the homeless**]$_{NP}$, [**tempest-tost**]$_{NP}$ to me,*
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" (from the sonnet "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus)

2. Nouns denoting nationalities (🕮 MSPS II, Section 7.2.1)

Adjectives denoting nationalities, mainly those ending in *-ish* or *-ch*, also figure as NP heads. These are also generic and plural, but unlike the former group, they cannot be modified by adverbs, only by adjectives:

(36) *[**The Irish**]$_{NP}$ were soon almost wholly dependent on the potato as their food staple.*

(37) *[**The Spanish**]$_{NP}$ have lived with terror from ETA terrorists.*

(38) *Just as [**the English**]$_{NP}$ are connoisseurs of their teas and [**the French**]$_{NP}$ are meticulous about their sauces and wines, Japanese consumers want rice to taste a certain way—and U.S. rice varieties often don't fill the culinary bill.*

(39) *[**The modern French**]$_{NP}$ have so completely lost the refinement of taste that distinguished their ancestors that I have often wished there were a law banning the use of orange, pink, or royal blue in domestic interiors and obliging French home owners to get written approval from three non-French adults before purchasing a roll of wallpaper.*

Nationality adjectives may denote groups smaller than the nation, e.g. sports teams or troops (40–42).

(40) *[More than 500 of **the Irish**]$_{NP}$ were down, nearly a fifth of them officers.*
(41) *[**The Irish**]$_{NP}$ have won two of their past three games.*
(42) *So it's true, [**the English**]$_{NP}$ are retreating.*

3. Abstract adjectival heads (🕮 MSPS II, Section 3.1.1)

Adjectives may also head abstract NPs. The nouns implicit in examples (43–45) are *thing, situation*, etc. These NPs are singular, can be modified by adverbs and can be compared:

(43) *No, [**the best**]$_{NP}$ is we're friends, we really get along.*
(44) *This is a jump into [**the unknown**]$_{NP}$, which could cause more anxiety.*
(45) *If there were rules that worked, [**the supernatural**]$_{NP}$ would be science. [**The truly supernatural**]$_{NP}$ must be truly meaningless.*

5.2.2 Adjective phrases as independent clause constituents

5.2.2.1 Adjective phrases as subject complements

In Part II, predicative use was singled out as another important defining property of adjectives. Predicative adjectives, or rather, predicatively used AdjPs, have two syntactic roles. They function as subject complements (Cs) and as object complements (Co). In this section we discuss the former.

When AdjPs function as subject complements, they follow copular verbs and characterize the clause subject.

(46) *She seems [very **HAPPY**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Cs}$ today.*
(47) *Eventually, they became [very **CLOSE**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Cs}$*
(48) *She appeared [quite **NORMAL**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Cs}$ in lavender pantaloons and vest.*
(49) *I was [thoroughly **SCARED**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Cs}$*

Often, AdjPs are only used predicatively because the prepositional phrase (50) or clausal complement (51) makes the AdjPs too heavy for premodification.

(50) *I was [thoroughly **ASHAMED** <u>of myself</u>]$_{AdjP\ as\ Cs}$*
(51) *They were [**ANNOYED** that they had been excluded from the negotiations]$_{AdjP\ as\ Cs}$*

Similarly, adjectives denoting temporary states of health occur predicatively. One such adjective is *well*, which occurs with the copulas *feel/look*.[26] Notice the difference in meaning between the adjectives *good* and *well* with the two verbs.

(52) *I feel* ***good***. (emotionally, physically, etc.)
(53) *I feel* ***well***. (health-wise)
(54) *She looks* ***good***. (appearance-wise)
(55) *She looks* ***well***. (health-wise)

Well is not acceptable after other verbs of perception, like *taste*; cf.

(56) *The food tastes* ***good/*well***.

Learners of English should pay special attention to verbs of perception (*smell*, *feel*, *look*, *sound*). These are normally incompatible with adverb phrases; they take AdjPs as subject complements to express the subject's physical or emotional state, perceptual experience, etc.

(57) *He smells* ***funny/?funnily***.
(58) *I feel* ***strange/*strangely***.
(59) *I feel* ***good/*well***.
(60) *She sounds* ***angry/*angrily***.

Verbs of perception may only exceptionally co-occur with adverb phrases. For instance with *smell* and *feel*, adverb phrases express the intensity of feelings/perceptions (Quirk et al. 1985: 407–408).

(61) *He felt* ***badly*** *about it* ('guilty', 'uneasy').
(62) *He felt* ***keenly*** *about it*.
(63) *He felt* ***strongly*** *about it*.
(64) *He felt* ***deeply*** *about it*.
(65) *It smells* ***strongly*** *of garlic*.

In many cases, alternating between adjective phrase complements and adverb phrases changes the meaning:

(66) *She feels* ***bad*** *today*. (health-wise)
(67) *She feels* ***bad/badly*** *about it*. ('guilty', 'uneasy')
(68) *He was* ***keen*** *about it*. ('enthusiastic')
(69) *He felt* ***keenly*** *about it*. ('intensely')
(70) *He felt/was* ***strong***. ('physically powerful')
(71) *He felt* ***strongly*** *about it*. ('intensely')

[26] The adjective *well* should not be confused with the adverb *well*, which corresponds to the adjective *good*.

The same switch with the verb *look* even affects how the verb is interpreted. *Look* in *look sad* is a copula verb linking the subject to its descriptive adjective phrase complement. Its meaning is similar to that of other copular verbs, like *seem* or *appear*. But *look* in *look sadly* is a dynamic verb expressing the subject's purposeful activity of gazing, observing, and the adverb phrase expresses the manner in which this activity is done.

(72) *I looked **sad*** vs. *I looked **sadly** (into the distance)*.

5.2.2.2 Adjective phrases as object complements

When AdjPs function as object complements (Co), they characterize objects (Od). Object complements are usually found with verbs like *make*, *consider*, *find*, *declare*, *pronounce*, and somewhat idiosyncratically with the verb *get* in the fixed phrase *get it all wrong*. Object complements can also be simple or complex AdjPs; direct objects are normally noun phrases, but may be clauses too (76):

(73) *Right, you've got to make [things]$_{Od}$ [**interesting**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*
(74) *Mother made [people]$_{Od}$ [**happy**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*
(75) *He clearly considers [cigarettes]$_{Od}$ [**addictive**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*
(76) *Do you consider [what he did]$_{Od}$ [**unethical**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*
(77) *The state considered [him]$_{Od}$ [**dangerous to himself or others**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*
(78) *A man might find [her]$_{Od}$ [**attractive**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*
(79) *Barak did not declare [peace]$_{Od}$ [**unachievable**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*
(80) *Queen Elizabeth has pronounced [garlic]$_{Od}$ [**unpleasant to the royal palate**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*
(81) *No, no, you've got [it all]$_{Od}$ [**wrong**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*

Object complements inserted into transitive sentences specify the result of the process:

(82) *Pull [the string]$_{Od}$ [**taut**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$, to tighten it through all connectors.*
(83) *We pulled [the sails]$_{Od}$ [**tighter**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*
(84) *Ginny pulled [the gate]$_{Od}$ [**open**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$ and walked up the ramp.*
(85) *Ankle-deep water washed [the streets]$_{Od}$ [**clean of tourists**]$_{AdjP\ as\ Co}$*

5.2.2.3 Adjective phrases as syntactically free modifiers and clause linkers

Adjective phrases can be syntactically unattached, free-floating units. Ignoring the fine detail, we may say that unattached AdjP have two main functions. They act as (a) detached modifiers of a NP which is usually located in the following sentence, and (b) clause linkers.

In (86) and (87) sentence-initial AdjPs modify the subject of the following sentence from outside the boundaries of the subject's sentence:

(86) *[**Unused to idleness**]*$_{AdjP}$, *[**he**]*$_{S}$ *arranged the setting carefully to pass the time*. ('he is unused to idleness')

(87) *[**Aghast and eyes ablaze**]*$_{AdjP}$, *[**my sister**]*$_{S}$ *stood on the curb*, *watched him disappear into the fires*. ('the sister was aghast, with eyes ablaze')

Such AdjPs normally occur at the very beginning of the utterance and modify the subject from their external vantage point.

Rarely, detached AdjPs modify the sentence object. These AdjPs are usually located sentence-finally (Quirk et al. 1985: 27). Notice that in example (88) the state of 'being hot' does not result from drinking the beverage – if this were the case, the AdjP would be an object complement (🕮 Section 5.2.2.2). Rather, this AdjP corresponds semantically to a subordinate clause of time:

(88) *You can't drink it [**hot**]*$_{AdjP}$
'You can't drink it while it is hot'

In sentences (89a) and (90a), the detached AdjPs act as clause linkers. As such, they always come sentence-first to provide the speaker's comment on the content of the upcoming sentence. It is clear from the paraphrase of example (89a), for instance, that the speaker associates the quality of strangeness with the situation communicated in the clause.

(89) a. ***[Strange]***$_{AdjP}$, *it was your generation that began the journey to the stars*. ('that which I find strange is that it was your generation that began the journey to the stars').

Sometimes clause-linking AdjPs can be replaced by adverb phrases (89b), but not when the AdjP is followed by a *that*- or a *how* clause (90b) (Quirk et al. 1985: 426):

(89) b. *[**Strangely**]*$_{AdvP}$, *it was your generation that began the journey to the stars*.

(90) a. *[**Strange**]*$_{AdjP}$ *how things turn out*.
b. ***[Strangely]***$_{AdvP}$ *how things turn out*.

Some speakers object to AdjPs used in this way, arguing that the adverb phrase should be used instead. But since replacement by the adverb phrase is not always possible, such complaints are somewhat misguided. A probable reason why detached AdjPs are even possible as clause linkers is ellipsis. The AdjP may be considered the last remaining part of an ellipted construction in which the AdjP functioned as a subject complement:

(90) c. (***It is***) ***strange*** *how things turn out*.

Here are two more examples of clause-linking AdjPs:

(91) ***[Most important]***$_{AdjP}$, *parents need to be positive role models*.
(92) ***[Even more remarkable]***$_{AdjP}$, *he'd never found that annoying*!

5.2.2.4 Adjective phrases as exclamations

Simple AdjPs may act as exclamations, especially in conversation and fictional dialogues (93–97), but also in news headlines and captions (98–99) (LGSWE, p. 520). These can be seen as reduced forms of more complete exclamations, viz. *That's great*! Or *How awesome*!

(93) *"I guess it's all right with me, too". – "****Great****!" Angela started to smile*.
(94) *"****Awesome****! I'm totally enthusiastic about everything"*.
(95) *"I'm going eat with you, guys". – "****Cool****!" Vadik said*.
(96) *The third bell rings*. *"****Oh dear****, ****oh dear****!" the little old woman whines*.
(97) *"Most ships go to Muziris." "****Amazing****!" exclaimed Maximus*.
(98) ***Blinding***!
(99) ***Hair raising***!

5.3 Syntactic subclassification of adjectives

Adjectives fall into several classes based on whether they can occupy only one or both syntactic positions typical of adjectives: the attributive slot (premodification) and the predicative slot (subject or object complements).

5.3.1 Central adjectives: attributive and predicative

Adjectives called "central" by Quirk et al. (1985: 404) can function both attributively and predicatively. According to LGSWE (p. 506), most central adjectives denote color (100–101),[27] size or other dimension (102–105), time (106–107). To these we may add many adjectives denoting shape (108–109), emotional or cognitive states (110–113), personality traits (114–115), etc. Each adjective is given below in the attributive and the predicative context.

(100) *My own brain contains [this **blue** sky]$_{NP}$ plus six cherry trees in bloom.*
(101) *The sun was warm, the sky was [**blue** and cloudless]$_{AdjP}$*
(102) *He was [a **short** man]$_{NP}$, not much taller than she herself.*
(103) *The man was [**short** and mustachioed]$_{AdjP}$*
(104) *She pressed her lips into [a **thin** smile]$_{NP}$*
(105) *This time Miranda's smile was [**thin** and bright]$_{AdjP}$*
(106) *Disk instabilities only take a few thousand years to form a planet around [a **young** star]$_{NP}$*
(107) *The star spins faster than the Sun. This means the star is [**young**]$_{AdjP}$*
(108) *People talk about [his thick, black, **curly** hair]$_{NP}$*
(109) *Her brown hair was [**curly** and unruly]$_{AdjP}$*
(110) *There is nothing sadder than [a **sad** girl]$_{NP}$*
(111) *The little girl was [**sad**]$_{AdjP}$ when they left without a kitten*
(112) *Now, you're [a **smart** guy]$_{NP}$*
(113) *He couldn't take the humiliation. Offed himself with nitrogen gas. Very smart. The guy was [**smart**]$_{AdjP}$*
(114) *I am not [a **mean** person]$_{NP}$. I know I'll go to Heaven.*
(115) *Just because one Chinese person is [**mean** to the Latin people]$_{AdjP}$, then all the Latin people think all Chinese people are mean.*

[27] "The word form *green* is ambiguous: it can be a form of the adjective GREEN denoting a colour, or of the noun GREEN meaning 'area covered in grass', as in 'village green' or 'bowling green'. In the first sense, *green* is in the same lexeme as the comparative form *greener*; in the second sense, it is in the same lexeme as the plural form *greens* (which is also the sole form of another lexeme GREEN meaning 'vegetables'). In neither sense is *green* in the same lexeme as *greenish* (Carstaris-McCarthy 2002: 125).

5.3.2 Attributive only

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 428), adjectives that are only or predominantly attributive do not characterize the referents of their nouns directly. Take for instance the bracketed noun phrases in (116) and (117):

(116) *He's such [a **wooden** actor]*$_{NP}$
(117) *They chose [the **wrong** person]*$_{NP}$

The adjectives *wooden* and *wrong* do not describe the actor or the person; the actor is not made of wood; the person does not have the quality of wrongness, whatever that would be. *Wooden* describes the acting; *wrong* relates to the misguided selection of a person for a particular position.

The most plausible interpretation of example (118) is one where *old* describes the duration of friendship, not the friend's age. As a matter of fact, no implications are even made about the friend's age; he may be no more than 16, but in the eyes of a teenager, an eight-year old friendship is a long one. Of course, in a different context *old* can be a central adjective describing the referent's age.

(118) *He's [my old friend]*$_{NP}$

In example (119) *old* is ambiguous between 'old in age' and 'being in my possession for a long time'. Heavy stress on the adjective brings forth the latter interpretation (Quirk et al. 1985: 428):

(119) *I'll take [my **old** car tonight]*$_{NP}$ ('the car I have owned longer than the other(s)')

Adjectives that characterize their nouns directly are called *inherent*, those that do not are called *non-inherent* (Quirk et al. 1985: 429, 🕮 Section 6.2). The syntactic correlate of an adjective's inherent or non-inherent status is its (in)ability to occur both attributively and predicatively. Inherent adjectives face no positional restrictions, non-inherent adjectives are attributive only. But there are exceptions among non-inherent adjectives; some may occur predicatively with select nouns (120). According to Quirk et al. (1985: 429), there is no explanation for why non-inherent *new* in (120) is acceptable as a predicative and in (121) it is not.

(120) *a new student* : *The student is new*.
(121) *a new friend* : **The friend is new*.

Adjectives that are only or predominantly attributive include the following four types: intensifying adjectives, limiter adjectives, other adjectives related to adverbs and adverbials, and some denominal adjectives.

1. Intensifying adjectives

Adjectives that have an intensifying or rarely a lowering effect on the noun they modify:

(122) a. *She is a **true** artist, a formidable businesswoman and humanitarian.*
b. **The artist is **true**.*

(123) a. *The verdict was a **clear** victory for the prosecution.*
b. **The victory was **clear**.*

(124) a. *They smiled and waved, **pure** joy dancing across their expressions.*
b. **The joy was **pure**.*

(125) a. *The ship sunk in just 12 minutes and what followed was **sheer** terror.*
b. **The terror was **sheer**.*

(126) a. *However, this still is a very long way from **definite** evidence of life.*
b. **Evidence is **definite**.*

(127) a. *Plants with yellow flowers are just **plain** fun.*
b. **Fun is **plain**.*

(128) a. *You know, he's a **total** stranger.*
b. **Stranger is **total**.*

(129) a. *She felt like a **complete** and **utter** fool.*
b. **The fool is **complete** and **utter**.*

(130) a. *He's a **real** hero.*
b. **The hero is **real**.*

Many of these intensifying adjectives can be paraphrased with morphologically related adverbs:

(122) c. *He was **truly** an artist.*
(123) c. *It was **clearly** a victory.*

Some intensifying adjectives have inherent uses, but then they mean something different:

(131) a. ***pure** joy* ('complete')
b. ***pure** water* or The water is **pure**. ('not dirty')

(132) a. ***clear** victory* ('obvious', 'undisputed')
b. ***clear** glass* or The glass is **clear**. ('not opaque')

(133) a. *a **true** artist* ('valid', 'proper')
b. *a **true** story* or The story is **true**. ('not invented')

2. Restrictive adjectives

Adjectives like *certain*, *principal*, *main*, *only*, etc., which restrict the reference of the noun:

(134) *She likes to explore before committing to stay in a* ***certain*** *area*.
(135) *Coronary heart disease remains the* ***principal*** *cause of death in the UK*.
(136) *The White House accepted his decision the* ***same*** *day*.
(137) *That's really the* ***only*** *hope we have*.
(138) *If you're set on staying at a* ***particular*** *place*, *get your rooms first*.
(139) *His* ***chief*** *opponent has a nuclear arsenal*.
(140) *His* ***exact*** *whereabouts tonight are unknown*.
(141) *There'd been a time when his* ***sole*** *reason to drink was to forget*.
(142) *Many students enroll without the* ***specific*** *goal of obtaining a degree*.
(143) *For us*, *the* ***main*** *focus is our high school students*.
(144) *The* ***precise*** *nature of Fido's family tree remains shrouded in mystery*.

Some of these restrictive adjectives have matching adverbs: *The precise nature* vs. *precisely its nature*; *the main focus* vs. *mainly the focus*.

3. Other adjectives related to adverbs and other forms of adverbials

A separate group of non-inherent adjectives covers any adjectives (other than intensifiers and limiters) that have clear adverbial correlates. These adjectives reference the time, quantity, manner, or other circumstances in which the implicit processes or relationships evolve or exist. Their adverbial nature can be gleaned from paraphrases of examples (145–155), where the adjectives are matched to their adverbs or prepositional phrases of time, frequency, quantity, manner.

(145) *Lovelace is accused of suffocating his* ***former*** *wife*. ('formerly his wife')
(146) *I called an* ***old*** *acquaintance*. ('an acquaintance of old time')
(147) *I know this from* ***past*** *experience*. ('experience from the past')
(148) *That a* ***possible*** *reason*. ('possibly a reason')
(149) *I think this country is facing a* ***present*** *danger*. ('danger at present')
(150) *Carl Lewis is an* ***occasional*** *contributor*. ('occasionally a contributor')
(151) *I was a* ***big*** *supporter of Clinton*. ('supported Clinton much')
(152) *The protagonist is a* ***clever*** *liar*. ('lies in a clever way')
(153) *He was paired up with a small Asian girl*, *a* ***beautiful*** *dancer whose stage presence made up for what she lacked in height*. ('girl who danced beautifully')
(154) *You have the muscles of a* ***hard*** *worker*. ('someone who works hard')
(155) *Manson's mother was a* ***heavy*** *drinker*. ('she drank heavily')

4. Denominal adjectives

Non-gradable adjectives derived from nouns with the following suffixes:

- *-ar*: *solar system*, *solar eclipse*, *nuclear program*, *bipolar disorder*, *molecular biology*;
- *-ic*: *economic development*, *hydrochloric acid*, *domestic violence*, *academic achievement*;
- *-an*: *urban development*, *human dignity*, *ovarian cyst*;
- *-al*: *chemical weapons*, *medical school*, *commercial break*, *sexual harassment*, *physical activity*;
- *-ly*: *daily news*, *yearly savings*.

These adjectives do not describe the referents of nouns but classify them into categories and are ungradable (📖 Section 6.3).

5.3.3 Predicative only

Adjectives that are more or less exclusively predicative bear the strongest resemblance to verbs and adverbs. Instead of describing the nominal referents, they refer to their (temporary) conditions or states. For instance, adjectives denoting states of health in humans or animals, such as *faint*, *well*, *faint*, *unwell*, *ill* have been found to occur predicatively over 95% of the time (LGSWE, p. 508). Still, an occasional attributive use is not difficult to come by, especially with *sick*, which quite freely occurs attributively (cf. example 156):

(156) *I didn't know how to take care of a* ***sick*** *person*,
(157) *Struggling to balance the demands of a job and an* ***ill*** *child*?

The other major group of predicative adjectives are adjectives with complementation (📖 Section 5.1), such as *prone*, *aware*, *glad*, *conscious*, *able*, *fond*, etc., cf. examples (156–163):

(158) *Authoritarians are [**PRONE** to denying even obvious facts]*$_{AdjP}$
(159) *At around three, kids start to become [**AWARE** of right and wrong]*$_{AdjP}$
(160) *She was [**GLAD** about how nice things were]*$_{AdjP}$
(161) *Ashcombe is [**CONSCIOUS** of the importance of reputation]*$_{AdjP}$
(162) *Soon I was [**ABLE** to stand]*$_{AdjP}$
(163) *Michael was [**very FOND** of his niece and nephew]*$_{AdjP}$

Finally, a set of *a*-adjectives and a handful of other miscellaneous adjectives distinctly prefer predication (exceptional attributive uses are given in footnotes; the underlined adjectives did not have a single attributive occurrence in COCA):

ablaze, *abreast*, *afraid*, *aghast*,[28] *aglow*, *alike*,[29] *alive*,[30] *alone*,[31] *askew*,[32] *asleep*,[33] *aware*[34]. Below, we illustrate a selection of these.

(164) *Half of the block was [**ABLAZE**]$_{AdjP}$ by the time we got down.*
(165) *I keep [**ABREAST** of the latest developments]$_{AdjP}$*
(166) *I was [**AFRAID** to talk to anyone]$_{AdjP}$*
(167) *Caprice tried not to look [**too AGHAST**]$_{AdjP}$*
(168) *For the moment she was [**AGLOW** with youth]$_{AdjP}$*
(169) *We are [**AWARE** that the proposed challenge is hard]$_{AdjP}$*

[28] *By 1945*, *an **aghast** writer at Life magazine fretted that "even the most proper women appear on beaches in costumes which used to be seen only in the rowdiest of cabarets".*

[29] *Ed schools are part of the cartel that restricts entry into public-school teaching in America*, *seeks to force everyone through essentially the same homogenized preparation program in ever more **alike** institutions*.

[30] Most attributive uses of *alive* refer to a slightly different, inherent, also gradable meaning, viz. 'vibrant'. As a non-gradable adjective meaning 'living', *alive* is preferably predicative, but there are also attributive uses like *There are more dead people in the world than there are **alive** people*.

[31] Outside the fixed expression *some alone time*, *alone* is rarely attributive. The following attributive example is quite exceptional; not only is *alone* used attributively, but it is also perceived as gradable: *Hed also learned enough to know that not only was she incredibly brave and surprisingly skilled*, *she was also the most **alone** person hed ever met*. *And hed met a lot of alone people since starting LCR*.

[32] *He could not bear the wait for Sam's return to set the **askew** world straight*.

[33] *An **awake** patient is more complicated that an **asleep** patient, says Dr*. *Roy Winston*.

[34] Aware is more readily accepted attributively when premodified by an adverb, as in *All this means those in poverty now include better-educated*, *politically **aware** people*, *Mr*. *Smiley says*.

Exercises

1. Complete the complex adjective phrases with appropriate forms.

1. The large, book-lined room was cool and empty _____ customers.
2. Hurricane Irma appears set _____ a path toward southern Florida.
3. He doesn't want to be answerable _____ others.
4. Chicago is all too familiar _____ losing children to violence.
5. I was really worried _____ him at the time.
6. If you are not averse _____ the Dungeons & Dragons aesthetic, it might be worth the effort.
7. The restaurant is surprisingly full _____ life and conviviality.
8. I was always hopeless _____ chatting up women.
9. We're so grateful _____ he was willing to come to Philadelphia.
10. Texans are enthusiastic and knowledgeable _____ their state's history.
11. Embracing clean energy is compatible _____ economic growth.
12. I wrenched my arm free _____ Milo's grasp.
13. Fortunately, the man was inclined _____ look first and shoot second.
14. I was especially proud _____ myself for being so clever.
15. We grew totally and irrevocably bored _____ each other.
16. The gesture was astonishingly similar _____ a woman studying her fingernails as a delaying tactic.
17. I am not so confident _____ Trump knows where Afghanistan is.
18. You are enormously reliant _____ a team.
19. The science is unclear _____ how much humans are contributing to climate change.
20. Many products have not even been subject _____ any of these tests.
21. He has had almost no sleep, is half drunk _____ fatigue.
22. No ruler worthy _____ his crown could simply ignore that!
23. I am so thankful _____ my mom came and took me to the doctor.

2. Identify the functions of adjective phrases (premodifier/postmodifier, subject complement, object complement, NP head, detached AdjP).

1. Alcohol use is [especially detrimental to patients with hepatitis C]$_{AdjP}$
2. She stared at him, [oblivious of the people on the sidewalk]$_{AdjP}$
3. He dreamed of a [brilliant]$_{AdjP}$ career.
4. He did what comes naturally to someone [obsessed with films]$_{AdjP}$

5. [Doped up and barely awake]$_{AdjP}$, he'd sat up too fast.
6. The sight made her [sick with fear]$_{AdjP}$
7. This empowers many, [the shy and timid]$_{AdjP}$, [the bold and brave]$_{AdjP}$
8. Since time [immemorial]$_{AdjP}$, women have gone out of their way to make themselves [attractive]$_{AdjP}$
9. Bristol, Tenn., is [famous as the birthplace of country music]$_{AdjP}$
10. They killed all the cattle and burned the fields [black]$_{AdjP}$

3. Are the adjectives below central (inherent) or non-central (non-inherent). If non-central, are they intensifiers, limiters, other adjectives related to adverbials, or denominal adjectives?

1. Clarity again, like **pure** water, overcomes me.
2. I was a **big** eater. I loved to cook. I loved food.
3. Hugh had planned this surprise with **sheer** pleasure.
4. I like him, he is a **good** man.
5. Maybe there was a clue in his **medical** records.
6. If you are a **long** sleeper who feels lethargic much of the day, you might benefit from restricting your time in bed.
7. The **only** clue left behind by the criminal was a Sprite soda can.
8. Alexandra Kerry shows up at Cannes Film Festival in a very **sheer** dress.
9. Many theories in social science are **pure** nonsense that has currency.
10. I think a **good** preacher has to have natural gifts.
11. Zealandia's continental crust is thicker than the **oceanic** crust.
12. Carbon dioxide is the **main** cause of global warming.

Summary of Chapter 5

Chapter 5 was dedicated to the syntax of adjective phrases. As most properties of adjectives explored in earlier chapters only materialize in the adjective's syntactic enviornment, we took a closer look into this environment to learn more about the structure and functions of the adjective phrase. We then explored various classes of adjectives that fail to occur in their expected syntactic slots, reminding the reader once again how resistant language may be to easy classification.

Chapter 6: Semantics of adjectives

Experiential phenomena coded as adjectives tend to denote relatively simple attributes of entities (Givón 1993: 55). According to Dixon (1982), some languages express such attributes with verbs, rather than adjectives. But to the extent that a language has adjectives as a distinct word class at all, the word class will include at least words denoting relatively permanent, concrete qualities inherent to the entity, like color, shape, size, consistency, weight, etc. Because this observation is valid across languages, we may regard such adjectives prototypical. Less prototypical adjectives would include those denoting inherent, possibly durable, but non-physical states (*good*, *bad*), (evaluative) character traits (*brave*, *cowardly*), also temporary states like temperature (*hot*), feelings (*sad*, *happy*), states of health (*sick*, *idle*, *nauseous*) or social states (*busy*, *idle*) (📖 TB 6.1.), and various other, non-inherent adjectives like those surveyed in Section 5.3.2.

Since categories do not come ready-made or with natural cut-off points, this semantic classification, like any other, is bound to be imperfect. The harder we look, the more distinctions we are likely to find. What looks like sufficiently similar attributes at one level of analysis, may end up being classed into two different categories at a finer level of analytical detail. Ultimately, if we push the "splitting" to the extreme, we may end up having very many classes consisting of too few or even single members. For this reason, a semantic analysis of adjectives should aim for semantic classes that (a) have cross-linguistic validity (same distinctions recurring in language after language) and (b) show clear grammatical consequences. In this chapter, we present several classifications that appear to be more directly linked with the grammatical behavior of (English) adjectives. In Section 6.1 we present the grammatical consequences of antonymous adjective pairs. Section 6.2 repeats the distinction between inherent and non-inherent adjectives introduced in Chapter 5. Finally, Section 6.3 revisits comparison and degree modification through the lens of the semantic notions of gradability and scalarity.

6.1 Antonymic adjectives

Adjectives, as we know, denote attributes from a variety of domains, like physical size, color, shape, taste, mental states, character, etc. (🕮 TB 6.1.). Many of them come in antonymic pairs, where one member means the opposite of the other on a scalar property. For instance, *short* and *tall* are two distinct values on the scale of height, *hot* and *cold* are opposites on the temperature scale. Table 6.1. illustrates English antonymic adjectives.

The existence of antonymic adjectives is not spectacular in and of itself. But a closer inspection reveals that members of antonymic pairs are not equal. One member usually acts as a neutral default, while the other one is marked. This is manifested in several ways.

Semantics

The positive member of an antonymic pair usually gives the name to the whole semantic scale: we speak about the scale of "width" not "narrowness"; the scale of "loudness" not "quietness", the scale of "thickness" not "thinness", etc. The negative member of the pair names only the negative end of the scale. In Croatian too, we speak of scales like "širina" ('width'), "dubina" ('depth'), "visina" ('height'), "glasnoća" ('loudness'), etc.

Table 6.1. Antonym adjective pairs (adapted from Givón 2001: 84)

quality	**positive**	**negative**
size	*big*	*small*
length	*long*	*short*
width	*wide*	*narrow*
thickness	*thick*	*thin*
height (position)	*high*	*low*
height (size)	*tall*	*short*
speed	*fast*	*slow*
loudness	*loud*	*quiet*
roughness	*rough*	*smooth*

Grammar

The positive member is used in so-called *extent* questions when the answer may come from any region on the quality scale (1). When extent questions include the negative member, the only possible answer is a value from the negative end of the scale (2). Cf. also the Croatian translations:

(1) *How tall is she? - Very short/very tall.*
('Koliko je visoka? – Vrlo je visoka/niska')

(2) *How short is she*? - *Very short / *very tall.*
('Koliko je niska? – Vrlo je niska/*vrlo je visoka')

TB 6.1. Prototypical and less prototypical adjectives (Givón 2001: 81–83)

PROTOTYPICAL ADJECTIVES

Size

General size: big/small; ***Horizontal extension***: wide/narrow; ***Thickness***: thick/thin, fat/skinny; ***Vertical extension***: tall/short; ***Vertical elevation***: high/low; ***Length***: long/short

Color

Brightness: dark/light, dark/bright, black/white; ***Color***: violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, red, beige, etc.

Auditory qualities

Loudness: loud/soft, noisy/quiet; ***Absolute pitch***: high/low; ***Relative pitch***: sharp/flat; ***Harmony***: mellow/harsh; ***Melody***: melodious/cacophonous

Shape

One-dimensional: straight, crooked, bent, curved, twisted; ***Two-dimensional***: round, square, oval, triangular, rectangular, trapezoid; ***Three-dimensional***: spherical, cubic, conical, cylindrical, pyramidal

Taste: sweet, sour, salty, acid, bitter

Tactile

Texture: rough/smooth; ***Resistance***: hard/soft; ***Pointedness***: sharp/dull

LESS PROTOTYPICAL ADJECTIVES

Evaluative: good/bad, pretty/ugly, nice/lousy, desirable/undesirable

Transitory states

Mental-internal: angry, tired, happy, sad, content, disgusted, alert, etc.; ***External activity***: busy/idle; ***External condition***: dirty/clean; ***Speed of motion***: fast/slow; ***Temperature***: hot/warm/tepid/lukewarm/cold;

States of living

Age: young/old, new/old; ***Life***: alive/dead; ***Health***: healthy/sick, ill/well; ***Business***: busy/idle, employed/unemployed

6.2 Inherent versus non-inherent adjectives

Another classification with grammatical consequences is the classification of adjectives into inherent and non-inherent, already discussed in Section 5.3. For the sake of this overview, we repeat the most important details. Inherent adjectives characterize the referent of the noun directly; non-inherent adjectives do not. For instance, *old* in *an old man* means a man who is advanced in age; *old* in *an old friend* does not mean that the friend is old, but the relationship, at least in the speaker's perception. Non-inherent adjectives, therefore, characterize something, like a relationship or some other aspect of the situation, closely related to the noun's referent, but not this referent itself. Such adjectives typically intensify, limit, or classify, e.g. *utter stupidity*, *main reason*, *medical school*, respectively, or are related to adverbials as in *beautiful dancer* when it means 'a person who dances beautifully'. The semantic distinction between inherent and non-inherent corresponds largely to the syntactic distinction between central adjectives (syntactically mobile) and peripheral adjectives restricted to the attributive slot. Examples (3–7) illustrate non-inherent adjectives related to adverbials.

(3) *I was a **big** supporter of Clinton*. ('supported Clinton much')
(4) *The protagonist is a **clever** liar*. ('lies in a clever way')
(5) *He was paired up with a small Asian girl*, *a **beautiful** dancer whose stage presence made up for what she lacked in height*. ('girl who danced beautifully')
(6) *You have the muscles of a **hard** worker*. ('someone who works hard')
(7) *Manson's mother was a **heavy** drinker*. ('she drank heavily')

6.3 Gradable versus nongradable adjectives

Adjectives also differ semantically in terms of whether they denote qualities that come in degrees or not. Gradable adjectives denote properties that can be laid out on a scale, with the grammatical consequence that they can be compared and modified for degree, especially by adverbs like *very*. Non-gradable adjectives cannot compare and do not allow modification by *very*. Some of them may, however, be associated with emphatic adverb modifiers like *absolutely* in *absolutely true* (**truer*, **truest*) (LGSWE, p. 521).[35] Many adjectives are gradable, especially descriptive adjectives denoting color, size, etc. (🕮 TB 6.1.).

(8) *The **littler** girl was less hurt than you might fear*.
(9) *I must have **softer** bones than most people*.
(10) *He'd need to learn how to play against **bigger**, faster, more skilled players*.
(11) *Their pictures were known around the world - the **tallest** man, the **shortest** woman, the woman with the **smallest** waist*.
(12) *The molecules making up the cloud were **lighter** than air*.
(13) *The Wolverines are one of the **youngest** teams in college football*.

Gradability is not a permanently fixed property of an adjective. It is negotiable and can change through contextual modulation. Examples (14–19) display non-gradable uses of some of the seemingly uncontroversial gradable adjectives from the list above. When non-gradable, adjectives like *little*, *big* etc. are no longer descriptive, but act as classifiers or identifiers (see below, also Paradis 2001). For instance, in example (14) *the little finger* is a type of finger distinct from the thumb, the index, the middle finger, and the ring finger. It cannot compare – there is no *littler/smaller finger* in this sense of the word.

(14) *A white bandage wrapped his left hand with his **little** finger and ring finger sticking out*.

[35] Other scholars draw a different boundary between gradable and non-gradable adjectives. For Paradis (2001), non-gradable adjectives are only those that accept no degree modifiers whatsoever, like *daily* (*newspaper*). Gradable adjectives are all adjectives that accept any kind of degree modifier and are divided into three types. (1) Non-scalar bounded gradable adjectives like *dead*, which enter into a complementary relationship with their opposites (e.g. *alive*). There is no scale but a dichotomy between two states. These adjectives are compatible with "totality" adverbs like *completely*. (2) Scalar unbounded adjectives like *long* (the prototype of gradability); they denote various values along the scale, compare, take *very* and other degree adverbs. (3) Scalar bounded adjectives like *excellent*, which denote extreme values on the scale, do not compare, and allow only emphatic adverb modifiers like *absolutely*, but not *very*.

(15) *Included-in-the-fare wines*, *beers*, *cocktails and* ***soft*** *drinks are available for lunch and dinner*.
(16) *The very laws of Nature must be different*, *going back to the* ***Big*** *Bang*.
(17) *He's an award-winning novelist and* ***short*** *story writer*.
(18) *By the time of the battle both the armies of Scipio and Caesar were enormous*, *consisting of several legions*, *hundreds of cavalry and thousands of* ***light*** *infantry*.
(19) *Aren't you forgetting something*, ***young*** *lady*?

We examine two types of non-gradable adjectives in the rest of this section: nongradable descriptive adjectives and classifiers.

6.3.1 Non-gradable descriptive adjectives

According to Bolinger "comparability is a semantic feature coextensive with 'having different degrees' or associated to items which are 'susceptible to being laid out on a scale'" (1967: 4). Most descriptive adjectives are gradable in this sense, but not all. Although this may not be immediately apparent, some descriptive adjectives denote properties that cannot be associated with degrees, and cannot compare.

One group of non-gradable descriptives are so-called *extreme adjectives* like *excellent*, *perfect*, *ideal*, etc. Extreme adjectives do imply a scale, e.g. something can only be judged as *excellent* if assessed against a standard value on the quality scale. But since adjectives like *excellent* or *perfect* themselves denote extreme scalar values beyond which it is impossible to go, they cannot compare by usual means (?*more excellent*, ?*most excellent*) and are classified as non-gradable in Bolinger's terms (but 🕮 footnote 35). Paradis calls such adjectives implicit superlatives (2001: 52).

Another group of non-gradable descriptives are the so-called *limit adjectives*, e.g. adjectives like *dead*. Unlike extreme adjectives, limit adjectives do not imply a scale, but are conceptualized in terms of 'either ... or'. In the words of Paradis (2001), the adjective *dead* and its complementary adjective *alive* divide their conceptual domain into two distinct parts. They denote absolute states; one cannot be more or less dead, one is or isn't dead, and for this reason limit adjectives do not normally compare.

These distinctions are easy to make in theory. But a glimpse into data reveals whims of usage that defy generalizations. Examples (20–26) illustrate the grading of the 'ungradable'. Example (26) is especially interesting as it recasts the idea of 'being dead' from a point-like absolute state to a graded one that evolves to completion.

(20) *The animal looked **more dead than alive**.*
(21) *I assure you, this frog is **very dead**.*
(22) *He's dead but he ain't, you know, **dead dead**.*
(23) *Ah, sir, I may well have been **half dead**. And not for the last time either.*
(24) *"What happened to her?" the cook asks. "She looks **pretty dead**." ...*
(25) *Because Death had not found her, she was not **entirely dead**. Rather, she existed in a strange place between life and death.*
(26) *He probably wasn't **absolutely dead**. Or, if he was, maybe he wasn't dead long enough. Maybe your heart has to stop for a certain length of time before you can have a death experience.*

Examples (27–29) illustrate comparison of the extreme adjective *perfect*. Admittedly, the idea that extreme adjectives may compare is not that shocking. According to Paradis (2001: 52), people are more or less ready to compare extreme adjectives like *excellent*, *ideal*, to accept comparatives like *more ideal* or *the most perfect*. Bolinger himself observed (1967: 6) that while comparability is associated with the ability of a property to be laid out on a scale, "the fondness of exaggeration pulls many of the adjectives representing these extremes off their perches and comparing them (i.e. comparing their non-extreme meaning) then becomes possible".

(27) *Some mobile companies are prioritizing discrete new camera features over the chase for ever **more perfect** photos.*
(28) *Do we mean women are angelically **more perfect** than men?*
(29) *The interface transformed from old and clunky to elegant and stylized, the tools became **more and more perfect** in what they did.*

6.3.2 Classifier adjectives

The second major group of non-gradable adjectives are many adjectives that fall into the general category of *classifiers* (LGSWE, p. 508). Although classifiers may have more or less descriptive content, their primary role is not (so much) to describe as it is to place the nominal referent into a (sub)category and thus narrow its reference. For instance, *medical* narrows down the reference of *school* to only those schools that specialize in teaching medicine. Similarly, the adjective *German* narrows the reference of the noun *speakers* to only speakers of that particular language. LGSWE posits the following subtypes of classifiers (p. 509):

Relational/classificational/restrictive: *additional*, *average*, *chief*, *entire*, *external*, *final*; *following*, *general*, *initial*, *internal*, *left*, *main*, *particular*, *previous*, *primary*, *public*, *similar*, *single*, *various*, etc.

Affiliative: designating the national or religious group to which a referent belongs: *American*, *Chinese*, *Christian*, *English*, *French*, etc.

Topical/other: naming the subject area or showing a relationship with a noun: *chemical*, *commercial*, *environmental*, *human*, *industrial*, *legal*, *medical*, *mental*, *official*, *oral*, *phonetic*, *visual*, etc.

TB 6.2. Boundedness: gradability, countability and aspectuality

Paradis (2001) draws a remarkable parallel between gradability in adjectives, countability in nouns, and (lexical) aspect in verbs. These semantic features of the three word classes are all associated with boundedness. According to Paradis (2001: 47), the association of boundaries with concepts is a pervasive characteristic of human cognition. In the conceptualization of noun entities, the presence or absence of boundaries makes the difference between countable and uncountable nouns (🕮 MSPS II, p. 42). Countable nouns rest on the conceptualization of entities as having boundaries (prototypically, in physical space), which give them characteristic shapes, e.g. *an hourglass*. Uncountable nouns are not inherently associated with boundaries and have no characteristic shape, e.g. *sand*. In the conceptualization of verb entities, boundedness is concerned with how events are instantiated in time, i.e. whether events are inherently associated with a beginning and an end point or are perceived as capable of lasting indefinitely. Verbs denoting states (*to love*) and activities (*to sit*) are seen as inherently denoting continuous situations with no associated beginning and end. Verbs may also inherently denote activities bounded in time by the beginning and the terminal point, e.g. *to murder*, *to fall*. In adjectives, boundedness is associated with gradability. For adjectives that qualify as gradable (in Paradis' terms, this means, adjectives that allow any kind of degree modifier), different types of gradability are associated with different kinds of boundedness. A full account is beyond the scope of this section. Suffice it to say that among scalar adjectives, viz. those that can only be conceptualized against the background of a scale, adjectives like *long* are construed as unbounded, since they are not inherently associated with any definite point on this scale but occupy a range of values (and can compare). Scalar adjectives like *excellent*, in turn, indicate one bounded point on the scale, the extreme value, and since this value is not associated with degrees, such adjectives resist normal comparison.

Exercises

1. Read the following dialogue from the pilot episode of Seinfeld (1989). Which semantic feature is the topic of this exchange of wit?

JERRY: No no no, don't interrupt the cycle. The machine is working, it, it knows what it's doing, just let it finish.
GEORGE: You're gonna "overdry" it.
JERRY: You, you can't "overdry".
GEORGE: Why not?
JERRY: Same as you can't "overwet". [George looks puzzled] You see, once something is wet, it's wet. Same thing with dead: like once you die you're dead, right? Let's say you drop dead and I shoot you: you're not gonna die again, you're already dead. You can't "overdie", you can't "overdry".

2. Gradable or non-gradable? Name more examples of shifting adjectives.

1. They confiscated Wong's computer, memory cards, and a **hard** disk.
2. Bubbles gush from his **open** mouth.
3. My adrenaline was pumping at a **fast** pace.
4. Like **Big** Foot, Ghoul gradually took on a life of his own.
5. NPY stimulates the growth of abnormal **smooth** muscle in blood vessels.
6. I'm allergic to dogs, but being in the **open** air, it was tolerable.
7. I have a pretty **big** foot. I've never been afraid of kicking my kids out.
8. He'd had his fill of **fast** food while traveling from Nashville to K. Meadow.
9. Kurt tapped his foot on the **hard** surface of the floor a few times.
10. He levered his body upward in a single **smooth** motion.

Summary of Chapter 6

Chapter 6 focused on several semantic features of adjectives with morphosyntactic consequences. Starting from antonymic adjective pairs in Section 6.1, we next revisited the inherent vs. non-inherent distinction (Section 6.2) and finally pulled some authentic corpus data to provide a finer-grained discussion of gradability in Section 6.3.

Chapter 7: Formation of new adjectives

Adjectives are open-class words (MSPS II, pp. 19–20), which means that new adjectives are formed on a regular basis. See, for instance, examples (1) and (2):

(1) *Hilton was so famous – or rather **faux-mous** – that simply banning her from a gossip column brought the columnist a certain cachet … (Celebrity Inc. How Famous People Make Money by Piazza, Jo., 2011)*

fauxmous$_{adj}$: a 21th century blend of two words *faux* 'false' and *famous* referring to someone who is famous for no good or obvious reason - usually reality TV participants, children of famous people, professional party goers, etc.[36]

(2) *Washingtonian*, *Lincolnian*, ***Trumpian**: Is **Trumpian** Destined to Become the Greatest Adjective in the Land*?[37]

trumpian$_{adj}$: 'describes an action or person that is motivated by arrogance, self-aggrandizement, and without concern for fact, consequence or responsibility'[38]

We cannot do justice to the formation of English adjectives within the constraints of this book. Still, to round off our profile of adjectives, we throw a quick glance at the ways new adjectives come into being. These are:

1. derivation by affixes
2. compounding
3. conversion (minor type)
4. "repurposing" of *-ing* and *-ed* participles

1. Derivation by affixes

Most adjectives arise by attaching a suffix or, more rarely, a prefix to a base word (MSPS II, pp. 16–18). The base may be a noun, a verb, or another adjective:

Noun:	*grace* > *graceful*; *cord* > *cordless*; *lady* > *ladylike*; *fame* > *famous*
Verb:	*create* > *creative*; *continue* > *continuous*; *interpret* > *interpretive*
Adjective:	*happy* > *unhappy*; *considerate* > *inconsiderate*; *deductible* > *nondeductible*

[36] https://slangdefine.org/f/fauxmous-2daa.html (Accessed 27 February 2017, 12:03)

[37] http://www.slate.com/blogs/lexicon_valley/2016/09/22/what_makes_the_adjective_trumpian_so_perfect_for_the_candidate.html (Accessed 27 February 2017)

[38] http://www.urbandictionary.com/?page=4 (Accessed 27 February 2017)

A more complete list of adjective-forming suffixes, introduced in Section 3.1, is repeated here for convenience as Table 7.1.

Table 7.1. Adjectival suffixes

Suffix	Adjective derived by suffixation
-able	*doable*, *knowledgeable*, *presentable*, *transferable*
-(i)al/(u)al	*accidental*, *segmental*, *parental*, *sentimental*; *presidential*, *facial*, *financial*, *beneficial*; *factual*, *textual*, *contextual*
-(i)an	*Shakespearean*, *Italian*, *Jordanian*, *agrarian*
-ary	*dietary*, *planetary*, *disciplinary*, *complementary*
-ed	*striped*, *red-bearded*, *long-nosed*; *advanced*, *mixed*, *sophisticated*
-esque	*Reaganesque*, *Clintonesque*, *statuesque*, *picturesque*
-ic	*nomadic*, *barbaric*, *heroic*, *parasitic*
-ing	*amazing*, *blazing*, *boring*, *surprising*
-free	*carefree*, *gluten-free*, *error-free*, *disease-free*
-ful	*careful*, *hopeful*, *boastful*, *wonderful*
-ish	*childish*, *greenish*, *sheepish*, *freakish*
-less	*careless*, *hopeless*, *harmless*, *fruitless*
-like	*humanlike*, *earthlike*, *birdlike*, *jewel-like*
-ly	*womanly*, *beastly*, *princely*, *motherly*, *lawyerly*
-ous	*ambitious*, *generous*, *outrageous*, *rigorous*, *murderous*
-y	*wiry*, *healthy*, *smudgy*, *freaky*; *spidery*, *chocolaty*; *creaky*, *clingy*

2. Compounding

A steady supply of adjectives comes from putting together independent words, like nouns and participles (*eye-catching*) or participles and adjectives (*piping hot*). Compounding is an exquisite information-compression mechanism. What would otherwise take heavy postmodification by a relative clause or prepositional phrase can be pressed into a prenominal compound adjective, cf. (3–4):

(3) ***battle-weary*** *soldiers > soldiers who have grown weary of battle*
(4) ***clean-shaven*** *face > face that has been shaven clean of beard and moustache*

Compound adjectives are common in written English, especially news reports, and unsurprisingly so (LGSWE, p. 535). Careful integration of complex information into as compact a form as possible is a journalistic must as the goal is to keep up with a steady stream of news from around the globe.

We only exemplify subtypes of compound adjectives defined by the word class of their constituent elements and leave their more detailed discussion for

the future. The topic deserves a much closer look than we can afford since it is by no means clear that compounds can be easily distinguished from free syntactic phrases. We follow LGSWE (pp. 533–535) and treat the adjectives below as compounds because they feature hyphenation, arguably one objective criterion for compound status. However, it should be noted that some compounds may occur without a hyphen, cf. the open spelling in *midnight blue* (Quirk et al. 1985: 1578), *hoppong mad* (Adams 2001: 97) or the solid spelling in *heartbreaking* (Adams 2001: 92). Also, note that items that are adjectival in form but function as adverbs, e.g. *slow* in *slow-moving* ('N moves slowly') are treated below as adverbs.

Adverb + adjective

(5) *hopelessly-retro*, *critically-ill*, *politically-sensitive*, *ever-present*, *fiercely-competitive*

Adverb + *-ed* participle

(6) *well-fed*, *well-timed*, *well-paced*, *privately-owned*, *ill-suited*, *ill-advised*, *new-born*, *heavily-guarded*, *hard-pressed*, *hard-earned*, *privately-owned*, *highly-trained*, *highly-publicized*, *deeply-rooted*, *deeply-seated*

Adverb + *-ing* participle

(7) *slow-burning*, *smooth-running*, *rapidly-changing*, *rapidly-growing*, *naturally-occurring*, *legally-binding*, *steadily-growing*, *newly-emerging*, *deeply-troubling*, *deeply-moving*, *well-meaning*, *well-paying*

Reduplicative

(8) *wishy-washy*, *easy-peasy*

Adjective + color adjective

(9) *bluey-white*, *sickly-white*, *dark-blue*, *hot-red*, *graceful white*, *deep-blue*, *royal-blue*

Adjective + other adjective

(10) *visual-spatial*, *political-ideological*, *juvenile-pubertal*

Adjective + *-ed* participle

(11) *ready-mixed*, *white-washed*, *short-cropped*, *clean-shaven*

Adjective + *-ing* participle

(12) *funny-looking*, *scary-looking*, *free-standing*, *sweet-smelling*, *innocent-looking*, *bitter-tasting*, *familiar-looking*

Noun + adjective

(13) *work-shy*, *nutrient-rich*, *gluten-free*, *ankle-high*, *millennia-old*, *street-smart*, *book-smart*, *race-proud*, *power-drunk*, *sleep-drunk*

Noun + *-ed* participle

(14) *school-based*, *state-owned*, *air-conditioned*, *drug-related*, *computer-generated*, *time-honored*, *heart-shaped*, *tree-lined*, *computer-animated*, *age-matched*, *password-protected*, *coffee-colored*, *detail-oriented*

Noun + *-ing* participle

(15) *substance-abusing*, *soul-crushing*, *game-breaking*, *health-enhancing*, *face-framing*, *body-hugging*, *head-scratching*, *life-prolonging*, *bone-crushing*, *price-cutting*, *chest-thumping*, *eyebrow-raising*, *soul-stirring*

Adjective + noun

(16) *general-purpose*, *double-digit*, *front-row*, *inner-city*, *full-time*

Participle + adverbial particle

(17) *boarded-off*, *drained-off*, *hissed-off*, *painted-over*, *combed-over*, *cleared-out*, *spawned-out*, *shot-out*, *stepped-up*, *trumped-up*

X + denominal adjective in *-ed*

(18) *blue-eyed*, *pointy-nosed*, *sharp-tongued*, *two-faced*, *right-handed*

Preposition + noun (from Carstairs-McCarthy 2002: 64)

(19) *overland*, *in-house*, *with-profits*, *offshore*, *downmarket*, *upscale*

3. Conversion (minor type)

An interesting source of new adjectives is the conversion of phrases into adjectives. Quirk et al. (1985: 1563) consider this process a minor type of conversion. As usual with conversion, there is no derivational marker, but note the addition of hyphens, cf. (20–22):

(20) *He is a true* ***dyed-in-the-wool*** *free-market guy*.
(21) *Seen from above*, *Khobar looked even smaller: a little*, ***down-at-heel*** *Arab town on the southern shore of the Persian Gulf*.
(22) *Sporting a white waiter's uniform*, *he exposes his chest*, *occupying customers' seats with a* ***couldn't-care-less*** *attitude*.

This type of conversion builds adjectives that are not based on the usual patterns of compounding listed in (1–19) above. Admittedly, what is or is not a "usual"

pattern is an empirical question and one that deserves a more extensive discussion than we can afford. Suffice it to say that it is unlikely that there will ever be a pattern of compounding based on material of predicate scope, cf. *couldn't care less* in (22). The treatment of *full-time* as a compound (cf. 16) is less certain, though, as it may also be considered the result of conversion of the phrase *full time* found in e.g. *I was employed full time …*. Similarly, *boarded-off*, listed as a compound in (17), could be considered the result of conversion (cf. *The area was boarded off*).

4. "Repurposing" of *-ed* and *-ing* participles

In Section 3.2.3 we examined the cline between participles and adjectives. We showed participles with various adjectival features, like attributive and predicative use, degree modification, and comparison. The change of participles into adjectives is a long and gradual process of morphosyntactic reorganization different from the abrupt formation of new adjectives by means of synchronic word formation. During this long process, a participle gradually assumes more and more of adjectival features, until ultimately it becomes, like *interesting* or *boring*, a full adjective. The set below contains participial adjectives collected from the bottom of COCA's frequency range:

(23) *The doctor was very **shaming** as though it was all my fault.*
(24) *It's a very **sombering** day for us.*
(25) *It's a very **soaring** building as well. It's mysterious.*
(26) *Suicide is a very **stigmatizing** death.*
(27) *It was very **protruding**. The face stuck out.*
(28) *It's a very **scheming**, dangerous thing to do to another person.*
(29) *It had a very **repelling** effect, and yet you felt the vitality and fresh air.*
(30) *Those are two very **competing** forces.*
(31) *So it was very **crushing** and sad, the whole experience.*
(32) *She was very happy and very **bubbling**.*
(33) *When I started, nobody seemed very **promising**.*
(34) *He seemed very **controlling** of what she did.*
(35) *The world seemed **washed** of all colors but white and gray.*
(36) *At no point had he seemed **ruffled** or melancholy.*
(37) *Everybody seemed **pooped**.*
(38) *Every time Christians proclaim that redemption has already come in Jesus Christ, they need to be reminded by Jews and others that the redeemed world does not look very **redeemed** to non-Christians.*
(39) *A lot of people have the idea that poetry is horrible, very formal, very **rhyming** and very **removed**, I think, from high school kids.*

Exercises

1. Complete sentences with complex adjectives built from the material in brackets. Comment.

1. She'd grown up in the arms of white, small-town _____ America, never having traveled to more than the neighboring states for the first eighteen years of her life ('one that fears God').
2. He stared at Mother, _____, his mouth slightly open ('with eyes open wide').
3. Home to 48 families, the village has a rustic, _____ charm: bamboo fences crisscross the gentle hillside, ruling off neat vegetable patches ('in the manner/style of Tolkien's fiction').
4. Although _____ donation of certain human tissues is authorized in some states, medical authorities' prerogatives in the area of tissue harvesting for transplant are usually statutorily limited by the survivors' right to object ('one for which no consent has been obtained').
5. There have been mechanical problems that are giving a bad name to the Mexican aspect of the bi-national panel process. In my mind, those are all _____ and _____ ('can be tinkered with'; 'can be cured').
6. More than 600 episodes, and 32 Emmy Awards later, the Simpsons is now the _____ scripted prime-time show in U.S. history ('one that ran the longest time').
7. I was interested in the idea of service and being with _____ people (who think like me, have a mind like mine').
8. Dinner that night was eaten in _____ silence. When we finished, my father looked across the table at me ('during which everyone was occupied with their own thoughts').
9. Far too many people live in _____ environments, where trust is replaced by costly and unwanted surveillance ('environments in which there is no trust').
10. Parkinson's disease is a common, _____neurodegenerative condition that affects over 120,000 people in the UK ('related to age').
11. Marc Peruzzi suffers from a rare glandular disorder that causes _____ ____ weight fluctuation ('in the manner/style of Oprah')
12. A _____ movie revealed just how close to disaster that first moon landing came ('suspensful movie, one that causes the audience to bite their nails').

13. He has a _____ nose, outsized ears, a shiny bald head (‘like a bulb’).
14. Vizenor turns to the story of an artist being inspired by the _____ urn at Ishi’s grave (‘related to the crematorium’).
15. My cats can be real clowns. And here’s one now. A slinky caramel-colored feline nicknamed Ami silently sidles up to Henrikson. Oversized ears and large, dark eyes give her a vaguely _____ look (‘resembling Yoda’).

Summary of Chapter 7

Chapter 7 was a non-exhaustive overview of the main strategies used in forming new adjectives, viz. affixation, compounding, conversion, and what we called the gradual repurposing of participles as adjectives.

PART III: ADVERBS

Chapter 8. Adverbs: Setting the scene
Chapter 9. Morphological structure of adverbs
Chapter 10. Syntax of adverb phrases
Chapter 11. Semantics of adverbs

The third part of this volume is dedicated to adverbs, arguably the most difficult English word class to define and delimit from others. We start in Chapter 8 with an overview of the category. We examine its heterogeneity, but also discuss what holds this loose category together in spite of all diversity. Of special interest are overlaps between adverbs and other word classes, especially adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections.

Chapter 9 focuses on the morphological structure of English adverbs. We examine their morphological form and adverb comparison. After that, we move on to present arguments, put forward by some linguists, against the traditional view of adverbs as a distinct word class and in favor of an alternative analysis in which adjectives and adverbs are members of the same word-class category.

In Chapter 10 we survey the syntactic functions of adverb phrases. As with adjective phrases, we explore a variety of their syntactically dependent and syntactically independent uses.

Part III closes with Chapter 11 where we explore the staggering semantic diversity of adverbs.

Chapter 8: Adverbs: setting the scene

In some of the most authoritative accounts of English grammar, adverbs are described as "the least homogenous class and hardest to define" (Givón 1993: 71), "the most nebulous and puzzling of the traditional word classes" (Quirk et. al. 1985: 438), or as "a classificatory wastebasket, a dumping ground for words that don't belong in any of the other more clearly defined categories" (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 131). Similarly, Nilsen observes that "…there seems to be a general consensus of opinion among grammarians [no matter what model they represent] that the most heterogeneous, and the least understood of the traditional part-of-speech categories is, without question, the category of adverb (1972: 179).

Although faced with a difficult task, in this chapter we will attempt a reasonably well-rounded overview of the category. As we examine various morphological, syntactic, and semantic features of adverbs in Section 8.1, we will keep tabs on the misbehaving items and types that gave the word class such a bad name. In Section 8.2 we will zoom in on overlaps between adverbs and other word classes, although such overlaps will already figure in the discussion in Section 8.1.

8.1 Adverbs as a heterogeneous class

Adverbs are heterogeneous in all respects: morphologically, semantically, and syntactically. As we will show in this chapter, there are no simple yet definitive criteria for allocating to the adverb category all manner of items traditionally regarded as adverbs.

Morphologically, adverbs can be simple (*now*, *then*, *always*, *here*, etc.), compound (*maybe*, *hereafter*, *nevertheless*, etc.), and derivational (*simply*, *kindly*, *crabwise*, etc.). Derivational adverbs are commonly formed from adjectives by *-ly* suffixation. While this sounds like a good enough foundation for distinguishing at least adverbs from adjectives, some adverbs and adjectives are morphologically indistinguishable (e.g. *fast*, *hard*). This, among other formal coincidences between adverbs and other word classes, renders morphological make-up rather unreliable as a criterion for adverb identification.[39]

[39] Such a close relationship between adjectives and adverbs is not an English idiosyncrasy. In German, for instance, adjective stems are used as adverbs without any suffixal support, e.g. *Abends wird der Faule* ***fleißig***$_{AdjP}$ 'in the evenings the lazy one becomes dilligent' versus *Er arbeitet sehr* ***fleißig***$_{AdvP}$ 'he works very dilligently'. In Croatian, some adverbs are

Semantically, adverbs express a variety of notions related to the circumstances of a situation: its spatial or temporal setting (1), frequency (2), or manner (3), etc. Adverbs also express the degree of a property (4), contrast (5), and myriad other meanings discussed more fully in Chapter 11. This semantic nonuniformity makes it impractical to use meaning as a predictor of category membership.

(1) *You are not allowed to park your car **here**.*
(2) *She is **always** complaining about something.*
(3) *He behaved **inappropriately**.*
(4) *My story is **slightly** different than yours.*
(5) ***Alternatively**, the college could bring in the police more to address illegal activities.*

Would it be more informative to resort to syntax and learn from the syntactic distribution of items traditionally regarded as adverbs? Unfortunately, it is easy to oversimplify the matter. Adverbs are usually defined in contrast to adjectives. It is commonly held that, unlike adjectives, which modify nouns, adverbs modify verbs and everything else except nouns.[40] Let us consider some examples. In (6) and (7) we see the word *clockwise* categorized as an adjective (heading a simple adjective phrase) and as an adverb (heading a simple adverb phrase), respectively.[41] The basis for this categorization is distribution.[42] When it modifies a noun (6), *clockwise* is categorized as an adjective, when it modifies a

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morphologically indistinguishable from the corresponding neuter adjective in one of the case-forms. For instance, in ***dobro**$_{AdjP}$ dijete* versus ***Dobro**$_{AdvP}$ je to napravio*.

[40] Adverbs originally modified verbs and verb phrases, and over time they began to modify other elements, like adjectives, adverbs, whole sentences or utterances (Pittner 2015: 5). The historical primacy of verbs and verb phrases as targets of modification is reflected in the origin of the term *adverb*. The noun derives – via French – from Latin *adverbium*, *ad-* meaning 'to', *verbum* meaning 'verb', *-ium* being the nominal suffix. The Greek term for adverbs was *epirrhema*, *epi-* meaning 'upon', and *rhema* 'verb'. In the grammar of Dionysius Thrax *Tékhnē Grammatikē,* written in the 2nd century BC adverbs were described for the first time as uniflected words that modify verbs.

[41] As already argued with adjectives (🕮 Section 5.1), modification is the function of phrases – simple or complex, not "words" alone. Thus even when we speak of "adverbs" as modifiers, this is only done for simplicity.

[42] The view that adjectives and adverbs differ in distribution is sometimes referred to as *the complementarity claim*. The essence of the claim, according to Payne et al. (2010: 31), is that "the choice between adjective and adverb is fully predictable from the category that is modified: adjectives modify nouns and adverbs modify all other categories". This suggests a clear division of labour between adjectives and adverbs. We will see later that even though this may be true for the most characteristic uses of adverbs, there are many examples of adverbs that modify nouns and so defy this generalization. Some may even function as complements, another function supposedly reserved for adjectives (and other structures, but not adverbs).

verb (7), it is categorized as an adverb (in the examples below, the modified items are given in small caps, bold, but other syntactic details have been omitted for clarity). The same distinction is shown in (8) and (9) with a morphologically related adjective-adverb pair. It would seem, therefore, that the distinction between adjectives and adverbs rests securely on function (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 123).

(6) *The **[clockwise]**$_{AdjP}$ **CIRCULATION** of air is dragging moisture from the Gulf of Mexico.*
(7) *You start **TURNING** your end of the towel **[clockwise]**$_{AdvP}$, and your friend does the same at the other end.*
(8) *She is a [very **cautious**]$_{AdjP}$ **PERSON**.*
(9) *He **CLIMBED** [**cautiously**]$_{AdvP}$ up the stairs.*

Still, there is some overlap between the sets of items modifiable by adverbs and adjectives. Adjectives are indeed more restricted as they only modify nouns. Adverbs, in turn, modify a larger set of elements, like verbs (10), adjectives (11), other adverbs (12), determiners (13), prepositional phrases (14), and clauses (15). But adverbs also modify nouns and noun phrases, as can be seen in examples (16–17).

(10) *She **TOUCHED** his hair **soothingly** and lifted the bag, helping him.*
(11) *These words may be **soothingly** **DIPLOMATIC**, but her methods aren't.*
(12) *States have **quite** **BROADLY** tried to define college and career readiness.*
(13) *Authorities at the time said that **virtually** **ALL** the clown sighting reports had originated with young children.*
(14) *Palin was embraced **practically** **WITHOUT RESERVATION** in many conservative circles.*
(15) ***Unfortunately**, **RIGHTS WERE NOT NECESSARILY GRANTED TO EVERY PERSON IN AMERICA AFTER THE PASSAGE OF THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT**.*
(16) *Sarah, my **upstairs** **NEIGHBOR**, came down with her daughters.*
(17) *This is **quite** **A DIFFERENT RESULT** than that found in our study.*

Importantly, not every adverb can modify just any, or all, of these items. The heterogeneity of adverbs thus also manifests in the range of items to which individual adverbs may attach as modifiers (Huddleston et al. 2002: 563). For instance, while *almost, only*, or *even* can modify verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, noun phrases, and determiners (18a–f), *very* or *extremely* can only modify adjectives and adverbs, but not verbs, noun phrases, or clauses (19a–e):

(18) a. *Her skirt flared out to **almost** **REVEAL** the tops of her stockings.*

b. *Up until a year ago, when Iranian-backed gunmen ruled the streets, the prospect of economic recovery was* ***almost UNTHINKABLE****.*
c. *But* ***almost IMMEDIATELY****, she started hearing about nothing else.*
d. ***Almost ON A DAILY BASIS****, new allegations arise that the academy does too little to prevent sexual assaults and help victims.*
e. *That is* ***almost A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY****.*
f. *Birds in* ***almost ALL*** *religions are the angels of angels.*

(19) a. *This is a* ***very INTERESTING*** *story.*
b. *She spoke* ***very CANDIDLY*** *about her failed marriage.*
c. **He* ***RUNS very****.*
d. **This is* ***very A DIFFERENT RESULT****.*
e. ** **Very, I ASKED HER TO JOIN ME****.*

Since the tendency to modify verbs is so often perceived as **the** defining feature of adverbs, this feature makes *very* a very strange adverb indeed. *Moreover*, *conversely*, or *however* are then equally strange since they only modify clauses.

Adverbs also vary in whether they are modifiable themselves. Manner adverbs in *-ly* can be intensified by adverbs like *very*, *extremely*, etc. (example 20), but e.g. viewpoint adverbs (📖 Section 11.4) cannot take intensifiers (example 21):

(20) *He spoke [**very/quite/extremely CANDIDLY**]$_{AdvP}$ about his father's death.*
(21) ***[**Very/extremely/quite* ***POLITICALLY***]$_{AdvP}$*, this is a defeat for the conservative right-wing government.*

In addition to being modifiers, adverbs can also function as complements of a limited number of verbs like *treat*, *behave, live, go*:

(22) *My grandchildren behave [**impeccably**]$_{AdvP}$ while staying with me.*
(23) *While I'm visiting with them, they treat me [**respectfully**]$_{AdvP}$*

As for copula verbs (e.g. *be*, *seem*), adverbs are not their most typical type of complement and only some adverbs can take on this exceptional role. The most representative adverbs, viz. manner adverbs in *-ly* (e.g. *cleverly*, *honestly*, etc.) cannot – the complement slot is filled by their corresponding adjectives (24–25). Yet local and temporal adverbs occur freely after copulas, cf. examples (26–28).

(24) a. *His answer was [**honest**]$_{AdjP}$*
b. **His answer was [**honestly**]$_{AdvP}$*
(25) a. *Her actions were [**bold**]$_{AdjP}$*
b. **Her actions were [**boldly**]$_{AdvP}$*
(26) *He was [**outside**]$_{AdvP}$*
(27) *The meeting is [**upstairs**]$_{AdvP}$*
(28) *Your life is [**now**]$_{AdvP}$ – you should live in the present.*

Local and temporal adverbs have additional features, of morphological nature, that make them different from other adverb classes. Apart from some frequency adverbs (e.g. *occasionally*, *systematically*, *consistently*, etc.), local and temporal adverbs are usually not based on adjectives or marked by the *-ly* suffix. They also do not have comparative and superlative forms. In this respect, they form a class of their own. However, as argued by Pittner et al. (2015: 17), what binds them together with other adverbs is their function as circumstance adverbials (🕮 Section 10.2.2), like the adverbial of place in *He is playing* ***inside***.

For all their "strangeness", some local and temporal adverbs (e.g. *here*, *there*, *now*, *then*, *always*, etc.) are among the most frequent adverbs in English (LGSWE, p. 796). Their frequency even exceeds that of manner adverbs in *-ly*, which are usually considered the category prototype (🕮 T8).

So far, we have seen that adverbs vary greatly in form, meaning, the words they modify, with regard to whether they can be modified themselves, and whether they can function as complements. We also noted that unlike some other adverbs, local and temporal adverbs have no comparative and superlative forms. However, they are not alone in this. Actually not many adverbs allow inflectional comparison. This is only possible with some monosyllabic adverbs (e.g. *soon*, *sooner*, *soonest*) and adverbs identical in form with adjectives (e.g. *fast*, *faster*, *fastest*). Adverbs ending in *-ly* form their comparatives and superlatives periphrastically, with *more* and *most* (e.g. *more importantly*, *most importantly*), while other classes of adverbs cannot be compared in any way, e.g. linking adverbs (🕮 Section 11.8) like *however*, *therefore*, *thus*, etc., intensifiers (🕮 Section 10.2.1.1 and T10) like *very*, *quite*, *rather*, etc. or viewpoint adverbs (🕮 Section 11.4) like *economically*, *politically*, *school-wise*, etc.

Even from this brief introduction we can see that adverbs are extremely heterogeneous indeed. No matter where one looks for evidence of the category, viz. form, modification, complementation, comparison, there is always a type or two of adverb that fails to toe the line (🕮 Table 8.1.).

Some authors are more optimistic. According to Payne et al. (2010: 73), the pervasiveness of *-ly* adverbs is a strong unifying force for the whole category. Namely, with the suffix *-ly* one can derive adverbs of all semantic types, even local and temporal adverbs, which are otherwise almost exclusively monomorphemic and unrelated to adjectives. See, for instance examples (29) and (30), where *locally* and *recently* denote the place and time of action, respectively:

(29) *The scheme was designed and implemented* ***locally***.
(30) *I came across Peter* ***recently****, for the first time in weeks*.

Table 8.1. Heterogeneity of adverbs

	Verb modifier	Clause modifier	Complement of copulas	Modifiable by adverb	Comparison
slowly	+	-	-	+	+
inside	+	-	+	-	-
very	-	-	-	-	-
soon	+	-	-	+	+
moreover	-	+	-	-	-

TB 8.1. Definition of adverbs in some reference grammars (based on Rauh 2015)

Many authors never seem to fail to point out how difficult it is to define adverbs or that there are no clear criteria for assigning items into the category. In her analysis of some influential reference grammars of English, Rauh (2015) found that their authors either shy away from a definition, or, if they do provide one, it falls short of diagnosing the full set of items. Rauh first examined the grammar of Greek, *Tékhnē grammatikē,* written by Dionysius Thrax in the second century BC. This grammar offers the first known definition of adverbs. Based on morphological and syntactic criteria, adverbs are defined as simple or compound indeclinable words added to a verb. The grammar also lists as many as twenty-five semantic features of adverbs i.e. the expression of manner, quality, place, time, horror, wish, etc. Still, some of the items given as examples are not "added to a verb" and so fail to fit the syntactic aspect of the definition (e.g. words corresponding to English *yes*, *no*, etc.). Also, the definition is too narrow as it fails to cover items "said of" adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, etc. Rauh (2015: 20) then looks into Curme's (1935) grammar of Modern English, where adverbs are defined as words that modify verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Curme later adds adverbs as modifiers of prepositional phrases, clauses, and sentences, but still fails to include adverbs acting as complements (e.g. in *She lives abroad*). Finally, in the most recent of the grammars examined, that by Huddleston et al. (2002: 563), adverbs are defined as follows: "Adverbs characteristically modify verbs and other categories except nouns, especially adjectives and adverbs." Rauh finds that the use of hedges "characteristically" and "especially" renders the definition unreliable and weak, and reveals uncertainty about how to deal with this complicated category (Rauh 2015: 21–22). Also, like Curme's (1935), this definition fails to explicitly recognize adverbs as complements of verbs. The general problem with all the definitions is that there is a discrepancy between how the category is defined and the items discussed as its members (Rauh 2015: 22). According to Rauh, this may be why some grammarians (Quirk et al. 1972, Quirk et al. 1985, and Biber et. al: 2002) do not even attempt to define the adverb, but simply proceed with discussing its characteristics.

8.2 Adverbs and other word classes

Besides the problems addressed in Section 8.1, adverbs are also notorious for participating in various cases of multifunctionality. Consider the following examples:

(31) ***Today*** *is a day of great loss to the planet and to the human race.*
(32) *President Trump vowed* ***today*** *to whittle down huge trade deficits.*
(33) *The air* ***aboard*** *the station contains high levels of carbon dioxide.*
(34) *Three swimmers made it back to the boat and climbed* ***aboard****.*

Traditional grammars would analyze *today* in (31) as a noun since it functions as the head of the subject NP. However, *today* in (32) would be an adverb, rather than a noun since it is not the head of an NP, it does not inflect for number, and is not preceded by a determiner.

In (33) *aboard* is complemented by a noun phrase and thus looks like a preposition (🕮 Section 12.1). In (34), however, *aboard* is not followed by a complement and can be treated as an adverb (for an alternative view 🕮 TB 8.2.).

Needless to say, the existence of such formally identical multifunctional forms makes it difficult to argue for the viability of the word class adverb from the point of view of its distinctness vis-á-vis other word classes.

8.2.1 Adverbs versus adjectives

The link between adverbs and adjectives is especially strong. Since overlaps between these two categories were dealt with extensively in Section 3.2.1, we will only sum up the most important points here.

Many adverbs and adjectives are related morphologically. Adjectives are the most abundant source of adverbs, serving as the basis for *-ly* suffixation (e.g. *bold* > *boldly*). Alternatively, some adverbs and adjectives have the same simple form, e.g. in *He ran [fast]*$_{AdvP}$ vs. *a [fast]*$_{AdjP}$ *car*. Also, like adjectives, some adverbs may compare, some inflectionally (e.g. *far*, *farther*, *farthest*), others periphrastically (e.g. *cruelly*, *more cruelly, the most cruelly*).

Syntactically, adverbs and adjectives head phrases of similar structure: both can take degree modifiers (e.g. *That was a [very* ***nice****]*$_{AdjP}$ *gesture* vs. *He moved*

*[very **slowly**]*$_{AdvP}$) and degree complements (*[as **proud** as her mom]*$_{AdjP}$ vs. *[as **proudly** as you can]*$_{AdjP}$.[43]

Apart from adjectives, adverbs share features with other word classes as well. In the following sections, we examine their overlaps with prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Our discussion will be based largely on Quirk et al. (1985: 441–445), with some influence from LGSWE.

8.2.2 Adverbs versus prepositions

In multi-word verbs (📖 MSPS I, Part 2), the particle[44] following the verb is either an adverb or a preposition. If the verb is intransitive, the particle is an adverb, viz. a prepositional adverb (Quirk et al. 1985: 713):

(35) *His aunt passed **away**.*
(36) *The glasses slid **off**.*

If the verb is transitive, the particle is either an adverb or a preposition. The decision falls on whether the verb and the particle can be separated from each other by repositioning the object noun phrase. If the particle can be separated from the verb by the NP object, it is an adverb (37–38). The particle cannot be moved when it is a preposition (39–40), since this noun phrase acts as the prepositional complement (📖 Section 12.1).

(37) a. *We turned **down** his offer.*
b. *We turned his offer **down**.*
(38) a. *He has put **off** the meeting.*
b. *He has put the meeting **off**.*

(39) a. *When I arrived, he was listening **to** music.*
b. **When I arrived, he was listening music **to**.*
(40) a. *When in London, you should call **on** me.*
b. **When in London, you should call me **on**.*

The same dilemma may exist with single-word verbs. Simple verbs can also be followed by a preposition or a prepositional adverb. Again, unlike prepositional adverbs, prepositions must be followed by their complement:

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[43] Rauh takes this similarity further claiming that, as heads of their respective phrases adjectives and adverbs also rarely take complements (2015: 134). We have to disagree with this statement since many adjectives readily occur with prepositional phrase complements (📖 Section 5.1).

[44] *Particle* is a used as a general cover term for adverbs and prepositions.

(41) *The air **aboard** the station contains relatively high levels of carbon dioxide*. (preposition)
(42) *Three swimmers made it back to the boat and climbed **aboard***. (prepositional adverb)
(43) *She ran **past** the four-story building housing the library*. (preposition)
(44) *Everyone she ran **past** smiled and waved to her*. (prepositional adverb)

Huddleston & Pullum (2005: 130) provide a sample of words that can act as prepositions or (prepositional) adverbs:

(45)

aboard	*above*	*across*	*after*	*along*
behind	*below*	*beneath*	*beyond*	*by*
down	*in*	*off*	*outside*	*over*
past	*round*	*since*	*through*	*under*

TB 8.2. Adverbs versus other word classes – an alternative view

Some authors (Huddleston et al. 2002, Huddleston & Pullum 2005, and Payne et al. 2010) argue that adverbs can be made less heterogeneous by removing from the category some words traditionally seen as multifunctional (e.g. *today* between noun and adverb or *aboard* between preposition and adverb). The heart of this argument lies in the formal diversity of structures that function as adverbials. Note that adverbials are often realized as adverb phrases, cf. (1a) (📖 Section 10.2.2), but they also occur as noun phrases (1b), or prepositional phrases (1c):

(1) a. *The shop opens [**tomorrow**]$_{AdvP}$*
b. *The shop opens [**next week**]$_{NP}$*
c. *The shop opens [**in two weeks**]$_{PP}$*

The proposal (Huddleston et al. 2002: 564–565) is to reduce the heterogeneity of adverbs by relaxing the definition of other word classes in adverbial functions (nouns, prepositions, etc.) so that these other classes can "adopt" the adverbs with which they are multifunctional (to our mind, this sounds a bit like the proverbial robbing Peter to pay Paul – some reasons will soon become obvious).

To illustrate, the proposal is to treat *outside* in *The basket is outside* as a preposition, not an adverb. The reason is that *outside* functions as a complement to the verb *be*, and this function is only associated with adjectives (2a) and prepositions (3a) (actually NPs and PPs), not with adverbs traditionally defined. Evidence for this restriction comes from pairs of adjectives and adverbs linked by *-ly* suffixation, where only the adjective is allowed in the complement slot (📖 Section 8.1 and example 2a,b). Therefore, to treat *outside* as an adverb would be inconsistent with how adverbs are traditionally defined (2005: 132). Instead, it is argued that *outside* is a preposition, despite missing its NP complement (incidentally, a key defining property of prepositions!).

(2) a. *The cake is [**perfect**]$_{AdjP}$*

b. **The cake is **[perfectly]**$_{AdjP}$*

(3) a. *The plates are **[in the drawer]**$_{PP}$*
b. *The bicycle is **outside**.*

The authors believe that this analysis makes adverbs a much more coherent class since it is now rid of words that differ radically in their distribution from genuine adverbs (genuine adverbs obviously being adverbs derived from adjectives by *-ly*).

Huddleston et al. (2002: 564f) also exclude from adverbs items like *yesterday*, *tonight*, *today*, *tomorrow*, etc., traditionally seen as nouns or adverbs. Their proposal is to treat these words as deictic pronouns.

(4) a. ***[Yesterday]**$_{NP}$ was the first day for weeks that it hasn't rained.*
b. *They arrived **[yesterday]**.*

The argument is that there is no reason to treat *yesterday* in (4a) and (4b) differently. Since noun phrases commonly function as adverbials (e.g. *They arrived **last week***, *They stayed **a long time***), Huddleston et. al. argue that *yesterday* in (4b) is also a noun phrase (headed by a deictic pronoun), which functions as an adverbial of time.

Note that the changes described so far clean the adverb category of adverbs denoting local and temporal settings. Interestingly, for other authors (Ramat & Ricca 1994), local and temporal adverbs are the true representatives of the category since they are among the most frequently used adverbs in the English language (📖 T8).

In this book we side with the traditional view and regard items like *outside* and *then* as adverbs. Semantically and syntactically, local and temporal adverbs are very similar to "genuine" adverbs in *-ly* denoting manner since both classes specify the circumstances of the action denoted by the verb (time, place, and manner), and function as circumstance adverbials.

8.2.3 Adverbs versus conjunctions

Some adverbs serve to contribute to discourse coherence. They establish semantic connections between parts of discourse of various lengths (LGSWE, pp. 558–559). LGSWE calls them *linking adverbs*. They function as *linking adverbials* (note the terminological distinction! 📖 Section 10.2, esp. 10.2.2). Linking adverbs include items like *yet*, *and so*, *therefore*, *thus*, *nevertheless*, *additionally*, *overall*, which resemble coordinating conjunctions (e.g. *and*, *but*, *or*) and subordinating conjunctions (*because*, *since*, *as*, *although*, *though*, *while*, *whereas*). All are connectives of sorts, but there are some differences between linking adverbs and conjunctions, which make it reasonable to see them as different categories.

First, coordinating conjunctions (coordinators, for short) have a fixed position at the head of the clause they introduce, cf. (46a,b). Linking adverbs are more mobile within the clause, as shown in examples (47a,b):

(46) a. **But** I told you I was going to be late.
b. *I told you **but** I was going to be late.

(47) a. ***Nevertheless**, it is a very complex medical condition*.
b. *It is, **nevertheless**, a very complex medical condition*.

Second, unlike coordinators, which are mutually exclusive, linking adverbs may be preceded by a coordinator:

(46) c. *And **but** I told you I was going to be late.
(47) c. *But, **nevertheless**, it is a very complex medical condition*.

Third, unlike coordinators, linking adverbs tend to be separated off by commas in writing and short pauses in speech from the rest of the clause (cf. 47a–c).

The boundary between some linking adverbs and coordinators is less clear, e.g. *so*, *yet*, and *neither* are like linking adverbs since they can be preceded by coordinators, but are also like coordinators since their position is fixed at the head of the clause (LGSWE, p. 80):

(48) a. *And **yet**, it seems to be the best option in my case*.
b. **It seems **yet** to be the best option in my case*.

Linking adverbs can be distinguished from subordinating conjunctions (subordinators) based on restrictions on the order of the linked clauses (Quirk et al. 1985: 442). Unlike clauses introduced by subordinators (e.g. *because* in examples 48a,b), clauses that start with a linking adverb cannot be repositioned since that would sever its semantic relationship to the other clause. Compare examples (50a) and (50b), where after being repositioned, the *so*-clause no longer introduces the result of the situation described in the first clause. Instead, it has some vague semantic connection with a (here unexpressed) piece of earlier discourse:

(49) a. *He decided to help us **because he felt sorry for us***.
b. ***Because he felt sorry for us**, he decided to help us*.

(50) a. *He felt sorry for us. **So, he decided to help us***.
b. ? ***So, he decided to help us**. He felt sorry for us*.

8.2.4 Adverbs versus interjections

Since adverbs are such a heterogeneous category of items, there is a fine line even between some adverbs and interjections. Interjections are an "extragrammatical" class of words that do not belong to sentence structure proper, but signal emotional reactions like, e.g. satisfaction (*Ah*), mild call for attention (*Ahem*), disapproval (*Boo*), *pain* (*Ouch*), etc. (Quirk et al. 1985: 853). The interjections most commonly misperceived as adverbs fall into two subclasses: reaction signals (e.g. *no*, *yes*, *yeah*, *yep*, *m*, *hm*, *mhm*) and initiators (*well*, *oh*, *ah*, *oh well*, *well then*, *why*), and both are very frequent in spoken English.

(51) ***Oh**, I didn't know you were here.*
(52) ***Wow**, that's what I call dedication*.

Adverbs are similar to interjections in that they may be morphologically invariable and express subjective values. But invariability and subjectivity are by no means a feature of all adverbs. That is, not all adverbs are invariable, and many other word classes are (prepositions, conjunctions). Also the encoding of subjectivity is not a property of all adverbs (Cuenca 2000: 31). The distinction between the two classes rests more securely on syntax. Unlike adverbs, interjections are syntactically independent and can stand alone as complete utterances. In that respect interjections are "sentence equivalents" rather than "sentence constituents" (Cuenca 2000: 32). *Blast!* or *Damn!* – short as they are – are complete utterances semantically equivalent to the full sentence *I am very disappointed*.

T8. Adverbs: prototypes and family resemblances

We have emphasized the multifarious nature of the word class adverb throughout Chapter 8. The diversity of items called adverbs is so great that the category has come to be perceived as a messy "dumping ground" for any words that do not pass muster as members of other word classes. With so many diverse items inside the category, it may indeed be impossible to articulate the common ground that holds the category in place.

Starting from some well-known work into the nature of human categorization by psychologists and philosophers of language (e.g. Rosch 1973, Rosch & Mervis 1975, Wittgenstein 1958), this section looks a little bit more closely into the internal structure of the category adverb and it prototypical members.

Why do humans categorize? The ability to perceive similarities between recurrent objects and experiences in the environment has been fundamental to human existence. We organize environmental stimuli into categories that are useful and meaningful to us. Categories represent collections of objects and experiences that we perceive as similar enough at some level to form a generalization. For instance, playing chess, rugby, or solitaire may be perceived as members of the category ACTIVITIES PURSUED FOR ENTERTAINMENT. A category of finer grain, like BALL SPORTS, would then only include activities that involve physical exertion, a team of players, and, crucially, a ball, but would exclude solitaire or chess. Categorization allows us to be economical. By attending to knowledge about the generalized category, we do not inquire or speculate (much) about the properties of its individual members; we can form some expectations about the appearance, behavior, or other properties of category members. Ideally, all members would look and behave in exactly the same way, but research shows that this is not the case.

Psychological experiments (e.g. Rosch 1973) have shown that humans build their categories around the prototype, viz. the item that most fully represents the category. Prototypical members share more attributes with other members in the category than peripheral items, or share attributes with more members than the peripheral ones. Items on category periphery, conversely, share attributes with relatively fewer other members or share fewer attributes with other, more central members (Geeraerts 1988: 208). In other words, less prototypical items belong to the category because they share some properties with the prototype, and/or with some other members in the category that are themselves similar to the prototype and/or other members. Members of a category are related to each other through what is metaphorically, and quite conveniently, called "family resemblances" (Wittgenstein 1958, Rosch & Mervis 1975). Within a family, a

single person may share different sets of physical and behavioral features with different individuals from his/her family, but not necessarily a single set of features with all family members. Let's take sports as an example. Soccer may be perceived a more representative member of the category SPORTS than, say, the game of Musical Chairs. In fact, most of the world probably considers soccer the prototypical kind of sports. It is a rule-governed, competitive game that requires talent, physical prowess, may be pursued professionally and is highly institutionalized. Musical Chairs is a game similar to soccer insofar as it is also rule-based, competitive, and even takes some physical skill to play well. But unlike soccer, it cannot be pursued professionally. It is a private, recreational type of entertainment and takes little talent to play. Musical Chairs may be more similar to karaoke than to soccer, given its focus on fun and music. If Muscial Chairs and karaoke can be considered sports at all, they are only very poor examples, teetering on the very brink of the category. They appear a much better fit to a different, or at least a more general, category we could call GAMES or ENTERTAINMENT. As Rauh (2015: 26) observes "[t]he periphery of the category organized around a prototype does not have clear-cut boundaries and items on the periphery could belong to either of two adjacent categories" (Rauh 2015: 26).

There is no reason to expect that things are any different with linguistic items and categories, word classes included. To take a simple example, we can consider common countable nouns like *table* prototypical nouns and uncountable nouns like *police, information* less typical instances (📖 MSPS II, Section 2.2).

But what about adverbs? Given all the messiness associated with the word class, is it even plausible to assume that there is a powerful enough prototype or that there are powerful enough family resemblances to make the category work?

Ramat & Ricca (1994, in Pittner et al. 2015: 6) propose viewing adverbs as a macro-category consisting of several subsets related to each other by family resemblances. They consider the subset consisting of *-ly* adverbs as the central subset in terms of their meaning (adverbs denoting manner) and syntactic behavior (they function as verb modifiers):

(1) *We greeted each other* ***cordially***.

Ramat & Ricca (1994), however, note that *-ly* manner adverbs are somewhat flawed concerning their potential to stand as the category prototype for at least two reasons: first, they are not the most frequent adverbs in English, and second, cross-linguistically, most languages have items subsumed under the class adverb which are more frequent than manner adverbs. Among them are items denoting spatial or temporal settings (*now*, *here*), degree (e.g. *very*, *extremely*), and focus (e.g. *only*, *just*). Ramat & Ricca (ibid. 316) observe that this "heterogeneous core-

group" rather than manner adverbs in *-ly* should be considered prototypical, mainly on account of its cross-linguistic frequency. It should be noted here that frequency is often combined with the family resemblance model of prototypicality in that the importance of an item is a combined effect of its role within family resemblance structure and the relative frequency with which it is experienced (Geeraerts 1988: 208).

Payne et al. (2010:70) also report that the list of 60 most frequent adverbs in the British National Corpus contains only a few *-ly* adverbs. This is consistent with Ramat & Ricca's (1994: 317) finding about the scarcity of manner adverbs among the 50 most frequent *-ly* adverbs.

However, other authors insist that a different type of frequency information is necessary to make prototypicality judgements. Pittner et al. (2015: 7), for instance, argue that what matters is the frequency of specific **types** of adverbs, not the frequency of **individual** adverbs. They conclude that – since the *-ly* adverb is the most frequent **type** of English adverbs – it should be seen as the category prototype.

With regard to temporal and local adverbs (📖 Section 8.1), Pittner et al. (2015:7) add that these adverbs seem to form a class of their own. However, it is seen as related to other subclasses of adverbs with their syntax – they most frequently function as circumstance adverbials, and their semantics as modifiers.

A completely different perspective is presented in Rauh (2015). The author argues that adverbs do not build a prototype-based category that would subsume all items classified as adverbs in various English grammars. In her view, the adverb category only serves to pull together words that cannot be categorized otherwise. Moreover, in many cases there are no family resemblances whatsoever between the disparate members (e.g. on what grounds can the items *please* or *kindly* be treated as co-inhabitants of the same category?).

Rauh (2015) proposes that the heterogeneity of the word class is conditioned by human processing capacities. We simply need to have a limited, psychologically optimal number of word classes so we could process them easily. If the purpose of word class categories is to structure a large number of lexical items of a language into a cognitively manageable number of categories, then the number of such categories should not exceed a certain number (Rauh 2015: 38). Rauh concludes that "it is the function – or the fate – of the part-of-speech adverbs to attract together all those words that do not fit the definitions for other parts of speech and be treated as a sort of a waste-paper basket for such items (Rauh 2015: 38). The author finds validation for this claim in psychological experiments that have shown that the ideal number of categories within a domain,

in our case – in the lexical inventory of a language – is seven plus or minus two categories (Miller 1956, in Rauh 2015: 36). This number corresponds with the number of word classes usually proposed in the description of various languages – it usually ranges between seven and ten.

Therefore, it seems that the category adverb is a somewhat atypical major word class in that it does have a prototypically structured core, viz. manner adverbs in *-ly*, but in addition to items populating that core, it also comprises items that do not fit the definitions for other parts-of-speech, viz. sentence connectors like *however*, *therefore*, or *nevertheless*, the expressions *yes* or *no*, sentence negators like *not*, and forms that are not used as modifiers but rather as complements of verbs such as *abroad* as in *He went* ***abroad*** or *outside* as in *She is playing* ***outside*** (Rauh 2015: 38).

Exercises

1. Which of the following claims is true, partially true, or false? Provide arguments and examples to support your claims.

1. English adverbs are derived from adjectives with the *-ly* suffix.
2. All adverbs modify verbs.
3. Adverbs can be compared inflectionally.
4. Manner adverbs in *-ly* are the most prototypical type of adverbs.
5. Adverbs ending in *-ly* typically function as complements of the copula *be*.

2. Classify the words in bold as adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, nouns, or interjections. Provide arguments for your decisions.

1. Forget **yesterday's** news.
2. **Yesterday** was my rest day.
3. The president wants it **yesterday**.
4. The city has been an important seaport **since** the Middle Ages.
5. He left early in the morning and I haven't seen him **since**.
6. Hemingway said that he wanted to be buried **beneath** this tree.
7. They were waving from the bridge as the boat was passing **beneath**.
8. Peter walked **in** and closed the door behind him.
9. Despite this, very little research has been conducted **in** the area of college luxury suites.
10. This is typically a **quick** and straightforward, semi-automated procedure.
11. Minnie, Minnie, come here **quick**.
12. The strength of our argument is illustrated **well** by the 1989 murder of Judge Robert Smith.
13. He was **well** aware that his wife was seeing somebody else.
14. I'm not feeling **well** today.
15. **Well**, it seems I am **behind** with my work again.
16. They found that a single injection **well** can cause earthquakes at distances more than 6 miles (10 kilometers) from the well.
17. Can I borrow your pen for a second? **Yes**, of course.
18. **Yes**, I have won the lottery!
19. He had a cup of coffee before he went outside to look **around**.
20. He lives **around** the corner.

Summary of Chapter 8

Chapter 8 was an introduction to adverbs, the most notoriously heterogeneous word class. We showed that there is no single criterion that would encompass all items traditionally considered adverbs. The heterogeneity was shown to also stem from unstable boundaries between adverbs and other word classes, most notably adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. In a special section devoted to the adverb's category structure, we surveyed some arguments to the effect that prototypical, or core adverbs, comprising manner adverbs in *-ly*, join class with items that fail to meet the criteria for assignment to any other word class. This presumably makes the category cognitively efficient, but still something of a classificatory chaos.

Chapter 9: Morphological structure of adverbs

The heterogeneity of adverbs is also reflected in the fact that some adverbs are open class words, i.e. mostly *-ly* adverbs freely derived from adjectives, while others, like *there*, *now*, and *then*, are closed-class words (📖 MSPS II, Section 1.T.2). Actually, there are four morphological types of adverbs: simple, compound, and derivational adverbs, and fixed phrases functioning as adverbs. We will describe each type in turn, and close the chapter by taking a closer look at comparison.

9.1 Simple adverbs

Simple adverbs form a closed class and are limited in number. They usually denote the spatial or temporal setting of a situation, e.g. *here*, *there*, *near*, *never*, *always*, *soon*, *often*, *seldom*, *once*, etc., degree, e.g. *very*, *quite*, *almost*, *so*, *rather*, etc., or focus: *only*, *even*, *just*, etc. Some simple forms that qualify as adverbs, e.g. *hard* and *fast* can also be adjectives (📖 Section 3.2.1.2), *before* and *outside* also function as prepositions (📖 Section 8.2.2), *today* and *tomorrow* can also be nouns (LGSWE, p. 539).

9.2 Compound adverbs

Compound adverbs consist of two or more elements combined into a single word. Some of the examples are: *sometimes*, *anyway*, *somewhat*, *somehow*, *anyhow*, *meanwhile*, *oftentimes*, *nevertheless*, etc. Some compound adverbs are very formal, e.g. *forthwith*, *herewith*, *whereupon*, *heretofore*, *hereafter*, etc.

9.3 Adverbs derived by suffixation

9.3.1 Adverbs in *-ly*

The derivation of adverbs from adjectives by *-ly* suffixation[45] is by far the most productive pattern of adverb formation. A great many adjectives have matching *-ly* adverbs, as testified by the pairs in (1–3):

(1) a. *Invariably, **abashed** owners or executives would respond.*
b. *The New York Times **abashedly** admitted that it failed to review the novel when it was first published.*

[45] For *-ly* adverbs vs. *-ly* adjectives 📖 Section 3.2.1.1 and TB 9.1., for a snippet of history of *-ly* adverbs 📖 TB 3.2.

(2) a. *Critics, however, say the **draconian** measures limit civil liberties*.
b. *The fact that he was **draconianly** punished for an unintended act is intolerable*.

(3) a. *A handful of **garrulous** women gathered at sunset to gossip*.
b. *This anxiety caused them to be **garrulously** nonchalant about ceremony*.

Some adjectives are particularly fond of being transformed into adverbs in this way. According to Baayen & Renouf (1996: 88–89) this includes adjectives prefixed by *un-* and adjectives suffixed by *-ing*, e.g., *uneasily*, *uninhibitedly*, *uncontroversially*; *bewilderingly*, e*nchantingly*, *dashingly*, etc.

Still, some adjectives refuse *-ly* suffixation. Huddleston et al. (2002: 566) list two sets of constraints on the formation of *-ly* adverbs:

Morphological constraints:

1. adjectives beginning with the prefix *a-* (*afraid*, *alive*, *awake*, *asleep*, etc.)
2. adjectives with the Latin suffix *-or* (*inferior*, *minor*, *junior*, *superior*, etc.)
3. adjectives that themselves end in *-ly* (*friendly*, *manly, ugly*, *silly*, etc. but also 🕮 TB 9.1)
4. adjectives based on *-ed* participles (*hurt*, *improved*, *unexplained*, etc.)

Semantic constraints:

1. adjectives derived from place names (*German*, *English*, *Russian*, etc.)
2. adjectives denoting color (*brown*, *scarlet*, *yellow*, *blond*, etc.)
3. adjectives denoting size or age (*big*, *small*, *old*, *young*, etc.).

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 439), the *-ly* suffix can only be added to dynamic adjectives (*cheerful* > *cheerfully*, *suspicious* > *suspiciously*, *jealous* > *jealously*, etc.). *-ly* adverbs are not formed from stative adjectives, like those denoting dimension (*big* > **bigly*, *tall* > **tally*), color (*red* > **redly*, *blonde* > **blondely*), or age (*old* > **oldly*, *young* > **youngly*).

TB 9.1. *-ly* adverbs from *-ly* adjectives*?*

Adjectives ending in *-ly* refuse to take on another *-ly* to form the matching adverb (**lovelily*), a corresponding periphrastic construction is used instead, e.g. *in a lovely manner*. However, Carstairs-McCarthy (2002: 128) points out that some English speakers find acceptable the adverb *sillily* (> *silly*), since the *-ly* on the adjective is not itself a suffix, but a part of the root (📖 MSPS II, Section 1.T.1.2). They will, nevertheless, reject the adverb **friendlily* (> *friendly*), since the *-ly* on the adjective is a suffix.

Bauer (2004b: 6) provides a diachronic perspective on this (📖 TB 3.2.). Drawing on evidence from *-ly* adverbs derived from *-ly* adjectives, Bauer argues that the productivity of affixes changes over the course of their historical development. He notes that while contemporary speakers of English are reluctant to produce *-ly* adverbs from *-ly* adjectives (he found no instances in the COBUILD corpus containing 18 million words), not that long ago, in the first edition of the OED from 1933 *-ly*, adverbs were listed for all monomorphemic *-ly* adjectives: *burlily*, *holily*, *jollily*, *melancholily*, *oilily*, *sillily*, *surlily*, *uglily,* and *wilily*. Bauer concludes that, at some point in the history of English, such adverbs were more common than they currently are. Still, he observes that the same edition of the OED contains at least 473 words ending in adjectival *-ly* (e.g. *friendly*), but only ten *-ly* adverbs with *-ly* adjectival bases that were not obsolete or rare: *cleanlily*, *friendlily*, *ghastlily*, *homelily*, *kindlily*, *livelily*, *lonelily*, *lovelily*, *lowlily*, *manlily*.

TB 9.2. ***majorly***

Despite the constraint against building *-ly* adverbs from adjectives ending in the Latin comparative suffix *-or*, Huddleston et al. (2002: 566) note that the adverb *majorly*, 'in a major way, to a considerable degree' has recently come into use, mainly among younger speakers. To test this claim, we checked the frequency of this exceptional adverb in COCA. With only 64 instances, *majorly* can be considered a (still) rare occurrence; but there is no doubt that it has made its way into English against all odds. The results in Table TB 9.2. point to its clear, if not constant, rise in popularity.

Table TB 9.2. Changes in the frequency of *majorly* (COCA)

Total	1990–1994	1995–1999	2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2014	2015–2017
64	1	9	9	15	18	12

Although pegged as a feature of informal discourse, *majorly* was attested even in COCA's academic register (if only 7 times):

(1) *This branch of the facial nerve (7th cranial nerve) travels over the midsection of the mandible and* ***majorly*** *supplies the muscles around the lips along with mandible area skin sensation*.

9.3.1.1 Forming *-ly* adverbs from adjectives

In this section we present some spelling and pronunciation conventions for adjective-derived *-ly* adverbs (from Quirk et al. 1985: 439):

1. In adjectives ending in a consonant followed by *-le*, adverbs are formed by replacing *-le* with *-ly* (e.g. *simple* > *simply*, *comfortable* > *comfortably*, *responsible* > *responsibly*, *reasonable* > *reasonably*, *visible* > *visibly*, but there are exceptions to this rule as in e.g. *whole* > *wholly*);
2. In adjectives ending in a consonant followed by *-y*, *-y* is usually replaced by *-i* before *-ly* (e.g. *easy* > *easily*, *ready* > *readily*, *heavy* > *heavily*, *steady* > *steadily*, *necessary* > *necessarily*, etc.). In some cases, parallel spellings exist (e.g. *dry* > *dryly*/*drily*, *sly* > *slyly*/*slily*).
3. In adjectives ending in *-y* preceded by a vowel, there are no hard and fast spelling rules: *coy* > *coyly*, but *gay* > *gaily*;
4. Adverbs derived from adjectives ending in *-ic* and *-ical* are equivalent in form (*historic*/*historical* > *historically*, *economic*/*economical* > *economically*, *tragic*/*tragical* > *tragically*), but note the exception: *public* > *publicly*;
5. Adverbs derived from *-ed* participles end in *-edly*, pronounced [ɪdli] (however, note that for e.g. *decidedly* Merriam Webster Dictionary gives the pronunciation [ədli]);
6. In adverbs ending in *-arily* derived from adjectives in *-ary*, the stress is shifted to the antepenultimate syllable (especially in AmE): e.g. ‘*primary* > *pri’marily*.

9.3.1.2 Adverbs in *-ly* formed from non-adjectival bases

Although most *-ly* adverbs are formed from adjectives, some are derived from nouns (4a) and verbs (4b), as reported by Huddleston et al. (2002: 566). Baayen & Renouf (1996: 82–83) list examples of *-ly* adverbs built from phrases (4c), even adverbs themselves (4d) (🕮 TB 9.3.).

(4) a. *bodily*, *namely*, *partly*, *purposely*
b. *exceedingly*, *longingly*, *jokingly*
c. *matter-of-factly*, *real-worldly*, *out-of-breathly*, *unchanged-to-modestly*
d. *abroadly*, *whyly*, *onely*, *oftenly*

TB 9.3. Phrase-based and adverb-based *-ly* adverbs (COCA)

We checked COCA for evidence of the phrase-based and the adverb-based adverbs from the list (4c,d) above. We only found examples of *matter-of-factly* (768 hits) and *oftenly* (1 hit):

(1) *That's all I can do, he said* ***matter-of-factly****.*
(2) *The words were uttered* ***matter-of-factly*** *as if the events were typical.*
(3) *I will more* ***oftenly*** *find a pattern of over involvement, protection, mother love.*

This suggests that *-ly* adverbs derived from phrases and adverbs are only short-lived nonce forms (or occasionalisms), i.e. words created for a specific communicative purpose. Once they have served their purpose, they can be disposed of immediately.

9.3.1.3 Semantic import of the *-ly* suffix

Most *-ly* adverbs denote manner and degree. They can be paraphrased as 'in an Adj manner' (e.g. *quickly*, *nosily*, *obliviously*) or as 'to an Adj degree' (e.g. *extremely*, *completely*, *absolutely*, etc.). But Huddleston et al. (2002: 565) warn that this is far from true for all *-ly* adverbs, while Quirk et al. (1985: 1556) argue that the range of meanings of *-ly* adverbs corresponds to a fuller set of semantic notions. In fact, Payne et al. (2010: 73) maintain that the pervasiveness of *-ly* adverbs in all semantic types of adverbs is **the** glue that holds the whole word class together. Examples (5–9) illustrate some of this semantic diversity: i.e. *-ly* adverbs expressing time (5), frequency (6), place (7), focus (8), and manner (9).

(5) *Let me ask you,* ***finally****, about the big issue of the weekend.*
(6) *Finnish shipowners* ***regularly*** *look for cheaper alternatives.*
(7) *He shops* ***locally****, heading to West Side Market for specialties.*
(8) *A lot of people get into certain businesses* ***precisely*** *because of this.*
(9) *Everything turned out just fine, his first day at school went* ***swimmingly****.*

9.3.2 Adverbs in *-wise*

The suffix *-wise* is added to nouns to form nongradable adverbs which usually denote manner (10–12), dimension (13), or the perspective from which the statement can be assessed as relevant (14).

(10) *A trail of moisture marked the path by which he must have scooted* ***crabwise*** *across the floor.*
(11) *Sam took the lead rope from the boy and got the horse trotting* ***counterclockwise*** *around him.*

(12) *Below the surface planks, heavy beams ran* ***lengthwise*** *along the walkway*.
(13) *They are best eaten while still a bit warm, and may be cut* ***crosswise*** *into smaller portions*.
(14) *Men* ***healthwise*** *are kind of a mess*.

When it means dimension, the suffix *-wise* has a variant form in *-ways*. In some cases, it may even be the more frequent form of the pair, e.g. in *sideways*.[46]

When it means 'as regards' or 'as far as the BASE is concerned', *-wise* can be semantically categorized as building *viewpoint adverbs* (📖 Section 11.4). According to Lindquist (2007), the "viewpoint *-wise*" has become very productive and builds many nonce forms. It can be added not only to nouns, but also noun phrases, e.g. *sex-and-violence-wise*. For more on viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* 📖 T11.

9.3.3 Adverbs in *-ward(s)*

The suffix *-ward(s)* forms nongradable directional adverbs:

(15) *She got into her car and pointed it* ***homewards***.
(16) *A farmer was burning straw, the yellow billows of smoke spiralling lazily* ***upward***.
(17) *Intensification of cold allowed the arctic flora and fauna to spread* ***southward***.

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 438), the variants without *-s* are common in printed AmE, while the variants with *-s* are common in BrE and spoken AmE. We checked this in COCA and BNC, by counting the raw and normalized frequencies of the variant forms in the total corpora, and in their spoken subcorpora. The results are mixed (📖 Table 9.1.). First note that individual items differ considerably in overall frequency (*upward(s)* being far more frequent than *homeward(s)* across the table). The total corpus count in COCA confirms the observed AmE preference for the form without *-s*. Similarly, the total corpus count in BNC also confirms BrE preference for the *-s* form, though with one exception (*homeward* being more frequent than *homewards*). As for the results for the spoken sections of the two corpora, it turns out that – contrary to Quirk et al.'s claim (1985: 438) – the *-s* forms are not consistently preferable to *-s*-less

[46] In COCA the frequencies of *sideways* and *sidewise* are 3772 and 42, respectively. However, it would be unwise to generalize from this to the whole set of similar pairs. The situation is completely reversed with *lengthwise* (N=1160) vs. *lengthways* (N=6).

forms in spoken AmE (only in *upwards*). The results for spoken BrE largely confirm its stated preference for the *-s* forms, but again with one negligible exception - *homewards* (negligible because both variants are extremely rare).

Table 9.1. The frequency of *-ward(s)* in selected lexemes in BNC and COCA (total corpus and spoken subcorpus)

	COCA total		COCA spoken		BNC total		BNC spoken	
	Raw freq.	Norm. freq.	Raw freq.	Norm. freq.	Raw freq.	Norm. freq.	Raw freq.	Norm. freq.
upward	8199	14.51	327	0.58	694	6.94	24	0.24
upwards	1786	3.16	371	0.66	1689	16.89	52	0.52
homeward	303	0.54	17	0.03	83	0.83	4	0.04
homewards	5	0.01	-	-	17	0.17	-	-
southward	761	1.35	42	0.07	93	0.93	1	0.01
southwards	26	0.05	4	0.01	187	1.87	3	0.03

The forms without -s can be used in premodification of nouns, which makes them syntactically similar to adjectives:

(18) *The engineers straightened the stream's* ***southward*** *FLOW*.
(19) *During her* ***homeward*** *FLIGHT, she admired the rose's pure color.*

The suffix *-wards* can be added to nouns (e.g. *earthward(s), homeward(s)*), prepositional adverbs (e.g. *onward(s)*, *upward(s)*), or directional adverbs (*eastward(s)*, *southward(s)*, etc.). As with the suffix *-wise*, nonce forms are also common (e.g. *theatrewards*, *Chicago-wards*).

9.3.4 Adverbs in *-style* and *-fashion*

Nongradable adverbs are also formed by attaching *-fashion* and *-style* to nouns (e.g. *dog-fashion*, *puppet-fashion*, *parrot-fashion*, *goldilocks-fashion*, *bank-manager-style*, etc.), and adjectives (e.g. *Russian-style*, *American-style*). These adverbs resemble compounds, since *-fashion* and *-style* look more like independent words capable of becoming the second element in a compound, than suffixes. Be that as it may, like the viewpoint suffix *-wise*, *-fashion* and *-style* also yield many nonce forms. The meaning of *-style* and *-fashion* adverbs could be paraphrased as 'in the style/fashion of N' or 'Adj style/fashion' (Quirk et. al 1985: 1557):

(20) *One magical day he bowed,* ***dog-fashion****, and invited me to play*.
(21) *Then down the tree she went headfirst,* ***squirrel-fashion****, to pick up another load of leaves.*

(22) *The struggle has devolved into a war of self-preservation for the Karen fought* ***guerrilla-style***.
(23) *We won't go ruining ourselves* ***English-style****! It's enough if we get our fill* ***Russian-style***.

Adverbs in *-style* can also be used as noun premodifiers, in which case they look syntactically more like adjectives than adverbs:

(24) *He wore kurtas but also* ***European-style*** *SHIRTS*.
(25) *The hotel prepared* ***buffet-style*** *MEALS for both meetings*.

9.4 Fixed phrases

Some fixed phrases are used as adverbs, e.g. *of course, kind of, sort of*, *as good as*, *at last*, *in particular*, *in general*, etc. Individual constituents of these phrases rarely retain their individual meanings. The phrase as a whole functions as a modifier of the verb or the adjective:

(26) *And the U.S. took a **sort of** hands-off position*.
(27) *It was Ben Bernanke who **kind of** encouraged me to do it sooner*.
(28) *You were **as good as** trying to hurt yourself.*
(29) *It's great to see them **at last***.
(30) *I completed the course in August **as well***.

TB 9.4. Frequency of adverbs by morphological form (LGSWE)

Many reference grammars (e.g. LGSWE, p. 539) single out adverbs in *-ly* as the most prototypical member of the class (🕮 T8). However, some studies show that they are not the most frequent adverb type and that simple adverbs are used more frequently. Since frequency is often considered to be a symptom of prototypicality (🕮 T8), it may be useful to present here the results of a frequency analysis of various morphological types of adverbs reported in LGSWE (pp. 540–542). The analysis was performed on all adverb forms that occurred frequently, i.e. over 50 times per million words in the LSWE corpus.

Simple and *-ly* adverbs were found to be the two most common adverb types in all four registers (conversation, fiction, news, academic). Compound adverbs, fixed phrases, and adverbs formed by other suffixes lagged far behind. However, simple adverbs and *-ly* adverbs were by no means equally frequent, and the relative dominance of one over the other was not constant from register to register. Simple adverbs accounted for 60%, and *-ly* adverbs for only about 20% of adverbs in conversation. On the other hand, in academic prose about 55% of adverbs were *-ly* forms, whereas simple adverbs accounted for 30% of data. Functional contrasts between conversation and academic prose may explain these distributional differences. In conversation, speakers report actions and events, and an important part of this is stating the when and where of the situation. This is most easily accomplished with simple adverbs like *always*, *already*, *never*, *far*, *then*, *still*, *here*, etc. In academic prose, *-ly* adverbs serve to express the author's attitude to the proposition of the clause (e.g. *possibly*, *generally*, *obviously*), to describe processes (e.g. *rapidly*, *carefully*, *entirely*), or to express precision (e.g. *approximately*, *exactly*).

Fixed phrase adverbs are the least common adverbs in all registers, occurring less than 10% of times. But different fixed-phrase adverbs are found in different registers. Hedges like *sort of* and *kind of*, and forms like *at least* and *as well* are frequent in conversation, while Latin abbreviations (*i.e.*, *e.g.* and *etc.*) are common in academic prose.

9.5 Comparison of adverbs

Comparison is a feature shared by adjectives and adverbs. Even though adverbs do not behave uniformly with respect to comparison, some patterns can be discerned, as briefly outlined below.

9.5.1 Irregular comparison

There is a limited set of adverbs that compare irregularly. Their comparative and superlative forms have different stems from the absolute forms (📖 Table 9.2.).

Table 9.2. Comparison of adverbs

Absolute	Comparative	Superlative
well	*better*	*best*
badly	*worse or more badly*	*worst*
far	*farther*	*farthest*
	further	*furthest*
hard	*harder*	*hardest*
fast	*faster*	*fastest*
long	*longer*	*longest*
often	*oftener (rare)*	*oftenest (rare)*
	more often	*most often*

TB 9.5. Comparison of *badly*

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 463) *worse* is the usual comparative form of *badly*. However, the periphrastic form is required in BrE with the verbs *need* and *want*:

(1) *This road **needs** reconstruction **more badly** than that bridge.*
(2) *I **wanted** to call her **more badly** than ever.*

The two types of comparison of *badly* are actually not synonymous. Whereas *worse* implies that something was done less well, less skillfully, etc., *more badly* is not evaluative in that sense, it is a marker of intensity and means 'more intensely'. This is most likely why we found no inflected comparatives and superlatives with the two verbs in BNC. Curiously, Americans seem a tad more lax on this matter. COCA featured examples of *worse* with *need* and *want* in the meaning 'intensely'.

(3) *If you're in financial squeeze, you **need** that prize money **worse** than we do.*
(4) *Don't worry. I've got plenty, and you look like you **need** them **worse** than I do.*
(5) *I'm younger, stronger, and I want it **worse**.*

In very formal English, *ill* is synonymous with *badly*:

(31) *In his life he spoke **ill** of no one*.

In comparison to a lower degree, *well* has two forms: *worse* and *less well*. Saying that something is done *less well* is not as negative as saying that it is done *worse*:

(32) a. *She cooks **worse** than he does*.
b. *She cooks **less well** than he does*.

Adjectival compounds consisting of the adverbs *well* and *ill* + participles allow both types of comparison, inflectional and periphrastic (📖 Section 4.1.2 and Table 4.3.):

(33) a. *well behaved → better-behaved → the best-behaved*
b. *well-behaved → more well-behaved → the most well-behaved*

Like adjectival *far*, the adverb *far* can be compared both ways, with similar meaning-related tendencies (📖 Section 4.1.2). Some examples are given below:

(34) *Lisa bent even **farther** and grabbed the ornament*.
(35) a. *NTY can be **further** decomposed into a dividend yield of 4.29%.*
b. *This would result in Bottemiller and Wolverton **further** underestimating the impact of a transmission line on property value*.
c. ***Further**, equity interests in the reorganized firm are a crude mechanism for aligning managerial incentives.*

9.5.2 Comparison of adverbs with the same form as adjectives

Adverbs that have the same form as adjectives (e.g. *fast*, *hard*, *late*, *long*, *quick, early*) take inflections and follow the same spelling and pronunciation rules as their matching adjectives, e.g. *early > earlier > earliest* (📖 Section 4.1.3):

(36) *The knowledge spurred melody to work **faster***.
(37) *In many respects, they had to work **harder** to prove themselves*.

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 464), *soon* is peculiar in that it actually has no corresponding adjective. It easily takes comparative inflection (*sooner*), but the inflected superlative *soonest* is perceived as unacceptable, or at least very informal. *Soonest* is perfectly acceptable, though, as a premodifier of certain adjectives, e.g.: *the **soonest** possible date*, *the **soonest** available time*. It is also used in the proverb *Least said, **soonest** mended*, and in telexes and telegrams, e.g. *Send prices soonest* (‘as soon as possible’).

Similarly, *often* has the inflected forms *oftener* and *oftenest*, but *oftener* and especially *oftenest* are less common than the periphrastic forms:

(38) *The plants here change yearly, sometimes* ***oftener****.*
(39) *It is well known that dragons venture out* ***oftenest*** *in the deepest night.*

TB 9.6. ***A selection of corpus findings*** **(COCA)**

Sooner*.* Our quantitative findings confirm Quirk et al.'s observations regarding *soonest* (1985: 464). *Soonest* (N=84) was mainly attested in proverbs or proverb-like expressions (1), telegrams (2), and other informal contexts with the meaning 'the earliest occasion' (3–4):

(1) ***Soonest*** *begun,* ***soonest*** *done.*
(2) *Secure meeting* ***soonest*** *before COB. Repeat, urgent.*
(3) *I need him back in his lab in Arkansas* ***soonest****.*
(4) *What's the* ***soonest*** *you think he'll be forced to give in.*

Oftener **vs.** ***more often***. The preference of *often* for periphrastic comparison was found to be overwhelming, with 7915 tokens of *more often* compared to only 27 tokens of *oftener*, and with 4140 to 5 tokens of *most often* and *oftenest*.

Comparative adverbs in modal expressions. Adverbs with inflected comparison are often found in phrases with modal expressions (🕮 MSPS I, Section 9.O.4.5):

(5) *I had/'d* ***better*** *get your reservation well in advance.*
(6) *You had/'d* ***best*** *repair it immediately.*
(7) *I would/'d* ***sooner*** *have a cup of coffee.*

9.5.3 Adverbs ending in *-ly*

Adverbs in *-ly* compare only periphrastically:

(40) a. *honestly* → *more honestly* → *the most honestly*
b. *honestly* → **honestlier* → *the honestliest*

Sometimes the comparative *-er* adjective replaces the adverb (Quirk et al. 1985: 465):

(41) *That's* ***easier*** *said than done* ('more easily')
(42) *Speak* ***clearer****!* ('more clearly')

This kind of replacement is generally considered less objectionable than one with the adjective in its absolute form (🕮 Section 3.2.1.2):

(43) ?*Speak* ***clear****!* ('Speak clearly!')

T9. The single category claim

The traditional view, endorsed by all major grammars, is that adjectives and adverbs belong to two distinct, though in many aspects related, word classes. However, some authors advance the unconventional idea that adjectives and adverbs should be considered members of a single category. This claim is based on several arguments, one of the strongest being the status of the suffix *-ly*. Namely, the fact that the suffix is very productive and can occur freely with almost all adjectival bases has led some (e.g. Giegerich 2012, Pittner 2015) to argue that the *-ly* suffix has more characteristics of an inflectional (grammatical) than of a derivational (lexical) morpheme (📖 MSPS II, Section 1.T.1.2). As an inflectional morpheme, it would not be different in substance and effect from any other inflectional morphemes, like the comparative *-er* and the superlative *-est* of adjectives, or the plural suffix of nouns. The argument is that none of them build new lexemes but merely new word-forms of the same lexeme, which is a feature associated with inflectional morphology. In short, adverbs and adjectives are argued to be members of the same word class (Radford 1988 calls this class *advective*) because, among others, the *-ly* forms are only inflectional forms of adjectives (e.g. Giegerich 2012).

Another argument for the single category claim is that adverbs and adjectives arguably occur in mutually exclusive environments (i.e. the so-called *complementarity claim*, cf. footnote 42 and below): adjectives are modifiers of nouns, adverbs are modifiers of all other elements, primarily verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs (but 📖 Section 8.1).

The third argument is that in some languages adjectives and adverbs have the same form.

To better understand why, according to these authors, *-ly* should be treated as an inflection, let us first examine the nature of inflectional elements. The four properties of inflection listed below are only a selection of those discussed in morphological theory, but they should suffice for our purposes (for various views and more defining criteria cf. Bauer 1988, Bybee 1985, Dressler 1989, Haspelmath 1996, Plank 1994):

1. Inflectional elements are required by the syntactic environment, which is not the case with derivational elements;
2. Very productive and predictable morphological processes are usually inflectional;
3. Inflectional elements do not change the meaning of the base, they only add grammatical information, e.g. case, person, number; and

4. Inflectional and derivational elements are different also with regard to their position relative to the each other and to the root morpheme; derivational elements occur closer to the root and cannot occur after inflectional elements. Inflectional suffixes are always placed word finally.

Criterion 1: proponents of treating *-ly* as an inflectional suffix argue that its appearance is conditioned by the syntactic environment. Since adverbs are distinguished from adjectives by syntactic distribution (adjectives modify nouns and occur as predicative complements; adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs and supposedly do not occur as predicative complements), the decision on whether *-ly* is to be used or not is a syntactic one. This decision is, therefore, supposed to be no different in kind from the decision on whether to place a third person singular morpheme on the verb in the presence of a third person singular subject.

Criterion 2: The suffix *-ly* is very productive since it can be added to almost any adjectival base to form an adverb.

Criterion 3: in most cases *-ly* only adds grammatical meaning to its base (with some exceptions, like *hard* > *hardly* or *short* > *shortly*). In plain words, this means that the *-ly* does not substantially change the meaning of the base adjective but only indicates that it modifies a verb rather than a noun.

Criterion 4: *-ly* forms cannot be the bases for further derivational processes. Giegerich (2012: 342) argues that the reason we have items like *seldomness* but not items like **rarelyness* is because the *-ly* suffix is an inflection and as such prevents further derivation by *-ness*. Similarly, it is argued that *-ly* cannot be combined with comparative and superlative suffixes; as an inflectional suffix, it does not allow other suffixes in its tow[47] (this is not the case with the adjectival suffix *-ly* in *lovely* > *lovelier*, where *-ly* is derivational).

Arguments against the single category claim: Payne et. al. (2010) provide arguments against treating *-ly* as an inflectional suffix and consequently against the single category claim. The authors essentially reject the complementarity

[47] Booij (1996) offers a more nuanced view. He argues that there are two types of inflection: inherent and contextual. "Inherent inflection is the kind of inflection that is not required by the syntactic context, although it may have syntactic relevance. Examples are the category number for nouns, comparative and superlative degree of the adjective, and tense and aspect for verbs. Other examples of inherent verbal inflection are infinitives and participles. Contextual inflection, on the other hand, is that kind of inflection that is dictated by syntax, such as person and number markers on verbs that agree with subjects and/or objects, agreement markers for adjectives, and structural case markers on nouns" (Booij 1996: 2). Note that Booij treats comparison as inherent inflection.

claim, arguing that it is a misconception handed down to us from traditional grammars. In their oversimplified definitions, traditional grammars describe adjectives as modifiers of nouns, and adverbs as modifiers of other categories (📖 Section 8.1). Payne et al. (2010) pulled a number of web-attested examples to show that the claim is false. In example (1) the adverb *globally* serves as a post-head modifier of the noun *role*. What is more, as an adverb it does not even have the same meaning as its adjectival counterpart (cf. Criterion 3). *Global role* means 'an important role', *globally* in *role globally*, is locational – it means that the role is acknowledged world-wide.

(1) *[The unique role **globally** of the Australian Health Promoting Schools Association]$_{NP}$, as a non-governmental organization specifically established to promote the concept of the health promoting school, is described.* (from Payne et al. 2010: 43)

With regard to the generality of *-ly* (Criterion 2), Payne et al. (2010: 69) show, based on their BNC-based frequency analysis, that the most frequent adverbs are not those in *-ly* and that a good proportion of the most frequent adjectives do not even permit *-ly* suffixation.

While admitting that *-ly* fails to be followed by derivational and inflectional suffixes (Criterion 4), Payne et al. (2010: 62) argue that adverbs are not limited to forms in *-ly,* and that other adverbs may be involved in derivational processes (e.g. *soon*$_{adv}$ > *soonish*$_{adj}$, *seldom*$_{adv}$ > *seldomness*$_{n}$). Similarly, they argue that some adverbs do take inflectional suffixes, like comparatives and superlatives (e.g. *sooner*, *louder*, etc.).

Concerning the claim that adverbs and adjectives are members of a single category because some of them have the same form, Payne et al. (2010: 64) counter that formal identity cannot be a sufficient argument to support the single category analysis.

Payne et al. (2010: 65) propose further arguments in favor of treating adverbs as a category distinct from adjectives. They showed that the most frequent adverbs in BNC have a conceptual basis very different from that of adjectives. The most frequent adverbs belong to the semantic domains of focusing (e.g. *also*, *even*), degree (e.g. *very*, *well*), and time relationships (e.g. *still*, *yet*), the most frequent adjectives denote value (e.g. *good*, *bad*), dimension (e.g. *big*, *small*), age (e.g. *young*, *old*), and color (e.g. *white*, *black*). Besides revealing the most common semantic types of adverbs, their analysis also showed that the most frequent adverbs are not those in *-ly*, and more importantly, that the majority of the most frequent adjectives do not have manner adverb counterparts in *-ly*. The

most frequent adverbs, just like the most frequent adjectives, were found to be morphologically simple.

Payne et al.'s arguments (2010) for treating adverbs and adjectives as distinct categories also suffer from weaknesses. First, the claim that adjectives and adverbs have a distinct conceptual basis, and consequently form two separate categories, is unconvincing. Semantic distinctness does not entail morphosyntactic distinctness; note that e.g. abstract and concrete nouns are still treated as the same word class despite being semantically distinct. Payne et al.'s arguments against *-ly* as an inflectional suffix is not beyond reproach either, since the suffix does show at least some features of inflection (e.g. it has to be placed word finally).

As for *-ly* not being general, Pittner (2015: 137) argues that the fact that *-ly* does not apply to the whole class of adverbs is not relevant since inflections also allow exceptions. As to Payne et al.'s (2010) claim that the most frequent adverbs do not have *-ly*, Pittner counters by calling attention to German irregular verbs, many of which are very frequent, but do not follow the dominant inflectional paradigm.

Moreover, even though Payne et al. (2010: 52) challenge the complementarity claim and show that adverbs can also modify nouns, Pittner (2015) argues that in most cases the choice between adverb and adjective is syntactically determined after all. In Pittner's view there are no convincing arguments from the distributional court that *-ly* is derivational.

Although Pittner (2015) concedes that *-ly* shows some features of an inflectional element, she is still not convinced that adjectives and adverbs should be treated as a single category. She claims that the question whether adverbs and adjectives form one category is a wrong one (2015: 140). The question should rather be **which** adjectives and **which** adverbs form one category.

With due respect for the arguments presented above, and for the complexity of the problem, we must concede that the issue remains moot. However, we also believe that evidence for either alternative must be selected more carefully. Basing the arguments for or against the single category claim on the distinction between inflection and derivation is very slippery since the distinction between inflection and derivation is itself not clear either (cf. Bauer 1988, Buljan 2016, Bybee 1985, Dressler 1989, Haspelmath 1996, Plank 1994).

Exercises

1. Are the words in bold adjectives or adverbs? Explain.

1. I've been sent to inform you that the **homeward** perimeter registers a blip.
2. I have **monthly** classes where I teach women and girls different crafts.
3. A generation ago, the bus ride to an **away** game was like a party bus from San Diego to Tijuana.
4. I took the elevator to the ground floor and walked **mechanically** to the southeast exit.
5. **Nearby** Costa Verde is home to equally stunning stretches of sand.
6. They stirred as we came near, clumping into a **snake-like** shape.
7. They asked us to wait **outside**.
8. Both parties are working really **hard** to reach consensus.
9. I'd like to provide a **quick** historical overview.
10. We are aware that the proposed challenge is **hard** to solve nowadays.
11. I'll tell you how to get rich **quick**.
12. Adine was willing to believe **ill** of Perrin.
13. We could also consider how **fast** the automatic solution process is.
14. Jaz did not look out the window as they rode **homeward**.
15. Am I being stupid here? I need an **outside** opinion.
16. I use liquid kelp **monthly** as a foliar spray to keep tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and squash healthy and productive.
17. Brexit talks are back (not that they ever went **away**).
18. She was just doing her job last May in rejecting petitions that she argued were **untimely** filed.
19. He made their message sound at least **halfway** sensible.
20. This is a lovely hotel spoilt only by construction works **nearby**.
21. Ford has developed a **mechanically** extended flap that automatically activates when the door is open.
22. They're not trying to cure their very **ill** patients, but to keep them comfortable.
23. The hump continues to grow, morphing **snake-like** across the surface.
24. The respective development is proceeding **fast**.
25. I've been released through Tony's **untimely** death into the life of a full-time writer.

2. Use the words in brackets to complete each sentence. Use the comparative or superlative form of the adverb and the correct form of the verb.

1. Our group managed _____ up and have a delicious gourmet meal on the _____ *top of the mountain*. (climb, far)
2. I _____ since I took a course in public speaking. (speak, confidently)
3. In our study conducted several years ago older adults _____ than young adults on all memory tasks. (perform, badly)
4. Non-native rainbow trout are _____ than native brown trout when bait angling. (catch, frequently)
5. Exotic food is something that I _____ than local food. (cook, well)
6. People will _____ a big lie _____ than a little one. (believe, frequently)
7. Successful people in every field are often said to be "blessed with talent" or even just lucky. But the truth is, many _____ than the average person can even imagine. (work, hard)
8. Some researchers confirmed that obese individuals _____ than lean individuals. (eat, fast)
9. He who handles a nettle tenderly is _____. (soon, sting)
10. Our medical oncology committees actually _____ of all. (meet, frequent)

3. Using a corpus (preferably COCA or BNC) find sentences exemplifying all possible comparative forms for the adjectival compounds below

well-known, well-paid, ill-advised, well-behaved, far-fetched, well-mannered.

Summary of Chapter 9

In Chapter 9 we first presented the four morphological types of adverbs, viz. simple, compound, derivational adverbs, and fixed-phrase adverbs. We then briefly examined adverb comparison, another feature on which adverbs behave non-uniformly. In a special section we provided a glimpse into the complicated ongoing debate about whether adjectives and adverbs should be considered members of the same category or not.

Chapter 10: Syntax of adverb phrases

This chapter zooms in on the syntax of adverbs. Like other major word classes, adverbs also build phrases, and as phrases, i.e. adverb phrases, they contract various syntactic relations with other elements in the clause. In Section 10.1 we examine the internal structure of the adverb phrase, and then, in Section 10.2, we focus on their functions as (a) dependents within larger clause constituents and as (b) independent clause constituents.

10.1 Structure of adverb phrases

ADVERB PHRASES (AdvPs) are syntactic units which feature an adverb as their head element, optional modifiers and, less commonly, complements. Adverb phrases vary in size depending on the number of modifiers and complements:

(1) a. *Sally performed [**WELL**]*$_{AdvP}$
b. *Sally performed [amazingly **WELL**]*$_{AdvP}$
c. *Sally performed [quite amazingly **WELL**]*$_{AdvP}$
d. *Wealthy people think [very **DIFFERENTLY** than the average person]*$_{AdvP}$

In sentence (1a) the AdvP consists of only one element, the head adverb *well*. Sentence (1b) features a slightly larger AdvP. The head adverb *well* is modified by the adverb, or more accurately, by the simple AdvP *amazingly*. In (1c) *amazingly* is first modified itself by *quite* to form a more complex AdvP premodifier for *well*. In (1d) the head adverb *differently* is premodified by *very* and complemented by the prepositional phrase *than the average person*.

In the following two sections we examine in more detail the elements that occur as modifiers and complements within AdvPs.

10.1.1 Modification within the adverb phrase

Not all adverbs accept modifiers. This is particularly true of some adverbs not formed by *-ly* suffixation, such as *very*, *please*, *however*, *moreover*, *therefore*, *though*, *also*, *only*, etc. (Huddleston et al. 2002: 570). Adverbs that do allow modification are most commonly modified by other adverbs, but they can also take determiners, noun phrase, and prepositional phrase modifiers.

10.1.1.1 Adverbs modifying other adverbs

We will deal extensively with adverbs modifying other adverbs in Section 10.2.1.2. For now, let us present two structural types of modification, referred to

by Huddleston et al. (2002: 572) as stacked modification (2a) and submodification (2b):

(2) a. *I edit my Instagram photos [only [very OCCASIONALLY]]*.
b. *He plays tennis [[really extraordinarily] WELL]*.

In stacked modification the head adverb is modified repeatedly. The result of each stage of modification becomes input for the new stage of modification. In sentence (2a), *very* first modifies the head adverb *ocassionally* to build the AdvP *very occasionally* (Step 1). *Very occasionally* then becomes input for the second round of modification by *only* (Step 2). The new result is an even more complex AdvP *only very occasionally*. In stacked premodification, we get the impression that the AdvP is growing out to the left.

In the case of submodification exemplified in (2b), the head adverb is modified only once, but only after the modifier has itself been modified. Using a building metaphor, we might say that, as far as the head adverb is concerned, the modifier comes delivered to the head adverb as a prefabricated unit for its final integration into the AdvP. In other words, *well* is modified only after *really* and *extraordinarily* have been joined together to become a complex premodifier.

10.1.1.2 Determiners modifying adverbs

According to Huddleston et al. (2002: 573) AdvPs can be modified by determiners like *the*, *this*, *that*, *much*, *little*, *a little*, *no*, *any*, etc., cf. (3–6).

(3) *The parcel arrived [much **quicker** than I thought it would]*$_{AdvP}$
(4) *If only all shoots went [this **smoothly**]*$_{AdvP}$
(5) *He hit puberty [a little **sooner** than some of his peers]*$_{AdvP}$
(6) *No matter how hard I try, I can't do it [any **better**]*$_{AdvP}$

10.1.1.3 Noun phrases modifying adverbs

A limited number of adverbs, e.g. *early*, *late*, *soon* can be modified by noun phrases denoting measure:

(7) *The pop star arrived [**four hours** LATE]*$_{AdvP}$
(8) *You should get there [**three hours** EARLY]*$_{AdvP}$
(9) *We live [**file miles** APART]*$_{AdvP}$ (from Quirk et al. 1985: 452)
(10) *We dug [**ten feet** DOWN]*$_{AdvP}$ (from Quirk et al. 1985: 452)

10.1.2 Complementation within the adverb phrase

Complementation (and modification) is far less common in AdvPs than in AdjPs. This is hardly surprising if we keep in mind that adverbs include unmodifiable items like *however*, *though*, *also*, etc.

There are only two types of *-ly* adverbs that take complements directly (Huddleston et al. 2002: 571–572). The first type are stance adverbs (📖 Section 11.7). They take *for* PPs as complements (11–13). The head adverb denotes an emotional reaction and the prepositional phrase complement denotes the experiencer of the emotion. The list of adverbs taking this kind of complements is limited and includes: *annoyingly*, *comfortingly*, *encouragingly*, *gratifyingly*, *humiliatingly*, *pleasantly*, *pleasingly*, *rewardingly*, *satisfyingly*, *thankfully*, *(un)fortunately*, *(un)luckily* and *(un)happily*.

(11) *ANNOYINGLY for beginners, SEO reporting can be a bit intimidating.*
(12) *LUCKILY for English speakers, machine translation still can't match a native's touch.*
(13) *COMFORTINGLY for many UKIP supporters, this would completely redefine the UK's approach to immigration.*

The second type are *-ly* adverbs with PP complements parallel to the complements taken by the adjectives from which these adverbs have been derived (e.g. *similarly to* > *similar to*, *differently from* > *different from*, *independently of* > *independent of*, etc.).

(14) *Researchers think vinegar may act SIMILARLY to diabetes medications.*
(15) *Successful people think very DIFFERENTLY than the average person.*
(16) *Participants reported a desire to act CONSISTENTLY with their beliefs.*
(17) *The issues are not unique -- they apply EQUALLY to all children.*

In Table 10.1. we repeat Huddleston et al.'s (2002: 571) list of complement-taking adverbs which have matching complement-taking adjectives.

Table 10.1. Adverbs with PP complements (with matching adjectives)

Adverbs taking PP complements	Preposition
analogously, *comparably*, *identically*, *similarly*	*to*
concomitantly, *concurrently*, *consistently*, *simultaneously*, *equally*	*with*
differently	*than*
differently, *separately*	*from*
independently	*of*

When compared, adverb phrases feature complements in the form of degree clauses and phrases. Unlike with the two types of complements examined earlier, this type of complementation is not really selected by the head adverb. The complement is due to the modifier (e.g. *so*, *as*, *enough*, *too*, etc.) or the comparative inflection. There are six structural types of degree complements (from LGSWE, pp. 549–551; 🕮 Section 4.2):

Type 1 **a. ADVERB$_{comparative\text{-}er}$ + *than* + phrase/clause**
b. *more* + ADVERBS + *than* + phrase/clause
c. *less* + ADVERB + *than* + phrase/clause

(18) *She writes **more inspiringly** than others.*
(19) *He's hitting the ball **harder** than before.*
(20) *He arrived **sooner** than we expected.*
(21) *He mixes high theory with low culture **more engagingly** than any other philosopher does.*

Type 2 ***as* + ADVERB+ *as*-phrase/clause**

(22) *We should discuss these matters as **openly** as possible.*
(23) *You should raise money as **quickly** as you can.*

Type 3 ***so* + ADVERB + *that*-clause**

(24) *It happened so **suddenly** that I almost forgot about it.*
(25) *I authorized the payment so **eagerly** that I made a mistake on my password.*

Type 4 ***so* + ADVERB + *as to*-clause**

(26) *Try not to do it so **obviously** as to provoke reaction.*
(27) *The team played good, but not so **brilliantly** as to clinch the crown.*

Type 5 ***too* + ADVERB + *to*-clause**

(28) *It is too **early** to move in together.*
(29) *The bar tries far too **annoyingly** to make itself popular.*

Type 6 **ADVERB + *enough* + *to*-clause**

(30) *Did he act **bravely** enough to accomplish his dreams?*
(31) *Fat cannot be burnt **quickly** enough to provide the energy needed in acute workout.*

10.2 Functions of adverb phrases

Adverb phrases, like AdjP, function either as elements of larger clause constituents or as independent clause constituents. Adverb phrases functioning as independent clause constituents on a par with subject, object, or complement, are one formal subtype of adverbials (🕮 Section 10.2.2).

Table 10.2. Functions of AdvPs

	AdvPs as elements of larger syntactic units		**AdvPs as independent clause constituents**
10.2.1.1	AdvPs as modifiers in AdjPs	10.2.2	Adverbial
10.2.1.2	AdvPs as modifiers in AdvPs		
10.2.1.3	AdvPs as modifiers of particles, prepositional adverbs, and prepositional phrases		
10.2.1.4	AdvPs as modifiers of pronouns, predeterminers, and numerals		
10.2.1.5	Adverb phrases as modifiers of/in noun phrases		
10.2.1.6	Adverbs as complements of prepositions		

Let us first clarify the contrast between dependent and independent AdvPs and some terminology, viz adverb (phrase) vs. adverbial. Cf. examples (32) and (33):

(32) *[This [[**amazingly**]$_{AdvP}$ BEAUTIFUL]$_{AdjP}$ TABLE]$_{NP}$ is mine.*
(33) *She writes [**FLUENTLY**]*$_{AdvP}$

In (32) the adverb *amazingly* is only a dependent element sitting quite deep within the subject NP *this amazingly beautiful table*. *Amazingly* is first and foremost a part of the complex AdjP *amazingly beautiful*, where it acts as the premodifier of the head adjective *beautiful*. This complex AdjP then premodifies the head noun *table* (cf. *submodification* in 🕮 Section 10.1.1.1).

In (33) the adverb *fluently* is a stand-alone clause constituent – an adverbial, describing a circumstance (manner) in which the situation unfolds. The term *adverbial* is used for the **syntactic function** of various kinds of phrases and more complex units, which is analogous to subject, object, subject complement, and object complement. The term *adverbial* must be distinguished from the term *adverb*. *Adverb* is a word-class label, *adverb phrase* is the label for the adverb-headed phrase. *Adverbial*, however, is the term for a function that may be formally expressed as an adverb phrase, but also a noun phrase, a prepositional

phrase, even a clause (compare the time adverbials in *She came today*$_{A\ as\ AdvP}$ vs. *She came in the morning*$_{A\ as\ PP}$ vs. *She'll come next morning*$_{A\ as\ NP;}$ *She came before I managed to hide the evidence* $_{A\ as\ clause}$).

Note that some adverbs may take on either function, as a dependent and as an independent clause constituent. Others, e.g. linking adverbs like *therefore*, can only be adverbials. For instance, in (34a) the adverb *surprisingly* is a dependent modifier within the AdjP *surprisingly similar*. In (34b) *surprisingly* is an adverbial.

(34) a. *Our principles of management are [**surprisingly** SIMILAR]*$_{AdjP}$
b. *[**Surprisingly**]*$_{AdvP,}$ *our principles of management are similar*.

10.2.1 Adverb phrases as elements of larger syntactic units

As dependents, adverb phrases modify other items. Rarely, they act as complements (🕮 Section 10.2.1.6). As modifiers, they are versatile, targeting adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, noun phrases, and nouns. Usually they premodify, except *enough*, *indeed*, and *ago*, which are (also) postmodifiers:

(35) *Do you think that he is **OLD enough** for that responsibility*?
(36) *He is keen to learn and very **HONEST indeed***.
(37) *I saw him **two DAYS ago***.

10.2.1.1 Adverb phrases as modifiers in adjective phrases

Adverb phrases premodify adjectives, usually expressing the degree to which the quality coded by the adjective holds. Degree adverbs with gradable adjectives compare the quality to an implicit norm and come in two types: intensifiers/amplifiers and downtoners/diminishers. Intensifiers indicate that the quality is more intensive than the assumed norm; downtoners signal the opposite, i.e. that the quality in question is less intensive than the assumed norm. Compare the pairs of examples in (38) and (39). To interpret the adjectives in (38a) and (39a), we need to assess them against an implicit norm. In (38b), the intensifier *extremely* signals that the quality of being dangerous is present to a higher degree than the assumed norm. In (39b) the downtoner *hardly* indicates that the quality of being noticeable is true to a lesser degree than the assumed norm:

(38) a. *That road is **DANGEROUS***.
b. *That road is **extremely DANGEROUS***.
(39) a. *Your progress is **NOTICEABLE***.
b. *Your progress is **hardly NOTICEABLE.***

Intensifiers

Intensifiers include adverbs like *very*, *so*, *too*, *extremely*, *totally*, *entirely*, *highly*, *strikingly*, *amazingly*, *terribly*, *awfully*, *horribly*, etc.:

(40) *The entire resort is an **amazingly** beautiful place*.
(41) *Mary is really **absurdly** jealous*.
(42) *Last week I read this **terribly** interesting book on lions*.
(43) *I'm **awfully** glad that you have decided to stay*.

Interestingly, in (42) and (43) *terribly* and *horribly* intensify positive qualities. As independent adverbials these adverbs would retain their inherently negative meaning, cf. *She sings terribly* or *He cooks awfully*. But as premodifying adverbs of degree they are stripped down of their negative properties and reduced to pure markers of intensity (📖 T10).

Some intensifiers appear in fixed collocational patterns, e.g. *dead tired*, *dead drunk*, *fast asleep*, *wide awake* (such fixed collocations may also include nouns as amplifiers, e.g. *stone cold*, *rock hard*, *brand new*).

Downtoners

Downtoners include adverbs like *almost*, *barely*, *fairly*, *hardly*, *nearly*, *pretty*, *quite*, *rather*, *relatively*, *somewhat*, *kind of*, *sort of*, etc.:

(44) *I had a **barely** noticeable spot on my cheek removed*.
(45) *Yesterday on my way home I saw a **somewhat** disturbing scene*.
(46) *This is a **slightly** larger bedroom*.
(47) *We were **nearly** asleep when the door rang*.

TB 10.1. *fairly* and *rather* (Quirk et al. 1985: 446)

The downtoner *fairly* usually modifies adjectives and adverbs denoting desirable qualities (*fairly clear*, *fairly safe*, *fairly smoothly*). In the first 100 hits in COCA and BNC, *fairly* was found in collocation with negative qualities less than 10 times (*fairly dramatic*, *fairly slow*, *fairly radical*).

Rather tends to modify negative qualities (*rather low*, *rather limited*, *rather difficult*). It even adds a negative spin on the "positive" adjectives and adverbs by indicating that the positive quality is present in excess. For instance, *It is rather warm in here* implies that it is too warm. Unlike *fairly*, *rather* can modify comparatives and *too*- constructions, where it also implies that a quality is "too much" (*rather too silly* vs. ,**fairly too silly*, *rather larger* vs. **fairly larger*). It also modifiers certain nouns with adjectival qualities (*rather a pity* vs. **fairly a pity*), and certain verbs (*it rather annoys me* vs. **it fairly annoys me*).

Emphasizers

There is one more category of adverbs similar to intensifiers and downtoners, viz. *emphasizers*. Even though their effect is often similar to the effect of intensifiers, they do not depend on the gradability of the modified item. The focus is not on the degree of the quality, but rather on reinforcing the truth value of the quality (Quirk et al. 1985: 583). Cf. examples (48–52):

(48) *This **obviously** difficult problem has not yet been discussed.*
('it is obvious that the problem is difficult')
(49) *We should address these **actually** occurring injury patterns.*
('… address these injury patterns that occur in reality')
(50) *That is a **certainly** problematic viewpoint.*
('there is no doubt that this is a problematic viewpoint')
(51) *We had to reach a **really** difficult decision.*
('the decision is – without doubt – going to be difficult')
(52) *This is **just** unbelievable.*
('really, this is unbelievable')

Indeed can be a premodifier or a postmodifier (53–54). In fact, as noted above, *indeed*, *enough*, and *ago* are the only adverbs found in postmodification, but *enough* and *ago* exclusively so:

(53) *His behavior is unacceptable **indeed**.*
(54) *His behavior is **indeed** unacceptable.*
(55) *Is this water warm **enough**?*

Viewpoint adverbs

Although the majority of adverbs in premodification are intensifiers, viewpoint adverbs (📖 Section 11.4) can also be premodifiers (Quirk et al. 1985: 448). The viewpoint adverbs in (56–59) indicate in what respect the quality is relevant:

(56) *What is the difference between a project and a **financially** viable project?*
(57) *We have worked together to find an **architecturally** acceptable solution.*
(58) *These are parenting tips for raising **artistically** gifted children.*
(59) *Gossiping about patients is **ethically** wrong.*

10.2.1.2 Adverb phrases as modifiers in adverb phrases

The sets of adverbs modifying adjectives and adverbs are similar. Adverbs modifying other adverbs include e.g. *very*, *quite*, *rather*, *so*, *really*:

(60) *He spoke [**very** NERVOUSLY]AdvP*
(61) *She appeared [**quite** UNEXPECTEDLY]AdvP*
(62) *The glass holds up [**pretty** SURPRISINGLY]AdvP*
(63) *I work [**extremely** ARDUOUSLY]AdvP for all my essays*.

The only postmodifiers are *enough* and *indeed*. Still, *indeed* can only postmodify an adverb if *very* is co-present in the AdvP (Quirk et al: 1985: 449):

(64) *They waved their hands at us [very INVITINGLY **indeed**]AdvP*
(65) **They waved their hands at us [INVITINGLY **indeed**]AdvP*

Unlike adjectives, adverbs cannot be modified by viewpoint adverbs:

(66) **Gossiping about patients is [**ethically** WRONGLY]AdvP*

There are stylistic objections to stacking *-ly* adverbs, but this is not why (66) is wrong. In (67) intensifying *extremely* is completely acceptable with another *-ly*.

(67) *This is [a very pleasant and **extremely honestly** priced hotel]NP*

TB 10.2. *Indeed* as postmodifier in AdvPs (COCA)

In COCA *-ly* adverbs postmodified by *indeed* take the premodifier *very* in the vast majority of cases. The most frequent AdvP with postmodifying *indeed* (*seriously indeed*, N=16) remained unmodified by *very* only twice. In two instances *very* was replaced by other intensifiers: ***so** closely indeed* and ***quite** lovely indeed*.

10.2.1.3 Adverb phrases as modifiers of particles, prepositional adverbs, and prepositional phrases

Several intensifying adverbs can premodify prepositional phrases as in (68–69), prepositional adverbs (🕮 Section 8.2.2), as in (70–71), and particles in transitive phrasal verbs followed by pronominal objects (72–73).

(68) *She held her hand **right** ABOVE her shoulder*.
(69) *This happened **right** OUTSIDE his hotel room*.
(70) *We need to leave these matters **well** BEHIND*.
(71) *When I saw him sitting on the porch, I stepped **right** OUTSIDE*.
(72) *We have bought an old house. We first need to pull it **right** DOWN*.
(73) *I looked it **right** **UP** on Amazon.*

10.2.1.4 Adverb phrases as modifiers of pronouns, predeterminers, and numerals

Intensifying adverbs premodify a variety of other structures, like pronouns, predeterminers, and numerals:

1. **Indefinite pronouns** (🕮 MSPS II, Section 8.6)

   (74) *Unfortunately, **practically** nobody showed up for our presentation.*
   (75) *I like **almost** everyone in our group.*

Downtoners like *almost* and *practically* can premodify all indefinite pronouns, *nearly* can intensify only assertive pronouns:

   (76) *Very soon **nearly** everything will become digitized.*
   (77) **Very soon **nearly** nothing will become digitized.*

2. **Predeterminers** (🕮 MSPS II, Section 6.2.2)

   (78) *It is all taking place in a country **about** twice the size of California.*
   (79) ***Nearly** all the confirmed infections have come from contact with birds.*

3. **Cardinal numerals** (🕮 MSPS II, Section 6.2.3)

   (80) *I was sick **fully** 10 weeks.*
   (81) *The state will create **over** 100 jobs in the next decade.*
   (82) *This drug has contributed to **almost** 100 deaths in the last two years.*

4. **Ordinal numerals** (🕮 MSPS II, Section 6.2.3) **and superlatives**, which are obligatorily preceded by the definite determiner:

   (83) *You may suffer some nausea **just** the first 5 days of treatment.*
   (84) *This was **only** the first step of our journey.*
   (85) *We will take into consideration **only** the largest specimens.*

5. **Noun phrases with the indefinite article**, but only if *a(n)* is used in the sense of the unstressed cardinal numeral *one*:

   (86) *They had not been played with for **nearly** a century.*
   (87) *GEO spent **around** a quarter of a million dollars.*

10.2.1.5 Adverb phrases as modifiers of/in noun phrases

Even though AdjP are the most popular modifiers of NP heads, AdvPs occasionally step in as (a) premodifiers of complete NPs, (b) premodifiers of head nouns, (c) postmodifiers of head nouns.

Premodifying adverbs

When adverbs of degree premodify complete noun phrases, they should be considered external modifiers. External modifiers are never positioned within the NP but always precede the determiner. According to Quirk et al. (1985: 450), *quite* and *rather* are the most common adverbs to modify complete NPs, especially in BrE.

(88) *This was [**quite** an interesting experience]$_{NP}$*
(89) *The list of instructions now covered [**almost** an entire page]$_{NP}$*
(90) *The low-ball offer to Black is [**hardly** an isolated episode]$_{NP}$*
(91) *It was [**rather** a chaos]$_{NP}$*

Only a handful of adverbs premodify **within** an NP. Note the position of the adverbs **after** the determiners (where present) and before the modified head nouns in (92–96):

(92) *The bus ride to [an **away** GAME]$_{NP}$ was like a party bus from San Diego to Tijuana.*
(93) *I don't have [**inside** INFORMATION on what went on]$_{NP}$*
(94) *She heard [the **outside** DOOR]$_{NP}$ click.*
(95) *They had lost faith in [the **then** CHAIRMAN of the Supreme Council]$_{NP}$*
(96) *The question is, was it [an **inside** JOB]$_{NP}$*

The adverb nature of the premodifiers is clear from the paraphrases. They clearly denote the temporal and locational setting (Quirk et al. 1985: 453):

inside information > information received from *inside*
an away game > a game that we played *away*

Postmodifying adverbs

Only adverbs denoting time (97–98) and place (99–100) postmodify head nouns:

(97) *After [the SHOW **yesterday**]$_{NP}$ we hopped on a plane and flew to Dubai.*
(98) *For [the RECEPTION **afterwards**]$_{NP}$ the ladies made what I liked.*
(99) *They look up as it sinks into [the ROOF **above**]$_{NP}$*
(100) *The neighbors have more to worry about than [our ENEMIES **abroad**]$_{NP}$*

Some of these adverbs also figure as premodifiers, but not all:

(101) a. *I only saw [the **downstairs** NEIGHBOR]$_{NP}$ twice.*
b. *Go and talk to [the NEIGHBOR **downstairs**]$_{NP}$*
(102) a. *[The JOURNEY **abroad**]$_{NP}$ provided me with a jolt of reality.*
b. *[*the **abroad** JOURNEY]$_{NP}$*

10.2.1.6 Adverbs as complements of prepositions

Some adverbs function as complements of prepositions. This function is restricted to place adverbs (e.g. *here*, *there*, and *from*) and time adverbs (e.g. *lately*, *then*, *afterwards*, *long*, *soon*, *later*, etc.). Prepositions taking the adverbs *here* and *there* as complements include: *along*, *around*, *down*, *from*, *in*, *over*, *on*, *round*, *through*, *under*, *up*, *out*. Some examples are given in (103–105):

(103) *It took me two hours to climb [UP **here**]PP*
(104) *We are parked [NEAR **here**]PP*
(105) *We have all been [THROUGH **there**]PP on our way to Washington.*

Other place adverbs like *behind*, *above*, *below*, *beneath*, *underneath*, etc. complement only the preposition *from*:

(106) *I heard him shouting [FROM **above**]PP*
(107) *She was pushing me [FROM **behind**]PP*

Figure 10.1. shows the most common time adverbs as prepositional complements. To this we add the preposition *of* with the adverb *late*:

(108) *Our city has been on the national news OF **late***. ('recently')

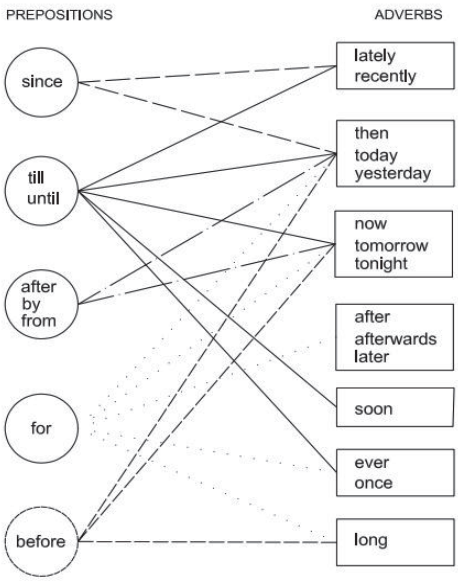


Figure 10.1. The most common time adverbs functioning as complements of prepositions (from Quirk et al. 1985: 455)

10.2.2 Adverb phrases as adverbials

So far we have surveyed AdvP acting as modifiers or complements within other phrases. This section looks more closely into AdvP as adverbials, viz. independent clause constituents comparable to subjects, objects, subject and object complements. Adverbials also modify, and in that respect they are similar to dependent AdvPs. However, unlike dependent AdvPs, which mainly modify adjectives and other adverbs, adverbials modify verb phrases (109) and clauses (110):

(109) *He spoke* ***honestly***.
(110) ***Honestly****, I don't like spicy food*.

In (109) *honestly* conveys additional information about the action. Besides knowing what the subject did, and that his action was completed, we learn from the adverbial **how** the action of speaking was completed.

In (110) *honestly* is not **part** of the sentence proposition, but provides the speaker's **comment** on that proposition. It provides an angle from which the speaker intended us to evaluate the proposition.

Adverbials differ from other clause elements in many ways. Study the following set of examples:

(111) *[**The other day**]$_A$ I was chatting with a friend [**in a coffee shop**]$_A$*
(112) *[**Although I usually avoid coffee shops**]$_A$, [**this time**]$_A$ I had fun [**because the music was not too loud**]$_A$*
(113) *I [**usually**]$_A$ go [**to her house**]$_A$ [**at around ten**]$_A$ [**to see if she needs anything**]$_A$*
(114) *[**Honestly**]$_A$, [**if I see you ever again**]$_A$, I will call the police*.
(115) *We failed [**miserably**]$_A$. [**Nevertheless**]$_A$, we decided to try again*.

These examples reveal the following facts about adverbials:

1. adverbials may be realized by different syntactic forms, e.g.

   NPs (*the other day*, *this time*);
   PPs (*in a coffee shop*, *to her house*, *at around ten*);
   AdvPs (*usually*, *honestly*, *miserably*, *nevertheless*);
   non-finite clauses (*to see if she needs anything*);
   finite clauses (*although I usually avoid coffee shops*, *because the music was not too loud*), etc.;

2. one clause may contain several adverbials. Example (111) has two, example (113) has as many as four;

3. adverbials come in several functional subtypes (🕮 Section 10.2.2); some express circumstances of the action or state reported by the verb (e.g. *miserably*, *usually*, etc.), others, like *nevertheless*, link discourse units (clauses, sentences, or paragraphs), others still provide speakers' comments on the proposition (e.g. *honestly*);
4. adverbials can have many different semantic roles, e.g. they can express time (*usually*, *the other day*, etc.), place (*there*, *in a coffee shop*), attitude (*honestly*, *in all honesty*), concession (*although I usually avoid coffee shops*), reason (*because the music was not too loud*), manner (*miserably*), etc.;
5. adverbials can occupy various positions within a clause. Note that in examples (111–115) some occur at the head of the clause (e.g. *the other day*), some medially – between the subject and the head of the VP (e.g. *usually*), and some come clause-final (e.g. *miserably*). Still, much depends on the subtype of adverbial; e.g. many linking adverbials prefer the clause-initial position;
6. Unlike other clause constituents, esp. subjects, most adverbials are optional. For instance, sentence (112) would be grammatical without its adverbials: *I had fun*. There are some verbs, though, which take circumstance adverbials as their obligatory complements (🕮 Section 10.2.2).

A detailed discussion of adverbials is beyond the scope of this volume. In this section we will describe the three functional subtypes of adverbials, and round off their profile in Chapter 11 where we survey the semantics of adverbs.

With respect to their grammatical functions, adverbials can be divided into three broad classes: circumstance adverbials, stance adverbials, and linking adverbials.[48] They differ from each other in how well they are integrated into clause structure and in their semantic versatility.

Circumstance adverbials

Circumstance adverbials are relatively well-integrated into clause structure. They provide information about the circumstances in which the action or state denoted by the verb unfolds. They provide information about the time, place, manner,

[48] We follow the classification provided in LGSWE (pp. 761–892) since we find it the most intuitive for introductory purposes. Other reference grammars use different classifications and different terminology. For instance, Quirk et al. (1985: 475–653) classify adverbials into adjuncts, subjuncts, disjuncts, and conjuncts. This is a more detailed, and a more syntax-sensitive classification than the one in LGSWE. Huddleston et al. (2002: 663–784) confuse matters somewhat by using the term *adjunct* (only a subtype in Quirk et al. 1985) as an umbrella term for **all** adverbials, specifying that those adjuncts that are not closely integrated into clause structure act as "supplements" or "parentheticals". The reader is referred to these grammars for more detail.

reason, cause, etc. and correspondingly answer questions like: when?, where?, how? why?, etc.

Unlike other adverbials, which are always optional, circumstance adverbials can be optional (116) or obligatory (117):

(116) a. *He disappeared*.
b. *He disappeared* ***yesterday***.
(117) a. **She dresses*.
b. *She dresses* ***very nicely***.

In (116a) the message is complete with or without the adverbial. If we decide to add one, this is only to learn more about the circumstances of the event in question. Therefore, *yesterday* in (116b) is optional. However, in (117a) the message is incomplete without the adverbial. In this case *very nicely* is obligatory. Manner, time, and space adverbials are the most common obligatory adverbials. Circumstance adverbials denoting position frequently occur as obligatory complements of copular *be*, but not with other copulas (Quirk et al. 1985: 518):

(118) a. *He is* ***there***.
(118) b. **He seems* ***there***.

Other verbs taking obligatory circumstance adverbials include *treat*, *behave*, *word*, etc. Their complements denote manner (Huddleston et al. 2002: 671):

(119) a. **He behaves*.
b. *He behaves* ***well***.
(120) a. **I treated her*.
b. *I treated her* ***well***.

The verbs *be*, *take place*, *happen*, *occur* take obligatory time adverbials (Huddleston et al. 2002: 694):

(121) a. **It happened*.
b. *It happened* ***yesterday***.
(122) a. **The concert will take place*.
b. *The concert will take place* ***tomorrow***.

Interestingly, even though circumstance adverbials are most commonly realized as prepositional phrases, not adverb phrases, the top-ranked circumstance adverbials by frequency include single-word adverbs denoting addition/restriction (*just*, *only*, *also*, *even*, *too*), time (*then*, *now*, *never*, *again*, *always*, *still*, *today*, *yesterday*, *already*, etc.) and place (*there*, *here*) (LGSWE, pp. 795–799). Since the majority of these simple adverbs are used for deictic

reference to earlier-mentioned, or contextually inferable circumstances of a situation, their high frequency is actually not that surprising after all. For instance, *here* and *there* are recapitulations of already-known locations:

(123) *You should come **here** as soon as possible*.
(124) *You are not allowed to go **there** by a car*.

Similarly, *then* is a pro-form standing for the time already known to discourse participants from the context. In (125), *then* is used instead of the PP *in two weeks*:

(125) *They advised us to check back in two weeks, they will know **then** how to proceed*.

Stance adverbials

Stance adverbials have a more peripheral role in the clause than circumstance adverbials. They fall into three categories: epistemic, attitude, and style adverbials.

Epistemic stance adverbials make observations about the truth value of the proposition, they focus on its certainty (e.g. *really*, *certainly*, etc.), sources (*reportedly*, *presumably*, *reputedly*, etc.), limitations (e.g. *officially*, *technically*, *theoretically*), and precision of the proposition, such as e.g. *apparently* (LGSWE, p. 764; Quirk et al. 1985: 615–616):

(126) *He **definitely** resigned*.
(127) *He **really** phoned her to tell her it was over*.
(128) *This coat **obviously** belongs to someone else*.
(129) ***Apparently**, he utterly refuted everything she said in her book.*
(130) ***Arguably**, imposing new procedures and safeguards may negatively impact the efficiency and cost-savings achieved.*
(131) *Rachel **allegedly** became so guilt-ridden that she confessed the entire series of events to her mom*.

Attitude stance adverbials provide the speaker's evaluation of, or their attitude to the proposition (*fortunately*, *understandably*, *wisely*, etc.) (LGSWE, p. 764):

(132) ***Wisely**, they decided to wait until it was day*.
(133) ***Fortunately**, I had another pair of shoes in my backpack*.

Style stance adverbials convey the speaker's comment on the utterance with regard to its style or form, and often explicate in what way the speaker speaks (e.g. *honestly*, *briefly*, *roughly*, *simply*, etc.) or how the recipient should take the message (e.g. *confidentially*, *seriously*, *privately*, etc.).

(134) ***Truthfully**, this car looks like a nightmare to drive*.
(135) ***Briefly**, we should look for another solution*.
(136) ***Seriously**, this is the best invention since indoor plumbing*.
(137) ***Confidentially**, the president is concerned about the trade restrictions*.

Linking adverbials

Linking adverbials are also more peripheral in the clause than circumstance adverbials. They connect units of discourse, and in doing so, specify the nature of the relationship between them. For instance, *however* in (138) expresses contrast between the propositions in the two sentences. *Furthermore* in (139) indicates that a new argument is being added to the discourse. *Nonetheless* in (140) signals concession (LGSWE, pp. 558–559):

(138) *Other areas around the state are undertaking similar protection efforts. **However**, it takes a continuous source of money to protect land*.
(139) *They had a successful transition from Arab nationalist tyranny to Islamic democracy. **Furthermore**, Tunisia's long-term viability as one state is well-grounded in its history*.
(140) *She learned that the tumor had taken a deadly hold. Paula **nonetheless** fought on and was able to meet her sister's baby son*.

TB 10.3. Frequency of three types of adverbials (LGSWE, pp. 765–770)

Circumstance adverbials are by far the most common type of adverbials in all four registers. This is hardly a surprise given their broad range of meanings.

Stance adverbials are generally rare. They are more common in conversation than in any other register, although they account for less than 10% of all adverbials in that register. Their slightly higher frequency in conversation is attributed to their personal and interactive nature. In this register, more than any other, speakers use stance adverbials to express their judgements and attitudes towards what they are saying.

Linking adverbials are most common in academic prose, but they also account for less than 10% of all adverbials in that register. This is again due to the nature of academic prose, with its focus on logical coherence and argumentation. Linking adverbials enable writers to build arguments coherently by explicitly stating the nature of the relationship between units of discourse, e.g. contrast (e.g. *however*, *on the other hand*, etc.), restatement (e.g. *in other words*), conclusion (e.g. *therefore*, *thus*, etc.).

Syntactically, circumstance adverbials are most commonly realized by prepositional phrases, while single adverbs account for about 20% of circumstance adverbials. About half of stance adverbials are realized by single adverbs, and so is about 80% of linking adverbials.

T10. Adverbs as intensifiers

Adverbs are at their most impressive when they act as intensifiers:

(1) *These few days have been **blisteringly** hot.*
(2) *He got **insanely** rich by the time he was 34.*
(3) *I saw this **epically** lazy seal who grabbed a ride on a passing boat.*
(4) *If we were to regard children as **fabulously** expensive pets, there would be no buyers.*
(5) *There were some queries that the office could answer **pretty** easily.*
(6) *It's **super** difficult to tell someone to fill out a form giving custody to someone else.*
(7) *He was **devilishly** handsome with his short, spiked hair and angular features.*

Intensifiers are special for many reasons. The most important one is that they are very fast to undergo semantic change, faster perhaps than any other group of lexical items (Stoffel: 1901 in Tagliamonte & Ito: 2002, Quirk et al. 1985: 590). Once popular intensifiers easily lose ground to the new, fresher ones, as speakers tire of the old ones or begin to feel that they have lost their "punch".

Ito & Tagliamonte (2003: 2006) trace the changing fortunes of English intensifiers through time. In the 13th century, the most popular intensifier was *well*. It was replaced in the 14th century by *full*. In the 15th century *full* was dethroned by *right*, but the latter lost ground to *really* in the 16th century. *Really* has remained remarkably resistant to this day. Currently the most popular intensifiers in BrE and AmE are *very*, *really*, and *so* (Ito & Tagliamonte 2003: 266; Tagliamonte & Roberts: 2005). Of these three, *so* is the most colloquial and apparently the most frequent intensifier among younger generations (Ito & Tagliamonte 2003):

(8) *I was **so** frustrated with him.*
(9) *I'm **so** glad to hear that.*

Although speakers rely much on these common intensifiers, they also constantly look for stronger expressions of intensity. Popular TV shows, like *Friends* (example 10) or *The Big Bang Theory* (example 11) are a rich source of innovations (note that these examples feature phrasal intensifiers, not intensifying adverbs):

(10) *I mean, isn't that just **kick-you-in-the-crotch**, **spit-on-your-neck fantastic**?* (Rachel) (from Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005: 285)
(11) **Leonard:** *Sheldon, this is not a big deal. It's a little white lie, everyone does it.*

Raj: *Not me, I'm a 100% honest in all of my relationships.*
Howard: *And how single are you right now?*
Raj: ***Eating-cake-on-the-toilet*** *single.*

Semantically negative adverbs stick to their negative content when they function as manner adverbials, e.g. *dreadfully*, *awfully*, *fearfully*, *terribly*, *ridiculously*, *insanely*, etc. As intensifiers, however, they are bleached down and become pure markers of intensity. As such they are even compatible with semantically positive words:

(12) *He was a surgeon, a* ***dreadfully*** *good one.*
(13) *With Feininger's gleeful, graceful help, he capers into the caverns of the Nixonian mind – spidery, treacherous and* ***dreadfully*** *entertaining.*
(14) *After all, he didn't interrupt our* ***terribly*** *interesting conversation.*
(15) *But this is an* ***awfully*** *successful election year.*

Speakers turn to negatively charged adverbs because such adverbs "have teeth" and are almost sure to deliver the necessary vigor when used as intensifiers:

(16) *I am* ***dreadfully*** *sad she is leaving.*
(17) *Please, Isabella. I'm* ***dreadfully*** *concerned for you.*
(18) *Lisa sounded* ***terribly*** *bitter and they couldn't blame her for that.*
(19) *This is a* ***terribly*** *sad breakup.*
(20) *I felt* ***terribly*** *exhausted and numb when they got me.*

As intensifiers, negative adverbs undergo what is called "delexicalization", a process in which they become semantically bleached. They gradually lose their lexical content to end up as pure markers of intensity with little trace of their original meaning. This change does not happen overnight. It is a gradual process, involving a period when negative adverbs are only occasionally used for intensity. In the next stage, such uses become more frequent, and the adverbs become less selective about their adjectives. The more frequent the adverb and the wider its range of modified adjectives, the further the adverb has come in the process of delexicalization (Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005).

We carried out a small corpus study of our own to verify these observations. We studied three negative adverbs in COCA to see how frequently they occurred as intensifiers with "positive" adjectives. The three adverbs and their total corpus frequencies were as follows: *terribly* (N=6572), *awfully* (N=2695), and *dreadfully* (N=287). Since it would have been too time-consuming to check all instances of *terribly* and *awfully*, we analyzed samples consisting of 200 instances for each. Our study has shown that only 7 out of 287 instances of *dreadfully* (2.5%) collocated with positive adjectives (e.g. *easy*, *entertaining*,

happy, *fond*, *calm*, *healthy*, *earnest*). The numbers look different for *terribly*; in the 200 instances studied, *terribly* intensified positive adjectives in 36 instances (18%). *Awfully* was the most frequent with positive adjectives (N=57 instances, or 28.5 %). Based on these numbers, we could tentatively conclude that *awfully* has come furthest along in the delexicalization process. Our data also suggest that although the semantic path from negative adverb (or other negative words/expressions) to neutral intensifier is a general phenomenon well-grounded in human communicative needs, it is also true that each adverb has its own personal history and that different adverbs have covered different distances on their way to developing the additional function as intensifiers.

To show the pervasiveness of this phenomenon, we list below the effects of similar developments from semantically negative forms (adverbs or adjectives) to non-negative intensifiers in three languages: Croatian (21–24), German (25–29), and Hungarian (30–31):

(21) *Jedna, jedina, jedinstvena i **opako** lijepa Monica Belluci!*
(22) *Pogledajte ovu akciju i ubacivanje lopte u koš, ovo je fakat **bolesno** dobro!*
(23) ***Brutalno** dobar novi broj najčitanijeg hrvatskog političkog tjednika od danas na svim kioscima!!!!*
(24) *Muškarac koji ženu u neformalnom razgovoru iznenadi poznavanjem sadržaja neke knjige automatski postaje **strašno** zanimljiv.*

(25) *Er sollte **teuflisch** gut darüber nachdenken, wo die slowakischen Interessen liegen.*
'He should think **damn-well** about where the Slovak interests lie'
(26) *Der Wirtschaft geht es **verdammt** gut.*
'This business is going **damn-well**'
(27) *Sie ist schrecklich lang und **schrecklich** schön.*
'It is terribly long and **terribly** beautiful'
(28) *Ich würde es **schrecklich** gern sehen.*
Literaly: I'd like to see it **terribly** gladly.
(29) *Ich freute mich **ungeheuer** darauf, Ihn wiederzusehen.*
Literally: I was **mostrously/outrageously** happy to see him again.

(30) ***Rohadt** kényelmes volt az ágy.*
Literally: the bed was **rotten**-comfortable
(31) ***Ördögien** szép volt a lány.*
'The girl was **diabolically** beautiful'

Exercises

1. Complete each sentence using the most appropriate intensifier from the list: *categorically, razor, bitterly, pitch, genuinely, wide, purely, stark, utterly, crystal, sincerely, readily, ridiculously, dead.*

1. The kids were still _____ awake even though it was their normal bedtime.
2. His heart was pounding in his chest and he was _____ surprised that his voice wasn't shaking.
3. So, when I became an adolescent, I was very disappointed, _____ disappointed with the way the country was going.
4. The family _____ denies the allegations that our son, Jose Antonio, was involved in any kind of drug smuggling.
5. And she didn't flinch when her political task looked _____ hopeless.
6. And I hope, I really, _____ hope that this tragedy, this unimaginable, unspeakable tragedy will provide an impetus to bring back measures that would keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people.
7. I remembered buying this _____ expensive outfit 12 years ago and thinking I was crazy.
8. Tom, nothing in life is more _____ serious than play.
9. Be careful, the edges of some stones are _____ sharp.
10. This is a _____ hypothetical question, but a breakup of the euro zone would most probably send Europe into a deep recession.
11. No lights were on, but it was no longer _____ dark.
12. She would rather run through the supermarket _____ naked than reveal her secret to Mum.
13. The science is _____ clear, we need to phase out fossil fuels starting with the most damaging ones.
14. I urgently call upon politicians of any persuasion to reflect on the peer-reviewed scientific information that is _____ available and which clearly points to the need to rapidly phase down fossil emissions.

2. **Using a good reference corpus (COCA or BNC) find examples in which the adverbs *quite*, *only*, *just* and *even* modify: (i) a verb, (ii) an adjective, (iii) an adverb, (iv) a PP, and (v) an NP.**

3. **Decide whether the adverbs in the sentences below function as adverbials or as constituents of other clause elements.**

    1. We chose the most economical and **architecturally** acceptable scheme.
    2. Professor Aman noted the irony of a **politically** hypersensitive, unprecedented arrangement the enforcement of which the state alone could pursue.
    3. Things would **soon** change, **however**, both in the courts and in Congress.
    4. It is a rare sunny afternoon in an **epically** miserable London June.
    5. Albert is a meek law professor who has **never** used a firearm before.
    6. Cholera has **repeatedly** traveled out of Asia to cause epidemics in Africa.
    7. The feeling is that the EU will help Spain to do better **economically**.
    8. I was **actually** thinking of sending you a message.
    9. In-house lawyers are **somewhat** marginalized within the business.
    10. Her thoughts turned **homeward**, to her husband.
    11. I couldn't repeat **verbatim** conversations that took place.
    12. He provided an **inside** view of the rich array of characters.

4. **Identify the items modified by the adverbs (e.g. noun, NP, PP, verb, adjective, adverb, etc.).**

    1. **Close** to a decade ago, I had a baby.
    2. I emailed my resume and a photo of my chubby-legged, **smilingly** toothless infant to Tony Bourdain.
    3. Although it was not **exactly** the type of work I'd been seeking, I **happily** checked my ego and accepted the job.
    4. I found myself leaning in to a kind of an accidental dream career enabled by his legendary generosity, and his **equally** legendary crankiness.
    5. He has done **quite well**.
    6. He liked to say that he didn't want or need anyone chasing him **around** with a phone and a hairbrush.
    7. We communicated **largely** by email or text, and, in those early years, saw each other **so infrequently** that I'd **inevitably** have to re-introduce myself to him at the rare party or screening that we'd both attend.
    8. I was **hardly** the only **creatively** ambitious person who benefited from Tony's generosity.

9. Before Tony died, we began co-authoring a second book, based on his **nearly** two decades of world travel.
10. It's an **utterly** daunting prospect, to stare down this uncertain path without his guidance.
11. This crisis, **however**, if not quickly solved, threatens to **severely** undermine trust in the common currency.
12. Europe got caught **halfway** in its integration process.
13. The violence erupted last night **almost** in the blink of an eye.
14. That restaurant is **quite** an operation.

5. Identify adverbials in the sentences below. What is their syntactic form (AdvP, NP, PP, finite or nonfinite clause)?

1. Our school achieved fantastic results last year.
2. Their visual system develops gradually over the first few months of life.
3. I went to her house to see her.
4. New survey finds most renters enjoy renting, although for many it's expensive.
5. I saw him at work today.
6. I normally call her at around noon to see if everything is OK.
7. I haven't seen him in five long years.
8. In both spots, the rich, pork and bean-filled stew (and national dish), feijoada, is practically ubiquitous.
9. This time it was much easier because we knew what to expect.
10. Frankly, I wholeheartedly agree with you because I believe that mentoring is important for the recruitment and retention of qualified nurses.

Summary of Chapter 10

In Chapter 10 we explored adverbs as heads of syntactic units called adverb phrases. We first examined the internal structure of adverb phrases (Section 10.1) and then surveyed their two major syntactic functions (Section 10.2): (a) adverb phrases as dependent elements within larger syntactic units (modifiers of adjectives, other adverbs, prepositional phrases, nouns, NPs, etc, and complements of prepositions), (b) adverb phrases as independent clause constituents (adverbials). A special section was devoted to adverbs as intensifiers, a particularly interesting set prone to delexicalization and more rapid semantic change than many other lexical items.

Chapter 11: Semantics of adverbs

Semantically, adverbs are extremely heterogeneous. They fall into a number of semantic classes that contribute to the meaning of the words and phrases they modify. Adverbs express time, place, manner, degree, the speaker's attitude toward their own statement, they also clarify the nature of the relationship between parts of discourse.

It is also quite common for an adverb to take on distinct meanings in different contexts. For example, *terribly* in *He yelled terribly* expresses the manner of yelling, while *terribly* in *a terribly interesting book* only intensifies *interesting*. The story with *just* (1a–e), borrowed from LGSWE (p. 552), is even more complex:

(1) a. *He has **just** left* ('closeness in time')
    b. ***just** awful news* (intensity)
    c. *It's nothing, it's **just** a scratch* (decrease in intensity)
    d. *It'll **just** stop* ('by itself'; manner)
    e. ***Just** stop talking* (used in imperatives in the meaning 'I'm only asking this one thing')

In the following sections we present eight semantic classes of adverbs.[49] For each we will specify whether it is found with AdvP used adverbially or as dependents within larger clause constituents. We close the chapter with a survey of several meanings realized by adverbs only occasionally.

[49] Our discussion of the semantics of adverbs mirrors the seven semantic types identified in LGSWE. However, we extended this taxonomy to include viewpoint adverbs, i.e. viewpoint subjuncts as discussed in Quirk et al. (1985: 568–569). As for other marginal meanings of adverbs included in Quirk et al. (1985), e.g. means and instrument, we followed LGSWE and included them in a separate, miscellaneous, section.

11.1 Place

Adverbs of place (e.g. *here*, *there*, *northwards*, *nearby*) can encode several different meanings: position, direction, and distance:

(2) *A woman named Rosa was **there***. (position)
(3) *For the last two months my sales are going **downwards***. (direction)
(4) *Then the path goes **upwards** to the right bank of the river*. (direction)
(5) *We have come **far**, but we still have a long way to go*. (distance)
(6) *My parents live relatively **nearby***. (distance)

Adverbs of place may be ambiguous between position and direction (Quirk et al. 1985: 522). Example (7) can be interpreted both ways:

(7) *The baby was crawling **upstairs***.
a. The baby was crawling around in one of the upstairs rooms.
b. The baby was going upstairs by crawling.

Adverbs of place usually function as independent adverbials. Occasionally they occur as the first element of compound adjectives (*a forward-facing child seat*, *a forward-looking attitude*, *a far-reaching decision*, *a far-fetched conclusion*, etc.) (LGSWE, p. 552).

11.2 Time

Adverbs can convey several different meanings related to time: position in time (e.g. *then*, *now*, etc.), frequency (*often*, *seldom*, *occasionally*, *rarely*, *regularly*, *repeatedly*, *weekly*, *daily*, *monthly*, etc.), duration (*permanently*, *temporarily*, *shortly*, *briefly*), and the temporal relationship between two situations (e.g. *already*, *still*, *yet*, etc.):

(8) *I was living in Italy **then***. (position)
(9) *I know you are **continually** urging people to pay attention*. (frequency)
(10) *I read magazines that are published **biweekly** or **monthly***. (frequency)
(11) *I hope they won't be **long***. (duration)
(12) *Human rights **briefly** came up during the meeting*. (duration)
(13) *He had **already** been fired*. (time relationship)
(14) *I **still** haven't found my purse*. (time relationship)
(15) *She has **yet** to prove her arguments*. (time relationship)

Time adverbs can encode two different time-related meanings simultaneously. In example (16), *recently* expresses both the position in time of the communicated event and the relationship between two positions on the time axis, viz. the present

time and the time when the report was published (more recently than other reports):

(16) *You can read a report **recently** published by renowned recruiting agencies*.

Elsewhere, different senses of an adverb show in different contexts. In (17) *always* relates to the frequency of visits, whereas in (18) *always* refers rather to duration, i.e. the speaker's love will last forever. As argued in LGSWE (p. 553) how we interpret the adverb will depend on the verb. In (17) *travel* is a verb denoting an activity that can be performed repeatedly. Of course, this is compatible with the idea of frequency; *love* in (18) is a stative verb (for more on stative verbs 🕮 MSPS I, Section 5.O.2.2), and is compatible with the sense of duration.

(17) *When we travel to Boston, we **always** make a stop at this restaurant*. (frequency)
(18) *If you obey me, I will love you **always***. (duration)

Time adverbs function mainly as adverbials, only occasionally as premodifiers (e.g. *a recently published report*), or as the first element of compound adjectives (e.g. *his often-cited works*).

11.3 Manner

Manner adverbs answer the question *How?* They specify how an action is performed or how a situation evolves. Typical manner adverbs are *-ly* adverbs derived from adjectives. The manner interpretation derives from the meaning of the adjective (*quiet* > *quietly*, *bad* > *badly*, *loud* > *loudly*, etc.). Manner adverbs ending in *-ly* form the largest group of adverbs and are considered by many authors as the most prototypical adverb type (🕮 T8). Cf. examples in (19–23):

(19) *We rebuilt China **single-handedly***.
(20) *The ballots should be **mechanically** sorted before hand recounts begin*.
(21) *Winds are **slowly** dying down*.
(22) *She devoured **greedily** whatever she could lay her hands on*.
(23) *His parents were waiting **anxiously** in the emergency room*.

The second, much smaller, group of manner adverbs are simple adverbs: e.g. *well*, *fast, hard*, *straight*, *abreast*, *verbatim*, etc.:

(24) *The state media republished **verbatim** a handful of our editorials*.
(25) *He caught the ball and ran **straight**, he ran straight and direct over half the length of the field to score*.

(26) *He hit me so **hard** that my jaw was dislocated*.
(27) *She was so bright and youthful, and although 80 years of age, she spoke **well***.

The least frequent group of manner adverbs are the ones ending in *-wise* (e.g. *clockwise*, *counterclockwise*), *-style* (e.g. *European-style*), *-fashion* (e.g. *dog-fashion*), and *-like* (e.g. *zombie-like*, *ghost-like*, *wormlike*):

(28) *I walked **crabwise**, trying to reach the door*.
(29) *He cooks turnip greens **Mexican-style**, in chicken stock with peppers*.
(30) *One day he bowed, **dog-fashion**, and invited me to play*.
(31) *Outside the tunnel, separated from it, she stood on solid ground and watched it twist **snake-like**, as if alive, away from her*.

Manner adverbs are used as adverbials (examples 19–31), but occasionally they figure as premodifiers of *-ing* and *-ed* participles in premodification of NP heads (LGSWE, p. 553), or as premodifiers of participial adjectives (example 34):

(32) *We ate dinner against the backdrop of [**quietly** sounding MUSIC]$_{NP}$*
(33) *[**Slowly** cooked FOOD]$_{NP}$ is easier to digest*.
(34) *She is [**happily** unmarried]$_{AdjP}$ with two kids*.

Similarly, manner adverbs can appear as first elements of compound adjectives:

(35) *There are many secrets to creating a **brightly-lit** room*.
(36) *Nowadays it is difficult to raise a **well-mannered** and polite child*.

Manner adverbs also convey additional nuances of meaning (Quirk et al. 1985: 560). In (37) *perfectly* is a mixture of manner and result semantics; it indicates that something was fixed in such a manner that the result was perfect. Another such blend is the mixture of manner and duration in (38), where *gradually* indicates that something was done in such a way that it took longer to do.

(37) *She fixed it **perfectly***. (taken from Quirk et al: 1985: 560)
(38) *They broke the news to him **gradually***. (from Quirk et al: 1985: 560)

Some adverbs used as manner adverbials double as degree premodifiers. Such adverbs are often strongly negative when used as adverbials (🕮 T10), but the negative semantics is bleached down to pure intensification in adjective premodification:

(39) a. *My dad was cooking dinner and he cooks **awfully***.
b. *This is our first race and it is **awfully** exciting*.

11.4 Viewpoint

Viewpoint adverbs specify the perspective from which the sentence or utterance should be understood. They could be paraphrased roughly as 'as regards [adjective]' or 'as regards [noun]'. There are two types of viewpoint adverbs: one derived from adjectives by *-ly* suffixation (e.g. *politically*, *geographically*) and the other derived from nouns with *-wise* (e.g. *foodwise*, *parenting-wise*). Viewpoint adverbs usually appear at the head of the clause, and are separated off from the rest of the clause by a comma in writing or a pause in speech:

(40) ***Technically**, this is a high-class piece of cartography.*
(41) ***Artistically**, this is the most vibrant period of English coinage.*
(42) ***Personality-wise**, she is very charismatic and loyal.*
(43) ***Housing-wise**, this is the second least affordable British city.*

Recent years have seen an increase in popularity of view-point adverbs in *-wise*. They most likely originated in AmE in 1950s (Lindquist 2007), and continue to be pegged as a feature informal discourse (Quirk et al. 1985, Lindquist 2007). The suffix builds many nonce-formations, e.g. *love-life-wise* (🕮 T11).

11.5 Degree

Adverbs of degree describe the intensity or the degree of that which is coded by an adjective, adverb, or verb. Degree adverbs, therefore, can function both as elements of larger clause constituents or as adverbials. In (44) *fully* is the modifier of the head adjective *normal* within the adjective phrase; in (45) *fully* modifies the verb, i.e. it functions as an adverbial.

(44) *His behavior is [**fully** NORMAL]$_{AdjP}$*
(45) *I [**fully**]$_{AdvP\ as\ A}$ appreciate your kindness.*

Degree adverbs can indicate a degree that is either higher or lower than expected. In the first case they are referred to as intensifiers or amplifiers, in the second case, they are called downtoners or diminishers (🕮 Section 10.2.1.1).

11.5.1 Intensifiers/amplifiers

Intensifiers increase the intensity of the item modified. Some intensifiers denote the upper end of an assumed scale: e.g. *absolutely*, *altogether*, *completely*, *entirely*, *extremely*, *fully*, *perfectly*, *quite*, *thoroughly*, *totally*, *utterly*, etc. (Quirk et al. 1985: 590):

(46) *This food processor is **completely** useless.*

(47) *We have to understand that the U.S. tax code is **extremely** progressive*.
(48) *The shop assistant **totally** ignored me for full ten minutes*.

Other intensifiers denote the high extent to which a certain characteristic holds, e.g. *badly*, *bitterly*, *enormously*, *far*, *greatly*, *highly*, *intensely*, *much*, *severely*, *so*, *strongly*, *terribly*, *violently*, *well*, exclamatory *how*, etc. (Quirk et al. 1985: 591):

(49) *He's **terribly** busy and you really shouldn't bother him*.
(50) *We have to understand the U.S. tax code is **extremely** progressive already.*
(51) *There are plenty of **stunningly** beautiful gowns out there.*
(52) *This area is known for its **amazingly** varied wildlife*.
(53) ***How** rude to ask when I'll get pregnant*.
(54) A: *I have to work all summer.* B: ***How** nice*.

Intensifying *how* is sometimes used ironically (LGSWE, p. 555), cf. (54) above.

Only gradable verbs and gradable adjectives allow intensifiers. Compare (55a,b) and (56a,b):

(55) a. * *He **completely** died*.
b. *He **completely** denied the allegations*.
(56) a. * *She was **extremely** dead.*
b. *She was **extremely** beautiful*.

Nongradable verbs and adjectives are modified by so-called emphasizers (📖 Section 11.7.1), whose focus is on confirming the truth of the proposition, i.e. expressing certainty that the proposition is true.[50]

(57) *He **really** died.*
(58) *She is **definitely** dead*.

Even though prescriptivists consider degree modification inappropriate for nongradable adjectives with inherently superlative meanings, so-called *limit* or *extreme adjectives* (📖 Section 6.3.1), such as *dead*, *true*, *unique*, etc. degree modification is not uncommon with such adjectives in conversation (LGSWE, p. 526):

(59) *I'll just – trim the **very** dead ends off the side there*.
(60) *That's **very** true*. (both examples from LGSWE, p. 526)

[50] Such adverbs are called emphasizers by Quirk et al. (1985: 583), but also epistemic stance adverbs (LGSWE, p. 557). They function as adverbials.

As observed repeatedly, manner adverbs with negative meanings (e.g. *terribly*, *awfully*) lose their negative meaning when used as intensifiers:

(61) *We were drinking coffee in a **preposterously** charming café that makes you feel like you're in Paris*.

Other words that lose their negative meaning to intensification include the premodifying adjective *dead* and the noun *stone*:

(62) *The crowd at this game was **dead** silent*.
(63) *My wife is **dead** nice*.
(64) *The bare concrete floor of the room was **stone** cold to walk on*.

11.5.2 Downtoners/diminishers

Downtoners or diminishers lower the intensity of the modified item. They indicate various degrees on a scale. They are especially popular as modifiers with gradable adjectives (65–66), but also occur as adverbials scaling down the effect of verbs (67–68):

(65) *I sat there **quite** motionless.*
(66) *The pills taste **slightly** sweet.*
(67) *I **almost** always forget to include this into my travel essentials*.
(68) *He **nearly** fell off the cliff.*

Quite is specific in its ability to modify both gradable and nongradable items. With gradable adjectives, its meaning is 'to some extent':

(69) *It was mostly sunny, but still **quite** cold on Sunday*.
(70) *I was really **quite** angry at him*.

With non-gradables, its meaning is 'completely' (LGSWE, p. 556):

(71) *He walked all around the deck, which was **quite** deserted, and found the staircase leading below.*

Adjectives modified by *quite* may be ambiguous. For instance, *confident* can be interpreted both as a gradable and an absolute state, lending different interpretations to (72) as 'completely confident' and 'confident to some extent' (LGSWE, p. 556):

(72) *I'm **quite** confident that I filed my 2015 taxes online.*
  a. 'completely confident'
  b. 'confident to a degree'

Downtoners should be distinguished from adverbs that primarily mark imprecision, e.g. *kind of*, *sort of*, *quite*, *rather*, *enough*, etc. These "hedging" adverbs are considered *stance adverbs* in LGSWE (🕮 Section 11.7)

A special type of downtoner is discussed in Quirk et al. (1985: 600).[51] These include items like *barely*, *hardly*, *little*, and *scarcely* and are called *minimizers*. These items cannot be negated since they already are negative. When they occur clause-initially, subject operator inversion is obligatory, cf. (73–75). *Hardly*, *scarcely*, and *barely* can occur with non-assertive items, as in (76) (🕮 MSPS II, p. 269):

(73) ***Hardly*** *did I solve one problem when I was faced with another*.
(74) *I* ***hardly*** *need anything*.
(75) ***Barely*** *did I take my shoes off when she started yelling*.
(76) *There were so many people that I* ***barely*** *saw a thing*.

11.6 Additive/restrictive

A relatively limited number of adverbs are additive or restrictive in meaning. They function as adverbials or modifiers (e.g. modifiers of AdjPs within NPs). In both cases they modify by focusing attention on those other elements. In (77) *simply* functions as an adverbial modifying the verb *tell*; in (78) *alone* modifies the NP *top charts*.

(77) *I was* ***simply*** *telling the truth.*
(78) *The top charts* ***alone*** *don't always tell the full story*.

Additive adverbs include e.g. *again*, *also*, *either*, *equally*, *even*, *further*, *likewise*, *neither*, *nor*, *similarly*, *too*, etc. (Quirk et al. 1985: 604). They indicate that whatever works for one item in the proposition also applies to the added element:

[51] Quirk et al. give a more nuanced typology of *downtoners* (1985: 597–598). In their classification, *downtoner* is the cover term for four subtypes of "downward-scaling" degree adverbs: (a) *approximators* (*almost*, *all but*, *virtually* as in *I almost kissed her*), which express an approximation to the force of the verb; (b) *compromisers* (*kind of*, *sort of*, *rather*, as in *I kind of hate you*), which have only a slightly lowering effect and call into question the appropriateness of the verb; (c) *diminishers* (*mildly*, *somewhat*, *slightly*, as in *I was somewhat affected by your decision*), which scale downwards and mean 'to a small extent'; and (d) *minimizers* (*barely*, *scarcely*, as in *I barely recognize you any more*), which mean '(not) to any extent'. This classification differs from that in LGSWE in at least the following ways: in LGSWE compromisers are a separate category called *stance adverbs* (this is also how we treat them in Section 11.7); also minimizers are not represented anywhere in LGSWE's taxonomy, but we decided to include them anyway.

(79) *The other part – about what will happen in the future – is **equally** important to know*.
(80) *The experts **also** urge researchers to develop more studies that measure the physical effects of these psychosocial elements*.
(81) *These are the people who will spread the word about fair trade, but **even** they were a bit in the dark*.
(82) *I know what I did was very serious, but there is **also** another party that needs to take responsibility too*.

Sometimes it is difficult to decide which element is focused on. In (80), the following two interpretations are equally plausible: 'experts, in addition to someone else, will urge researchers to develop more studies' and 'experts will urge researchers to develop more studies in addition to developing something else'.

Restrictive adverbs include items such as *alone*, *exclusively*, *exactly*, *just*, *merely*, *only*, *precisely*, *purely*, *simply*, *especially*, etc. These adverbs place focus on one element in the proposition, expressing that the proposition applies entirely, or exclusively to that element (83–84). Other restrictive adverbs like *chiefly*, *especially*, *largely*, *mainly*, *mostly*, *notably*, *particularly*, *primarily*, *specifically*, etc. indicate that the proposition applies primarily to a certain element, as in (85–86) below (Quirk et al. 1985: 604):

(83) *I **only** replied that he is a good guy*.
(84) *I try to learn from the past but I plan for the future by focusing **exclusively** on the present*.
(85) *People, **mostly** parents and children, sit around in comfortable chairs*.
(86) *And he **especially** shouldn't be comparing you to his exes*.

In some cases, especially in conversation, adverbs that restrict may be understood as simultaneously also lessening intensity (LGSWE, p. 781), as in (87–88):

(87) *I **only** wanted to help you*.
(88) *He was **just** listening to music*.

11.7 Stance

Adverbs may express three types of stance: epistemic, attitude, and style. Epistemic adverbs provide a comment on the proposition in terms of its certainty, reliability, limitations, and its source. Attitude adverbs express the speaker's attitude towards the proposition, while style adverbs describe the manner of speaking (LGSWE, p. 854). We discuss each type of stance adverbs in turn.

11.7.1 Epistemic stance adverbs

Epistemic stance adverbs are semantically most diverse. The may express:

Doubt and certainty

Adverbs of certainty or doubt express the speaker's certainty or doubt concerning the proposition in the clause. Adverbs of certainty include *definitely*, *decidedly*, *incontestably*, *incontrovertibly*, etc., cf. (89). Adverbs expressing a level of doubt include *probably*, *perhaps*, *maybe*, etc. as in (90) (LGSWE, p. 854):

(89) *Besides, Social Security and other entitlements* ***incontestably*** *enjoy the support of the America people*.
(90) ***Maybe*** *he needs some more time or whatever*.

Actuality and reality

Adverbs of actuality and reality express the speaker's judgment on whether the proposition was a fact or not e.g. *really*, *actually*, *truly* (LGSWE, p. 854):

(91) ***Actually****, things are going really, really well.*
(92) *No, they* ***really*** *mean it this time.*

Evidence

Some epistemic stance adverbs imply that the proposition in the clause is based on evidence, while at the same time not naming the source. They include e.g. *apparently*, *reportedly*, *reputedly*, *evidently*, etc. (LGSWE, p. 855):

(93) *At least forty horses were* ***reputedly*** *sacrificed at Genghis Khan's tomb*.
(94) *A series of leaked emails* ***reportedly*** *suggest that snapchat may have behaved questionably when dealing with a gun safety charity*.

Limitation

Several epistemic adverbs express that the scope of the proposition is limited (e.g. *mainly*, *typically*, *generally*, *largely*, etc.) (LGSWE, p. 855):

(95) ***Typically****, our economy grows at about 3 %.*

(96) *That's **largely** because end users still prefer buying a lot of cheap stuff.*

Imprecision

Epistemic stance adverbs can also indicate that the proposition in the clause is imprecise. Adverbs used to mark imprecision are called hedges and include items such as *like*, *sort of*, *kind of*, *about*, *roughly*, etc. (LGSWE, p. 856):

(97) *In response he hit me harder and I **kind of** gave up.*
(98) *I realize that telling you that bipartisanship failed has **roughly** the news value of telling you that Mel Gibson has issues.*

Hedges often indicate imprecision with numbers, quantities, and measurements:

(99) *After **about** two hours, the doors opened.*
(100) *It's been **roughly** 120 years since the advent of movies.*
(101) *Banks have paid **nearly** $9 billion to resolve the Libor crisis.*

11.7.2 Attitude stance adverbs

Attitude stance adverbs convey the speaker's evaluation of or attitude toward the proposition. The attitudes and judgements are diverse: some express the speaker's judgement on whether the proposition is right or wrong (*correctly*, *incorrectly*, *justly*, *unjustly*, etc.); others make judgement on whether something is strange or unexpected (*amazingly*, *astonishingly*, *curiously*, *funnily*, *incredibly*, *ironically*, *oddly*, *remarkably*, *strangely*, *suspiciously*, *unexpectedly*, etc.). These adverbs are often followed by *enough* (Quirk et al. 1985: 622):

(102) ***Ironically enough**, most Americans fail to take more important precautions to protect themselves.*
(103) ***Oddly enough**, the subway was empty for a weekend afternoon.*
(104) ***Strangely**, no one asked me what my sweatshirt meant.*
(105) ***Understandably**, the residents are very angry and concerned.*

Some adverbs judge the proposition as being appropriate or expected (*appropriately*, *inevitable*, *naturally*, *predictably*, *understandably*), causing satisfaction or dissatisfaction (e.g. *delightfully*, *pleasingly*, *annoyingly*, *regrettably*, etc.) or being fortunate or unfortunate (*fortunately*, *unfortunately*, *luckily*, *unluckily*, *happily*, *unhappily*, etc.) (Quirk et al. 1985: 622):

(106) ***Regrettably**, the murderer might be somebody you know.*

Attitude stance adverbs function as adverbials.

11.7.3 Style stance adverbs

Style stance adverbs provide the speaker's comment on how something is being said (*frankly*, *simply*, *sincerely*, *honestly*, *briefly*, *confidentially*, *privately*, *bluntly*, *strictly*, etc.):

(107) ***Briefly**, he became increasingly frustrated with her behavior*.
(108) ***Confidentially**, public protests may jeopardize career advancements*.
(109) ***Frankly**, it sounds better than some of the renditions parents are forced to endure at their kids' recitals*.

11.8 Linking

Linking adverbs express how the speaker views the relationship between two units of discourse, e.g. whether what is said follows from what was said earlier, whether it is a reformulation thereof, or the new unit of discourse perhaps stands in contrast to the earlier one. As such, linking adverbs have an important role in creating textual cohesion (LGSWE, p. 558). Linking adverbs always function as adverbials and connect parts of discourse of differing sizes (Quirk et al. 1985: 632).

Linking adverbials express a variety of meanings, of which we briefly present the six major types.

Enumeration and addition

Adverbs can be used to add items of discourse to other discourse items, and to enumerate pieces of information. In this way speakers also organize their discourse, and sequence or rank the enumerated elements by importance. Linking adverb used for enumeration include *firstly*, *secondly*, *lastly*, *next*, *then*, *finally*, etc. (LGSWE, p. 875, Quirk et al. 1985: 635):

(110) ***Firstly**, the analysis appears to have been calculated using a progressive fitting of the unknown parameters… **Secondly**, Hayman's representation of the maternal effects in the model …has been questioned*.
(111) ***Finally**, some assumptions have been made to create a real estate market scenario*.

Additive linking adverbs may simply indicate that one piece of discourse is added to another or overtly show that the added unit of discourse is similar to the one preceding it. The list of additive adverbs includes items like *further*, *similarly*,

also, *furthermore*, *moreover*, *likewise*, *equally*, etc. (LGSWE, p. 876; Quirk et al. 1985: 635):

(112) *France and Israel have come to that conclusion.* ***Moreover****, the government of Syria has come to that conclusion*.

(113) *Even though I doubled my efforts, I suffered setbacks at work.* ***Equally****, my husband's business slowed down*.

Summation

Summative adverbs cast the following unit of discourse as a conclusion or summary of what was said earlier. Examples of summative adverbs are *altogether*, *overall*, *then*, *therefore*, and *thus* (Quirk et al. 1985: 635):

(114) ***Altogether****, I enjoyed my working days*.

(115) ***Overall****, the pilot program in Maine has highlighted the need for innovative solutions*.

Apposition

Appositive adverbs show that the second unit of discourse is a restatement of the first, only reformulated or stated in more explicit terms (LGSWE, p. 876). The list of appositive adverbs includes *namely* (in formal written English often abbreviated as *viz.*), *thus*, *i.e., e.g*., and *specifically* (Quirk et al. 1985: 635):

(116) *Analyzing data by grade level (****viz.*** *elementary or secondary) would be beneficial*.

(117) *If only they'd had a manager that they –* ***i.e.*** *Morrissey – could work with*.

Result/inference

Resultive and inferential adverbs indicate that the second piece of discourse is a logical or practical result or consequence of the content of preceding discourse (LGSWE, p. 877). The following adverbs indicate result and inference: *accordingly*, *consequently*, *hence*, *now*, *so* (informal), *therefore*, *thus* (formal), *then*, etc. (Quirk et al. 1985: 636):

(118) *People are out of work,* ***therefore*** *tax revenues are down,* ***so*** *schools, law enforcement, fire departments, etc. will have to survive on smaller budgets*.

(119) *There are over 150 dog breeds;* ***consequently****, it's hard to pick one as a pet*.

(120) *Recent studies suggest that taking vitamin E in excess actually increases the risk of developing certain illnesses. We should,* ***therefore****, try and raise awareness on this issue*.

Contrast/concession

Adverbs may indicate that there is some sort of incompatibility between two neighboring units of discourse. Usually they express contrast, e.g. *rather*, *alternatively*, *instead*:

(121) *For example, the business may be the sole distributor of certain products within the United Kingdom.* ***Alternatively****, the business may have three long-term customer contracts essential to its operations*.

(122) *We had hoped to hold the Summer Open Evening at the Castle but after-hours security problems made this impossible.* ***Instead****, we shall build the evening around a different theme*.

Other adverbs indicate that two units of discourse are in a concessive relationship, i.e. that a proposition in the second unit of discourse is somehow unexpected in light of what was communicated in the first discourse unit. Adverbs in this group include: *however*, *still*, *though*, *anyway*, *anyways* (AmE, informal), *nevertheless*, *yet*, etc. (Quirk et al. 1985: 638):

(123) *His paper was intended to be a tentative investigation of British data and little else besides.* ***Nevertheless****, his results were quite remarkable*.

(124) *Britain was almost alone in systematically,* ***though*** *at this period still modestly, absorbing businessmen into the aristocracy*.

(125) *The theme has gone largely unrecognized by contemporary social theory.* ***Yet****, it is a key link in our new emphasis*.

Transition

Adverbs in this category serve to mark transition to a new topic that does not follow directly from previous discourse (LGSWE, p. 879). They include items such as *now* (informal), *meanwhile*, *incidentally*, *meantime*, etc. (Quirk et al. 1985: 636):

(126) *The UK's voluntary sector is large, its turnover is estimated at about seventeen billion. Which,* ***incidentally****, makes it larger than agriculture*.

(127) *Thanks very much for coming over. Right.* ***Now****, when I spoke to Mrs on the telephone last night, she told me about the work you've been doing*.

11.9 Other meanings

In the last section of Chapter 11, we briefly turn to several other meanings not covered in the taxonomy above (LGSWE, p. 560). This includes adverbs expressing means, instrument, and courtesy adverbs.

Example (128) features the adverb *mechanically*. Although it could be subsumed under manner adverbs, its meaning is a bit more specific, as it indicates the means, i.e. the method used to achieve the ideal structure of soil:

(128) *The ideal structure is created by plant and animal life in the soil: man's efforts to produce it **mechanically** are, at best, a poor substitute for nature*.

The adverbs in (129) and (139) look like manner adverbs, but they denote instruments used in certain processes:

(129) *The larval stages occur in the gastric glands and can only be seen **microscopically** following processing of the gastric mucosa*.
(130) *Several men had died of heart attacks, and 35 out of 75 men examined **electrocardiographically** showed abnormalities*.

Finally, the adverb *kindly* (LGSWE, p. 560) is a special expression of politeness (131–132) that could be paraphrased as 'please'. To this, we add the adverb *respectfully*. When used as a courtesy adverb, it could be paraphrased as 'if you don't mind my saying'.[52] Of course, both can be used ironically (133–134):

(131) *She **kindly** offered me her help*.
(132) ***Respectfully** , I suggest that doesn't represent the body of my work.*
(133) *'**Kindly**, don't waste any more of my time', he ordered her*.
(134) ***Respectfully** , shut the **** up.*

[52] Of course, *respectfully* can also function as a manner adverb meaning 'with a lot of respect', e.g. *The masquerader represents ancestors and must be treated **respectfully***.

T11. Viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* (based on Lindquist 2007)

Languages evolve. To expect that they should remain "unadulterated" by change and preserved in whatever is thought to be their pristine state is as unreasonable as many of the infamous prescriptivist lamentations, like that against split infinitives, or against colloquial uses of adjective forms instead adverbs (📖 MSPS II, Section 1.2; 3.2.1.2).

Some newly coined forms/words/expressions, or novel uses of existing ones, may survive prescriptive condemnation and become full-fledged members of the established lexicon. With some luck, this will be the fate of the viewpoint suffix *-wise*.

Originally, *-wise* adverbs (📖 Section 9.3.2) were derived from nouns, and denoted manner (1), or dimension (2–3).

(1) *In the same moment, Whitey began to move,* ***crabwise*** *and with difficulty*.
(2) *Peel the cucumbers, cut* ***lengthwise*** *in quarters, and scrape out any seeds*.
(3) *He started cleaning* ***clockwise*** *around the house, living room, hall, bathroom, den, kitchen, dining room, living room*.

Viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* are a relatively recent phenomenon. The earliest-dated record of a viewpoint adverb goes back to 1942 (*positionwise*, OED). This new meaning is featured in sentences (4–7), where it can be paraphrased as 'as regards N'. More examples could easily be adduced, since the formation of viewpoint *-wise* adverbs seems virtually unconstrained, cf. *career-wise*, *health-wise*, *family-wise*, *talent-wise*, *parenting-wise*, *business-wise*, *personality-wise*, *energy-wise*, *policy-wise*, *style-wise*, etc.

(4) ***Size-wise****, viruses are the tiniest of health hazards but, according to DuPont, are more prevalent in water than bacteria*.
(5) *There have been some strange reports* ***boyfriend-wise****, but it's been very quiet really*.
(6) *I can pretty well forecast how a guy is going to check out* ***behavior-wise*** *from a table plan*.
(7) *We're better individually, we're better collectively.... We're better* ***talent-wise****, and we have better chemistry*.

These suffixations indicate the perspective from which the proposition of the clause should be viewed. Hence the terms *viewpoint adverbs*, *domain adverbs*, *topic-restricting adverbs*, etc. (for a more extensive list of terms, cf. Lindquist 2007: 134).

Interestingly, there was no need for this development since English already had viewpoint adverbs in *-ly*, e.g. *politically*, *architecturally*, etc. This may explain in part why they were frowned upon by the prescriptivists of the 1960s (Lindquist 2007). By many it was considered an AmE fad, but some authors (e.g. Pulgram 1968: 32, in Lindquist 2007) were not as dismissive. They argued that viewpoint *-wise* adverbs are quite convenient and economical. For example, *careerwise* is much less cumbersome than *in relation to my career* (Howard 1993: 411, in Lindquist 2007).

It is commonly believed (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985, Huddleston et al. 2002: 567) that viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* are more frequent in AmE than in BrE. But Lindquist (2007) showed that this is false. By studying the frequency of viewpoint *-wise* adverbs in American and British newspaper corpora, the spoken component of BNC, and the Longman Spoken American Corpus, Lindquist (2007) found that viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* are now at least as frequent in BrE as they are in AmE (📖 Table T11) and that, perhaps surprisingly, they appear to be spreading faster in BrE than in AmE. The same study also found that not much has changed concerning their typical contexts of use; they are still predominantly found in informal English, i.e. in the spoken or newspaper sections of the corpora studied (often as part of topics like sports, art, entertainment, and living).

Table T11. Normalized frequency of viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* (per 1 mil) in spoken and written American and British corpora (from Lindquist 2007: 143)

	Approx. size (in mil.)	**Tokens**	**Norm. freq.**
New York Times, 1990	60	77	1.3
New York Times, 1995	53	77	1.5
New York Times, 2000	67	132	2.0
Independent, 1990	35	29	0.8
Independent, 1995	35	101	2.9
Independent, 2000	45	153	3.4
Longman Spoken American Corpus, ca 1995	5	38	7.6
BNC, context-governed component, ca 1990	6	37	6.2
BNC, demographic component, ca 1990	4	27	6.8

So, the question is, why are viewpoint *-wise* adverbs spreading, albeit only within the limits of informal English?

Lenker (2002, in Lindquist 2007) suggests a possible reason. She argues that viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* have an advantage over competing viewpoint adverbs in *-ic(ally)*, since the latter suffix is restricted to nouns of Greco-Latin origin

(*economically*, *musically*, etc.). The suffix *-wise* is compatible with Germanic bases. Data collected by Lindquist (2007) confirm this; some 75% of bases of viewpoint *-wise* adverbs were indeed found to be Germanic.

Also, the suffix *-wise* attaches to a wider range of bases than *-ic(ally)*. Lindquist's data include *-wise* adverbs with nominal compounds (e.g. *bottom-line-wise*, *love-life-wise*), coordinated noun phrases (e.g. *sex-and-violence-wise*) and noun phrases consisting of an adjective and a noun (e.g. *current-affairswise*).

Furthermore, Cowie (2006, in Lindquist 2007) argues that viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* are very useful since they fulfill a number of discourse functions. They provide a focus for a clause, help organize discourse beyond the clause level, and are economical (e.g. *business-wise* vs. *from the perspective of business*).

The data collected by Lindquist (2007) reveal yet another interesting fact. The viewpoint suffix *-wise* is highly productive, however it is mostly used to create nonce-forms, i.e. short-lived neologisms created on the fly. This means that there is a large pool of singleton *-wise* adverbs, which may not survive as permanent assets in the English lexicon.

Since viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* are almost exclusive to informal English, it is not at all surprising that there are no cut and dried spelling rules. In (8), *wise* looks more like a suffix, being bound to its base. In (9) it is more like a clitic, a phonotactically dependent, but morphosyntactically independent element. The hyphen in (10) gives it a semi-suffix-like appearance.

(8) **Foodwise**, I usually play it safe in a place like this, sticking with burgers or pub fare.
(9) *Maybe it is me but **dating wise**, I have noticed that women in their 20's tend to be extremely superficial*.
(10) *But **parenting-wise***, the thing about teenagers is that we need to love them more.

The form with the clitic was found only through the Web search, primarily in Internet conversations, which could indicate that this is the most informal spelling variant of the three.

In sum, it seems that, despite their informal flavor, viewpoint adverbs in *-wise* perform many useful functions. They have actually filled a system void by allowing speakers to move beyond adjective-based viewpoint adverbs in *-ly* (cf. *politically*), and express viewpoints even on Germanic and nominal bases. It remains to be seen whether this will be enough to turn their fate around and let them move beyond the confines of the informal.

Exercises

1. Identify the meaning of the adverbs below (e.g. time, place, manner, concession, contrast, result, viewpoint, apposition, addition, restriction).

1. **Insanely**, I wondered why Anja hadn't said the dude was one-legged.
2. Some know of the band from their **insanely** clever and **completely** silent album.
3. The Court has at least **somewhat** acknowledged the need for data privacy.
4. The Malaysia island of Penang is **arguably** one of Asia's best street food destinations.
5. He **halfway** surrendered to their demands.
6. I can't do things **halfway** so I started training four or five days a week.
7. I usually warm up during the season, and we're obviously already more than **halfway** through.
8. The use of fossil fuels would **fatally** undermine the UK's attempt to fulfil its climate obligations.
9. The fossil fuel companies are **well** aware methane is a potent greenhouse gas, and **yet** they seem willing to continue on a path which can have disastrous consequences for our grandchildren.
10. Young starred in **nearly** 100 motion pictures.
11. Carrie plans her moves, **career-wise**, like a military strategist.
12. Melanie is feeling **slightly** uncomfortable about the conversation.
13. **Then**, there's the Amazon and its rainforest, a vast world of rare species.
14. He was working in Seattle **then**.
15. **Now**, I would like to ask you some questions about alcoholic beverages.
16. The defense didn't deny it was Dante's print. **Instead**, they disputed whether or not it was actually a bloody print.
17. **Firstly**, it is necessary to make a distinction between systemic inflammation and Systemic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (SIRS).
18. Although we found **only** minor injuries, the cat did have blood inside her chest, probably from contact with the car or the road.
19. I **especially** appreciated the fact that she seemed **genuinely** glad I was here.
20. Presidential candidates see debates as their chance to **really** shine before millions.
21. I'm **really** impressed with the way folks have handled this.
22. Now the great thing about this, again shrimp cooks **awfully** quickly.

2. Choose the best, most natural-sounding linking adverb from the list to complete the sentences.

still, consequently, also, nevertheless, incidentally, otherwise (2x)*, subsequently, besides, instead, therefore, however*

1. You should stay where you are, _____ you might destroy footprints or some other kind of evidence.
2. The corn really should be in the ground, and we should be planting beans by now. _____ we're just looking at muddy fields.
3. We had a pretty bad recession year. _____ we are growing as planned.
4. Other areas around the state are undertaking similar protection efforts. _____it takes a continuous source of money to protect land.
5. The man with self-esteem issues feels threatened. He _____seeks control through manipulation, coercion, dominance.
6. We'd lived in this town for ten years. _____, most people couldn't pronounce my name.
7. We totally disagree with his approach. _____, he is no authority in this field.
8. I don't like her face; _____, she smokes, which is something I hate.
9. You don't really think I did it. _____ you wouldn't be sitting here, with me, enjoying a soda pop.
10. James finished his degree at Oxford University; _____he settled in London and took up a position with a large international bank.
11. Her new boyfriend is a proctologist. _____, how does one choose a career in proctology?
12. Germany has a massive trade surplus with the rest of the world. _____ it can afford to give more money for the humanitarian purposes.

4. Explain the difference in meaning between sentences in the following pairs. Which word is modified by the bolded adverb?

1. a. He **only** told him not to take it so seriously.
   b. **Only** he told him not to take it so seriously.
2. a. **Honestly**, do you think they are going to win the tournament?
   b. Do you think that they are going to win the tournament **honestly**?
3. a. **Just** wait there.

b. Wait **just** there.

4. a. **Frankly**, they don't want to talk about the incident.
   b. They don't want to talk about the incident **frankly**.

5. a. I don't **really** think that she is going to leave him.
   b. I **really** don't think that she's going to leave him.

5. Translate the following sentences into English. Consider if and how adverbs affect the use of tenses.

1. Naš gradić je u načelu sigurno mjesto za život, ali povremeno ima poplava i snažnih vjetrova.
2. Sreo sam ga prije nekoliko godina na planinarenju, ali nisam ga vidio otada.
3. Dosad je bilo iznimno puno upita o našim proizvodima.
4. Žao mi je, ali nažalost ne mogu vam pomoći. Gospodin Smith upravo je otišao na ručak.
5. Nedavno sam s prijateljima proveo čitav dan u staroj luci.
6. Teško da bi se njega moglo nazvati stručnjakom za geologiju.
7. Početak je prosinca i prve se pahulje tek trebaju pojaviti.
8. Trenutačno i nije nešto popularna među biračima, ali još bi mi nju mogli vidjeti u parlamentu.
9. Je li već stigla?
10. Naši vatrogasci obično nisu dovoljno opremljeni za borbu s požarima ovakvih razmjera.

Summary of Chapter 11

The final chapter of Part III surveyed the many meanings of adverbs. Many of them explicate circumstances of the action denoted by the verb, i.e. time, place, and manner. However, they also express contrast, concession, the perspective from which the proposition of the sentence should be viewed, and the speaker's attitude towards the statement. In addition, they organize discourse by introducing new discourse elements, expressing inference, allowing transition to new topics, etc. A special section was devoted to the phenomenon of viewpoint adverbs in *-wise*.

PART IV: PREPOSITIONS

Chapter 12. Prepositions: setting the scene
Chapter 13. Functions of prepositional phrases
Chapter 14. Prepositional semantics
Chapter 15. Prepositions and semantic networks

The final part of the volume is dedicated to prepositions. In traditional approaches to grammar, prepositions were neglected and considered marginal due to the belief that they had no meaning of their own. For a long time, they were "taken for granted" (Kurzon 2002: 231) and unruliness was perceived as the main characteristic of the word class (Rauh 1993: 99). Beyond that, prepositions are usually considered a closed class of words with a finite number of members, but the reality is that, not only are they more complex and interesting than traditionally believed, they also do accept new members. The popularity of prepositions rose with the development of generative grammar in the second half of the 20th century, especially Chomsky's X' theory (1970). Theory-driven studies of prepositional meanings emerged on a larger scale within cognitive linguistics around 1980. Influence of the latter, and its precursors (Rosch 1978, Wittgenstein 1953 [1958]), will be felt in Chapters 14 and 15 of Part IV, where we will rely on the principles of prototype categorization (📖 also MSPS II, Section 2T) to account for the meanings of some of the central English prepositions. Prototype-based categorization will also figure in Chapter 12, where we examine the cline between complex prepositions and free syntactic phrases, and overlaps between prepositions and other word classes.

Part IV of MSPS III is a balanced introduction to the main morphological, syntactic, and semantic characteristics of prepositions. It should in no way be considered a complete and fully exhaustive overview, as there are different approaches to studying the category. Our approach combines description and prescription in an attempt to motivate students of linguistics to observe patterns in linguistic data, but to also give them a normative take on those patterns. After all, as prospective future teachers of English as a foreign language, our student-readers also need an awareness of the linguistic choices that currently enjoy social sanction.

Chapter 12: Prepositions: setting the scene

12.1 Definition and structure of prepositional phrases

The challenge of defining prepositions is no smaller than the challenge of defining any other word class. As expected, and as will soon become obvious, prepositions are also a prototype-structured category, held together by its central members, but stretched at its seams by various marginal items. The definition(s) we provide below are of necessity idealized, since the true nature of the preposition can only be appreciated after all manner of odd examples have been explored throughout these chapters.

Prepositions are usually defined as words that express a relation between the entity coded by the prepositional complement and another entity in the syntactic environment (Quirk et al. 1985: 657). Prepositions are also defined as items introducing prepositional phrases or those connecting noun phrases with other structures (LGSWE, p. 74). Differences aside, all definitions are based on the idea of a **relation**. Together, the preposition and its complement build the syntactic structure called the prepositional phrase (PP).

Table 12.1. Structure of prepositional phrases

	preposition	**complement**
I returned	*at*	*midnight.*
She called you	*by*	*mistake.*
Fetch wine		*the cellar.*
I learned everything	*from*	*watching movies.*
You can learn much		*what people ask.*

The most common types of prepositional complements include:

a. noun phrases

(1) *It's all* ***IN*** *a good cause*.
(2) *I am brewing beer* ***AT*** *home*.

b. nominal *wh*-clauses

(3) *I learned* ***FROM*** *what he said*.

c. nominal -*ing* clauses

(4) *Nothing could prevent him* ***FROM*** *getting into the country*.

Prepositions exceptionally take adverbs or adjectives as complements, in phrases like *by far*, *at least*, *in brief*, *until now*, *in there*, *at once*, *since when*, etc.

(5) ***AT*** *last he finished his thesis*.
(6) ***BEFORE*** *long everything will fall into place*.

Quirk et al. (1985: 658–659) define prototypical, or as they put it, "central" prepositions as those prepositions that do not take:

a. *that* clause complements

(7) *She was surprised that her mother had not hurried out to greet her*.
(8) *She was surprised* ***of*** *her mother not hurrying to greet her*.
(9) **She was surprised* ***at*** *that her mother had not hurried out to greet her*.

b. infinitive clause complements

(10) *She was surprised to find the Queen in conciliatory mood*.
(11) *She was surprised* ***by*** *Queens's conciliatory mood*.
(12) **She was surprised at* ***to*** *find the Queen in conciliatory mood*.

c. personal pronoun complements in the subjective case form

(13) *He was convinced* ***by*** *the official documents*.
(14) **He was convinced* ***by*** *she*.

Of course, prepositions may be marginal ("non-central") for various other reasons, as will become apparent in due course.

A few notes on usage. Since *that* clauses and infinitive clauses cannot occur as prepositional complements, whenever these clauses occur with verbs/adjectives that are strongly bound to a preposition, the preposition must be dropped. Such verbs/adjectives can be followed by the preposition, or the *that*/infinitive clause, but not both concurrently. Cf. examples in (15) from Quirk et al. (1985: 659):

(15) *ask* (*for*), *decide* (*on*), *inform* (*of*), *tell* (*of*/*about*), *be bad* (*at*), *be aware* (*of*), *be sorry* (*about*), *be interested* (*in*)

If the preposition cannot be omitted, an alternative construction with a noun phrase, an *-ing* clause, or a *wh*-clause is used (ibid.):

(16) *I'm looking forward to [the meeting with you]*$_{NP}$
(17) *I'm looking forward to [meeting you]*$_{\textit{-ing}\ \text{clause}}$
(18) *I'm looking forward to [what you will say]* $_{\textit{wh}\text{- clause}}$

Alternatively, one could use a *that*-clause, but only if it is integrated into a complex noun phrase headed by nouns like *fact*. This complex NP functions as the complement, the *that* clause is "demoted" to the role of an NP postmodifier:

(19) *They are convinced* ***OF*** *[the FACT that they have a sacred mission]*$_{NP}$

Further, although prepositions and their complements tend to be in immediate succession, this is not always so. The preposition may be deferred (Quirk et al. 1985: 663–664) or stranded (LGSWE, p. 105). Prescriptive grammarians dislike deferred prepositions (LGSWE, p. 105) and consider them unacceptable. But the truth is, speakers may prefer deferment even when it is not obligatory. According to Quirk et al. (1985: 663–664) deferment is obligatory in the following three cases:

a. passive constructions with prepositional verbs (bolded, small caps) where the subject (underlined in 20) corresponds to the prepositional complement in the active (underlined in 21):

   (20) *Columbia's recent spending spree has partly been* ***PAID FOR*** *by Sony*.
   (21) *Sony has partly* ***PAID FOR*** *Columbia's recent spending spree*.

b. infinitive clauses with thematized[53] prepositional complement (underlined):

   (22) *The kid was impossible* ***TO REASON WITH***.

c. in *-ing* clauses with thematized prepositional complement (underlined)

   (23) *She's worth* ***LISTENING TO***.

Deferment is an option (a less formal one), when a preposition has interrogative or relative pronouns as complements (examples 25 and 27). The formal alternative, associated with careful writing (LGSWE, p. 107), is to leave the preposition and the complement in immediate sequence (examples 24 and 26).

WH-QUESTIONS

   (24) ***AT*** *which end do we start, the aesthetic or the linguistic*? (formal)
   (25) *Which end do we start* ***AT****, the aesthetic or the linguistic*? (informal)

RELATIVE CLAUSES

   (26) *This was something* ***ABOUT*** *which he was always teased*. (formal)
   (27) *This was something* (*which*) *he was always teased* ***ABOUT***. (informal)

Deferment may be obligatory if there is a strong bond between the preposition and the verb or adjective (28–29), or in some combinations of a *wh*-word plus preposition functioning as adverbials, especially in conversation (30–31). But

[53] Thematization here means focusing on an aspect of linguistic structure. In this case, on the prepositional complements.

this does not occur across the board (cf. 32–34), which makes it supremely difficult to predict the stranding behavior of prepositions in various constructions (LGSWE, p. 107):

(28) *What did it look* ***LIKE***?
(29) *All she complained* ***ABOUT*** *was her hair*.
(30) *Where is she* ***AT****?*
(31) *What did she do that* ***FOR***?
(32) ***TO*** *what extent does it destroy*, *and create*, *jobs*?
(33) ***TO*** *what do I owe the pleasure*?
(34) ***BY*** *what means did they achieve international standing so quickly?*

12.2 Morphological form: simple and complex prepositions

12.2.1 Simple prepositions

Most English prepositions are simple prepositions consisting of one word. They can be monosyllabic and polysyllabic. Simple monosyllabic prepositions from Quirk et al. (1985: 665) are given in (35a). In (35b) we provide a different list, one which includes the most frequent monosyllabic prepositions among the 100 most frequent prepositions in COCA. Allowing that the lists differ in part because COCA is restricted to AmE, it is doubtful that prepositions like *pro*, *qua*, or *sans* are any less obscure in BrE or any other variety than they are in AmE. In fact, all three were absent from the 100 top-ranked prepositions in both COCA and BNC. This is why a frequency-ordered list may be more beneficial to the learner, even if ours is based on AmE alone. We repeated the same frequency-analysis for polysyllabic simple prepositions, cf. the lists in (36a) and (36b).[54]

MONOSYLLABIC

(35a) *as*, *at*, *but*, *by*, *down*, *for*, *from*, *in*, *like*, *near* (*to*), *of*, *off*, *on*, *out*, *past*, *per*, *pro*, *qua*, *re*, *round*, *sans*, *since*, *than*, *through*, *till*, *to*, *up*, *via*[55], *with*

(35b) *of*, *in*, *to*, *for*, *with*, *on*, *at*, *from*, *by*, *as*, *like*, *through*, *out*, *off*, *up*, *per*, *than*, *near*, *since*, *down*, *past*, *but*, *plus*, *vs*

POLYSYLLABIC

(36a) *about*, *above*, *across*, *after*, *against*, *along*, *amid(st)*, *among(st)*, *anti*, *around*, *atop*, *before*, *behind*, *below*, *beneath*, *beside*, *besides*, *between*, *beyond*, *circa*, *despite*, *during*, *except*, *inside*, *into*, *notwithstanding*, *onto*, *opposite*, *outside*, *over*, *pace*, *pending*, *throughout*, *toward(s)*, *under*, *underneath*, *unlike*, *until*, *upon*, *versus*, *vis-à-vis*, *within*, *without*

(36b) *about*, *into*, *after*, *over*, *between*, *against*, *during*, *before*, *without*, *under*, *around*, *among*, *across*, *within*, *including*, *toward*, *behind*, *along*, *upon*, *despite*, *away*, *beyond*, *outside*, *onto*, *above*, *inside*, *throughout*, *until*, *beside*, *beneath*, *except*, *regarding*, *below*, *towards*, *via*, *unlike*, *versus*, *concerning*, *amid*, *alongside*, *atop*, *besides*

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[54] Unfortunately, we could not automatically retrieve the frequency list of complex prepositions. Still, the 100 most common prepositions in COCA featured what on closer inspection turned out to be parts of complex prepositions, viz. *front* (for *in front of*), *next* (for *next to*), *due* (for *due to*), *respect* (for *with respect to*), *behalf* (for *on behalf of*), *spite* (for *in spite of)*, etc.

[55] We note in passing that *via*, included among monosyllabic prepositions by Quirk et al., has two syllables. Therefore, we included it in our list of polysyllabic prepositions in (36b).

TB 12.1. Restrictions on prepositional usage

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 667), some prepositions are limited in use. This is because they are archaic (*unto*), poetic (*'tween* and '*twixt*), dialectal (Scots *outwith* 'except', 'outside') or they are foreign borrowings restricted to formal or technical contexts. Many borrowings come from Latin, some from French; those that have not been fully adapted to the English system appear italicized, e.g. *anti*, *circa*, *pace*, *pro*, *qua*, *re*, *versus* (abbreviated as *v* in BrE and as *vs* in AmE), *via*; *à la*, *apropos* (*of*) 'with regard to'. Other restrictions concern regional variation in form, as in *towards* and *toward*. BrE is argued to distinctly prefer *towards*. AmE usage is perceived as more flexible; *toward* is the preferred form, but *towards* is arguably not uncommon despite its bad reputation dating to the late 1800s (🕮 https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/toward-towards-usage). We verified this in COCA and BNC and found fairly robust preferences for the single variants in each national corpus. The 560-million word COCA currently features 146 239 tokens of *toward* and comparatively fewer tokens of *towards* – 25 433. In the 100-million word BNC, *towards* prevails with 27 017 tokens, over 1 153 tokens of *toward*.

12.2.2 Gradience between simple and complex prepositions

The boundary between simple and complex prepositions is not sharp. A seemingly simple and obvious criterion is orthographic separation: a simple preposition is spelt solid, a complex preposition has words separated by white space. Unfortunately, this criterion does not explain why *out of* is spelt as two words and *into* as one; or, why *instead of* is written as two words, and *in lieu of* as three (Quirk et al. 1985: 672). The spelling of some multi-word prepositions appears quite arbitrary.

12.2.3 Complex prepositions

The term "complex preposition" itself is of rather recent origin; in older publications complex prepositions are called group prepositions, phrasal prepositions, or compound prepositions (Hoffmann 2005: 26). Complex prepositions consist of two- or three-word sequences that function as a single preposition semantically and syntactically. They consist of separate orthographic elements, but are conceptualized as indivisible syntactic units. Sweet (1892: 134–5) describes complex prepositions as "consisting of a noun governed by a preceding preposition and followed by another preposition, which grammatically governs the following noun, although logically the noun is governed by the whole group". Quirk et al. (1985: 671) state more simply that "[i]n the strictest

definition, a complex preposition is a sequence that is indivisible both in terms of syntax and in terms of meaning". In two-word prepositions, the first word is usually stressed. It is usually an adverb, adjective, or a conjunction, the second word is a simple preposition (*of*, *for*, *to*, etc.).

Two-word prepositions

The list in (37) includes two-word prepositions illustrated in LGSWE (p. 75):[56]

(37) *such as*, *but for*, *except for*, *save for*, *apart from*, *aside from*, *away from*, *as from*, *ahead of*, *as of*, *because of*, *devoid of*, *exclusive of*, *inside of*, *instead of*, *irrespective of*, *out of*, *outside of*, *regardless of*, *upwards of*, *depending on*, *void of*, *according to*, *as to*, *close to*, *contrary to*, *due to*, *next to*, *on to*, *opposite to*, *owing to*, *preliminary to*, *preparatory to*, *previous to*, *prior to*, *relative to*, *subsequent to*, *thanks to*, *up to*, *along with*, *together with*, *as against*, *as per*, *as regards*, *rather than*

Three-word prepositions

Three-word complex prepositions come in the following structural types (LGSWE, p. 75):

Preposition$_1$ + Noun + Preposition$_2$ (PNP)

ending in *of*

(38) *by means of*, *by virtue of*, *by way of*, *for lack of*, *for want of*, *in aid of*, *in back of*, *in case of*, *in charge of*, *in consequence of*, *in favor of*, *in front of*, *in lieu of*, *in light of*, *in need of*, *in place of*, *in respect of*, *in search of*, *in spite of*, *in terms of*, *in view of*, *on account of*, *on behalf of*, *on grounds of*, *on top of*

ending in *to*

(39) *as opposed to*, *by reference to*, *in addition to*, *in contrast to*, *in reference to*, *in regard to*, *in relation to*, *with regard to*, *with reference to*

ending in *with*

(40) *at variance with*, *in accordance with*, *in comparison with*, *in compliance with*, *in conformity with*, *in contact with*, *in line with*

[56] Most of these prepositions are frequent in COCA, but the frequency range is extensive, going from 70 occurrences of *preliminary to* to 331 170 occurrences of *out of*.

others

(41) *as far as*, *as well as*, *in exchange for*, *in return for*, *as distinct from*

In Quirk et al. (1985: 670) some prepositions with four words are listed among three-word prepositions. They are like three-word prepositions in all respects except there is a fourth article, e.g. *at the hands of*, *at the expense of*. In LGSWE (p. 75) four-word prepositions are presented separately. They close with the preposition *of*, as is evident from the list in (42):

(42) *as a result of*, *at the expense of*, *for the sake of*, *in the case of*, *in the event of*, *in the light of*, *on the ground(s) of*, *on the part of*, *with the exception of*

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 672), and as any corpus study of legal English would no doubt reveal, complex prepositions are common in bureaucratic and legal discourse, especially *in case of*, *in default of*, *in lieu of*, *in pursuance of*, *in respect of*, *on pain of*, etc. Cf. examples (43) to (45):

(43) *He also pays 25 percent of that income to the Treasury* ***in lieu of*** *tax.*
(44) *Contracts made by any agent* ***in pursuance of*** *the principal's instructions are binding on*, *and operate for the benefit of*, *the latter*.
(45) *Local authorities will have a duty to keep the streets clean*, ***on pain of*** *being taken to court by members of the public*.

12.3 Gradience between complex prepositions and free phrases

Complex prepositions pose some difficulties. One is trivial, viz. deciding whether three-word sequences with an additional article qualify as three- or four-word complex prepositions. Another one is of more consequence, and concerns the difference between multi-word prepositions as syntactic units and similar multi-word sequences acting as free syntactical phrases. There are no absolute boundaries between the two; rather, we may speak of a scale of cohesiveness. On one end of this scale, there are sequences that seem as tightly integrated as simple prepositions (e.g. ***On top of*** *that, she admitted she was wrong*). On the other end, there are sequences that behave like loose collections of independent elements (e.g. *I climbed* ***on the (second) highest top/peak of*** *the mountain*). According to Quirk et al. (1985: 671) nine indicators of syntactic variability distinguish free phrases from complex prepositions. The more indicators of variability a PNP sequence shows, the more likely it is a free phrase.

a. variability of the second preposition

(46) *She placed the corset on the chair* ***by*** *the TV*.
(47) *She placed the corset on the chair* ***near*** *the TV*.
(48) **In spite* ***for*** *her work*, *she didn't succeed*.

b. number variability of the noun

(49) *There are some clothes on the* ***chair*** *by the TV*.
(50) *There are some clothes on the* ***chairs*** *by the TV*.
(51) **In* ***spites*** *of his age*, *his experience*, *he felt a cold thrill run through him*.

c. variability of determiners

(52) *There are some clothes on* ***the*** *chair by the TV*.
(53) *There are some clothes on* ***a*** *chair by the TV*.
(54) a. **In* ***a*** *spite of consistent repression*, *they produced five children.*
b. **In* ***the*** *spite of consistent repression*, *they produced five children*.

d. variability of the first preposition

(55) *There are some clothes* ***on*** *the chair by the TV*.
(56) *There are some clothes* ***under*** *the chair by the TV*.
(57) *****For*** *spite for her work*, *she didn't succeed*.

e. substitutability of the preposition and the complement by a possessive pronoun

(58) a. *There was beautiful glass on the surface* ***of the table****.*

b. *There was beautiful glass on **its** surface*.

(59) a. *She continued to try in spite **of the result**.*
b. **She continued to try in **its** spite*.

f. omissibility of the second preposition and the complement

(60) *There are some clothes on the chair **by the TV***.
(61) *There are some clothes on the chair*.
(62) **She continued to try in spite.*

g. substitutability of the second preposition and the complement by a demonstrative

(63) *There are some clothes on **that** chair.*
(64) a. *In the light **of this report** there now seems definite linkage*.
b. **In **this** light there now seems definite linkage*.

h. substitutability of the noun by other synonymous nouns/nouns of related meaning

(65) *There are some clothes on the **stool** by the TV*.
(66) **She continued to try in **malice** of the result*.

i. the noun can be premodified by an adjective

(67) *The clothes are on the **plastic** chair by the TV*.
(68) **She continued to try in **evident** spite of the result*.

On this evidence, *in spite of* is a complex preposition, *on the chair by* is not. The latter is a sequence of four words only resembling a complex preposition, but is a free and completely variable syntactic phrase.

Other examples lie at various distances from the two extremes. They show characteristics of free syntactic phrases and complex prepositions at once. For instance, *in quest of* is not as cohesive as *in spite of*; *quest* can be replaced by the nearly synonymous noun *search* (criterion h):

(69) *Her eyes were fixed on Melissa as if in **quest** of a miracle*.
(70) *Her eyes were fixed on Melissa as if in **search** of a miracle*.

In comparison with fits more criteria of variability (a, d, f, and h), which makes it even less of a complex preposition than *in quest of*:

(71) ***In comparison with** London*, *everything seemed to be in miniature*.
(72) *Sea-kayaks are unstable **in comparison to** river canoes I decide*.
(73) ***By comparison with** other European empires*, *the English feel they were doing well enough*.

(74) *Cambridge*, ***in comparison***, *lacked the power through the water to counter Oxford's punch*.
(75) *This would be a separate activity done by the US* ***in correlation with*** *other governments*.

In defense of satisfies variability criteria c, e, and h.

(76) ***In defense of*** *an ideal she would quite probably be willing to suffer death*.
(77) *He had helped* ***in the defense of*** *Crete*, *and fought with the British Army in Italy and Austria*.
(78) *All she could summon* ***in her defense*** *was that'd hurt no one but herself*.
(79) *The nation was united* ***in protection of*** *its past*.

Clearly, no categorical claims can be made regarding the above expressions, and so the question of whether these, or other similar strings, are complex prepositions or free phrases is simply a wrong question. The fact that something resembling a free phrase could simultaneously show features of complex prepositions simply means that the status of a word/expression as a preposition is a matter of degree and/or that expressions like *in defense of*, though at some distance from the single-word preposition prototype, are possibly already within the category boundaries.

12.4 Prepositions and other word classes

Prepositions overlap with other word classes, especially conjunctions and adverbs, but also participles and adjectives (📖 Table 2.1., and Table 12.2. below for fresh examples). While the word class of particular forms may be recoverable from the context, this is not always an easy feat.

Table 12.2. Multifunctionality of English prepositions (adapted from LGSWE, p. 76)

Form	prep	conj	adv	adj	v	example
as	●					*It was full of anecdotes from his life **as** a policeman.*
		●				***As** she walked from the post office empty handed, she pretended to be an American tourist.*
before	●					*It was **before** me.*
		●				*Queues formed at petrol stations **before** the war started.*
			●			*I've never seen that man **before**.*
given	●					*He didn't have money to share – **given** his own financial problems.*
					●	***Given** the chance, he would wipe us out.*
opposite	●					*Unfortunately, there was a row of mirrors on the wall **opposite** me.*
				●		*So we both started by playing the **opposite** sex.*
across	●					*She walked **across** the street.*
			●			*She walked **across**.*
since	●					***Since** the dawn of mankind, there have been haters.*
		●				*Roz has adopted some funny mannerisms **since** she's been away.*

12.4.1 Prepositions versus conjunctions versus participles

The common characteristic of prepositions and conjunctions is that both relate two syntactic units.

(80) *She didn't know ice cream at all **when** she decided to open the shop.*
(81) *Is this the year **of** his inevitable demise?*

When in (80) is a conjunction, relating two situations around a common point in time. The subject's cognitive state (lack of knowledge or experience with ice-cream) is related – via the time conjunction *when* – to another situation (decision

to act) so that both situations are construed as being valid at the same time. In (81), the preposition *of* relates a person's ill fortune to a particular point in time.

Sometimes the two functions coincide in the same form. This adds formal overlap to functional similarity and makes it harder to differentiate the two word classes. Compare (82) and (83):

(82) *Engage your brain* ***before****preposition your mouth*.
(83) *I had it for about two weeks* ***before****conjunction I told him I'd got it*!

As and *since* are similarly multifunctional (🕮 Table 12.2.), as are prepositions/conjunctions *until*, *besides*, *after*, *except*, *but*, etc.

So, what is the difference between these two word classes? Quirk et al. (1985: 660) propose a structural criterion. Prepositions introduce complements which are nominal or nominalized, while conjunctions (subordinators) introduce subordinate clauses with a full subject-predicate structure. By this criterion, *before* in (82) is a preposition followed by the NP complement *your mouth*, *before* in (83) is a conjunction, introducing a structure that could be an independent clause – *I told him I'd got it*.

This criterion is not beyond reproach. As briefly argued in Chapter 1, non-finite clauses sit between the two complement types; they are different from NPs since they do not refer to an entity, but refer to an event. They are not fully clausal either since, unlike finite clauses, they lack subjects and thus fail to demonstrate the typically clausal subject-predicate structure (84).

(84) ***On*** *seeing me*, *they looked taken aback.*

In fact, non-finite clauses may be interpreted as products of an early stage of syntactic nominalization, i.e. a process that involves

> various adjustments in the grammatical structure of the finite clause, adjustments that transform the clause toward another well-known prototype, that of the **noun phrase**. Typical noun phrases are marked by various determiners and modifiers. When a verbal clause is adjusted toward the NP prototype via nominalization, it becomes a **non-finite** clause, or at least a **less-finite** one (Givón 1993: 288, emphasis in the original)

Table 12.3. illustrates various complement types with *after*, *when*, and *by*. All three allow non-finite clauses. Leaving these aside, we see that *after* can be a conjunction or a preposition since it takes both finite clause and noun phrase complements, *by* can only be a preposition as it refuses finite clause complements, and *when* can only be a conjunction.

Table 12.3. Types of complements of *after*, *by*, and *when* (adapted from Quirk et al. 1985: 660)

	after	**by**	**when**
finite cl.	*He thought of her **after she called**.*	**He stopped frozen **by she called**.*	*He answered **when she called***
non-finite cl.	*He thought of her **after calling her**.*	*The Commons has the right to fill casual vacancies **by calling** a by-election.*	*And **when calling** the shots verbally does not work, he uses acts of violence.*
NP	*He thought of her **after her call**.*	*He stopped frozen **by her call**.*	****When her call**, she picked up the phone …*

Some *-ing* and *-ed* forms, like *considering* and *given*, are also multifunctional. They act as participles, prepositions, or conjunctions (Quirk et al. 1985: 660).

Prepositions

(85) *She's doing very well*, ***considering** her age*. ('in view of her age')
(86) ***Given** the conditions of extreme poverty in which the majority of Salvadorean families live*, *children are required to work*. ('if one takes into account the conditions of extreme poverty …')

Participles as parts of finite verb phrases (87–89) or as independent non-finite verb phrases in (90):

(87) *He's **considering** his options*.
(88) ***Considering** the recent proposal to move to Canada*, *I decided to stay put after all*. ('when I considered the recent proposal')
(89) *I was **given** ten days to think it all over.*
(90) ***Given** the chance*, *my kid would eat 'jam and toast' every day*. ('if she were given the chance')

Conjunctions

(91) ***Considering*** *that Trump has never acted in the interest of others in his entire life*, *the odds of that happening are about as slim as him actually … admitting that his entire presidency is a scheme to make money*. (‘since Trump has never acted …’)

(92) ***Given*** *that most of us don’t have the coordination or the patience to apply same*, *you've got to have it done professionally*. (‘since most of us don’t have … ’)

Other forms shifting between prepositions and conjunctions include *on account of*, *but*, *like*, *than*, and *as*. We explain them in turn.

on account of

On account of can be a preposition (example 93), if followed by an NP complement. As a conjunction it introduces dependent clauses, esp. in AmE. Consider examples (94) and (97). They are colloquial, their more “standard” albeit verbose paraphrases are those in (95) and (98). Note that in the latter two sentences *on account of* is no longer a (pure) conjunction, in (98) it is indisputably a preposition, in (95) it is something of a hybrid, featuring a nominalized non-finite *-ing* clause and a determiner. At any rate, constructions with *because* (in 96 and 99), are more natural than any of the four versions of *on account of*.

(93) *It was missing three toes* ***on account of*** *the neighbor’s pit bull.*
(94) *I’m late* ***on account of*** *I’m going to night school now*.
(95) *I’m late* ***on account of*** *my going to night school now.*
(96) *I’m late* ***because*** *I’m going to night school now.*
(97) *They didn’t call him that* ***on account of*** *he was tall*.
(98) *They didn’t call him that* ***on account of*** *the fact that he was tall.*
(99) *They didn’t call him that* ***because*** *he was tall.*

but

But is also a preposition when followed by an NP (100) or a conjunction when followed by a dependent clause (101):

(100) *Everyone* ***but*** *Jake came to my birthday party*.
(101) *Everyone came to my birthday party* ***but*** *Jake didn’t*.

The distinction may be hard to draw. For instance, what is the function of *but*, or *except* when a bare infinitive or an *-ing* clause follows (102)?

(102) *He does everything around the house* ***except/but*** *wash/washing the dishes*.

than*, *like*, *as

As parts of comparative constructions *like*, *than*, and *as* also function as prepositions or conjunctions (📖 MSPS II, p. 222). In the comparative, *than* is most likely to be followed by the objective case form of a self-standing pronoun. The subjective case pronoun is more common if an auxiliary verb is co-present. Cf. examples (103a – c):

(103) a. *She is smarter **than** I am*.
b. *She is smarter **than** I*.
c. *She is smarter **than** me*.

Than in (103a) is clearly a conjunction since it introduces a clause. *Than* in (103c) is a preposition since pronominal complements to prepositions should take objective case forms (📖 Section 12.1). What about example 103b then? We could argue that *than I* is a reduced form of (103a), which makes *than I* a reduced clause and *than* a conjunction. Or we could claim, as Quirk et al. (1985: 661) also speculate, that *than* in (103b) might be a hypercorrect version of (103c), not a reduced form of (103a). Since there is no principled way of choosing between these alternatives, the matter must remain unresolved.

The same kind of gradience is manifest in the following examples with *like* and *as* (from Quirk et al. 1985: 661–662):

(104) *She looks rather **like** me.*
(105) ?*She looks rather **like** I.*
(106) ***Like** me, she's a blonde*.
(107) ***Like** I, she is a blonde*.
(108) *She's a teacher, just **like** you and me.*
(109) ?*She is a teacher, just **like** you and I*.
(110) *No one can write **like** her*.
(111) **No one can write **like** she*.
(112) ?*She can't write **like** she used to*.

What is more, Quirk et al. (1985: 662) find that *like* in (104) is adjective-like since it allows degree modification, cf. *She is <u>more</u> **like** me*.

In (106) what looks like prepositional *like* (notice the objective case pronoun) has a quasi-coordinative function; the sentence could be interpreted as 'She's a blond, and so am I'.

In (109), we face the same puzzle as in (103b), but (108) seems more acceptable, and in (108) *like* is best interpreted as a preposition.

In (110) the meaning of *like* corresponds to a manner adverbial ‘in the same manner as (she does)’, ‘as well as (she does)’, but the objective case form *like her* is the norm, cf. (111) (Quirk et al. 1985: 662).

In (112) *like* is clearly a conjunction. It introduces a finite clause with an obligatory subjective case form on the subject pronoun (*like she used to*). Although this use of *like* is criticized (*as* is the preferred form), it is still common, especially in informal AmE.

12.4.2 Prepositions versus adverbs (prepositional adverbs and adverb particles)

To the average student of English, one of the most confusing facts about English word classes are coincidences in meaning and form between prepositions and adverbs, like those in (113–116):

(113) *The cat jumped **over** the wall*.
(114) *I’ll be right **over***.
(115) *She looked **up** the hill*.
(116) *She looked **up** the word*.

In examples (113) and (115), *over* and *up* are prepositions followed by their NP complements (*over the wall*, *up the hill*). However, *over* in (114) is not a preposition, but a “prepositional adverb”. Neither is *up* a preposition in (116), despite appearances. In (116) *up* functions as the so-called “adverb particle” (Quirk et al. 1985: 662), i.e. an element of the phrasal verb *to look up* ‘to check’. Unlike prepositions, which precede their complements, adverb particles can be repositioned after the NP, so that *She looked the word up* is an acceptable paraphrase of (116). Notice that the preposition *over* cannot be repositioned in (113), cf. **The cat jumped the wall* over.

In the remainder of this section, we will briefly revisit prepositional adverbs (both prepositional adverbs and adverb particles were dealt with more fully in Section 8.2.2).

Prepositional adverbs may be formally and semantically identical with corresponding prepositions, but there is a syntactic difference. Prepositional adverbs (example 117) can stand on their own as adjuncts, conjuncts, postmodifiers etc., whereas prepositions will always be followed by their complements (example 118).

(117) *Even though the weather was nice*, *we stayed **in** all day*.
(118) *Even though the weather was nice*, *we stayed **in the house** all day*.

Prepositional adverbs are normally stressed, whereas simple prepositions (especially monosyllabic prepositions) are usually not.

The following list features prepositional adverbs related to simple prepositions. All, with the exception of *without* and *besides*, have spatial and temporal meanings (Quirk et al. 1985: 714). Compare prepositional adverbs and prepositions in (120) and (121):

(119) *aboard*, *about*, *above*, *across*, *after*, *along*, *alongside*, *around*, *before*, *behind*, *below*, *beneath*, *besides*, *between*, *beyond*, *by*, *down*, *in*, *inside*, *near* (*nearer*, *nearest*), *off*, *on*, *opposite*, *outside*, *over*, *past*, *round*, *since*, *through*, *throughout*, *under*, *underneath*, *up*, *within*, *without*

(120) a. *The children are playing* ***outside****.*
b. *The children are playing* ***outside the house****.*

(121) a. *The weather is beautiful and I am stuck* ***inside****.*
b. *The weather is beautiful and I am stuck* ***inside the house****.*

The list in (122) features prepositional adverbs corresponding to complex, two-word prepositions (Quirk et al. 1985: 715). The prepositional adverbs and their matching complex prepositions are illustrated in (123) and (124):

(122) *ahead*, *away*, *back*, *close*, *east*, *eastward*, *instead*, *out*, *overhead*, *together*

(123) a. *She drove* ***away****.*
b. *She drove* ***away from the accident****.*

(124) a. *The team elected me* ***instead****.*
b. *The team elected me* ***instead of you****.*

The prepositional adverbs in (125) match three-word prepositions (cf. 126–127):

(125) *at variance*, *in addition*, *in aid*, *in case*, *in charge*, *in common*, *in comparison*, *in context*, *in exchange*, *in favor*, *in front*, *in lieu*, *in line*, *in need*, *in relation*, *in return*, *on top*

(126) a. *When parents are not at home I am* ***in charge****.*
b. *When parents are not at home I am* ***in charge of everything****.*

(127) a. *You do my homework and I will wash the dishes for a week* ***in return****.*
b. *You do my homework and I will wash the dishes for a week* ***in return for that favor****.*

Not every preposition has a matching prepositional adverb (Quirk et al. 1985: 715). For instance *for* and *against* do not, except in the phrases *vote for* and *vote*

against, and neither does *to*, except in *set to* (*and finish*), *turn to* (*and ask for help*), and a few idioms like *walk to and fro* (not to be confused with the prepositional phrase *walk to and from work*).

Quirk et al. (1985: 715) suggest that there is a gradience in explicitness between prepositional phrases and prepositional adverbs. Being the most explicit, prepositional phrases occupy one end of a scale; from there, we can observe a gradual decline in explicitness all the way down to the least explicit prepositional adverb on the opposite end of the scale (Quirk et al. 1985: 715):

(128) *in* (*great*) *need of your help*
(129) (*greatly*) *in need of your help*
(130) (*greatly*) *in need of it*
(131) (*greatly*) *in its need*
(132) (*greatly*) *in need*

Example (128) features a syntactically free NP. The head noun *need* takes an optional AdjP in premodification. The fact that an AdjP can be inserted between *in* and *need* suggests that the association between the two elements is quite loose, i.e. they do not form a unit.

Example (129) features a complex preposition *in need of*, which takes an NP complement (*your help*) but can only be premodified as an uninterrupted whole by a preposed adverb (*greatly*).

Example (130) reduces the explicitness of the prepositional complement by replacing the NP with a pronoun. The erstwhile pronominal complement is absorbed into the complex preposition as a possessive determiner (131).

Example (132) illustrates the furthest stage of reduction. *In need* has no complement whatsoever, and should be regarded a prepositional adverb. Its interpretation is fully dependent on the (extra-)linguistic context.

Exercises

1. Insert the missing prepositions.

1. They became fond _____ each other _____ school. Their fondness _____ each other grew and many years later they married.
2. He is very proud _____ his son. He often expresses pride _____ the child's achievement.
3. Are you satisfied _____ the way that the business is being run? The shareholders have expressed satisfaction _____ the way it is being run.
4. I am against any form of cruelty _____ animals.
5. There has been a great improvement _____ the behavior of children ____ the school. This has resulted _____ the head teacher's idea _____ involving them _____ decision-making.
6. I had to have vaccination _____ typhoid before entering the country.
7. She stared ____ amazement _____ the sight that met _____ her eyes.
8. There seems to be little likelihood _____ Williamson winning Wimbledon because of her inability to play well ____ grass tennis courts.
9. Even though Dennis didn't act _____ my advice and follow a career ____ medicine, I'm full of admiration _____ his determination to become a vet.
10. I described the machine ____ him and asked _____ him if he could make _____ me one like it.
11. There is no point ____ going _____car if we can't park _____ the theatre.
12. Go back ____ the hotel and wait ____ I call you.
13. I read ____ him the report and he listened____ me ____ amazement.
14. If you're going ___ the Post Office would you post a letter ___ me? Yes, of course, I'm leaving ___ an hour, so you can have it prepared ___ then.
15. Remember to be ___ time ___ the opera because if you are late they won't let you in ____the end ___ an act.

2. Complete each gap with a suitable word to form a complex preposition.

account; addition; common; exception; exchange; expense; favor; odds; regard; respect; sake; virtue

with the _____ of	for the _____ of	out of _____for
in _____ with	in _____ to	in _____of
in _____ for	at _____with	at the _____of
by _____ of	with _____to	on _____ of

3. Add the missing elements of the complex prepositions below.

1. Along _____ several dust balls, a mouse appeared from _____ the sofa.
2. According _____ Article II of the Constitution, and prior _____ the Twenty-second Amendment, the President had no term limits.
3. On behalf _____ the PTA, Mrs. Haroon stood next _____ the podium ____ front of the crowd in place _____ the president and presented me my plaque along _____ a trophy _____ account of all my hard work.
4. Portugal secured a World Cup spot by winning Group B ahead _____ Switzerland.
5. Man, unlike any other thing organic or inorganic in the universe, grows beyond his work, walks up the stairs of his concepts, emerges ahead _____ his accomplishments.

4. Complete each sentence using a complex preposition.

1. Tom is going to be promoted _____his hard work.
2. Everybody went to bed early_____ Jenny, who decided to watch YouTube videos all night.
3. Phillip decided to go out for a walk_____ freezing weather.
4. The teacher spoke to Jack's parents _____ their son's performance at school.
5. I'm very good friends with your new boss – you only got the job_____ me!
6. You should use olive oil _____ butter. It's healthier.
7. If you want to improve the taste of this dish, you should use pepper_____ salt.
8. The supermarket is open every day until 8pm _____Sunday, when it closes at 5pm.
9. It's going to be a sunny day today, _____the weather forecast.
10. I'm travelling this week, but you can call me _____ a problem.

5. Identify the class of the words in bold.

1. These dangers arise **because** of the imperfect fit between the questions of ultimate concern to the law and the information contained in a clinical diagnosis.
2. We feel confused, guilty, and ashamed **because** we may not be able to share this feeling-isolated.
3. **Before** the screening mechanisms were implemented, judges reported nearly unmanageable dockets for child support.

4. Never **before** has anyone discovered a relation between transmission lines and rural property value.
5. One student from the class entered the competition last year and went **on** to be a finalist.
6. Such determinations should be fact-specific inquiries made **on** a case-by-case basis.
7. After completion of the trial, participants then pair the **opposite** concepts with each other.
8. She took a seat, motioning him to the chair **opposite** her.
9. Lizzie lowered herself onto a chair and studied him as he assumed the chair **opposite**.
10. I'm not disappointed with what we accomplished, especially **considering** the age of our team.
11. Courts must be vigilant when **considering** novel contraband-only technologies.

6. Complex prepositions and free phrases. How fixed are the following expressions in terms of the variability criteria from Section 12.3?

as opposed to, with the exception of, by reference to, in addition to, at the hands of, in contrast to, as well as, in comparison with, in exchange of

7. The following examples feature a *wh*-word with and without the deferment of the preposition *for*. Is the deferment in (1) obligatory and is it possible in (2)? Explain.

1. I'm trying to get to Lakeland. **What for**?
2. People kill each other every day. And **for what**? Hmm?

Summary of Chapter 12

In Chapter 12 we defined the preposition, focusing on the structure of prepositional phrases. Throughout the chapter we discussed items that – for various reasons – deviate from the category prototype, and examined (especially in Section 12.4) category overlaps between prepositions, participles, conjunctions, and adverbs.

Chapter 13: Functions of prepositional phrases

Understanding the syntax of prepositions means exploring the syntax of prepositional phrases, viz. units combining a preposition with some form of complement, usually a noun phrase (1), a nominal *wh*-clause (2), or a nominal *-ing* clause (3).

(1) *The books are* ***on the shelf****.*
(2) *I watched carefully* ***from where I stood****.*
(3) *I signaled him* ***by putting my index finger on my nose****.*

In this chapter, we survey the functions of prepositional phrases. Like adjective- and adverb phrases, prepositional phrases can be syntactically independent or they can be constituents of larger syntactic units. For convenience, the functions of prepositional phrases are shown in Table 13.1. Each is then explored in some detail in Sections 13.1 and 13.2.

Table 13.1. Functions of prepositional phrases

	PPs as independent clause constituents		**PPs as elements of larger syntactic units**
13.1.1	Adverbials	13.2.1	Modifiers of head nouns in noun phrases
13.1.2	Prepositional objects	13.2.2	Complements of adjectives in adjective phrases
13.1.3	Subject and object complements	13.2.3	Complements of other prepositions
13.1.4	Subjects		

13.1 Prepositional phrases as independent clause constituents

13.1.1 Prepositional phrases as adverbials

Syntactically independent prepositional phrases function mainly as adverbials. This is illustrated in (4–9) with a variety of adverbial types, like those of position, time, destination, viewpoint, etc.[57] (Quirk et al. 1985: Chapter 8, also Section 10.2.2):

(4) *One of the dealers was lying **[on the ground]**$_A$*
(5) ***[At dawn]**$_A$, she was wide awake.*
(6) *Ben moved **[to Flagstaff]**$_A$ eight years ago because of the snow.*
(7) ***[From my point of view]**$_A$*, your decision seems a bit rash.
(8) ***[In all fairness]**$_A$, she did try to call the police and the ambulance.*
(9) ***[On the other hand]**$_A$, he did not try to help us.*

13.1.2 Prepositional phrases as prepositional objects

The second important function of prepositional phrases is associated with prepositions that are so strongly bound to a preceding verb that the preposition and the verb are perceived as a unit, viz. the prepositional verb.[58] Prepositional verbs include items like *approve of*, *look after*, or *call on*, cf. examples (10a), (11a), and (12a).

(10) a. *Her parents didn't approve **of her boyfriend**.*
b. ***Her boyfriend** was not approved of.*
c. *Her parents did not accept/like **her boyfriend**.*
d. *Her parents did not approve **of her boyfriend** or **(of) her behavior in general**.*
e. *Her parents did not approve at all **of her boyfriend.***
f. *Of whom did her parents not approve? – (Of) her boyfriend.*
g. *Her parents approved less **of her boyfriend** than **(of) her dealer**.*

(11) a. *She looked **after her sick father** all those years.*
b. ***Her sick father** was looked after by her all those years.*
c. *She tended **her sick father** all those years.*
d. *She looked **after her sick father** and **(after) his dog** all those years.*
e. ?*She looked all those years **after her sick father.***

[57] Adverbials come in many subtypes, but the six examples should suffice to illustrate the syntactic independency of prepositional phrases in this function.

[58] On types of multi-word verbs, cf. Quirk et al. (1985: Chapters 16.2–16.17, MSPS I: Part 2)

f. ***After whom*** *did she look all those years? –* ***(After) her sick father****.*
g. *She looked more devotedly* ***after her sick father*** *than* ***(after) his dog****.*

(12) a. *She called* ***on my mother*** *that night.*
b. ***My mother*** *was called on that night.*
c. *She visited* ***my mother*** *that night.*
d. *She called* ***on my mother*** *and* ***on her best friend*** *that night.*
e. *She called unexpectedly* ***on my mother*** *that night.*
f. ***On whom*** *did she call that night? –* ***(On) my mother****.*
g. *She called more often* ***on my mother*** *than* ***(on) her own****.*

These sequences of verb, preposition, and noun phrase can be analyzed two ways. Under one analysis, the verb and the preposition form a unit – the prepositional verb – and the noun phrase is a separate syntactic unit functioning as the direct object. In (10a) for instance, the noun phrase *her boyfriend* would be the direct object of the prepositional verb *approve of*. The second analysis treats the verb as one syntactic entity, and the preposition plus the noun phrase – the prepositional phrase – as another syntactic entity called the prepositional object. In (10a), the prepositional phrase *of her boyfriend* would be the prepositional object of the verb *approve*.

Evidence for the first analysis comes from at least two quarters. One is passivization. Notice that passivization targets only the NP and does not separate the preposition away from its verb (examples 10b, 11b, 12b). The NP object analysis is also supported by substitution. Some prepositional verbs have simple verbs as substitutes; i.e. such substitutions target the verb + preposition unit, and leave the NP behind (10c, 11c, 12c).

However, there is evidence for the second analysis, where the simple verbs *approve*, *look*, or *call* take prepositional phrases as their objects (i.e. prepositional objects). Evidence for the unit status of the prepositional phrase comes from the tests of coordination (10d), (11d), and (12d), separation by an adverb (10e), (11e), and (12e), (responses to) questions (10f), (11f), and (12f), and comparison (10g), (11g), and (12g) (Quirk et al. 1985: 1163). Thus, if one is willing to accept the evidence of coordination, question formation, etc., it could be argued that prepositional phrases also function as prepositional objects.[59]

[59] Whether syntactically independent PPs satisfy enough criteria to be called prepositional objects, rather than, say, adverbials, is a different matter. The tests above were used primarily to show the relative syntactic independence of the unit, whatever its function.

13.1.3 Prepositional phrases as subject complements and object complements

Prepositional phrases after copula verbs usually function as subject complements (13–15). Less frequently, they function as object complements after complex transitive verbs. As object complements they are especially frequent in construction with the verb *to drive*, where the verb is interpreted figuratively and the PP complement denotes mental disorder or illness (16).

(13) *[Gaga]$_S$ [was]$_P$ [**in good spirits**]$_{Cs}$*
(14) *[This dress]$_S$ [seems]$_P$ [**out of fashion**]$_{Cs}$*
(15) *[Despite jokes about his weight]$_A$, [he]$_S$ [appears]$_P$ [**in good shape**]$_{Cs}$*
(16) *[Echo]$_S$ [drove]$_P$ [her]$_{Od}$ [**out of her mind**]$_{Co}$*

13.1.4 Prepositional phrases as subjects

Very rarely, a prepositional phrase is the clause subject:

(17) A: *When is our next meeting*?
B: *[**On Wednesday**]$_S$ will be fine*.

13.2 Prepositional phrases as elements of larger syntactic units

Prepositional phrases also play a variety of syntactically dependent roles as modifiers and complements within larger syntactic units.

13.2.1 Prepositional phrases as modifiers within noun phrases

Prepositional phrases often postmodify NP heads. In fact, prepositional phrases may well be the most common type of postmodifier in NPs, even if, according to LGSWE (p. 635), only a few prepositions account for the bulk of PP postmodification viz. *of*, *in*, *for*, *on*, *to*, *with*. Regardless of which syntactic role the embedding NP plays, the modifying prepositional phrases (bolded in examples 18–20) are internal to the NPs and have no independent status.

(18) *[The MAN **with the cane**]$_{NP}$ is our friend.*
(19) *She had just reached [the BOTTOM **of the slope**]$_{NP}$*
(20) *[The CAR **in front of me**]$_{NP}$ abruptly began to move forward.*

Far less commonly, prepositional phrases premodify head nouns, cf. (21–22):[60]

(21) ***[Up-to-date** INFORMATION]$_{NP}$ is available on the website.*
(22) *Patients need [**round-the-clock** CARE]$_{NP}$*

13.2.2 Prepositional phrases as complements of adjectives in adjective phrases

Many adjectives build complex adjective phrases by taking complements. The most common type of complement is the prepositional phrase (📖 Section 5.1).

(23) *Truth is not [REMOTE **from us**]$_{AdjP}$*
(24) *That old woman was [quite INSISTENT **on this comb**]$_{AdjP}$*

13.2.3 Prepositional phrases as complements of other prepositions

Prepositional phrases may complement other prepositions, as shown below:

(25) *The results of that voting won't be known UNTIL **after the season**.*
(26) *No one has sipped a drop of water SINCE **before the sunrise**.*
(27) *He stole it FROM **under your nose**.*

[60] Incidentally, *up-to-date* and *round-the-clock* could be considered adjectives created by conversion of the prepositional phrases (📖 Chapter 7).

Exercises

1. Identify prepositions and their complements in the following sentences.

1. Maryland accomplished the change to its tax code through the legislative process.
2. The reliability of a corpus is ensured by the calculation of the interannotator agreement that measures the degree of agreement in performing the annotation task among the involved annotators.
3. All answers returned by Watson that score above a predetermined threshold are posted as target nodes in the inference graph.
4. This is far from a hairsplitting distinction-a central commitment of the criminal law is that offenses must be statutorily defined and proven beyond a reasonable doubt before a defendant can be punished for them.
5. A second well-known argument for differential punishment is that it provides marginal incentives for offenders to abandon their criminal design before the criminal act is consummated, whereas equal punishment removes incentives for abandonment of criminal plans.

2. Fill in the blanks with prepositions introducing PPs as adjective complements.

1. Your diet is deficient _____ vitamins.
2. People are utterly dissatisfied _____ the economic situation.
3. It's an illegal process, and the press should be ashamed _____ themselves.
4. I'm totally disgusted _____ your behaviour.
5. Jitty was so pleased _____ her wit she could hardly contain her glee.
6. I was shocked _____ the negative comments, and I was shocked _____ how insulting and ad hominem they were.
7. The young are still very angry _____ the referendum results.
8. Anyone who's that indifferent _____ food is problematic for me.
9. The city is notorious _____ its red light district and strip clubs.
10. The city was crowded _____ an increasing number of refugees.

3. Identify the function of the PPs below as: adverbial, prepositional object, subject complement, object complement, or subject.

1. **On the other hand**, appraisers have to find some rule for compensation.
2. Purchasing home gym equipment seems **out of your budget**.

3. The tour guides announced the most dangerous place to swim **along the southern shore**.
4. **Before ten** is a bad time to call me.
5. The new museum display is **out of this world**.
6. In the course of my pastoral visiting I called **on the dead man's son**.
7. **At midnight**, the sounds of his screaming wife jolted him awake.
8. Maybe this is all some kind of trick, designed to drive me **out of my mind**.
9. My sister cleaned **behind the fridge**.
10. **Behind the shed** needs mowing.

4. Identify the function of the PPs below as: NP postmodifier, NP premodifier, AdjP complement, or complement of other prepositions.

1. The woman **with the red hair** crossed the room and started talking to me.
2. We tested retail kits so we could evaluate the **out-of-box** experience each vendor provides.
3. iPhone 8 is still suitable **for my day-to-day needs**, although there is a new model on the market.
4. Americans are very likely to be deficient **in vitamins and minerals**.
5. The house **on the top of the hill** belongs to my grandparents.
6. They had confirmed Victoria rented the car **with these plates**.
7. He dragged her out from **under the table**.
8. Dust covered the **out-of-date** eyewear displayed on the rotating rack.
9. I decided to wait until **after Mary's wedding** to break up with him.
10. I know who I am and I'm proud **of my heritage**.

Summary of Chapter 13

Chapter 13 was an overview of the syntactic functions of prepositional phrases. The functions fall into two main groups based on whether the prepositional phrase is syntactically independent or not. Syntactically independent prepositional phrases most commonly function as adverbials, and as subject complements, less commonly as object complements, and exceptionally as subjects. When they are syntactically dependent, prepositional phrases act as modifiers of head nouns in NPs, as complements of adjectives within AdjPs, or as complements of other prepositions.

Chapter 14: Prepositional meanings

As mentioned repeatedly in earlier sections of Part IV, prepositions serve to establish a relation between two entities. The idea of a "relation" figures prominently in virtually all definitions of the preposition, mainly in reference to the syntactic structure of the prepositional phrase. But "relation" could also be understood as the highest possible semantic generalization about prepositions. At the most general level of description, prepositions express some kind of relation between two entities. At finer levels of analysis, the relation can be understood as that of location or orientation in space (📖 Section 14.1), time (📖 Section 14.2), or may be of more abstract nature (📖 Section 14.3). Quirk et al. (1985: 673) claim that temporal and spatial meanings are the easiest ones to describe systematically. But they are not only the easiest to describe. Spatial meanings form the very foundation for the development of many abstract senses[61] in prepositions and similar categories in a variety of languages (e.g. Šarić 2008, 2012a,b; Matovac 2013, 2017). According to Tyler & Evans (2003), all English prepositions originally coded spatial relations and over time, they developed additional, non-spatial senses. Examples (1–14) give us a glimpse into the semantic diversity of *over* (Tyler & Evans 2003; Quirk et al. 1985: 685).

(1) Position: *The portrait is hanging* ***over the bed***.
(2) Destination: *She threw a blanket* ***over the child***.
(3) Passage (over-and-above): *The animal climbed* ***over the fence***.
(4) Orientation: *They live* ***over the road***.
(5) Resultative: *Finally*, *we were* ***over the crest of the hill***.
(6) Pervasive (motion): *She poured wine all* ***over me***.
(7) Pervasive (static): *In the late autumn there were leaves all* ***over the ground***.
(8) Accompanying circumstances: *We talked about it* ***over a pitcher of beer***.
(9) Covering: *Put the protective cover* ***over the pool*** *before the temperatures go below zero*.
(10) Temporal: ***Over the years*** *I learned to manage without the stable income*.
(11) Focus of attention: *Don't cry* ***over lost opportunity****, create another one*.

[61] Aside from the big problem of how to define *meaning* in linguistic theory, the reader should also keep in mind that the "meanings" of a single polysemous lexical item are usually referred to as *senses*.

(12) Control*: I always by my children whatever they want. They have too much power* ***over me***.
(13) Preference: *I prefer jogging* ***over running and walking***.
(14) More: *There were* ***over 40 people*** *invited to my 30th birthday*.

One way to account for the semantic relatedness of the senses of any single preposition is to portray those senses as interconnected nodes in complex semantic networks. Such networks typically have one sense that can be regarded as primary, usually because it was historically the earliest one, but also because it is the conceptual hub of the whole lexical item (📖T8). The others may be linked to the primary sense and/or to each other by various metaphorical and/or metonymic links. We will return to prepositional polysemy in Chapter 15. In this chapter, we will largely follow Quirk et al. (1985) in providing a basic overview of English prepositional semantics. We will adopt an onomasiological approach – which means, we will start from the two prominent classes of meaning, i.e. that of space and time, and explore their coding by some of the major English prepositions. The description of other prepositional meanings will be more cursory. A more complete analysis of English prepositional semantics would fill volumes as it would need to systematically address the problem of near-synonymy, polysemy, etc., and subtle semantic variation in prepositional semantics that only an extensive corpus analysis can reveal.

TB 14.1. Onomasiology and semasiology

The term *onomasiology* comes from Greek *ónoma* 'name'. An onomasiological approach to the study of language means starting from the meaning/concept to identify the forms available to code the concept. A *semasiological* approach implies the opposite – starting from a form to identify the meaning(s) associated with the form.

14.1 Prepositions expressing relations in space

In this section, we explore the prepositional expression of spatial relations between entities. It will soon become apparent that entities' relations in physical space manifest in various ways themselves, but also that they can easily be reinterpreted as relations in various other, usually abstract domains.

When expressing relations in space, we also imply that the entities involved have a certain dimensionality (Quirk et al. 1985: 673–674). In other words, an entity to which another entity is related via a preposition may be construed as, e.g. a 0-dimensional point serving for pure orientation in space (15), as a one-dimensional line (16), as a two-dimensional area or surface (17), or as a three-dimensional object like an enclosed container (18):

(15) *My bike is **at the house***. POINT (dimension-type 0)
(16) *Granny's house is **on that road***. LINE (dimension-type 1)
(17) *There is new roof **on the house***. SURFACE (dimension-type 2)
(18) *There are two beds **in the house***. VOLUME (dimension-type 3)

Like Quirk et al. (1985), we will not explore systematically how the dimensionality of reference objects plays into prepositional semantics. Doing so would be unnecessarily cumbersome and would deliver little descriptive benefit. Therefore, we will only mention the dimensionality of objects when relevant. Figure 14.1. (borrowed from Quirk et al. 1985: 674) should give the reader sufficient background to follow the discussion.

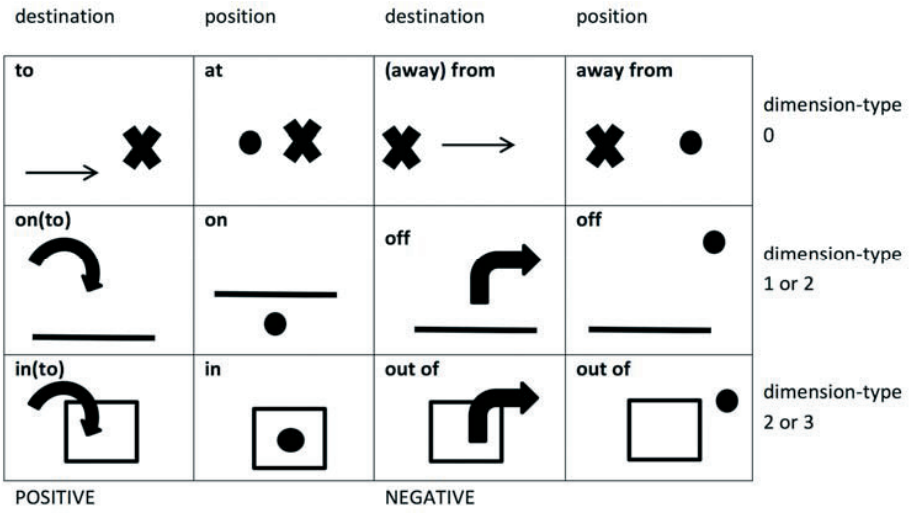


Figure 14.1. Space and dimension (from Quirk et al. 1985: 674)

14.1.1 Position and movement: positive and negative

The following four types of spatial relations for a system of sorts:

(a) positive position (static location): *at*, *on*, *in*
(b) negative position (static location): *away from*, *off*, *out of*
(c) positive destination (movement to a destination): *to*, *onto*, *into*
(d) negative destination (movement from a source): *away from*, *off*, *out of*

The four configurations differ on two properties of spatial scenes: (a) dynamism – whether or not there is movement with respect to a landmark location, and (b) orientation vis-à-vis the landmark. Examples (19–30) illustrate the four types:

Positive position

(19) *The school is located* ***at the end of the street***.
(20) *There was a huge bruise* ***on his arm***.
(21) *This is the most beautiful city* ***in the world***.

Negative position

(22) *The flu has kept me* ***away from school***.
(23) *Judit and Hans had let the phone go on ringing, or Hans would pick up and leave it* ***off the hook***.
(24) *All the children are* ***out of the room***.

Positive destination

(25) *Take the dog* ***to the vet***.
(26) *Heath tossed a sheaf of papers* ***onto the table***.
(27) *She came down the stairs and crept* ***into the room***.

Negative destination

(28) *No one will push me* ***away from this door***.
(29) *The phone is going to ring* ***off the hook***.
(30) *Get them* ***out of the room***.

Examples (31–33) show something quite interesting. Notice that the location coded by the prepositional complement is objectively (almost) the same in each pair of sentences. Still, the prepositions suggest different experiences of that reality. The preposition *on* in example (31a) focuses on the surface of the field, whereas *in* in (31b) invites the conception of the field as an enclosed space. Even more interestingly, the switch between *on* and *in* in examples (32a) and (32b) entails a difference in the perceived height of the grass. When tall enough, the grass may no longer be perceived as a flat surface upon which something or

someone rests, but as a three-dimensional enclosure that hides the located object from view. Something similar is at play in (33a–c).

(31) a. *So when he stepped **on the field**, he played with hunger*.
b. *And the fourth day, the dog is out playing **in the field** with his owner*.

(32) a. *She was sitting **on the grass***.
b. *She was sitting **in the grass***.

(33) a. *He usually sleeps near her **on the couch***.
b. *There was a handgun secreted away **in the couch***.
c. *There you sit, deep **in the couch**, oblivious to the table lamps that have been a part of your decor since before the Beatles broke up*.

Another interesting case is the distribution of *at* and *in* with geographical locations, as discussed by Quirk et al. (1985: 676). Whereas *in* is arguably used for large territories, like continents, countries, provinces, counties, city districts, etc. (***in** Africa*, ***in** Hungary*, ***in** Brooklyn*, etc.), *at* is used in references to towns and villages. We could perhaps argue that the subjective sense of enclosure, fostered by the experience of living in a large place, motivates this use of *in*. However, this generalization appears too strong since some towns take both *at* and *in **at/in** Stratford-upon-Avon*. Also, large cities may occur with *at*, especially when seen as points on a map, cf. example (35) from Quirk et al. (1985: 676):

(34) *She lives **in London***.
(35) *Our plane refueled **at London** on its way from New York to Moscow*.

A different contrast results from replacing *at* by *in* (36a–36b) (ibid.):

(36) a. *He's **at Oxford***. ('a student at Oxford University')
b. *He's **in Oxford***. ('staying, living, etc. in the City of Oxford')

When a location, like a country, is construed as a destination, it tends to be perceived as a vague, point-like location, rather than as an extended area or enclosure. This could explain the use of *to* instead of *into* in (37a):

(37) a. *The first Finnish immigrants came **to/?into Australia** in the 1850's*.
b. ?*The first Finnish immigrants came **into Australia** in the 1850's*.

The difference between *to* and *toward(s)* is associated with the idea of completion. *To* suggests that movement in the direction of a location results in arrival, *toward(s)* does not entail the completion of a journey. Note, incidentally, that the verb *arrive* and the noun *arrival* take prepositions of position (38c):

(38) a. *I drove **to Zagreb***.
b. *I drove **toward Zagreb***.

c. *U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, also arrived* ***in Zagreb***.

Buildings are found with both *at* and *in*. *At* is used when buildings are referred to as institutions with an emphasis on their function (39a); *in* is compatible with the construal of buildings as three-dimensional physical structures (39b):

(39) a. *Jenny works* ***at Harrods***.
b. *Jenny works* ***in Harrods***.

A similar observation can be made for *school* in (40a–c):

(40) a. *Sid is* ***at school***.
b. *Sid is* ***in school***.
c. *Sid is* ***in the school***.

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 677), the meaning 'enrolled' is expressed in BrE by *at school* and in AmE by *in school*. The meaning 'at the place, not at home' is expressed by *at/in school* in BrE and by *at school* in AmE. The meaning 'within the building' is expressed by *in the school* in both BrE and AmE (on the use of articles with locative nouns in locative and quasi-locative senses 🕮 also MSPS II, pp. 190–191).

Out (of) expresses negative destination or movement away from objects. Quirk et al. (1985: 678) observe that in AmE *out* + NP (example 41) is more common than *out of* + NP (example 42), whereas in BrE, it is vice versa. They add that in AmE *out + NP* is restricted to source objects that denote openings or apertures (cf. example 43):

(41) *She looked* ***out the window***.
(42) *She looked* ***out of the window***.
(43) **She drove* ***out the city***.

To test this claim, we compared the frequencies of *out the window* and *out of the window* in COCA and BNC, and confirmed AmE preference for the former, and BrE for the latter. Again, the absolute frequencies matter little due to differences in the size of the two corpora, what matters are the normalized frequencies of occurrence of each per 1 million words (🕮 Table 14.1.)

Table 14.1. Absolute (raw) and normalized (per mil) frequencies of *out the window* and *out of the window* in COCA and BNC

	COCA		**BNC**	
	Raw freq.	**Norm. freq.**	**Raw freq.**	**Norm. freq.**
out the window	7314	12.95	149	1.49
out of the window	582	1.03	738	7.38

14.1.2 Relative position

Prepositions: *over*, *under*, *above*, *in front of*, *behind*, *on top of*, etc.

Besides expressing simple position of objects in space, spatial prepositions also express the relative position of two objects or groups of objects, usually on a vertical or horizontal axis, cf. Figure 14.2.:

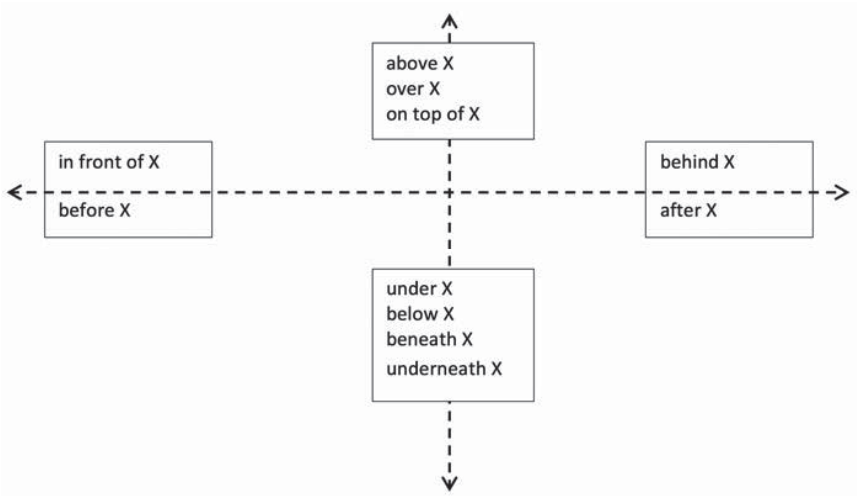


Figure 14.2. Relative position: vertical and horizontal axis (Quirk et al. 1985: 678)

Prepositions at opposite ends of an axis can be construed as antonyms: i.e. *above* vs. *below*; *over* vs. *under*; *in front of* vs. *behind.* The choice of one member of the antonym pair over the other is often only a matter of the perspective from which we choose to depict the situation (44a,b). In other cases, only one perspective is acceptable. Example (45b) sounds odd because it flouts the anthropocentric principle of "thematizing" human over non-human referents (cf. footnote 53). Other examples, like (46a,b), can be explained by other pragmatic or cognitive principles, like figure-ground organization. Small movable objects tend to be perceived as figures that stand out against large immovable entities as cognitive backgrounds, which is why (46a) sounds much more natural than (46b).

(44) a. *The bike is* ***behind the car***.
b. *The car is* ***in front of the bike***.

(45) a. *There was a halo* ***over the saint's head***.
b. *?*?*There was a saint* ***under the halo***.

(46) a. *The bike was* ***in front of the house***.
b. ?*The house was* ***behind the bike***.

Prepositions from the same end of an axis may appear synonymous, e.g. *over* and *above* (47), or *under* and *below*, but they are not. Notice that they cannot be used interchangeably (cf. 48a,b, 49a,b from Quirk et al. (1985: 678)):

(47) a. *The cottage is on the hill* ***above the village***.
b. ?*The cottage is on the hill* ***over the village***.

(48) a. *Keep the blanket* ***over you***.
b. **Keep the blanket* ***above you***.

(49) a. *The doctor and the policeman were leaning* ***over the body*** *when we arrived*.
b. **The doctor and the policeman were leaning* ***above the body*** *when we arrived*.

Above and *below* simply suggest that an object is on a higher/lower level than something else but there is no potential for contact (47). *Over* and *under*, in contrast, indicate a direct vertical relationship or spatial proximity with (potential) contact, cf. example (49a). We borrow figures from Tyler & Evans (2003: 112, 122) to visualize these contrasts:

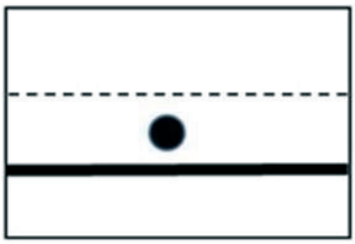


Figure 14.3a. Spatial scene for *over*

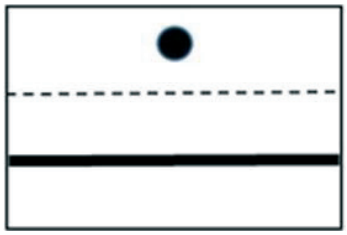


Figure 14.3b. Spatial scene for *above*

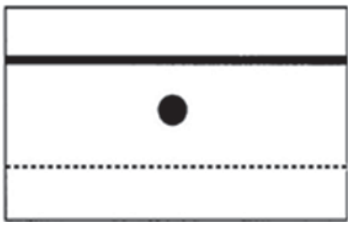


Figure 14.4a. Spatial scene for *under*

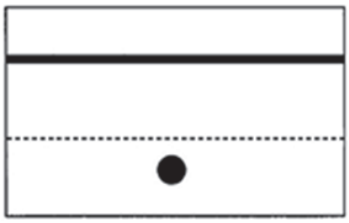


Figure 14.4b. Spatial scene for *below*

Under has alternatives in the less common prepositions *underneath* and *beneath* (the latter is also quite formal). *Underneath*, like *on top of*, also suggests that the two objects are close/in contact (Quirk et al. 1985: 679)

(50) *The police found the stolen money* ***under/underneath the carpet***.

Besides being non-synonymous, the forms in the above sets also vary in frequency, some of them quite dramatically so. When it comes to the distribution of *under*, *below*, *beneath*, and *underneath*, Quirk et al. (1985: 679) already found that *under* was by far the most frequent of the four items in two corpora, viz. the Brown corpus of AmE and the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus of BrE.[62]

Table 14.2. Raw frequencies of *under*, *below*, *beneath* and *underneath* in LOB and Brown printed corpora (from Quirk et al. 1985: 679)

	Total	BrE	AmE
under	1352	645	707
below	295	150	145
beneath	117	60	57
underneath	22	11	11

The raw and normalized frequencies of the same four words in COCA and BNC (Table 14.3.) confirm Quirk et al.'s findings.

Table 14.3. Absolute (raw) and normalized (per mil) frequencies of *under*, *below*, *beneath*, and *underneath* in COCA and BNC

	COCA		BNC	
	Raw freq.	Norm. freq.	Raw freq.	Norm. freq.
under	228 547	404.51	53 327	533.27
below	25 539	45.20	5 382	53.82
beneath	27 404	48.50	4 378	43.78
underneath	5 613	9.93	946	9.46

We add the frequency counts for *above, over,* and *on top of* in Table 14.4.

Table 14.4. Absolute (raw) and normalized (per mil) frequencies of *over*, *above*, and *on top of* in COCA and BNC

	COCA		BNC	
	Raw freq.	Norm. freq.	Raw freq.	Norm. freq.
over	428 418	758.26	77 559	775.59
above	61 117	108.17	13 165	131.65
on top of	16 564	29.32	2 487	24.87

[62] Unfortunately, these counts collapse the occurences of these forms as prepositions, prepositional adverbs, and adverb particles. Since the differences are quite robust, they probably also reflect prepositional uses only. The same applies to the items in Tables 14.3. and 14.4.

According to data in Table 14.4. *over* is by far the most frequent item in the set in both AmE and BrE.

To conclude this section, let us note that many of the prepositions expressing relative position (with the possible exception of *above* and *below*), can also be used dynamically for relative destinations. 'Relative destination' means the eventual position that an object assumes following motion. This meaning is similar to the meaning 'passage' discussed further below in Section 14.1.4.

(51) *She poured soup all* ***over me***.
(52) *I saw him walk out, so we all ducked* ***underneath the window sill***.

14.1.3 Space

A number of other, primarily spatial prepositions, fall into three semantic subsets.

1. *by*, *beside*, *with*, *near* (*to*), *close to*, *opposite (to)*
2. *between*, *among*, *amongst*, *amid*, *amidst*
3. *around*, *round*, *about*

Prepositions in the first set indicate relative proximity between entities, as represented in Figure 14.5.

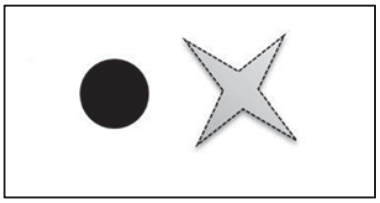


Figure 14.5. Schematic representation of *by*, *beside*, *with*, *near* (*to*), *close*, *opposite*

Despite their general similarity, each preposition in the first set is interesting enough to be studied on its own. For instance, *beside* is normally used with physical locations (53), but its close relative *besides* is usually used in a related abstract sense 'in addition to' (54). The latter also functions as an adverb with a similar meaning, 'in addition' (55):

(53) *There was a strange man* ***beside me*** *at the gallery*.
(54) ***Besides Rihanna*** *there were several famous people at the exhibition*.
(55) *He is very funny*. ***Besides***, *he is incredibly handsome*.

Near (to) (56a) is virtually synonymous with *close to* (56b):

(56) a. *Mark was sitting* ***near*** **(*to*)** ***Annie***
b. *Mark was sitting* ***close to Annie***.

Interestingly, both *near* (*to*) and *close to* inflect for comparison. This, of course, is because they also function as adjectives (*a close look*, *a near future*) and adverbs (*They came close/near*).

The positive/absolute form *near* may be followed by *to*, but not necessarily. The comparative and the superlative forms *nearer* and *nearest* usually require *to*. With *next*, *to* is obligatory.

(57) *Mark was sitting* ***nearer*** **(*to*)/*nearest to*/*next to Annie***.
(58) *Mark was sitting* ***closer to*/*closest to Annie***.

The second set of prepositions expresses the position of an entity in space relative to a set of a least two other entities, as shown in Figure 14.6.

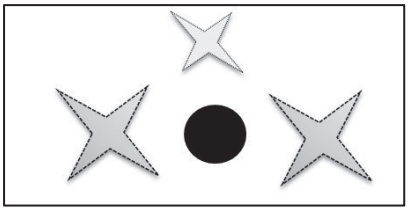


Figure 14.6. Schematic representation of *between*, *among*, *amongst*, *amid*, *amidst*

Amid and *amidst* (59–60) are formal and scarce (📖 Table 14.5.). Like *among*, they imply an indefinite number of orientational landmarks. *Amongst* is also formal and rare.

(59) *Three dozen archers stood* ***amid boxes and barrels*** *throughout the hold*.
(60) *It was a comfort: proof,* ***amidst the chaos and violence****, of his individual, coherent self*.
(61) *War* ***amongst the people*** *has shaded into routinized violence*.

The difference between *between* and *among* can be gleaned from examples (62–66). *Between* situates an object relative to the position of usually two discrete objects, *among* applies to an indefinite number of orientational landmarks.

(62) *We're exploring today the differences* ***between the sexes***.
(63) *She made her way to the bed, slid* ***between the sheets****, and drew the thin blanket to her neck*.
(64) *Selim stood* ***among the ruins****, overcome by something inexpressible*.
(65) *The biggest problem in Washington is the lack of integrity* ***among the members of Congress***.
(66) *Robespierre found some sympathetic hearers, especially* ***among the women in the audience***.

Table 14.5. Absolute (raw) frequencies of *between*, *among*(*st*), and *amid(st)* in COCA

	Absolute frequencies in COCA
between	372 917
among	195 616
amongst	3 478
amid	11 270
amidst	2 064

Prepositions in the third set express a circular arrangement of multiple objects in space or they trace an object's circular motion through space, as schematized in Figures 14.7a and 14.7b, respectively.

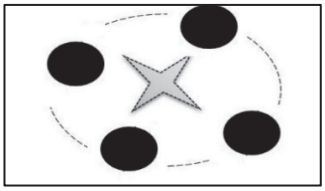


Figure 14.7a. Circular position: *around*

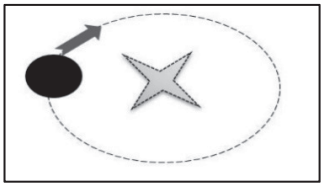


Figure 14.7b. Circular motion: *around*

Around and *round* express both types of scenes: static (67 and 69) and dynamic (68 and 70). As a preposition expressing dynamic circular motion, *(a)round* actually also fits the profile of prepositions in the cluster 'movement along a directional path' (🕮 Section 14.1.5).

(67) *I remember sitting **around the dinner table** during holidays.*
(68) *I walked **around the bar** and grabbed her arm.*
(69) *They stood waiting **round the grave** for the rest to assemble.*
(70) *Robyn came **round the table** and hugged his shoulders.*

About and *around* also allow vague references to unspecified locations of entities within an area. The meaning could be glossed 'in the area of' or 'in various positions in':

(71) *What's the appeal of running **around the country** shooting a TV show?*
(72) *I could roam **about the streets** as I pleased.*
(73) *I saw them every day **about the streets**, people with missing limbs.*

In AmE *about* is less common and more formal than *around*. Also, *round* is less common than *around*. According to our corpus findings (🕮 Table 14.6.), the absolute frequencies of the two forms in BrE are not as far apart as they are in AmE, but the difference is still appreciable.

Table 14.6. Absolute (raw) and normalized (per mil) frequencies of *round* and *around* in AmE and BrE (COCA and BNC)

	COCA		BNC	
	Raw freq.	**Norm. freq.**	**Raw freq.**	**Norm. freq.**
around	205 950	411.90	22 594	225.94
round	4 765	9.53	11 011	11.01

14.1.4 Passage

Prepositions: *over*, *under*, *behind*, *across*, *through*, *past*

With verbs of motion, prepositions may express 'destination' (📖 Section 14.1.2), but also 'passage' or movement of an entity towards and then away from a place.

(74) *On his way over he drove **past the house** where the great tree had stood.*
(75) *Only Mars remains invisible this month. It passes **behind the Sun** from our viewpoint June 14.*
(76) *He went **over the edge near mile marker 15 of the southbound span**.*
(77) *She figures out that a ball that's rolled **under the chair** is still there.*

Notice that sentence (77) leaves doubt as to whether "under the chair" is the eventual destination of the ball (fitting the 'destination' cluster from Section 14.1.2) or the chair is just a landmark object for tracing the ball's passage to a different ultimate destination.

The meaning 'passage' is more strongly and uniquely associated with *across*, *through*, and *past*.

(78) *A bird flew **across the window** and chirped.*
(79) *We passed **through the first of two archways** and into the Great Hall.*

Quirk et al. (1985: 682) suggest a parallel between the 'position' prepositions *on* and *in* and the 'passage' prepositions *across* and *through.* This is illustrated in Figures 14.8. and 14.9. and exemplified with sentences (80a–b) and (81a–b).

(80) a. *The ball is **on the grass**.*
b. *The ball was **in the grass**.*

(81) a. *The ball passed **across the grass**.*
b. *The ball passed **through the grass**.*



Figure 14.8a. *The ball is on the* grass.



Figure 14.8b. *The ball is in the grass*.



Figure 14.9a. *The ball passed across the grass*.



Figure 14.9b. *The ball passed through the grass*.

The images on the left, with *on* and *across*, suggest that the grass is short enough to be perceived as a flat surface (object of dimension-type 2). In this sense, *across* is interchangeable with *over*. Images on the right portray the grass as tall, which is why the expressions with *in* and *through* imply that the ball is located within or moves through a three-dimensional space (dimension-type 3).

14.1.5 Movement along a directional path

Prepositions: *up*, *down*, *along*, *across, (a)round*

With verbs of motion, the prepositions *up*, *down*, *along*, *across*, and *(a)round* express movement along an axis or directional path, cf. Figure 14.10.

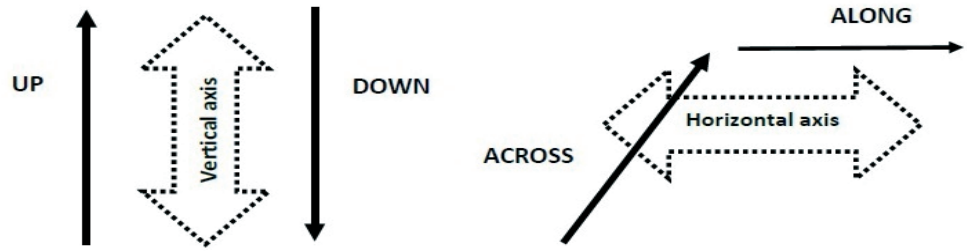


Figure 14.10. *up* and *down* and *across* and *along* (from Quirk et al. 1985: 682)

Up and *down* express opposite directions of vertical movement (82). Strangely enough, when used idiomatically, they can refer to horizontal movement interpretable as ‘along’ (83 and 84).

(82) *In the distance, Del went **up the hill, down the hill**, up, down*.
(83) *Mia went up the stairs and **down the "hall of fame"***.
(84) *He nervously paced **up and down the classroom***.

As Figure 14.10. shows, *along* is used for horizontal movement, where it suggests that movement proceeds from one end towards the other or in a line parallel with the axis (Quirk et al. 1985: 683), see example (85). It contrasts with *across*, which cuts through the horizontal axis and means 'from one side to another' (86).

(85) *We walked **along the shoreline** collecting things*.
(86) *We arrest, we seize vast amounts of drugs that come **across the border***.

Towards indicates real or fictive directional motion, motion 'in the direction of':

(87) *They walked **towards the river***.
(88) *The window of the cottage faces **towards the river***.

14.1.6 Orientation

Prepositions: *beyond*, *over*, *past*, *up*, *across*, etc.

Most prepositions expressing dynamic spatial scenes like 'relative destination' (📖 last paragraph of Section 14.1.2), 'passage' (📖 Section 14.1.4), or 'directional movement' (📖 Section 14.1.5) can also refer to static orientation (Quirk et al. 1985: 683–684). When orientational, prepositions do not just indicate the position of objects in space; they do so taking into account the speaker, i.e. the real or fictive point from which the speaker conceptualizes the situation. Compare (89), where the speaker's position is irrelevant to the location of the Smith residence and (90), where their location is depicted relative to where the speaker stands at the moment of making the assessment:

(89) *The Smiths live **between the school and the shopping mall***.
(90) *The Smiths live **behind this school***.

Beyond 'on the far side of' is primarily orientational. *Over*, *past*, *across*, and *through* can be orientational (in the same sense as *beyond*):

(91) *I live **beyond the reaches of the flash curtain***.
(92) *The guest bathroom is **past the kitchen***.
(93) *Merrilou Brown lives **across the street***.

Orientationally used *up*, *down*, *along*, *across*, and (*a*)*round* refer to an axis:

(94) *Let's go to the store **down the road***.
(95) *The practice field is **up the hill***.
(96) *She lives just **around the corner.***

An additional *from*-phrase stresses the speaker's viewpoint (example 97):

(97) *His house is **down the street from mine**.*

14.1.7 Resultative meaning

Prepositions: *from*, *out of*, *over*, *past*, etc.

Combined with the verb *to be*, some prepositions express static results or 'the state of having reached the destination' (Quirk et al. 1985: 682). These are negative prepositions *from*, *out of*, etc. or prepositions of 'passage' like *across*, *through*, and *past*, often accompanied by *already*, *just*, *at last*, (*not*) *yet*, etc.

(98) *The kids are finally **out of the house**.*
(99) *In her mind she was already **through the revolving doors**.*

The verb *to be* accentuates the static nature of such scenes (98–99), and may well be the only thing that warrants distinguishing between 'results', and 'relative destinations' from Section 14.1.2.[63] Combined with dynamic verbs (cf. 51–52), prepositions expressing relative destinations still strongly evoke motion leading up to the object being in the destination. In contrast, the resultative meaning of prepositions with *to be* makes salient only the ultimate state of locatedness in the place, fully backgrounding the motion that had led the object to its resting location.

14.1.8 Pervasive meaning

Prepositions: *over*, *through*, *throughout*, *with*, etc.

The meaning dubbed 'pervasive' suggests that something is, or moves, all over a place. It is found with *over* (100), *through* (101), some axis-type of prepositions like *across, along, down*, *around* (102). The meaning is especially prominent with *over* and *through* when prefaced with *all,* but this is not the usual meaning of the two prepositions. It is, however, central to *throughout* (104).

(100) *Years of diving **all over the globe** had not prepared me for what I saw*.
(101) *I was rambling, just rambling **all through the City***.
(102) *There is a bug that's been going **around the office***.
(103) *You see them **all along the coast**, jammed into once perfect sand*.
(104) *They propagate disinformation **throughout the world**.*

[63] We departed somewhat from Quirk et al. who present 'relative destination' as a separate category (1985: 681). We classed it together with 'relative position' (📖Section 14.1.2).

The pervasive meaning is also found in a special construction featuring the preposition *with*, the so-called "setting-subject" construction (Langacker 1991: 347–348). In setting-subject constructions (105–106), the subject of the clause represents the locative setting, not a participant in the situation. For instance, sentence (105) with the subject *The Pocomoke River*, actually means that there is a lot of wildlife *in the Pocomoke River*. Similarly, sentence (106) means that there was a lot of police and many frightened students *on the campus*. Similar examples could be adduced for the verbs *loaded with*, *buzzing with*, *dotted with*, etc.

(105) *The Pocomoke River is teeming* ***with wildlife***.
(106) *By now, the campus was swarming* ***with*** *police and frightened students*.

14.1.9 Abstract uses of place prepositions

A number of place prepositions have developed additional, abstract senses by various metaphorical routes. Notably, many place prepositions have come to denote time via the TIME IS SPACE metaphor (📖 TB 14.2., Section 14.2). This is exemplified with the spatial and temporal senses of *between* in (107) and (108) and is discussed some more in Section 14.2.

(107) *There was a pony in the pasture* ***between the house and the trailer***.
(108) *How much are we going to spend* ***between now and Christmas***?

Quirk et al. (1985: 685) argue for a stage-wise increase in metaphoricity of expressions with locative *in*. We do not necessarily share the authors' interpretations, but the general idea of metaphorical extension from purely locative to abstract senses in the preposition is beyond dispute:

(109) a. *I watched some colorful fish* ***in shallow water*** *for hours*. (literal)
b. ***In deep water*** *particle movement is almost completely orbital.* (literal)
c. *I think I'm* ***in deep water*** *with this course!* (metaphorical: 'in trouble')
d. *If a firm is* ***in difficulties*** *a merger may not help its partners.* (the noun is not metaphorical, but the preposition is)
e. *I'm going to be* ***in a tough spot*** *if this loan isn't approved.* ('in a difficult situation'; Quirk et al. (1985) argue that *in* is metaphorical like in d., but that another locative metaphor recasts the noun *spot* from an 0-dimension object the requisite 3-dimension object)

Other examples of metaphorical extensions include (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 686):

position → state, condition

to be in/out of danger, *to be in/out of office*, *to keep out of trouble*, *to be out of a job, to be in the wrong, to be in love, to be in a daze, out of character*, *to be in (a bit of) a jam*, *in confidence*

(110) *Her family was **in danger**.*
(111) *I can't tell you Clara's secret. I'm **in her confidence**.*
(112) *I'm **in a bit of a jam**—I accidentally made plans with two different men*!

destination → abstract condition or circumstances

into/out of debt, into/out of trouble, into/out of mess, *into the weeds*, *into shape*

(113) *It took many years to get **into this mess**.*
(114) *I'd like to come out tonight, but I'm deep **into the weeds** with my thesis*.

enclosure → abstract inclusion or exclusion

in a group, *out of the race*, *in the race*, *in play*, *in family*, *in a story*

(115) *The Democrat Party ran him **out of the party**.*
(116) *There aren't any princesses **in my story**, only dragons and elves*.

position → membership, participation

on the project, in the wrestling club, *in dance troop*

(117) *I am new **on the project** and am still learning the ropes*.
(118) *I have been winning medals **in this club** for five years*.

vertical direction → abstract level

above the law, *above my paycheck*, *above reproach*; *below the waist*; *beneath contempt*

(119) *His spot's narrative is **beneath contempt**.*
(120) *Nobody is **above the law**.*

vertical direction → subjection, subordination; process

under control, *under arrest*, *under spell*, *under oath*

(121) *He can't seem to keep his ego in check and keep the lies **under control**.*
(122) *They're both **under arrest**.*
(123) *I have only 4 people working **under me**.*

movement on vertical axis → movement on a list or scale

up the social ladder, *up a corporate ladder; up the charts*, *off the charts*

(124) *He must work his way* ***up the social ladder***.
(125) *You can get a record* ***up the charts*** *real high by giving it a running start*.

starting point/destination → originator/recipient

from – to

(126) *Property was passed not* ***from father to son*** *but* ***from mother to daughter***.
(127) *Knowledge is not directly transmitted* ***from the teacher to the student***.

resultative meaning; physical → abstract

beyond recovery, *beyond recognition; past recovery; over*

(128) *At this point and without the financial aid*, *we are* ***past hope***.
(129) *I am afraid his liver is* ***beyond recovery***.
(130) *The 'cause of death' figures are also changing* ***beyond all recognition***.

relative position → abstract relation between participants

between; among; amongst

(131) *The board argued* ***among themselves***.
(132) *The relationship* ***between Mark and Jackie*** *was an explosive one*.

passage → perseverance, endurance

through

(133) *I hope we are* ***through the worst***.
(134) *In early March they were put* ***through a hard training programme***.

14.1.10 Verbs incorporating prepositional meanings

Some verbs overlap in meaning with their associated prepositions. Since the meaning expressed in the preposition is already incorporated in the meaning of the verb, the preposition is redundant and thus dispensable (Quirk et al. 1985: 685). Dropping the preposition results in a change of the verb's valency. The verb becomes transitive and the former prepositional phrase becomes a locative NP object:

(135) *Always look to your right and left when you cross* (***over***) ***a street***.

(136) *She had to flee* (***from***) ***the country*** *because of the threats*.

The preposition is more frequently dropped than not, at least according to our corpus findings. Table 14.7. shows that, at least in the expressions studied, the prepositionless variant is preferable in both corpora.

Table 14.7. Absolute (raw) and normalized (per mil) frequencies of prepositional complements and locative NPs with select verbs in COCA and BNC

	COCA		BNC	
	Raw freq.	**Norm. freq.**	**Raw freq.**	**Norm. freq.**
turn the corner	225	0.40	21	0.21
turn round the corner	0	0	0	0
climb a/the mountain	99	0.18	13	0.13
climb up a/the mountain	9	0.02	0	0
flee the county	126	0.22	19	0.19
flee from the country	2	0.00	0	0
cross a/the street	483	0.86	29	0.29
cross over a/the street	0	0	0	0

Other verbs incorporating prepositional meaning include: *roam* (*about/around*) *the city*, *pass* (*by*) *a house*, *jump/leap* (*over*) *a fence*, *attain* (*to*) *a position*, *pierce* (*through*) *the defenses*, etc.

The changes involved in going prepositionless are not only syntactic. There is an attendant change in meaning between the two constructions. The construction with the preposition focuses on the process; the construction without the preposition puts emphasis on the effect or result of the process (Quirk et al. 1985: 685).

(137) *We should swim [**across the lake**]*$_{A}$*. It's not that big*.
(138) *Gertrude Erdele was the first woman to swim [**the Channel**]*$_{Od}$.

14.2 Prepositions expressing relations in time

Time is the second most important category of prepositional semantics. Prepositional phrases expressing time often function as adverbials (139–140). As adverbials, they establish the temporal setting for the situation, i.e. when, how long, how often, etc. a situation (has) occurred/occurs. Alternatively, they function as syntactically dependent postmodifiers (141) or complements (142):

(139) *She arrived [**on Tuesday**]$_A$*
(140) *That was [**on Saturday**]$_A$*

(141) *[The PARTY **on Friday**]$_{NP}$ was really interesting.*
(142) *This experience is like a voice [FROM **out of the past**]$_{PP}$*

The majority of time prepositions arise by semantic extension of existing spatial prepositions motivated by the conceptual metaphor TIME IS SPACE (📖 TB 14.2.). Virtually any position, extension, or movement in space is metaphorically construable as a position, extension, or movement in time. For this reason, it is "almost impossible to talk about time without using words like *approach*, *arrive*, *come*, *go*, *pass* and so on" (Evans & Green 2006: 82). To these we may add Japanese *Toki ga nagareru* 'time flows', Wolof *Tabaski mungiy ñów* 'Tabaski (a major holiday) is coming'; Spanish *La Noche Buena viene muy pronto* 'Christmas Eve is coming very soon' (all cited in Evans & Green 2006: 83), or Croatian *(Božić) dolazi*, *vrijeme prolazi*, *budućnost je pred nama*, etc. Little wonder then, that it is almost impossible to not use prepositions of space to talk about relations in time.

14.2.1 Time position

Prepositions: *at*, *on*, *in*, *by*

The prepositions *at*, *on*, and in, besides expressing positive position in space (📖 Section 14.1.1), also refer to "position" in time. However, position in time may be perceived as point-like or more extended, which causes some of the many usage quirks that EFL learners need to be aware of.

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 688), *at* is generally used for points in time, especially when telling clock-time (143). As such, *at* can reframe an objectively extended period of time as a time-point (144):

(143) *See you **at 10 o'clock***.
(144) *She is not cheery **at breakfast time***.

But idiomatically, *at* can express extended time periods as well, especially periods around holidays (Quirk et al. 1985: 688). Example (145) is interpreted as 'any time during the Christmas season'. Compare this to example (146), which is more "point-like", i.e. the subject proposes meeting exactly on Christmas (25th of December).

(145) *Let's do something together* ***at Christmas***.
(146) *Let's meet* ***on Christmas***.

On is used with nouns denoting days perceived as periods of time, as in (147) and (148), but is also found in fixed phrases involving point-like time references, like *on the hour* 'hourly, i.e. at 12 o'clock, at 1 o'clock, at 2 o'clock, etc.' in (149):

(147) *I'm seeing the dentist* ***on Monday***.
(148) *I travel to Spain* ***on New Year's Day***.
(149)*The train leaves* ***on the hour***.

Quirk et al. (1985: 688) also observe that *on* is also found with nouns denoting days when their reference is narrowed down through modification/complementation to only a part of the day (150–151):

(150) *They are arriving* ***on Sunday morning***.
(151) *I woke up exhilarated* ***on the morning of my birthday***.

Still, they add, *in* – and not *on* – is used with phrases like *early morning* or *late evening* (152). This is because periods both longer and shorter than a day are generally referred to with the preposition *in* (less commonly *during*), cf. (153–155)

(152) *She only stopped sobbing* ***in the late afternoon***.
(153) *She will travel round the Europe* ***in August***.
(154) *She got pretty annoying* ***in the afternoon***.
(155) *I am not going to the seaside* ***during summer***.

Periods of night take the preposition *in* (156). This is not without exception (Quirk et al. 1985: 688) since *night* is also found with *at* (157):

(156) *I woke up several times* ***in the night***.
(157) ***At night*** *I never sleep with my windows open*. ('during the night')

Finally, the preposition *by* is generally compatible with extended time periods. It is part of the idiom *by day* and *by night* used in reference to activities like travel. Its alternatives are *during the day* and *during the night*, respectively.

(158) *They preferred travelling* ***by night/during the night*** *because of the baby*.

TB 14.2. TIME IS SPACE

The conceptual metaphor TIME IS SPACE has attracted an impressive amount of attention from cognitive linguists. Evans & Green (2006: 75) argue that time, unlike space, is not a concrete or physical sensory experience. Yet, neuro-cognitive evidence suggests that our **experience** of time is real. We are subjectively aware of its passing. One way to communicate this experience in to linguistically code time in terms of space. In their seminal work, Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 41–44) discuss two space metaphors used by English speakers when conceptualizing and talking about time, viz. TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT (examples 1–2) and TIME IS STATIONARY AND WE MOVE THROUGH IT (3–4):

(1) *The deadline* ***has passed****.*
(2) *I look forward to the* ***arrival*** *of Christmas*.
(3) *As we* ***go further into*** *the 1980s*, …
(4) *We're* ***approaching*** *the end of the year*.

These are only two of three cognitive models of time discussed in Evans & Green (2006: Ch. 3.2.2). Both are based on the notion of the ego. The model exemplified in (1–2) involves the ego as a static experiencer; his location on the time line represents the experience of now and temporal situations are conceptualized as moving objects. Time is understood as "passing" since these objects move towards the ego from the future and beyond the ego into the past. In the model exemplified in (3–4) time is a static landscape through which the ego moves towards temporal events or miletstones conceptualized as locations. In addition to the two ego-based models, there is a time-based model. This model makes no reference to the ego; it involves understanding one temporal event relative to another temporal event, which may occur earlier or later (5–6).

(5) *Monday* ***precedes*** *Tuesday*.
(6) *Tuesday* ***follows*** *Monday*.

14.2.2 Measurement into the future

Preposition: *in*

Occasionally we may want to express how long ago in the past something happened or how far away in the future something will happen. The adverb *ago* is used for measurement into the past from the present as a reference point (159). Prepositions are not normally used for this purpose. However, measuring into the future is accomplished prepositionally, with *in* (160):

(159) *I can't recall what I was thinking just a moment* ***ago.***
(160) *Well, what happens* ***in a year from now*** *-- what happens* ***in five years from now****?*

"Now" is not the only possible point of reference; one can also measure into the future from a point of time in the past. According to Quirk et al. (1985: 689), this is expressed as in (161), but not by more complex constructions shown in (162a–163a – all three examples borrowed from Quirk et al. ibid.). Those constructions are possible, however, when measuring into the future from now (162b–163b):

(161) *He finished the job **in three months***. ('in the space of three months from when he started it')
(162) a. ?*He finished the job **(in) three months from then***.
b. *He'll finish the job **(in) three months from now***.
(163) a. **He finished the job **in three months' time***.
b. *He'll finish the job **in three months' time***.

14.2.3 Duration

Prepositions: *for*, *during*, *over*, (*all*) *through*, *throughout*

Prepositional phrases expressing duration differ from similar prepositional expressions of time in that they answer the question *(For) how long?* rather than *When*? This is exactly how sentence (164) differs from a remarkably similar sentence featuring a different preposition, viz. *in* (165). Prepositional phrases of duration typically open with *for* (note also the idiomatic phrases such as *forever*, *for good*, *for years*), but other prepositions are possible too, as will become evident shortly.

(164) *I'll be at the seaside **for the summer***. ('I'll be there all through the summer')
(165) *I'll be at the seaside **in the summer***. ('I'll go some time during the summer')

Sentence (164) indicates that the subject will enjoy a longer time at the seaside, i.e. their stay at the seaside will last as long as the summer itself. The sentence could felicitously be used as an answer to the question *How long will you be/stay at the seaside?* Sentence (165), with *in the summer*, suggests that the subject will got to the seaside at some point in the summer and will stay there for some of time included in the summertime range, but not for the whole duration of the summer. The preposition *during* would invite the same interpretation (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 689).

During expresses duration only if it is accompanied by durative markers like *whole* (166). Absent such markers, *during* is easily seen as expressing a (point-like or extended) position in time within the duration of a situation (167) (ibid.):

(166) *He managed to stay awake* ***during the whole meeting***.
(167) *She spoke* ***during the meeting***. ('she said something once or twice in the meeting')

The durative interpretation of pervasive spatial prepositions *over*, (*all*) *through*, and *throughout* is another compelling case for the TIME IS SPACE metaphor. It takes a moment's reflection to see how occupying many micro-locations within an extended place (168) can come to be metaphorically construed as duration in time (169):

(168) *'T was the night before Christmas, when* ***all through the house****, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse*.
(169) *Sleep, my child and peace attend thee* ***all through the night.***

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 689), *over* indicates duration with noun phrases denoting holidays and similar special occasions, and is compatible with shorter periods of time than *through*(*out*). This association of durative *over* with NPs denoting times of special significance extends even to days of the weekend (special days of rest in many cultures). Thus, we can say that something happened *over Saturday/Sunday*, but it would be downright odd to say that something occurred or was done *over Wednesday*.

Prepositions: *from … to*, *until*, *up to*

The paired prepositions *from ... to* (or *till*) also express duration. Their temporal interpretation ultimately also derives from the spatial meaning of each preposition. The starting point of the period corresponds to the metaphorical origin of motion; the terminal point of the period corresponds to the end-point of motion.

(170) *With these ideas, thinking is moved* ***from the present to the future***.
(171) *They worked* ***from sunrise to sunset***.

With the *from … to/till* pair, the span may or may not include the end-point itself. In (171) it is unclear whether the work lasted up to the sunset, or up to and including the sunset. We find the same ambiguity in (172). However, the AmE duration prepositions *from ... through* are not ambiguous, they include the end-point within the scope of duration, cf. example (173) (Quirk et al. 1985: 690):

(172) *This species is a long bloomer if given water, lasting* ***from spring to fall***. (fall may but need not be included)
(173) *Flowers will bloom* ***from spring through fall***. (fall is included)

Up to, in turn, usually means that the end-point is excluded:

(174) *This stage of the project lasted* ***from March up to September***. (September is not included)

Reference to the start of the period may be omitted, but usually not if the end point is expressed with the preposition *to*:

(175) *I stayed in Paris* ***until/till/up to/ through/*to November***.

However, *to* can sometimes be used interchangeably with *till* even in the absence of *from*:

(176) *There are only a few weeks* ***to/till the end of the semester***.
(177) *The revision test can be postponed* ***to/till next Thursday***.
(178) *I only have a few years* ***to/till retirement***.

Until and *till* may be preceded by *up* in informal styles (179).[64,65] As Quirk et al. aptly observe (1985: 690–691), they occur with verbs expressing duration (180) and are found with momentary verbs only exceptionally, e.g. when the idea of duration is imposed by negation (182), or the progressive verb form (183):

(179) *They were okay, right up* ***until the end***.
(180) *I stopped attending classes, and I slept* ***till noon***.
(181) **My family came to visit* ***till last spring***.
(182) *My family didn't come to visit* ***till last spring***.
(183) *In the 1950s and '60s they helped create a raunchy and ruckus-style of play that could keep a juke joint jumping* ***till dawn***.

In (182) the idea of duration comes from negation, which shifts focus away from the family's arrival to the period of **waiting** for the visit; in (183) duration is imposed by zooming out from a single momentary act and perceiving the series of repeated momentary acts as a single durative event.

In contrast to *until* and *till*, *by* denotes an end point and is used only with momentary verbs.

(184) *Africa's time to take the center of the world stage had arrived* ***by mid-century***.
(185) **He worked there* ***by Easter***.

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[64] *Till* and *until* also function as conjunctions introducing dependent time clauses, e.g. in *Wait here* ***until/till I return***.

[65] In legal English, *pending* is often used in the same sense as *until*, cf. *Agency proposing debarment did not issue a suspension* ***pending resolution of the debarment matter***.

Till and *until* are delightfully confusing. In positive sentences both express a terminal point in time and mean 'up to' (186); in negative sentences, they express the starting point and mean 'before' (187):

(186) *I just sat there on the stairs and* ***cried until dawn***. ('she stopped crying when dawn came')
(187) *She* ***did not cry until that evening****, when her lover came over with a pizza*. ('she started crying that evening')

TB 14.3. *Till* with durative and momentary verbs

Using limited search syntax, we extracted from COCA all verbs that fit the formula [v*] *till* [at*] [nn*] (verb followed by *till* then an article then a noun). The idea was to verify *till*'s claimed preference for durative verbs. As expected, most verbs among the first 100 frequency-ordered results were durative and included *wait*, *stay*, *fight*, *continue*, *dance*, *last*, *laugh*, *think*, *watch*, *extend*, *chew*. Occasional non-durative verbs were made to fit, usually by negation:

(1) *Jimmy bought Lopo considerable lamb and port at the only inn on Terzoza, pleased to learn* ***no more vessels would arrive till spring***.
(2) *Heel-first walking* ***doesn't begin till age 2****, and an adult type gait appears only around 8 years of age*.
(3) *It's just a two-month sprint, he would say, waving them off, the real campaign* ***wouldn't begin till Labor Day***.

Prepositions: *between … and*

The correlated prepositions *between ... and* also express duration of a period flanked by reference to the starting and the terminal point (188). However, unlike *from ... to*, which usually expresses the whole time span bounded by the two points in time, *between… and* do not necessarily imply the entire interval. Rather, they suggest that a situation will occur some time within the interval, possibly also at the starting point or at the terminal point (Quirk et al. 1985: 692). For instance, the lunch in (188) may be ready at three o'clock, but also at two, or four. The visit in (189) will happen at any hour between the time for breakfast and lunch.

(188) *The lunch will probably be ready sometime* ***between two and four o'clock***.
(189) *I'll drop by* ***between breakfast and lunch*** *to bring you all the materials*.

Between, especially when used without the correlated *and*, requires that the intervals involve similar objects or events that occur repeatedly, ibid.:

(190) *We have experimental work* ***between practical classes***.
(191) *I'm a restless person, and two months is way too long* ***between races***.

Prepositions: *before*, *after*, *since*

The prepositions *before*, *after*, and *since* express one of the two boundaries of an implied period of time. *Since* and *after* open up extended time periods by indicating their starting points, *before* closes a time period by indicating the point of its termination.[66]

Both *since* and *for* express duration. But whereas *since* makes salient the beginning of the period, *for* underscores the duration itself.

(192) a. *I have lived there* ***for eleven years***.
b. *I have lived there* ***since 2007***.

Before and *after* can be considered opposites, as shown in (193) and (194):

(193) *The dinner is* ***after the concert***.
(194) *The concert is* ***before the dinner***.

14.2.4 Absence of preposition in expressions of time

It is not rare for the preposition of time to be absent from a time adverbial. In that case, the adverbial changes form, from a prepositional phrase to a noun phrase. There are three types of prepositionless time adverbials, according to Quirk et al. (1985: 692–695): adverbials expressing points in time, frequency, and duration.

Point-in-time adverbials

Prepositions may be absent from adverbials of time expressing the "when" of a situation. Prepositions are even obligatorily absent whenever they would precede the deictic words *last*, *next*, *this*, *that* or the indefinite determiner *some* (on *some* 🕮 MSPS II, Section 8.6.3):[67]

(195) a. *We played football* ***last Friday***.
b. **We played football* ***on last Friday***.

(196) a. *I'm seeing my dentist* ***next Wednesday***.
b. * *I'm seeing my dentist* ***on next Wednesday***.

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[66] All three also function as conjunctions, e.g. *I have not heard from her* ***since I left Mars***; ***After she came***, *she lay there, still moaning; I always enjoy that pplause* ***before I say anything***.

[67] Quirk et al. (1985: 692) include here the "quantitative word" *every*; however, to our mind, *every* belongs among prepositionless adverbials of frequency in the following subsection.

(197) a. ***Some day*** *you will regret not helping me*.
b. *****On some day*** *you will regret not helping me*.

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 692), this also extends to nouns like *today* ('this day'), *yesterday* ('last day'), and *tomorrow* ('next day'), which, as their glosses suggest, incorporate the deictic meanings 'last', 'next', or 'this' (🕮 TB 14.4.):

(198) a. *I'll call him* ***today/tomorrow***.
b. **I'll call him* ***on today/on tomorrow***.

Not all prepositions are omissible, only *at*, *on*, *in* (195–199). Omitting *before* and *since* may change the meaning (200) or induce ungrammaticality (201):

(199) a. *Some even came by to watch practice* ***Wednesday***.
b. *Some even came by to watch practice* ***on Wednesday***.

(200) a. *I'll see you* ***before tomorrow***.
b. *I'll see you* ***tomorrow***.

(201) a. *I haven't spoken to him* ***since yesterday***.
b. **I haven't spoken to him* ***yesterday***. (*I didn't speak to him yesterday*)

If it is possible, omission of the preposition is more common in informal English. The preposition is optional:

a. in deictic phrases indicating times removed from the present by another slice of time, as in (202) or (203):

(202) *I saw Mark* ***(on) the day before yesterday***.
(203) *I saw Mark* ***(in) the January before last***.

b. when referring to time "located" before or after a given time in the past (204) or in the future (205):

(204) *She called him and asked him to come* ***on the following weekend***.
(205) *He will be here* ***(on) the next day***.

Nondeictic phrases containing *the* and postmodification (underlined in 206) may drop the preposition, especially in AmE. Note that the preposition is only optional if there is posmodification (cf. 207a and 207b):

(206) *She came* ***(on) the day <u>of the funeral</u>*** *to take me back to San Francisco.*

(207) a. *It started* ***the spring <u>of sophomore year</u>***.
b. *They started* ***in the spring***.

TB 14.4. Deixis

The term *deixis* is used in reference to any forms in an utterance whose interpretation is heavily dependent on the extralinguistic context, such as the perspective from which the spatiotemporal setting of the situation is reported. Deictic forms belong to various word classes and include, e.g. personal pronouns *I*, *you*; adverbs *here*, *there*, *now*, *then*; demonstratives like *this* or *that*. Clearly all these forms are context-dependent and often "speaker-centered". What is *here* for the speaker may be *there* for the addressee. Deixis has received considerable attention in linguistics since the "meaning" of deictic forms is in large measure only pragmatic, rather than being a part of semantic structure of deictic words (Green 2006: 415).

TB 14.5. When is *next Saturday*?

If – on any day from Monday to Friday – we use the phrase *next Saturday* to refer to a day that is yet to come, the phrase is ambiguous. Uttered on, e.g. Friday, the phrase may be understood as 'Saturday of the present week', i.e. tomorrow. Other people may interpret the same phrase as 'Saturday of the week to follow', i.e. the Saturday that is 8 days away. In contrast, *this Saturday* will always mean 'Saturday in the present week'. The same goes for months of the year (Quirk et al. 1985: 693).

Frequency adverbials

Frequency adverbials preceded by the indefinite determiner *every* never include a preposition (208):

(208) *He always sent me three or four letters* ***every week***.

The preposition is optional with frequency adverbials that include names of days of the week, but this is characteristic of informal styles, especially informal AmE. Nouns denoting weekdays may be in the singular or plural form, regardless of whether there is a preposition or not (Quirk et al. 1985: 694).

(209) a. ***On Monday(s)*** *they hold the village meeting in the hall*.
b. ***Monday(s)*** *they hold the village meeting in the hall*.
c. ****On every Monday*** *they hold the village meeting in the hall*.

Other frequency constructions always require the preposition (ibid):

***with* + adj. + frequency**

(210) *Murders still take place* ***with alarming frequency***.

***on* + adj. + occasions**

(211) *Being a dog has its advantages and I have proven that* ***on countless occasions***.

***at* + adj. + intervals**

(212) *Scientists expose sea snails to the signal* ***at regular intervals*** *to sensitize the animals*.

***between* + each + sg. noun**

(213) *I spend the week* ***between each class*** *preparing the evening's material*.

***at* + pl. noun**

(214) *They have gotten used to the sirens blaring* ***at all hours of the night***.

from time to time

(215) *As a master mixologist, I felt the need to experiment* ***from time to time*** *on my morning elixir*.

***at a/the rate of* + noun**

(216) *When Apple opened up its App Store, the games started arriving* ***at the rate of dozens a day***.

Duration adverbials

Many (paired) prepositions express duration (📖 Section 14.2.3), but only *for* is dispensable. As argued by Quirk et al. (1985: 694), it is often absent from duration adverbials when the predicator is a stative verb (217).

(217) *Keane remained silent* ***(for) several seconds more***.
(218) *We saved this* ***(for) the whole time you were gone***.

If phrases begin with *all* (219), the preposition *for* is obligatorily absent. Curiously, with the nearly synonymous *whole*, *for* is optional.

(219) a. *She lived with us* ***all winter***.
b. **She lived with us* ***for all winter***.
c. *She lived with us* ***(for) the whole winter***.

The preposition is obligatory when the predicator is a dynamic verb and the action does not go on uninterrupted for the whole duration indicated in the adverbial.

(220) a. *She played volleyball professionally* ***for ten years***.
b. *? *She played volleyball professionally* ***ten years***.

When duration adverbials occur at the beginning of the clause, the preposition is obligatory. Similarly, the preposition is non-optional in fixed *for*-phrases (for days, for years, etc.)

(221) a. *This pre-Inca myth has remained unchanged **(for) hundreds of years**.*
b. ***For hundreds of years**, this pre-Inca myth has remained unchanged*.

This latter requirement may be relaxed if the clause-initial duration adverbial featuring *for* is part of a coordinated structure, especially in *years and years* (223):

(222) ***For years**, locals have shown off their summer clothes on the Boardwalk*.
(223) ***Years and years**, her father's voice echoed in her head*.

14.3 Ranges of prepositional meaning

Sections 14.2 and 14.3 were dedicated to space and time – the two main categories of prepositional semantics. But these do not exhaust the full meaning potential of English prepositions. There are other notable meanings like cause, purpose, means, agent, instrument, accompaniment, concession, respect, etc. Sections 14.4 and 14.5 will show that prepositional semantics is no less complex than the semantics of adverbs (🕮 Chapter 11). Prepositions express myriad meanings, and some of these meanings appear more similar to each other than to others. Quirk et al.'s (1985: 695–703) response to these similarities is to group similar meanings under a common heading, called a meaning range or spectrum. Meanings are argued to fall within a range if they are associated with particular prepositions and *wh*-words, for instance the preposition *for* and interrogative adverbs *why* and *how* in the cause/purpose range.

It should be kept in mind, though, that meanings within a range are not fully discrete (Quirk et al. 1985: 695). In the coming sections it will become obvious how supremely difficult it may be to tell meanings apart, for instance cause and reason, stimulus and cause, support and intended recipient, etc. At times, Quirk et al.'s inclusion of a meaning within a group appears to be mainly a matter descriptive convenience, at least at first glance (e.g. including source and origin prepositions into the cause/purpose range). Clearly a more detailed analysis than we can afford is necessary to assess the plausibility of the proposed meanings and to map the semantic structure of the two meaning ranges. We will follow Quirk et al. and, as we survey the so-called cause/purpose range (🕮 Section 14.3.1) and the means/agentive range (🕮 Section 14.3.2), we will always try to tap into the common ground that keeps each range together. In Section 14.4 we round off the chapter by taking a closer look at prepositional meanings that did not fit the two ranges, like concession, respect, exception, etc.

14.3.1 The cause/purpose range

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 695), the cause/purpose range covers at least the following meanings: cause, reason, motive, destination, purpose, and target (exemplified in 224–229). We find the differences between some of these meanings quite dainty and obscure (e.g. cause and reason). Also, some of the six meanings appear to represent small meaning ranges themselves. For instance, based on Quirk et al.'s discussion of 'target', here exemplified in (229), we would have to assume that 'target' is actually part of a finer-grained mini-cluster involving prepositions expressing goals of motion and intended/actual recipients – see further below.

Cause

(224) *So much God-given talent is being wasted* ***because of fear***.

Reason

(225) *Philip had been grounded* ***for talking back to his mom***.

Motive

(226) *And I did it for you and I did it* ***out of love*** *and I would do it again*.

Destination

(227) *The next day, we packed up and took off* ***for home***.

Purpose

(228) *We're also fighting* ***for honor and for reputation and for what we believe in***.

Target

(229) *What we understood about terrorism – it's aimed* ***at the innocent, at the unassuming***.

Cause, reason, motive

The first three meanings in the range, i.e. cause, reason, and motive express the material or the psychological cause (i.e. motive) for a situation. All prepositional phrases in this set answer the question *Why…*?

(230) *Hamilton takes her clients there* ***because of good merchandise***.
(231) *He nearly shot himself* ***on account of her cruelty***.
(232) *Why didn't we speak up? Sometimes* ***out of fear****, sometimes* ***out of shame***.
(233) *I know my Kate will be half beside herself* ***for want of seeing you again***.
(234) *Because it is so remote, the site suffers* ***from neglect***.

Cause or reason are expressed with *because of* and its more formal alternative *on account of*. Psychological causes or motives are mainly referred to with *out of* and *for*. *For* is relatively rare and is found in expressions like *for fear/love/joy/sorrow*, where the NP complement includes a noun of psychological state.

Intended destination, purpose: *for*

For is much more common as an expression of 'purpose' and 'intended destination'. The latter meaning, found with verbs of motion, properly belongs

among prepositions of space, examined in Section 14.2. Yet, Quirk et al. discuss it as part of the cause/purpose range as a descriptive convenience. As will soon become obvious, that the idea of 'intended destination' forms the very foundation for the metaphorical expression of the more abstract meanings that more properly belong within the present range, viz. 'purposes' and 'intended recipients' (🕮 TB 14.6.).

TB 14.6. PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS

Kövecses (2002: 70) lists the following English expressions as manifestations of the conceptual metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS: *reaching one's goals, working toward a solution, the end being in sight*. To these we add analogous Croatian expressions: *dostigao sam svoj cilj*, *grabiti k uspjehu, postaviti nedostižne ciljeve*, *približiti se rješenju*, etc. According to Kövecses (2002: 70), this metaphor is based on correlations in experience. Usually, when we want to accomplish something, we have to go to a particular place: e.g. if we want to drink beer, we have to go to the fridge, a store, or a bar; if we want to sleep, we go to bed. Since the concept of purpose is so intimately correlated in our experience, and repeatedly so, with going to a destination, this metaphor has a strong intuitive appeal indeed.

First, a few words about *for* and 'intended destinations'. This use of *for*, exemplified in (235) only suggests that the subject intends to reach the destination, there is no implication of arrival (236). This is different from the preposition *to*, which focuses on the destination and instills the expectation that the destination will be reached (237), (cf. the same contrast between *to* and *toward* in Section 14.1.1).

(235) *Later that day, Maitland set sail* ***for Savannah*** *via the inland waterway*.
(236) *He ran* ***for the hills***. (*to hide from the enemy*)
(237) *He ran* ***to the hills***. (*every day to practice for the marathon*)

What is more fascinating, however, and more relevant to the discussion of the cause/purpose range, the concept of destination in physical motion events is a perfect target for the metaphorical expression of abstract purposes. In other words, abstract purposes are easily construed as destinations through the workings of the conceptual metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS (🕮 TB 14.6.) and so the literal destination and the abstract purpose receive common linguistic representation in the preposition *for*. *For* as 'destination' was exemplified in (235–236), *for* as an abstract 'purpose' is exemplified in (238):

(238) *When I was a kid, you know, I played* ***for*** *fame.* '… in order to get fame'

When *for* expresses 'purpose', it can be paraphrased by *in order to*. As expressions of purpose, phrases with *for* act as postmodifiers (239), adverbials (240), and adverbials in copular clauses (241) (Quirk et al. 1985: 696):

(239) *[The dress **for the wedding**]$_{NP}$ is gorgeous*.
(240) *They came [**for the wedding**]$_{A}$.*
(241) *The food is [**for the wedding**]$_{A}$.*

Target (recipient, target, goal): *for, to, at*

The polysemy of *for* does not stop with 'destination' and 'purpose'. When its complement NP denotes animate entities, like persons or animals, the meaning of *for* is 'intended recipient' (242–243).

(242) *I bought this present **for my sister***.
(243) *A school bookkeeper baked a cake **for Gurley***.

This use is similarly motivated by correlations in experience.[68] Namely, people not only experience a strong connection between moving to a place and achieving a purpose (📖 TB 14.6.). As argued in Evans & Tyler (2003: 154), there is also a strong correlation between purposes and recipients. The action of doing something for someone, such as buying presents (242) or baking cakes (243), is motivated by the purpose of giving them to, or otherwise benefiting, recipients.

Further, note that sentences (242) and (243) say nothing about whether the sister and Gurley received the present and the cake. The lack of assumption of ultimate reception is completely analogous to the lack of assumption of reaching the destination in the 'intended destination' sense of *for* (cf. example 236).

Also, like spatial *for*, the *for* meaning 'intended recipient' has the 'accomplished' counterpart in the preposition *to*. So, just like *to* in (237) implies reaching the destination; *to* in (245) means that the sister received the present.

(244) *I bought this present **for my sister*** (*but she refused to take it*).
(245) *I gave a present **to my sister***.

Prepositional phrases denoting recipients (syntactically analyzed as indirect objects) often participate in the syntactic alternation called the *dative shift*. The effects of dative shift are shown in (246) and (247) where, compared to (242) and (243), the prepositional phrases have swapped places with the direct objects (*a*

[68] The reader is referred to Tyler & Evans (2003) for a closer look into the polysemy of *for* and other English prepositions. We address prepositional polysemy only briefly in Chapter 15.

present, *a cake*) and have lost the preposition. The same alternation applies to the sentence with *to* in (245), cf. (248)[69]

(246) *I bought my sister a present*.
(247) *I even baked her a cake*.
(248) *I gave my sister a present*.

Dative-shifting is not always possible. An example of non-alternating intended recipients is given in (249)[70] (borrowed from Levin 1993: 49):

(249) a. *The architect selected a house **for** the couple.*
b. **The architect selected the couple a house*.

The meaning 'intended goal or target' is also found in prepositional expressions with *at*, where the prepositional phrase is an object to the verb (250–25q). Similarly with *aim at*, *shoot at*, *snap at*, *bark at*, *shout at*, *yell at*, etc.

(250) *Mama sat quietly for a minute, then smiled **at Daddy***.
(251) *He screamed **at reporters** and ranted **at callers** to his radio show*.

Sentence (252) clearly shows that the intended targets or goals of action, just like intended destinations or recipients, may not be reached. To express that the target of action has been achieved, or in this case, that the man has been shot, the prepositional phrase needs to be replaced with a direct object NP, cf. (253):

(252) *According to reports, an officer shot **at the man**, but did not strike him*.
(253) *He shot **the man** in the forehead at nearly point-blank range*.

A similar contrast is found with verbs like *bite at, chew at,* etc. The most salient aspect of their meaning is that the subject's action is **directed** at a target, even if they also suggest that the target has already been somewhat affected (unlike in example 252).[71] Notice that in (254) there is a strong sense of the subject moving in the direction of the target, i.e. lowering the head to take each new mouthful of

[69] It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss restrictions on this alternation (they are formal, etymological, semantic, and pragmatic in nature). For more detail, cf. Erteschik-Shir (1979), Levin (1993: 47–48), Goldberg (2006), and the references cited therein.

[70] In Levin, these prepositional phrases with *for* are semantically described as referring to 'beneficiaries', the participants meant to benefit from the actions. Tyler & Evans (2003: 153) in turn, distinguish between *for*-phrases denoting 'intended recipients' and *for*-phrases denoting 'beneficiaries'. They argue that with intended recipients receipt is not entailed, while beneficiaries in the benefactive sense actually receive the transferred entity.

[71] These are examples of a special type of construction called "conative"; the semantics of this construction is described in Goldberg (1995: 63) as 'X directs action at Y'.

the grass in order to act on it (chew it). There is no assumption of directed motion in (255), the subject already has the grass in his mouth.

(254) … *got down on his hands and knees and was chewing* ***at the grass***.
(255) *Chewing* ***the grass*** *didn't seem to help him think much, so he tried shutting his eyes, and fell into a doze*.

This idea of motion directed at a target combined with the intention to act on and affect it also explains the difference between sentences (256a) and (256b). The combined motion-plus-action semantics of example (256a), featuring the preposition *at*, is contrasted with sentence (256b), which only expresses motion toward the goal with no intent to (negatively) affect the target entity.

(256) a. *She ran* ***at me.***
b. *She ran* ***to me***.

The same contrast exists between *to* and *at* with intransitive verbs of speaking. Verbs with *at* imply hostility, intention to affect the object toward whom the shouting, screaming, yelling is directed; when followed by *to*, the same verbs only suggest directing the voice current toward the message recipient (393).

(257) *I was quite sure she shouted* ***at me***, *not* ***to me***.

The final meaning addressed within the mini-cluster *target* is 'source/origin', as expressed by *from* (1985: 698) and exemplified in (258) and (259).

(258) *Everything you know is* ***from me***.
(259) *Ida Harris, Ida sweet Ida is* ***from Upland, California***.

Although the reasons for including 'source' and 'place of origin' into the cause/purpose range are not immediately obvious, conceptually, the association between causes and sources has been well documented in the literature. Croft (1991) argues that causes of energetic action are metaphorically conceptualized as the initial points or sources of motion toward a goal. Motion corresponds to the energy flow, the goal corresponds to the intended effect of action. Croft corroborates this claim with evidence from, among others, prepositional polysemy. One such polysemous preposition is *from*, which can express both causes and sources of motion. In fact, the same polysemy is found in a range of languages. Compare English examples in (260) and Croatian examples in (261). In (260) gunshot injuries are construed as the metaphorical source for the sequence of changes that end with the subject's death (metaphorical destination). Similarly, in (261), shock is the cause (the metaphorical source) for the ultimate change in the child's hearing (metaphorical destination):

(260) a. *She got up and walked **from the room***.
b. *Walker later died **from gunshot injuries***.

(261) a. *Nestala starica dan ranije otišla je **od kuće** i više se nije vratila*.
b. *Dijete je **od šoka** privremeno zanijemilo*.

14.3.2 The means/agentive range

The means/agentive range covers the following prepositional meanings: manner, means, instrument, agentive, stimulus, accompaniment, support, and opposition (Quirk et al. 1985: 698). As with the cause/purpose range, this range is also characterized by small overlapping clusters of meanings that defy simple classification.

Manner: *in ... manner*; *like*; *with*

Manner, and its related concept of resemblance, are expressed with the complex preposition *in ... manner* (262), and the simple prepositions *with* (263) and *like* (264). With transitive and intransitive verbs, *like* expresses 'manner', specifically 'in a manner resembling' (264); with copular verbs, *like* suggests 'resemblance' (265).

(262) *In school libraries researchers need information **in a timely manner***.
(263) *I will water your plants while you're away **with pleasure***.
(264) *He went back to work, sneaking out of his own apartment **like a thief***.
(265) *Life is **like a river.***

The difference between *like* and *as*, though notable, is often missed by non-native speakers. *As* – contrary to *like* – means the actual role or capacity in which something is done; *like* means resemblance, not the actual role:

(266) *Instead of trying to climb to the top like everybody else, he wants them to take the lowest seat at the table, indeed, to get up from the table and to wait on the guests **like a servant***.
(267) *For the next six-and-a-half years, she worked **as a servant** in a Swiss boarding school, scrubbing floors and cleaning toilets*.

Prepositional phrases expressing 'manner' often correspond to manner adverb phrases (268a and b).

(268) a. *I have long listened **with much attention** to the music of John Hartford*.
b. *I have long listened **attentively** to the music of John Hartford.*

Means and instrument: *by, with, without*

Prepositional phrases expressing 'means' and 'instrument' also answer the question *How ...*? The preposition *by* expresses 'the means of performing an action', usually various modes of transport, means of communication, etc. (cf. also the phrase 'by means of'). This is exemplified in (269–271). *With* is found with names of tools and instruments, including body parts, used by agents to complete an action (272) and (273). *Without* is the negative equivalent to most meanings of *with* (except 'support, solidarity', see below). In (274) we exemplify the opposite of instrumental *with*.

(269) *The man had arrived* ***by train*** *Tuesday afternoon*.
(270) *If you are chosen, you will be notified* ***by email***.
(271) *Pioneer thinkers often create new ideas* ***by breaking the rules***.
(272) *She broke his ankles* ***with a sledgehammer***.
(273) *Had he thought* ***with his head*** *instead of points considerably farther south*.
(274) *She made a cake* ***without a blender***.

Instruments can be expressed by alternative means. Instead of prepositional phrases, one could use the transitive construction with the verb *use* and its instrument-denoting direct object (275) or a construction with an instrumental subject (276).

(275) *I look upon you as you would see a man who* ***used his head*** *to hammer nails. Poor fool*.
(276) ***A flying Tennessee elbow*** *broke Hayes' nose*.

Instruments and agentives: *with, by*

As shown earlier, *by* and *with* express the 'means' and the 'instrument' of action, respectively. In addition to means, *by* phrases also refer to 'human agents' in passive constructions, but such phrases tend to be omitted, especially if the identity of the agent is unknown.

(277) *Her ankles were broken with a sledgehammer* (***by someone***).

Although *by*-phrases occasionally designate instruments, e.g. in (278), the contrast between instrumental *with* and agentive *by* is solid. Take for instance examples (279a, b) borrowed from Quirk et al. (1985: 700). Sentence (279a), featuring the preposition *by*, portrays the branch as the immediate cause of the damage, human agency is excluded (the ultimate cause may well have been a storm, causing the branch to break off from the tree). Instrumental *with* in (279b) suggests that there is an unexpressed human agent who is ultimately responsible

for the damage; the agent had used the tree branch as an instrument to damage the window. Now natural causes are excluded:

(278) *Her teeth had been smashed out, at the gum-line, as if* ***by a hammer***.
(279) a. *The window had been broken* ***by the branch of the tree***.
b. *The window had been broken* ***with the branch from the tree***.

Similar contrasts between actions instigated by external causes without human agency or intent to act, and those caused by human doing, are illustrated in the following corpus examples:

(280) *Roser was volunteering at the track meet when he was accidentally struck* ***by a hammer*** *during a hammer throw event around 4:15 p.m*. (hammer throwers had no intention to use the hammer to hit Roser on the head)
(281) *Wood-handled chisels should never be struck* ***with a hammer*** *because this would destroy the handle*. 'woodworkers should never strike wood-handled chisels with a hammer'
(282) *Modern composite headlamps are generally much brighter and far less likely to be broken* ***by a stone***. '… by stone debris lying on the road, which gets kicked up by other vehicles'
(283) *Do not strike your head* ***with a stone*** *just to see what this will do*.

Stimulus: *at*

Quirk et al. include 'stimulus' within the means/agentive range. A stimulus refers to something or someone that triggers an emotional, or more generally, psychological reaction. Prepositions introducing stimuli include *at* or *by*, occasionally *about*, *in*, *with*, etc. The emotional reaction, in turn, is expressed in the associated verb/(participial) adjective,[72] as shown in (284–288):

(284) *I was shocked* ***at/by his behavior***.
(285) *I am worried* ***about that***.
(286) *They are interested* ***in linguistics***.
(287) *I was angry* ***at*** *(AmE)/****with*** *(BrE)* ***you***.
(288) *Kafka is too astonished* ***at her behavior*** *to make a move*.

[72] Most of these qualify as participial adjectives, especially when followed by prepositions other than *by* – they allow intensification by *very*, replacement of *be* with another copula, etc. For instance, *She seemed very worried about that*. For more detail on differences between adjectives and participles, 🕮 Section 3.2.3).

Example (287) suggests that stimuli which are persons or objects, rather than events, are preferably expressed with *with* in BrE and *at* in AmE. With abstract nouns, *at* is acceptable in both varieties (288).

Boundaries between 'stimuli', 'instruments', 'agents', even 'causes' – from the cause/purpose range – are fragile. A stimulus for an emotional reaction may as well be interpreted more generally as the cause of the emotion. For instance, in (284) the behavior can be interpreted as the cause of shock. Alternatively, some stimuli, like that in (287) can be considered semi-agents in Quirk et al.'s terms (1985: 701–702). Paraphrases with such stimuli in subject position underscore their agentive nature, e.g. *You anger me* vs. *I was angry at you*.

Accompaniment: *with*

The preposition *with* is often used with animate NPs to express accompaniment, viz. the meaning 'in company with' or 'together with' (289–291). This meaning is sometimes referred to as 'comitative'. It can be paraphrased with coordinated NPs, cf. (291b) below:

(289) *Marty has been outstanding working* ***with me*** *on the playbook.*
(290) *Together* ***with Iran and Russia***, *the group appeared determined to do anything necessary to keep the Syrian regime in power.*
(291) a. *I'll take out my guitar and play* ***with you***.
b. *I'll take out my guitar and* ***you and I*** *will play.*

Comitative *with* often coordinates agents. For instance, in (289) "Marty and I" are two agents working on the playbook, in (290) "Iran, Russia, and the group" are the agents making plans to act. Clearly, this makes comitatives suitable for inclusion in the means/agentive range.

However, *with* can also express 'accompanying circumstances', and as such it may be a better fit for the cause/purpose range. Cf. example (292), where the *with*-phrase implies a 'cause':

(292) *I can't work properly* ***with all the noise***. ('because of all the noise')

Comitative *with* has its negative counterpart in *without*:

(293) *She can't imagine her life* ***without her mother***. ('without her company')

Support and opposition: *for, with, against*

In Quirk et al.'s taxonomy, support and opposition are classed within the means/agentive range (1985: 702–703). Their rationale for this, as we illustrate with (294) below, is not always obvious.

The notion of support, glossed 'in favor of', is expressed by *for*; its negative counterpart is *against* (294). We argue that, when *for* means support, it fits the cause/purpose range better, since it can be seen as yet another metaphorical take on physical destinations, something similar to 'intended recipients'. Only this time, the recipients come to receive support, a more abstract entity, not physical objects like cakes or presents (242–243) For instance, in (294) a vote in favor/in support of Trump is a vote intended for Trump.

(294) *The market volatility is not necessarily a vote* ***for*** *or* ***against*** *Trump*.

Concepts associated with 'support' include 'solidarity' or 'sympathy' and these are expressed by *with* (cf. example 295).

(295) *Whether you decide to marry him or not*, *I'm* ***with you***. ('on your side')

The opposite of the *with* of 'solidarity' is *against* (296), not *without* (cf. instrumental *with* in example 274).

(296) *He knew I was* ***against him***. ('not on his side')

Interestingly, the preposition *with* can even express opposition in conjunction with verbs like *fight*, *argue*, *quarrel*, etc. (example 297):

(297) *He argued* ***with directors*** *about how scenes should be played*.

If opposition and support are both expressed within the same construction, viz. *fight/play with X against Y*, *with* cannot mean 'opposition', only 'support' (Quirk et al. 1985: 703). We would like to argue, though, that this use of *with* can also be interpreted as a case of 'accompaniment' (see above), as evidenced by the comitative paraphrase of example (298).

(298) *My sister always* ***fought with me against our parents*** ('my sister and I always fought against our parents'

With the verb *play*, opposition can be expressed equally with both prepositions, *with* and *against*:

(299) *Clients IV and V played chess* ***with the computer***.
(300) *He played chess* ***against himself***.

14.4 Other prepositional meanings

14.4.1 'Having'

Prepositions: *of, with, without*

Several prepositions, including *of*, express 'possession' (broadly defined), cf. (301) and its paraphrase:

(301) *a woman* ***of great taste*** 'the woman has great taste'

Of is preferable with nouns denoting abstract qualities (302–303), but *with* is not uncommon (304).

(302) *He's a man* ***of great integrity and character, unquestioned morality***.
(303) *She is a woman* ***of strength and fortitude***.
(304) *Bob was a very outgoing person* ***with a great sense of humor***.

'Possession' is more generally expressed by *with*, especially when the entity owned is concrete:

(305) *There was a man* ***with a gun****, and I ran after him*.
(306) *Around her neck she wears a miniature portrait of a man* ***with a mustache, a liberty bonnet, and an open-necked shirt***.
(307) *It is a book* ***with a fascinating cover***.

Abstract qualities as objects of possession are generally compatible with both *of* and *with* (302–303), though not always (e.g. example (304) would not quite be felicitous with *of*). Concrete entities, in turn, are not found with *of* (308):

(308) ******... she wears a miniature portrait of a man* ***of a mustache***.

The opposite of the *with* of 'having' is *without* 'not having', e.g.

(309) *He really does not want this to be a war* ***without end***.
(310) *The band was sharing a house* ***without electricity*** *in Los Angeles*.

Prepositional phrases of possession often function as postmodifiers (311), but they may also be independent adverbials (312):

(311) *I saw [a MAN* ***with a long black beard****]*$_{NP}$
(312) *She went into the bathroom [****with her walker****]*$_{A}$

A fine line separates the notion of 'having' from that of 'accompaniment' (Section 14.3.2), but the distinction is relevant. In order for something to qualify as a comitative phrase ('accompaniment'), the entity should be capable of participating in the situation willingly, i.e. it must be a human being or at least animate. In (312), although the walker remains in close contiguity with the

subject, the more reasonable paraphrase would be to say (a) that the subject **had** the walker with her as she went into the bathroom, especially if she did not really need the walker to move but simply forgot to leave it behind, or (b) that she **used** the walker as the instrument to help her get to the bathroom. She certainly did not walk into the bathroom **together with/in company with** her walker.

The difference between comitatives and possessives may be less sharp than in "the walker" example. For instance, we'd argue that two of Quirk et al.'s examples from the category of 'possession' (1985: 705) are more plausibly or at least equally plausibly analyzed as comitatives:

(313) ***With Mary*** *I always feel happy*.
  a. 'when I am together with/in company with Mary' – comitative
  b. '?when I have Mary (around)' – 'having'

(314) ***Without Mary*** *I always feel miserable*.
  a. 'when I am not together with/in company with Mary – opposite of comitative
  b. '?when I don't have Mary (around)' – 'not having'

14.4.2 Concession

Prepositions: *in spite of*, *despite*, *for all*, *with all*, etc.

Many prepositions express concession. The most general and the most widely used one is *in spite of* (315). *Despite* is more formal (316), while *for all* and *with all* are more colloquial and restricted (317–318). The latter two express concession only when accompanied with *all*: Without *all*, *with* is causal (319) (Quirk et al. 1985: 705–706).

(315) *There aren't even any coastal flood warnings posted* ***in spite of the strong ocean storm***.
(316) ***Despite initial success as a diagnostic tool***, *its design as an expert consultant was not considered to meet the information needs of most physicians*.
(317) ***For all his flaws***, *he was the most powerful king in history*.
(318) *The woman's tendency to be judgmental irked him at times but he kept his annoyance at bay.* ***With all her faults****, she meant well and she was the only one willing to watch the boy*.
(319) ***With this noise****, I couldn't sleep*. ('because of this noise …') (Quirk et al. 1985: 706)

Notwithstanding is formal legal English (320). It can also be an adverb (321).

(320) ***Notwithstanding the myriad changes in the legal profession***, *the contemporary law school remains remarkably Langdellian in its design*.
(321) ***Notwithstanding***, *researchers and practitioners need to know how many data points to collect*.

14.4.3 Respect

Prepositions: *with reference to*, *with respect to*, *regarding*, *with regard to*, *as regards*, *in respect of*, *respecting*, *on the matter of*, *about*, *concerning*, *as for*, *as to*

Prepositions that mean 'respect', glossed roughly as 'in connection with', 'on the topic of', are common in formal English, especially business communication (Quirk et al. 1985: 706). Some of the above-listed prepositions are illustrated in (322–325).

(322) *John, tell me -- **with reference** to your report of lost communications and navigation -- what was your first indication of trouble yesterday*?
(323) ***With regard to Chernobyl***, *we want to bring legal proceedings against officials who use their positions not to reveal the true radiation levels*.
(324) ***As to the monitoring efficiencies***, *the parties themselves can choose how to allocate priority*.
(325) ***Regarding the quality value***, *French quality assessment programs are lagging due to a lack of data on health outcomes*.

As for allows the speaker to return to an earlier topic, which is why it cannot open a new piece of discourse. When used clause-initially, *as for* signals the speaker's contemptuous attitude (326).

(326) ***As for your opinions on national policy***, *Mr. Thatcher... well, let me just say this. These are the reasons why I believe you're full of shit*.

Prepositional phrases expressing 'respect' function mainly as adverbials, but they also occur in NPs as postmodifiers (327–330).

(327) *Arendt formed [her VIEWS **on**/**about race and politics**]$_{NP}$ by reading Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man*.
(328) *His analysis bears a superficial resemblance to [the classical VIEWS **concerning class of Marx and Engels**]$_{NP}$*
(329) *Our survey addressed [campus OPINION **with regard to diversity issues**]$_{NP}$*
(330) *I'm curious, did she ever give you [her THEORY **as to how the child ended up in the woods**]$_{NP}$*

14.4.4 Exception

Prepositions: *except for*, *with the exception of*, *apart from*, *aside from* (esp. AmE), *except*, *excepting*, *excluding*, *but*, and *save* (formal)

Prepositional phrases of exception function as adverbials (331–333) or as postmodifying phrases (Quirk et al.'s 1985: 707). The latter function is typical with *except* (334) and *excepting* (335) and is the exclusive function of prepositional *but* (336–337). Occasionally, prepositions of exception (but also of addition, 🕮 Section 14.4.5) have prepositional phrases as their complements (338–339).

(331) *[**Except for Donald Trump**]$_{A}$, every announced candidate has stature.*
(332) *[**Apart from the music**]$_{A}$, which sounded ghostly and distant through the closed door, there was nothing but silence all around him.*
(333) *The public is less permissive about that sort of thing now, [**with the exception of drugs**]$_{A}$.*
(334) *It's likely to be noticed by [EVERYONE **except the person it's meant for**]$_{NP}$*
(335) *Upon examining, I found it to resemble that generative fine dust the ancients called pollis or pollen, necessary to the propagation of [all FLORA **excepting the ferns**]$_{NP}$*
(336) *West and south of the park would be closed to [ALL **but residents**]$_{NP}$*
(337) *[WHO … [should know] [better] … **but the Lord**]$_{NP}$*
(338) *No one dresses like that [**EXCEPT in the old movies**]$_{PP}$*
(339) *The layers of the tail fin began to come apart [**FROM within one spot**]$_{PP}$*

As evident from (336) and (337), prepositional phrases of exception led by *but*[73] must contain a universal indefinite determiner or pronoun (positive or negative) like *all, every, any, each, no, nobody*, etc. (🕮 MSPS II, Section 8.6.2) or an interrogative *wh*-word like *who, where*, etc. Sentences (337) and (340b) feature postmodifying *but* separated off from its head.

(340) a. [***Everyone but John***]$_{NP}$ *wanted to go to the horror house.*
b. ***Everyone*** *wanted to go to the horror house* ***but John***.

Bar and barring are rare. They may be considered substitutes for *except* and *excepting*.

[73] Recall that *but* also functions as a conjunction, e.g. in *It was an expensive neighborhood, **but** the house was big enough for her mother to live with them.*

(341) ***Barring catastrophic collisions***, *the Voyagers are expected to continue to prosper on their lonely*, *boundless journeys*.

Non-assertive contexts, like negative clauses, may accept *beyond* instead of *except* (*for*), cf. (342).

(342) *Connor caught the tone of her voice; but did not react* ***beyond nodding*** *before he left*.

TB 14.7. *Irregardless of* vs. *regardless of*

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 707) the preposition *irregardless* (*of*), considered nonstandard by many, seems widespread in informal AmE. It is also argued that the preposition probably originated by the collapsing of the "synonymous" forms *regardless* and *irrespective*, or through the double coding of negation (*irr* + *less*). To check how widespread *irregardless* really is in AmE, we looked up its total frequency in COCA (compared to the frequency of *regardless*). We then checked the frequencies of *irregardless* in COCA's five registers. The 52 occurrences of *irregardless* in the whole corpus are no match to the 14 967 occurrences of *regardless*. But rarely as it occurs, it is the most frequent in spoken AmE, with 30 occurrences. Fiction comes second (N=14), then news (N=5), then academic English (N=3), and finally magazines (N=2).

14.4.5 Addition

Prepositions: *besides*, *as well as*, *in addition to*

'Addition' is the opposite of 'exception'. This meaning finds its prepositional expression in *besides*, *as well as*, and *in addition to*.

(343) *Fetuses were buried on the grounds* ***as well as children as old as three***.
(344) ***Besides the pain*** *in her eyes there was fear*.

14.4.6 Negative condition

Prepositions: *but for*

But for expresses 'negative condition', paraphrasable as 'if it hadn't been for'.

(345) ***But for Jake's knowledge of maps***, *we would have been lost*.

It is not uncommon to find *except for* used synonymously with *but for* in the negative condition sense. However, Quirk et al. (1985: 709) argue that *except for* should not be used for this purpose. Notice the ambiguity in sentences (346) and (347) borrowed from Quirk et al. (1985: 709).

(346) ***Except for*** *John they would all have died.* 'if it hadn't been for John …' (negative condition)
(347) ***Except for*** *John they all died.* 'with the exception of John …' (exception)

Granted, the morphosyntactic difference in the verb phrases should be sufficient to disambiguate the sentences (*would have died* is compatible with the conditional interpretation), but in less careful speech, there is conceivably a risk of misunderstanding.

TB 14.8. Exception or addition?

EFL learners should exercise caution with prepositions of addition and exception. The following pair of examples is superficially very similar, except for the non-negligible contrast induced by the two semantically contrasting prepositions (examples from Quirk et al. 1985: 708):

(1) *Everyone passed* ***except/but Richard***. 'Richard did not pass, but everyone else did'
(2) *Everyone passed* ***besides Richard***. 'everyone passed, in addition to Richard'

The difference is cancelled out in negative contexts; sentences (3) and (4) are roughly synonymous:

(3) *No one passed* ***except Richard***.
(4) *No one passed* ***besides Richard***.

14.4.7 Subject matter

Prepositions: *about*, *on*

The prepositions *about* and *on* can express subject matter ('on the subject of', 'concerning'). They combine with various verbs and adjectives, usually those expressing some form of communication:

(348) *I* <u>*wrote*</u> ***on the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder among Vietnam combat veterans***.
(349) *When I returned home, I* <u>*wrote*</u> ***about the incident*** *in my diary*.
(350) *The young priest* <u>*preached*</u> ***on the sanctity of life*** *at a Denver hospice.*

Quirk et al. (1985: 710) list the verbs taking either *about*/*on* or only *about*:

about/on

argue, *be knowledgeable*, *communicate*, *confer*, *hold forth*, *preach*, *speak*, *write*

about

find out, *hear*, *inform*, *learn*, *keep quiet*, *quarrel*, *read*, *teach*

On tends to follow verbs expressing well-planned, formal linguistic communication, such as lecturing, public speaking, etc., and is not found with verbs such as *squabble*, *fight*, *quarrel*, *chat*. The same applies to *on*-phrases as postmodifers (*a book on/about gardening*, *a talk on/about linguistic universals* vs. *a story about a dragon*, *uproar about a movie*). Of course, if a verb can take either preposition, switching between the two prepositions will cause that semantic contrast exactly:

(351) *He spoke **on dystopian novels***. ('gave a lecture on')
(352) *He spoke **about dystopian novels***. ('talked about distopian novels')

Subject matter is also expressed with *concerning* – a less usual and more formal alternative to *on* and *about* (353), *over* (354), and with *of* – a literary alternative to *about* with verbs like *tell*, *speak*, *talk*, *inform* (355):

(353) *We still are in the debate **about/concerning the War on Terror***.
(354) *There is controversy **over/concerning the measurement of GDP***.
(355) *Long ago they had talked **of the stars**, **of life on other planets***.

Switching from *of* to *about* (both frequent with the verb *think*), has semantic consequences (Quirk et al. 1985: 710). *Think of* means that something came to one's mind or attention (356), whereas *think about* means 'ponder on/consider' (357):

(356) *Its soothing tones threatened to calm her down, so she thought **of the children shivering in the morning cold***.
(357) *The boy also often thought **about the girl** in the days and weeks that followed*.

14.4.8 Material, ingredient, substance

Prepositions: *with*, *of*, *out of*, *from*

With verbs of making, the prepositions *with*, *of*, *out of*, and *from* refer to the ingredients, materials, or substances with or from which something is made or derived:

(358) *We drink cocktails made **with pineapple juice**, **smoked salt**, **and spirulina frozen into ice cubes***.
(359) *The lenses are made **out of the liquid glycerin***.

(360) *Surimi is often made **from pollock fish** with fillers and flavorings like starch*, *sugar*, *egg whites*.

With may also express that the material or substance is prevalent in the entity:

(361) *The main artery of the town had been paved, though it was lined **with trees***.
(362) *I got to my feet he took a revolver from his coat. It was plated **with silver***.

Prepositional phrases with *of* and material-denoting nouns are used as postmodifiers. They can be interpreted literally (363) or metaphorically (364).

(363) *You can end up in [a* CASKET ***of pure gold***$]_{NP}$ *before you even know you're dead*.
(364) *Most of all she had [a* HEART ***of pure gold***$]_{NP}$

14.4.9 Standard

Prepositions: *for*, *at*

In Parts II and III we explored comparison as a property of adjectives and adverbs. It was argued that any comparison implies or explicitly codes the standard against which the speaker assesses the degree of a quality. The standard is usually expressed with a *than* prepositional phrase (365) or clause (366). But other forms of coding were explored as well (📖 Part II, Section 4.2)

(365) *I am fond of heels and not a bit uncomfortable being taller **than a man***.
(366) *Fuller has been better **than he was last summer***.

The meaning labelled 'standard' in Quirk et al. (1985: 711), concerns the prepositional expression of comparison that is implicit in some adjectives in the absolute/positive form. For instance, saying that an elephant is big implies a standard or norm on a scale different from that used to assess the size of a cat or a mouse. Compare Quirk et al.'s examples (1985: 711) and their paraphrases.

(367) *This elephant is big*. ('this elephant is big for an elephant')
(368) *This cat is big*. ('this cat is big for a cat')

These implicit norms can be made explicit with the *for*-prepositional phrase.

(369) *My cat is <u>big</u> **for a cat***.

Another way to complete the meaning of positive adjectives or strongly evaluative nouns, is to indicate the respect in which the adjectival quality (*brilliant* in 370) or the nominal designation (*a pro* in 371) applies to an entity. This is accomplished with an *at*-phrase:

(370) *But the young recruit was brilliant* ***at fixing things***.
(371) *No doubt he was a pro* ***at reading women's body language***.

Admittedly, the above phrases of "respect" are not true standards of comparison, but they do relativize the quality coded in the adjective or implied in the noun, to only that domain where the quality (and its extent) is true of the entity. For example, the young recruit in (370) may be terrible at speaking foreign languages, but his brilliance has to do with his skills and dexterity as a repairman.

In this use, *for* and *at* usually introduce prepositional phrases as complements of adjectives (e.g. 370). But they also occur in noun postmodification (371 and 372) or as independent adverbials (373–374).

(372) *He is [a complete IGNORAMUS* ***at physics****]*$_{NP}$
(373) *Also, he seemed to be doing well [****at his business****]*$_{A}$
(374) ***[For a man with the pride of Lucifer]***$_{A}$*, it is a point of particular pride that he himself has organized his rescue*.

14.4.10 Reaction

Prepositions: *at*, *to*

In Section 14.3.2, we presented 'stimulus' as part of the meaning range dubbed "means/agentive". We also showed that sentences featuring an expression of stimulus usually also code the emotional or psychological reaction to the stimulus. In examples (283–287) of Section 14.3.2 the reactions were coded in the verbs/participial adjectives. However, reactions can also be coded prepositionally, by phrases like *to my surprise/regret/relief/horror/delight*, all of which feature an abstract noun denoting an emotion, cf. examples (375–376).

(375) ***To my surprise***, *I didn't feel a lot of pain*.
(376) ***Much to my regret****, we never did get to become mountain men*.

Reactions to stimuli are not always emotional, but if we admit reactions of intellectual nature, the category becomes less uniform. The door is now open to examples like (377–382), which do not express reactions to events as much as the subject's interpretation of events (even with the preposition *according to*).

(377) *The article was,* ***to my mind****, a tirade of irrational generalizations*.
(378) *This was,* ***in my view****, an incorrect thing to do*.
(379) ***In my book****, a terrorist is a terrorist*.
(380) ***For my money****, Tony Bennett is the best singer in the business*.
(381) *The suspect,* ***according to police****, was a former schoolmate of the victim*.

Exercises

1. Fill the blanks with suitable prepositions.

1. Women don't know what goes on ____ the playing field among boys.
2. The King-Riggs match continues to inspire people to fight for fairness _____ the playing field.
3. A cool morning breeze passed _____ the cotton fields the next Tuesday.
3. You've only been _____ Cambridge since January and everyone on the campus knows your name.
4. I will go to the best pub _____ Cambridge.
5. _____ the tree, bananas take weeks to ripen. Commercial bananas, however, are chopped down and shipped while they are still green.
6. The powerful muscles in his arms and shoulders bunched and swelled even more as he pulled himself higher _____ the tree.
7. Only about one-tenth of sea ice is _____ the water surface; the other nine-tenths lie below.
8. Mary reached for the shawl draped _____ the arm of her chair.
9. Our buses leave every hour, _____ the hour.
10. He's just standing _____ the bus stop, waiting for our fine American transportation system to come pick him up.
11. What's been traumatizing my kids are the posters ____ the bus stop.
12. Every morning he takes up his perch _____ the window of a coffee shop across from the courthouse.
13. My reflection _____ the window startled me, peering back in while I tried to see out.
14. Your granny's _____ the window, watching us make out.
15. I knocked _____ the window to get his attention.
16. Here, I see nothing but gray, hear the tap-tap-tap of the rain _____ the window.
17. Every time the fly slammed _____ the window, it reflexively surrendered to the crash momentum and fell.
18. She dragged herself _____ the mud on all fours.
19. Boards are laid _____ the mud of the unpaved streets.
20. The creature's body came to a triangular point above narrow fins that lay flat _____ the mud like wings.
21. The video showed the bizarre creatures planted, like carrots, _____ the mud of a shallow lagoon.

2. Correct or not? Correct the mistakes and comment in either case.

1. Arriving **at Sydney**, I transferred the beads to a warehouse on the docks.
2. I have to sneak **out the camp**.
3. Mr. Hardie would seek the counsel of the men sitting **nearest him**.
4. She fell and landed on her back **among** the rows of bell peppers and squash.
5. She thanked me **on my help**.
6. Patients are now flying in to see him **from over the country**.
7. James told Saturn where the best place to **swim the river** was.
8. She was a girl **of a round face**, small and flat as a coin.

3. Explain the semantic differences between sentences in the sets. Focus only on shifts in prepositions/conjunctions.

1. a. There was no one else there **beside him**.
   b. There was no one else there **besides him**.
2. a. You are more lovely than an antelope running **across the desert**.
   b. He dreamed of wolves running **through the forest**.
   c. Richie was in the store and he saw him running **across the street**.
3. a. I **laughed until** I heard her calling me again.
   b. I **didn't laugh until** I read the caption above the picture.
4. Politicians don't talk **to you**, they talk **at you**.
5. a. What forced a life-loving man to live **like a monk**?
   b. Later on, Peter lived **as a monk** in a monastery near Gaza in Palestine.
6. a. We took them every year on a vacation **in the summer**.
   b. Barbara was visiting her cousin **for the summer**.
7. a. On Europa, what wasn't destroyed **by radiation** was incorporated into the ocean.
   b. The recipient's immune system is usually destroyed **with radiation** before the transplantation.
8. a. No one pays attention **except me**.
   b. No one pays attention **besides me**.
   c. Everyone pays attention **except me**.
   d. Everyone pays attention **besides me**.

4. Identify the meanings of polysemous prepositions in the sets below.

1. a. I placed them on the table **beside him**.
   b. Dr. Jim is **beside himself** with excitement.
   c. **Beside him**, Erin looked anything but angelic.
   d. Everyone pays attention **besides me.**
   e. No one pays attention **besides me.**

2. a. I was **in love** with her.
   b. Millions are **in danger**.
   c. The mysterious man was **in town** to pick up his mail.
   d. Liza's doll store had been **in business** since long before his birth.
   e. We are much better prepared than we have been **in the past**.
   f. She was **in the army** during the war.

3. a. I can't see **beyond the walls of snow on each side of the road**.
   b. Louis could have passed for someone **well beyond the age of a hulking seventeen-year-old**.
   c. Some of those scalded by the boiler explosion were **beyond hope**.

4. a. He was also suspended **from school** for fighting with a peer.
   b. She appreciated the opportunity to work **from home**.
   c. They suffer **from depression and anxiety**.
   d. To learn **from others** requires humility.
   e. At the moment, bioplastics are often made **from corn**, a controversial wing of the industry.

5. a. Turkish soaps showed more diverse roles **for women**.
   b. The Hoxley silver thief had been sent away **for life**.
   c. Want me to pick up something **for dinner**?
   d. Private sector workers are reluctant to raise any concerns **for fear of losing their job**.
   e. They said the car had been driving wildly **for miles**.

6. a. Life is not easier **with a man or woman**, but it's more fun.
   b. You even taught me to accept life **with a smile**.
   c. She comes out **with a knife**.
   d. I'll cut out Sandy's heart **with a knife**.
   e. Larry was recruited to work **with a team of assorted astrophysicists**.
   f. Fill your heart **with love**.
   g. Stop arguing **with your sister**!
   h. Even **with all the traffic whizzing down Massachusetts Avenue**, I could still hear the muffled sobs.

i. **With all the problems this city has, with all the violence and street crime going down**, it's hard for me to muster much sympathy for a trio of fancy pants.

4. Translate the sentences. Prepositional phrases should replace/be integrated in the bolded parts (if any). Follow instructions in brackets.

1. Zaprepastio me njegov izgled – činilo se kao da **tjednima** nije spavao. (*Start with* "I was")
2. Bio je to roman **na kojemu** je opsesivno radila **godinama** i nikada ga nije dovršila.
3. Riječ je **o pojmu** koji treba tumačiti **s obzirom na** zadane ciljeve te direktive.
4. Vojni veterani dobivaju neograničen **pristup sveučilišnoj pomoći u okviru** regulative koju je predsjednik Donald Trump ozakonio.
5. Iako se vlasti i dalje fokusiraju **na spašavanje preživjelih**, posljedice oluje "Harvey" postupno izlaze **na vidjelo**.
6. Majica mu je **sva u mrljama od rajčice**. (*Use* "covered").
7. Ne treba uvijek slušati sve savjete **vezane za** zdravlje.
8. Djeca se igraju **na ulici** do sitnih noćnih sati.
9. Toga dana bili smo svi **na dvorištu**.

Summary of Chapter 14

In Chapter 14 we surveyed the most important classes of prepositional meanings. While all could be subsumed under the schematic label "relation", the relations are myriad and are a challenge to describe exhaustively and systematically. In our survey we focused on the prepositional expression of space and time, but also on other meanings within meaning ranges characterized by a mix of coherence and overlaps, viz. the cause/purpose range and the means/agentive range. We concluded with a miscellany of other meanings that did not fit the major meaning categories/ranges explored in the chapter.

Chapter 15: A close-up on prepositional polysemy: the case of *above* and *below*

> … meanings do not match up with a mind-independent objective reality. Rather, 'reality' is determined by the nature of our bodies and our neuro-anatomical architecture, as well as the physical world we inhabit. Hence, the meanings encoded in language relate to and reflect our conceptual system, which constitutes our 'representation' of reality. (Tyler & Evans 2003: x)

Chapter 14 provided a relatively non-technical overview of prepositional semantics. The survey was far from exhaustive, but we went as deep and as wide as space allowed. Still, despite providing an occasional comment on semantic associations between various senses of a single preposition (e.g. the 'goal' and 'purpose' interpretation of *to*), we feel that a few more words on the polysemy of prepositions would benefit the reader. In this chapter, we will zoom in on the prepositions *above* and *below* to get a glimpse into their semantic range and how (some of) those senses hang together. This is all the more important as traditional approaches to the (mental) lexicon have tended to either ignore looking into whether or how the different meanings of a single form may be related, or have claimed that the relationships are not systematic, i.e. that they are not related at all and thus constitute cases of homonymy (cf. Tyler & Evans 2003: 1). Not everyone agrees with these views, e.g. Heine (1997) considered that the problem of how to represent multiplicity of meanings in single forms was central to modeling linguistic theory. In this chapter we follow Tyler & Evans (2003), who see the various senses associated with spatial prepositions and particles as related in a systematic and highly motivated manner. Arguing from a Cognitive Linguistics position, these authors show that spatial particles and prepositions are often highly polysemous. The senses are related and can be represented as networks of senses organized around a primary sense. Our experience of space is fundamental to this organization since "[S]patial experience provides a substantial portion of the conceptual bedrock for the human conceptual system, that is, for the nature of meaning" (ibid. x). The primary sense may not be easy to pin down, and no one criterion can be seen as decisive. Rather a set of criteria should be used together to determine the most likely candidate(s). The linguistic criteria include "(1) earliest attested meaning, (2) predominance in the semantic network, (3) use in composite forms (Langacker, 1987), (4) relations to other

spatial particles, and (5) grammatical predictions (Langacker, 1987)" (Tyler & Evans 2003: 47–49); empirical evidence, in turn, would come from psycholinguistic experiments that tap into the acquisition and processing of polysemous language units.[74]

We cannot afford an extensive survey of Tyler & Evans' (2003) model or a complete survey of polysemy of even the prepositions addressed here. However, we will provide the reader with just enough detail to hopefully inspire their interest in the topic for future independent study. As we will show in the next two sections, a linguistically, if not cognitively, real representation of polysemy in spatial prepositions involves central senses motivated by proto-scenes (🕮 Figure 15.1.), i.e. scenes that involve relations or locations of entities in space. Space and the experience of our bodies as it exists and acts within this space are among the most human experiences of all. Little wonder then that we take space as fundamental in experiencing and linguistically coding not only relations in space, but through metaphor and other types of conceptual associations, concepts as abstract as time, purposeful activity, control, and social hierarchy etc. (Lakoff 1987; Langacker 1987; Fauconnier & Turner 2006; Tyler & Evans 2003).

For Tyler & Evans (2003: 32) polysemy networks are a result of "speakers perceiving communicatively useful connections between a non-primary use and the primary sense". This means that the senses of any preposition did not arise because speakers could not think of anything better to label the new concepts. Rather, speakers must have noticed something in the basic spatio-physical configuration of the preposition that allowed them to make a meaningful and easily discernible connection to the new concept they wanted to express.

We will illustrate this approach with two prepositions related to the vertical axis – another fundamental human experience – *above* and *below*. A more complete survey would also mean looking into the prepositions *over* and *under*, since the four appear to divide the labor of organizing the vertical dimension into four related subspaces. The importance of describing all four exhaustively cannot be overstated, since it is only by doing so that we can actually appreciate differences and similarities in distribution between members of each pair, i.e. *above* and *over*, on the one hand, and *below* and *under* on the other. Unfortunately, we need to limit ourselves in the interests of space.

[74] There is no universal agreement on some of these issues, especially since psycholinguistic experiments have cast some doubt on the claims that polysemy networks – with senses organized with respect to the primary sense – are psychologically real structures in our conceptual systems (for an overview, cf. Zlatev 2009).

15.1 Semantic network of *above*

The proto-scene of *above* involves a spatial configuration in which one entity is located higher up than some landmark. What makes it different from *over* is that this entity is not within potential reach of the landmark, cf. Figure 15.1.

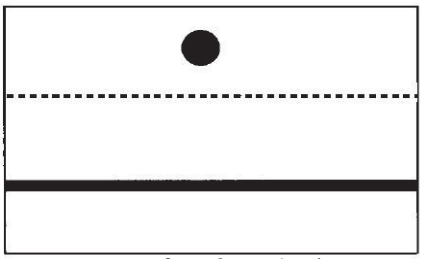


Figure 15.1. The proto-scene for *above* (Tyler & Evans 2003: 112)

Examples (1) and (2) have been handpicked to bring home the idea of 'no contact':

(1) *But then he sees Jesus get crucified, and **above the cross** he sees another image of Christ, who's laughing. ... the soldiers think that they're actually crucifying him, but they can't crucify him because he's a supernatural being. They're only crucifying his earthly shell, his body. But his real self is **above the cross**, laughing at them for their foolishness in thinking that they can hurt him.*

(2) *The most important thing is to graft plants of exactly the same age and size, and to shield them from light for up to five days after the grafting operation is done. After the grafted seedlings have been hardened off and show vigorous new growth, it is important to plant them shallowly, so that the graft union is **above the soil line**.*

In (1) *above* underscores the idea that Jesus is physically and figuratively out of crucifiers' reach and cannot be touched or harmed by them. In (2) *above* highlights the importance of keeping the place where two plants have been grafted together away from soil. Contact with soil would make the plants vulnerable to disease or mechanical damage.

The next two examples (from Tyler & Evans 2003: 111) involve two seemingly identical situations which differ only in the presence vs. absence of contact. The jacket and the chair are in contact in (3a), but not in (3b).

(3) a. *The maid hung the jacket **over the back of the chair**.*
b. *The maid hung the jacket **above the back of the chair**.*

Let us use example (1) to say a few words about the conventions and terms used in cognitive linguistic diagrams like that in Figure 15.1. In Figure 15.1., Jesus would correspond to the entity represented as the dark circle (in cognitive linguistics terms, this entity is referred to as the **trajector – TR**). The thick solid horizontal line would represent the cross and probably also the crucifiers (in cognitive linguistics terms, these would represent the entity called the **landmark – LM**). The landmark is linguistically encoded in the prepositional complement. The dashed line delimits the area proximal to the landmark. In this case, Jesus is distal from the dashed line, i.e. he is not within crucifiers' reach.

Examples (1) and (2) denote a static scene. Example (4) is a dynamic take on the basic sense of *above*. The TR is perceived as going up a vertical scale.

(4) *The old orange sun rose **above the rim of the world**.*

Beyond this proto-scene, Tyler & Evans (2003) propose four more senses in the semantic network of *above* (Figure 15.2.). This is far fewer than the number of senses they propose for *over* (N=15). What we find interesting (but in need of further empirical study) is their explanation for this quantitative discrepancy. It is argued that, since *over* implies potential contact between the TR and LM, the scope of possible extensions to non-spatial domains is larger with *over.* If nothing, then because the most salient elements in the human environment are those with which we are most likely to interact directly – elements with which we have first-hand experience. This is how learning begins from our earliest years – as children learning about the world we reach for and touch the objects of interest, and much to our parents' dismay, we even (attempt to) derive much of this experience by putting objects into our mouths.

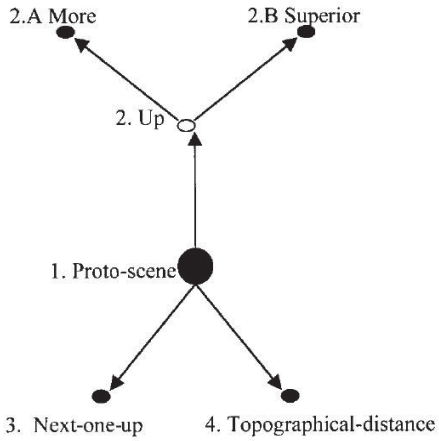


Figure 15.2. The semantic network for *above* (from Tyler & Evans 2003: 116)

The four additional senses of *above* are analyzed within two clusters. The first cluster, labeled *The Up Cluster* involves the senses 'more' and 'superior'. The other cluster includes the senses 'next-one-up' and 'topographical distance'.

15.1.1 The Up Cluster

There are a number of basic human experiences where the idea of 'up' is correlated with positive feelings or experiences. One such experience is the correlation between 'up' and 'more' (🕮 Section 15.1.1.1); the other is the correlation of 'being up' and 'being superior' (🕮 Section 15.1.1.2).

15.1.1.1 More (2A)

In human experience there is a strong correlation between quantity and vertical elevation. In the proto-scene associated with the sense 'more', the more there is of something, the higher it is in terms of vertical elevation.[75] Just think of what happens when you pour yourself a glass of wine. The higher the level of wine in the glass, the more wine for you to drink. This sense of 'more' has become independent of physical verticality and physical objects, cf. (5):

(5) *The average yearly salary of a data scientist is* ***above $110,000***.

In example (5) both the salary (TR) and the amount of $110,000 (LM) are non-physical entities. In reality, the former cannot be physically higher than the latter, their relationship is interpreted as 'more'.

15.1.1.2 Superior (2B)

Vertical elevation is easily associated with superiority. Think of the many experiences where being elevated in physical space gives or implies an advantage over others; kings sitting on elevated thrones, judges sitting on elevated benches, armies on higher battleground enjoying an advantageous combat position, the famous rock from which the celebrated Lion King addressed his animal kingdom, even the organization of shopping malls, where the most expensive stores are located on the top floors far from the hustle and bustle of ordinary folk on the ground level. 'Superiority' (in terms of authority, seniority, salary, immunity

[75] *Over* has also developed the sense 'more'. The distinction between literal *over* and literal *above* relating to contact may be cancelled when *above* and *over* mean 'more'. In that case, the two prepositions are interchangeable: (i) ... the temperature was **above 100** … (ii) … the temperature was **over 100** (both examples – shortened – from Evans & Green 2006: 117).

from prosecution, etc.) has thus become a conventional sense of *above*, even where no physical elevation is involved:

(6) *I don't believe that anybody is* ***above the law***.
(7) *Aria always knew Sonya d'Medved had airs* ***above her station***.
(8) *In every generation there are men who rise* ***above the rest***.
(9) *Jake rose* ***above colleagues' petty comments***.

In example (9), for instance, we have to infer that Jake's colleagues had treated him badly in the past. He has managed to distance himself from the petty comments, assuming a higher moral ground.

15.1.2 Next-one-up (3)

The sense glossed 'next-one-up' makes reference to verticality, but also sequentiality. Specifically, it focuses on the next element up in a vertically-oriented sequence:

(10) *Do you see the red window on the 3rd floor? My office is just* ***above it***.

The likely source of this sense is human experience with objects like ladders (with series of vertically sequenced steps), multi-storeyed buildings, etc., where an element within the vertical sequence can be identified by reference to the element beneath it. From there it is a short step to the metaphorical construal of social classes, levels of education, etc. in terms of a metaphorical ladder. In this sense of *above*, the no-contact requirement is canceled. Contact between a TR and a LM is possible, as shown in Tyler & Evans' (2003: 12) example, here (11).

(11) *Is this the box you want? No, not that box, the one* ***above it***.

15.1.3 Topographical-distance (4)

The final sense, 'topographical distance', may seem hard to reconcile with the idea of verticality. Examples like (12), from Tyler & Evans (2003: 121) make no obvious reference to the vertical dimension. The sentence only really means that the bridge is approximately that far upstream from the falls, not that much higher up in the air than the falls:

(12) *The nearest bridge is about half a mile* ***above the falls***.

But this sense is still motivated by the basic sense of *above*. It is found with geographical features like rivers, streams, or other water flows, and the role of gravity is crucial to understanding how the sense has developed. Sources of running water usually lie physically higher than where the waters flow into seas,

making gravity the force that takes the water from its higher-placed origin to its lower-lying mouth where it enters the sea. Therefore, movement in the direction of the water flow can be conceptualized as downward motion; by the same token, movement in the opposite direction of the water flow must be construed as upward-oriented. "Given that moving upstream correlates with covering geographical distance, then being *above*, in the sense of being at a part of the river which is physically higher than a lower part, entails having covered distance to reach the new location." (Tyler & Evans 2003: 121)

15.2 Semantic network of *below*

Below can be considered the contrast partner of *above* (Tyler & Evans 2003: 127). The two prepositions contrast in their relative position on the vertical axis, but both involve TR–LM relationships with no possibility of contact. The proto-scene for *below* can be glossed as 'lower than, with no possibility of contact' (example 13), and is represented in Figure 15.3.:

(13) *These birds feed on animals that live* ***below the surface of the water***.

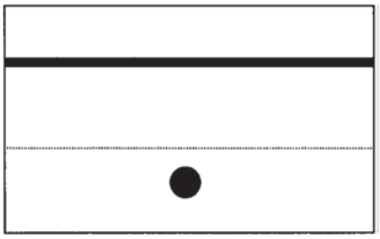


Figure 15.3. The proto-scene for *below* (Tyler & Evans 2003: 122)

Their semantic networks are also congruent. The network of *below* (Figure 15.4.) mirrors closely that of *above* (Figure 15.2.).[76]

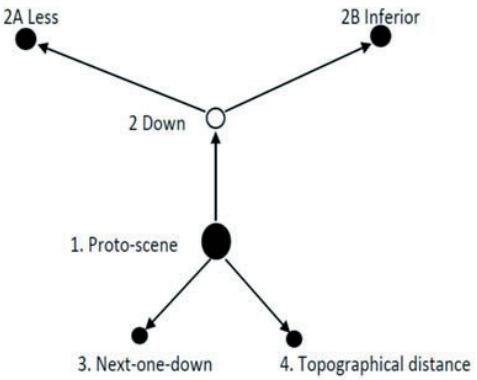


Figure 15.4. Semantic network for *below* (modified from Tyler & Evans 2003: 128)

[76] We have adapted the original network of *below* given in Tyler & Evans (2003: 218) due to reasonable concern that a node in their semantic network was accidentally misrepresented, e.g. the *down* 'node' numbered 2 in Figure 15.4., was labeled *up*.

15.2.1 Down Cluster

Two senses of *below* fall into the Down Cluster, viz. 'less' and 'inferior'.

15.2.1.1 Less (2A)

Below may indicate a relation between a TR and a LM such that the TR represents 'less' relative to the LM. The same experiential correlation that motivated the extension of vertical 'above' to quantitative 'more' explains the shift from vertical 'below' to quantitative 'less'. Less of an entity (quantity) occupies less vertical space. The extension of this configuration to non-physical entities and non-physical quantity is featured in example (14), where it is claimed that US economic assistance (TR) must not be less than the amount owed (LM).

(14) *US economic assistance is not allowed to drop* ***below the amount Israel owes the US in repayment for past debts***.

15.2.1.2 Inferior (2B)

As argued in Section 15.1.1.2, the experience of being in a higher location leads to various implications of superiority, and this explains the extension of *above* from 'higher than' in space to 'superior to' in various areas of social practice. The converse applies to *below*. Being lower and/or having less correlate with being at a disadvantage or inferior to others; e.g. subordinates bow or kneel before royalty, armies on lower ground are sitting ducks for adversaries on higher terrain, the animal kingdom gazes up to their beloved Lion King, the shoppers on lower floors of shopping malls rarely even venture to the more expensive top floors. The sense 'inferior' can also be understood in reference to 'lower in quality', 'worse than', cf. examples (17–18).

(15) *Morgen was* ***below him*** *once in the chain of command*.
(16) *As Xavier observes, samurai never marry* ***below their social class***.
(17) *The court finds that trial counsel's performance fell* ***below the standard of reasonable professional judgment***.
(18) *At-risk status was applied to students who performed* ***below grade level***.

15.2.2 Next-one-down (3)

'Next-one-down' is the mirror-image of 'next-one-up'. When it means 'next-one-down', *below* identifies the TR as the next lower element in the sequence relative to the LM (example 19). Note that the sequence need not manifest in physical

space – hence figurative extensions to non-physical TRs, LMs, and sequential relations in (20–23). See also how the TIME IS SPACE metaphor works itself into the polysemy of both sequential *below* and sequential *above* (21–22). In example (21), we could conceptualize going through the stages of life as climbing up a metaphorical ladder. Since climbing a ladder takes time, those who had started earlier have reached farther up than those who only recently started the climb. Therefore, in example (21) the younger generations (TR), who come chronologically later than the *me* (LM) are linguistically coded as generations *below*. *Generations above* in example (22) refer to the chronologically earlier seniors. Similarly, example (23) features two TRs, one being the next one up, the other the next one down from the speaker (LM) in the educational hierarchy:

(19) *Something had happened the floor right **below us**.*
(20) *It made her recoil from the sound of her American accent, the blah blah blah of someone middle-class, cushioned by the class **below her**.*
(21) *I like to learn from another generation **below me**.*
(22) *When my father moved here years ago, the generation **above him** taught him all about this country.*
(23) *My class, the class **above** us, the class **below** us, we've got a lot of really good athletes.*

Like its counterpart, 'next-one-down' allows for contact between TR and LM. The hair (TR) is in some contact with the hat (LM), albeit not for its whole length.

(24) *She wore a man's felt hat, and the white hair hanging **below it** was thin and hung to her shoulders.*

15.2.3 Topographical distance (4)

Below also expresses distance of a TR from a LM along an elongated path. In sentences (25–26) *below* invites the reader to follow an imaginary path downstream of the rapids and falls (LMs) to locate the animate subjects and the basin (TRs) further downstream.

(25) *Once they were safely ashore **below the rapids**, the group took a breather.*
(26) *To see all 2,584 feet pouring down from a glacier, bring a topo map and ascend a tricky climber's path that follows Colonial Creek 1.5 miles to a hidden basin just **below the falls**.*

Exercises

1. Identify the senses of *above* and *below* in the following sentences.

1. Athenian democracy was ranked higher than Sparta's oligarchy, and certainly **above tyranny**.
2. It happened on Connecticut Av., right **below Duke Zeibert's restaurant**.
3. It was the only film studio not to have a film budgeted **above $200,000**.
4. His dental office is **above the bookstore**.
5. They're currently about one hundred eighty meters **below the surface**.
6. The temperatures here are well **below the average**.
7. You were in space. You were hundreds of miles **above the Earth**.
8. Their bodies cool **below the temperature at which they can fly**.
9. I've got a blade here! Jackson hollered **above the noise**.
10. Rubio rose **above the others** in his depth and knowledge about policy.
11. First-year students **above the age of 25** engage in more purposeful activities than younger students.
12. You can increase efficiency by traveling **below the speed limit**.
13. I scored **above the norm** on measures of hostility.
14 He never rose above the rank of corporal through the course of the war.
15. **Above the falls**, traffic declines sharply, but it's best to avoid weekends.
16. I'll give you something **above the asking price**.
17. She is an elitist who regards herself as being **above the rules**.
18. From puddle ducks in the upper reaches (but well **below the falls**) to oldsquaws at the mouth of the Niagara, this American icon offers more than a honeymooner's retreat.

2. Study the following examples featuring *over* in various spatial and abstract senses. Describe each sense as narrowly as possible, consulting, if necessary Tyler & Evans (2003: Chapter 4).

1. The bees built their hives high in the trees **over the summer**.
2. The thief jumped **over the wall**.
3. She still has so much power **over me**.
4. The fire trucks' ladders extended **over the roof**.
5. The images were recorded by a pair of drones that hovered **over the field**.
6. We got guys **all over the field**.
7. She stepped **over the dead body** and came rushing at me in the dark.
8. Nine-tenths of old Armenia lies **over the border** in Turkey.

9. I could leap **over the bed** and make it to the door before she got me.
10. The hulk of a man had rolled **over the bed**.
11. Harriette draped the dress **over the bed**.
12. The doctor was standing **over the bed**, waiting to pronounce death.
13. No use crying **over spilt milk**.
14. There were **well over fifty people** in Quintoon's glass-sided living room.
15. We prefer time **over money**, we don't want to work too hard.

3. The Croatian preposition *nad* matches English *over* to a remarkable degree. Translate these sentences into English, using *over* when possible (some examples are from Matovac 2013).

1. Stajati nekome nad glavom.
2. Nema velike ovlasti, nad njim su još tri upravitelja.
3. Bila je to veličanstvena pobjeda dobra nad zlom.
4. On je po darovitosti svakako bio nad svojim vršnjacima.
5. Proveli su nadzor nad radnicima.
6. Mislim da bi se trebao zamisliti nad svojim postupcima.
7. Sutra će biti provedena kontrola nad radnicima.
8. Tako se slavi pobjeda nad neprijateljima.
9. Klevetnik je lopov nad lopovima jer krade bližnjemu ono najsvetije: čast

Summary of Chapter 15

In Chapter 15 we presented Tyler & Evans' (2003) approach to prepositional polysemy. Their model is based on the idea that the distinct senses of prepositions arise in large part by registering correlations in human experience. The senses are represented as nodes in semantic networks built around a basic sense and the basic sense itself involves basic configurations in spatial proto-scenes. Although we could not afford an in-depth survey of the polysemy of English prepositions, with our overview of the polysemy of *above* and *below* we have hopefully managed to pique the reader's interest in the topic.

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