

612 The semantics and grammar of adverbials

It's *not* that <they object to him>; it's *more probably* that <they have no interest in him>.

It's *not* just that <she's young>; it's $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{surely} \\ \textit{more} \end{array} \right\}$ that <she's inexperienced>.

Note [a] *Exactly* and *precisely* are used as comment utterances on a previous declarative sentence:

A: That was the day she was referring to.

B: $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{Exactly.} \\ \textit{Precisely.} \\ \textit{Right.} \langle \textit{esp AmE} \rangle \end{array} \right.$

But these seem to be related to some implied sentence such as 'That was *exactly/precisely* the day' or 'You are *exactly/precisely right*'. *Quite* ['I quite agree'] is used in the same way in BrE. *Right* is used, especially in AmE, to express agreement, and is more common than *exactly* or *precisely*; but it cannot be related like these to focusing subjunct use. Especially in BrE, *quite* ['I quite agree'] commonly expresses agreement with something said by another speaker, whether the preceding clause is positive or negative (cf 8.130 Note [c]):

A: She should (not) have told you!

B: *quite*.

[b] Like *not only*, but without a corresponding correlative, *not even* can focus upon the subject:

Not even <HE> protested.

Disjuncts

8.121 Like subjuncts, the adverbials that we call DISJUNCTS are grammatically distinct from adjuncts in terms of the features set out in 8.25. Consider in this connection the adverbials in the following sentences:

Sadly, the storm destroyed the entire tobacco crop. [1]

Your son is not, *in all frankness*, succeeding in his present job. [2]

Since she ran out of money, she had to defer buying a new car. [3]

We note, first of all, that it is not the *form* of these adverbials that makes them different from adjuncts or even from subjuncts:

Dr Fox sat *sadly* in her room. [4]

The arrested man answered *in all frankness* the rather awkward personal questions. [5]

She has been living in great hardship *since she ran out of money*. [6]

Nor yet is it the *positions* in which the adverbials are placed in [1], [2], and [3]. We could move the adverbials to *I* in [4] and [6]; we could move *in all frankness* to *M* in [5]; we would leave their grammatical relations broadly unchanged and still sharply different from the grammatical relations of the adverbials in [1], [2], and [3]. The adverbials in [4], [5], and [6] can be made the focus of a cleft sentence; can be the basis of contrast in alternative interrogation or negation; can be focused by focusing subjuncts; and can come within the scope of predication pro-forms or ellipsis. These propensities

are those of their adjunct status (*cf* 8.25). But the adverbials in [1], [2], and [3] cannot, without producing absurdity or requiring a different interpretation, undergo any of these processes:

- *Did the storm destroy the crop *sadly* or . . . ?
- *It is *in all frankness* that your son is not succeeding . . .
- *It is *since she ran out of money* that she had to defer buying a new car.
[asterisked except as a time adjunct of backward span, whereas in [3] the adverbial concerns not time but *reason*]

Similar observations hold true for subjuncts, as we saw in 8.88, but it should not be thought on that account that disjuncts are especially akin to subjuncts. Rather, we have a three-fold distinction that can be set out informally as follows:

ADJUNCTS are similar in the weight and balance of their sentence role to other sentence elements such as subject and object.

SUBJUNCTS have in general a lesser role than the other sentence elements; they have for example less independence both semantically and grammatically and in some respects are subordinate to one or other of the sentence elements.

DISJUNCTS, by the same analogy, have a superior role as compared with the sentence elements; they are syntactically more detached and in some respects 'superordinate', in that they seem to have a scope that extends over the sentence as a whole.

We shall now scrutinize the general semantic roles of disjuncts in order to understand why they appear to have such a grammatical function in relation to the clauses in which they operate.

- 8.122** It is very difficult to make a wholly objective utterance, and almost everything we say or write conveys the impress of our attitude. Thus, a sentence such as

Mr Forster neglects his children. [1]

entails assumptions about the 'authority' on which the statement is made. It is unlikely that the speaker has heard Mr Forster say, 'I neglect my children', but if this were the source of authority, the speaker would have been more likely to make the sentence:

Mr Forster says (that) he neglects his children. [2]

This might well imply that the speaker cannot himself confirm it:

Mr Forster says (that) he neglects his children (*though I've seen no evidence of this*). [3]

If, indeed, he had such evidence, the sentence would be likely to be different again, both in the statement of the authority and the implication of the speaker's own view:

Mr Forster admits (that) he neglects his children (*as I myself have suspected*). [4]

By contrast with [2] and [4], the 'unattributed' sentence [1] is likely to mean and to be interpreted as meaning:

From things I have heard and seen, I claim it to be a fair and true assessment that *Mr Forster neglects his children*. [5]

It need hardly be pointed out that such detailed specificity is rarely made explicit, though it is worth noting that in a court of law it would be by no means unusual for the speaker of [1] to be obliged either to expand it to [5] or at least to acknowledge that by his [1] he intended to mean neither more nor less than [5].

But even in ordinary speech and writing, it is not uncommon to find some overt indication of authority accompanying the bald statement [1], such as:

I think	}	(that) Mr Forster neglects his children.	}	[6]
I gather				
It seems				
I tell you . . .				
I tell you <i>frankly</i> . . .				
I tell you <i>privately</i> . . .				
I put it to you <i>crudely</i> . . .				
I say, <i>if you will allow me (to do so)</i> , that . . .				

Each of the italicized sections in the various alternate forms of [6] is an adverbial in a clause which has the speaker as subject and *Mr Forster neglects his children* as its object. Thus:

I	tell	you	<i>frankly</i>	that Mr Forster neglects his children.	[7]
S	V	O _i	A	O _d	

But even the degree of overt authority in [7] can be abbreviated:

Frankly, Mr Forster neglects his children. [8]

It is where sentences like [8] have the same meaning as [7], that we speak of the adverbials as disjuncts, and it can now be seen why such adverbials have in some sense a superordinate role in relation to the sentences in which they function.

Note [a] Not all disjuncts can be so straightforwardly related to adverbials in superordinate clauses. For example, the disjunct in:

Presumably, Alison has bought a new car.
cannot be related to:

*I tell you *presumably* that Alison . . .
But plausible paraphrases will nonetheless place 'Alison has bought a new car' as a clause functioning as an element in a superordinate clause, eg:

I presume that Alison has bought a new car.
That Alison has bought a new car *is widely presumed*.
It *is widely presumed* that Alison has bought a new car.

It is a matter of interesting speculation to account for the processes by which we can express the meaning of these finite verb phrases in terms of verbless adverbials.

[b] Many conjuncts also correspond to a construction containing a verb of speaking; cf 8.138.

[c] Note the following examples of formal stereotyped expressions of authority:

I hereby declare that I shall . . .
Stop – *in the name of the law*.
No flowers *by request*.

- 8.123 Disjuncts can be divided into two main classes: **STYLE** disjuncts (by far the smaller class) and **CONTENT** disjuncts. Style disjuncts convey the speaker's comment on the style and form of what he is saying, defining in some way under what conditions he is speaking as the 'authority' for the utterance. Content disjuncts (also known as attitudinal disjuncts) make observations on the actual content of the utterance and its truth conditions. These two classes and their subclasses are displayed in Fig 8.123.

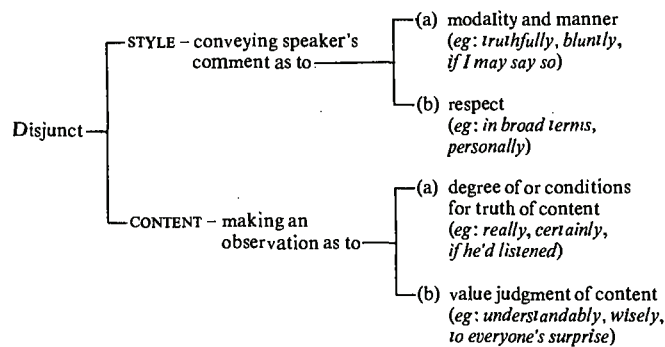


Fig 8.123

Style disjuncts

- 8.124 The relationship between a style disjunct and the clause to which it is attached can often be expressed (as we explained in 8.122) by a clause in which the same formal item as the style disjunct is a process adjunct (cf 8.78ff), with a verb of speaking, the subject of which is 'I'. Thus, *frankly* in:

Frankly, I am tired.

is equivalent to *I tell you frankly* or *I say frankly*. If the clause is a question, the disjunct may be ambiguous:

Frankly, is he tired?

In this example, the adverbial may correspond to *I ask you frankly* or to the more probable *Tell me frankly*. Often the disjunct is quite overt about the verb of speaking and the adverbial may take the form of a finite clause:

If I may say so without offence, your writing is immature.

In thus drawing attention not only to what is said but to how it is being said, the style disjunct is often an implicit comment on language itself (cf 8.126). Adverbs commonly used as style disjuncts include:

Type (a): Modality and Manner

candidly, flatly, honestly, seriously, strictly, truly, truthfully; confidentially, privately; approximately, bluntly, briefly, broadly, crudely, frankly, generally, roughly, simply